

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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GOOD LAND STEWARDS REWARDED THROUGH USDA PROGRAM

Don't miss the opportunity to apply for fiscal year 2011 funds

BOISE, Idaho, December 15, 2010 – Agriculture producers practicing good land stewardship may be rewarded through the Conservation Stewardship Program. The program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, uses monetary incentives to encourage producers to maintain and initiate conservation practices on their land. The cut-off date for fiscal year 2011 funds is January 7, 2011.

"We see this program as a great opportunity for producers to get rewarded for working to conserve the resources on their land," said Jeff Burwell, Idaho NRCS State Conservationist. "Producers who already maintain a high level of conservation and are willing to do more activities will benefit from this program."

"Program participants receive an annual payment for conducting conservation work on their land. In 2010, we funded 202 CSP contracts covering 351,000 acres. We paid over \$4 million dollars to help producers conserve resources," Burwell said.

The per-acre payment depends on if its cropland, pasture, rangeland or forestland. The minimum payment is \$1,000 and the payment cap is \$40,000 per year, with a \$200,000 maximum for the five year contract period.

"The program is available to both agriculture and forestry producers," Burwell said. "When applicants are approved, they work with NRCS to develop a conservation stewardship plan outlining current conservation activities and new treatments for resource concerns on their land."

If you are interested in applying, complete the self-screening checklist to determine if you are eligible and the Conservation Stewardship Program is suitable for your operation. The checklist is available at NRCS field offices and on the NRCS Website at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/special_pdfs/CSP_Producer_Self-Screening_Checklist.pdf.

"Producers must fill out the application in their local field office. The process can be a little overwhelming at first but the NRCS staff will help you," Burwell said. Once the application is accepted, the information is verified before the application is approved.

Applications are ranked by estimating environmental performance based on the producer's current and proposed conservation activities.

For information on the program, eligibility, or a list of conservation activities, visit your local NRCS office. To find the office nearest you, look for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the government pages of the phone book or on the NRCS Web page <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/> under "Find a Service Center."

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