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USDA ANNOUNCES 2005 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM CONTRACTS

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2005 - Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner today announced that USDA will offer 12,700 Conservation Security Program (CSP) contracts across the nation. These 2005 contracts being offered translate into more than a \$1 billion long-term commitment to conservation over the next ten years.

"CSP participants are conservation innovators. What they do today will lead to additional environmental benefits for the nation as they share their knowledge of conservation with others," said Conner at a CSP event in Carroll County, Maryland. "The program is offered nationally on working lands rewarding the nation's leading conservationists and providing incentives for them and others to do more."

The CSP contracts offered cover about 9 million acres of private land in the 220 watersheds nationwide. USDA expects to fully invest the \$202 million provided by Congress for this fiscal year. Environmental enhancement activities offered by applicants include improving soil quality, water quality, wildlife habitat management, nutrient and pest management, air quality management and on-farm energy management.

Following the process outlined in the CSP sign-up notice published in the Federal Register on March 25, 2005, applications will be offered according to the published enrollment categories, in order, until the funding is exhausted. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will offer contracts to applications in enrollment categories A and B and subcategory C-1.

The number of applications accepted by state for each tier of conservation accomplishments is as follows:

State	Number of Applications Approved	Total Projected Contract Cost
AK	2	\$11,305
AL	64	\$956,481
AR	589	\$10,563,637
AZ	159	\$2,461,851
CA	386	\$6,096,373
CO	190	\$2,962,871
CT	9	\$23,891
DE	16	\$304,113
FL	38	\$521,820
GA	129	\$2,823,758
HI	7	\$86,918
IA	2,040	\$14,280,535
ID	468	\$4,143,632

IL	295	\$2,551,825
IN	664	\$7,378,781
KS	765	\$9,177,815
KY	47	\$461,841
LA	24	\$191,224
MA	9	\$29,936
MD	377	\$4,358,739
ME	8	\$39,473
MI	388	\$5,569,887
MN	590	\$4,227,650
MO	1,204	\$13,574,659
MS	34	\$526,173
MT	370	\$7,188,321
NC	147	\$1,558,097
ND	227	\$3,574,102
NE	794	\$4,746,134
NH	15	\$67,618
NJ	6	\$60,500
NM	75	\$1,158,852
NV	45	\$519,389
NY	77	\$968,964
OH	370	\$3,732,553
OK	136	\$659,228
OR	597	\$6,297,291
PA	228	\$992,870
PR	29	\$100,548
RI	3	\$29,007
SC	65	\$525,324
SD	124	\$842,455
TN	16	\$49,846
TX	84	\$6,476,076
UT	91	\$1,218,978
VA	166	\$1,330,487
VT	9	\$80,484
WA	224	\$7,477,439
WI	268	\$1,854,479
WV	1	\$595
WY	76	\$194,137
Total	12,745	\$145,000,000

NRCS also extended the comment period on the interim final rule for CSP to Sept. 9, 2005. This extension will give the public additional time to comment on key issues regarding implementation of the program. The extension notice was published in the Federal Register on July 20, 2005. Comments can be made via the Federal Register at the Regulations web site <mailto:farbillrules@wdc.usda.gov>.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agriculture lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. NRCS financial and technical assistance promotes the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes. CSP will be available each year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. Additional information on CSP, including the self-assessment workbook and Federal Register notice, is at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

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