



DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center
4100 220th Street West, Suite 102
Farmington, MN 55024
Phone: (651) 480-7777
Fax: (651) 480-7775

News

For Immediate Release: August 12, 2009

For more information call: Lana Rotty 651-480-7777

National Sign-Up for New Conservation Stewardship Program *Continuous Enrollment for Producers Begins Aug. 10*

Farmington, MN – On August 6, 2009 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that a continuous sign-up for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) will begin on August 10. CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain, improve, and manage existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations.

"This program will help the Nation's agricultural and forestry producers reach greater levels of conservation performance, which will help protect our land and water," USDA's Kathleen Merrigan said. "The conservation benefits derived from maintaining and enhancing natural resources will improve the quality of soil and water, assist in addressing global climate change, and encourage environmentally responsible energy production."

For information about CSP, including eligibility requirements, producers can visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp or visit their local NRCS field office. Local information meetings will be held:

- 10:00 A.M. Wednesday August 19th at the Cannon Falls Township Hall
- 1:00 P.M. Monday August 24th at the Farmington USDA Service Center
- 1:00 P.M. Tuesday August 25th at the Scandia Community Center
- 1:00 P.M. Wednesday August 26th at The Point in Hastings
- Additional meetings will be announced later.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers CSP. Eligible lands include cropland, improved pastureland, and non-industrial private forestland.

Eligible applicants may include individuals, legal entities, and Indian tribes. The program will be offered to producers in all 50 states, District of Columbia and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. Agricultural and forestry producers must submit applications by Sept. 30 to be considered for funding in the first ranking period. Congress capped the annual acreage enrollment at 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year nationwide.

To apply for CSP, potential participants will be encouraged to use a self-screening checklist first to determine whether the program is suitable for their operation. This form is available on the NRCS Web sites and at your local NRCS field office. After filling out the self screening checklist, the participant should stop in their local NRCS field office and complete an application.

USDA is finalizing the program's policies and procedures. The CSP interim final rule, published in the Federal Register, is open for public comment through Sept. 28.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272(voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).