

# CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

## — Minnesota Summary —

3/12/08

### **Data Shows CSP is Popular with Farmers, Produces Wide Range of Conservation Benefits**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) held its first Minnesota sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) in 2004 and has held two additional sign-ups since that time. While the program remains popular among farmers, limited funding and access have dampened its use around the state. The 2008 Farm Bill needs to strengthen and invest in this result-orientated and in-demand program. Below is chart of basic Minnesota CSP statistics.

Table 1	Watersheds	Number of Contracts	Acres	Funding Paid Out Payments represent existing contracts plus new sign-ups and modifications.
2004	1	132	58,412	\$1.36 million
2005	6	561	142,052	\$4.96 million
2006	1	15	8,141	\$6.26 million
Total	7 *Blue Earth watershed held two sign-ups: 04 & 05	708 *Update from Dec. 2007 data	208,605	\$12.58M + (\$8.8M for 07) = \$21.38M

◆ This chart does not include contracts that have been cancelled or terminated.

The Conservation Security Program remains popular with farmers despite significant funding restrictions. Only seven out of the 85 watersheds in Minnesota have been funded by CSP. The new Conservation Security Program should receive full funding and be open to all farmers in a predictable manner.

### **CSP Advancing Conservation**

The Conservation Security Program encourages higher conservation performance by providing real incentives for farmers to enhance their environmental stewardship. According to NRCS personnel in Minnesota, to date nearly 90 percent of the 2004 contract holders and more than a third of the 2005 contract holders modified their contracts and initiated additional conservation measures, resulting in improved soil and water quality, energy management and wildlife habitat. More contract holders were then and are now interested in modifying contracts, yet limited funding has reduced opportunities for farmers to upgrade their contracts.

### **CSP Covers a Wide Range of Conservation**

CSP's enhancement payment provides incentives for conservation activities a producer does above and beyond the eligibility and qualification criteria for the program. Below is how enhancement payments were distributed with 2005 contract holders (2005 was the biggest sign-up year). The distribution of enhancement payments to farmers clearly shows that producers are addressing a number of different resources through this program.

Table 2	Air	Energy	Grazing	Habitat	Nutrient	Pest	Soil	Water	Total
Minnesota	\$14,147	\$183,929	\$94,371	\$582,743	\$947,937	\$932	\$1,076,988	\$14,499	\$2,915,546

◆ This chart does not include contracts that have been cancelled, terminated or modified.

## **Hidden Treasures – Conservation Security Program and Wildlife**

In 2006 Minnesota signed up one watershed for CSP, the Red Lakes watershed in northwestern Minnesota. A case study ([www.msawg.org/pdf/hidden\\_treasures%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.msawg.org/pdf/hidden_treasures%5B1%5D.pdf)) done on the benefits accrued for wildlife from CSP found: *A total of \$395,305 in funded enhancements is for pest management practices that should benefit some wildlife (about 28% of all Conservation Security Program contract payments). Altogether, 85% of the \$1.4 million [over the life of the contracts] in Conservation Security Program payments in Minnesota's Red Lakes watershed will pay for practices that either provide wildlife or wildlife habitat benefits, or reduce pesticide use and benefit some wildlife.*

## **Conservation Benefits**

Other studies have demonstrated that CSP is in demand, provides measurable conservation results, and spurs additional conservation. See:

- *Conservation Security Program Drives Resource Management: An Assessment of CSP in 5 Midwestern States.* [www.mnproject.org/csp/CSP\\_Report\\_web\\_April\\_19,\\_2007.pdf](http://www.mnproject.org/csp/CSP_Report_web_April_19,_2007.pdf)
- *Conservation Security Program: An Assessment of Farmers' Experience with Program Implementation.* [www.cfra.org/node/253](http://www.cfra.org/node/253)