

#### **NRCS Announces Sign-Up Period for Updated Conservation Stewardship Program**

**The next deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) applications to be considered for funding this year is May 10, 2019. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest up to \$700 million for new enrollments and contract extensions in fiscal year 2019. The 2018 Farm Bill made several changes to this critical conservation program, which helps agricultural producers take the conservation activities on their farm or ranch to the next level. "CStP continues to be a very effective tool for private landowners working to achieve their conservation and management goals," NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr said. "It is the largest conservation program in the United States with more than 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled." While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by May 10, 2019, to ensure their applications are considered for 2019 funding. Changes to the Program**

**The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes NRCS to accept new CStP enrollments from now until 2023, and it makes some important improvements to the program. These updates include:**

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres. For fiscal 2019, NRCS can spend up to \$700 million in the program, which covers part of the cost for producers implementing new conservation activities and maintaining their existing activities.**
- Higher payment rates are now available for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.**
- CStP now provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.**

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**About the Program**

**CStP is offered in all 50 States and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to weather extremes. CStP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. For more information, visit the Kansas NRCS website at: [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov) or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, check on the Internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS\_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer,**