



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd; Suite 900 • Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 414-3200 • Web: <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 19, 2006

CONTACT: Jill Rees: 503-414-3273

NRCS ANNOUNCES CSP CONTRACT MODIFICATION PERIOD

Portland, July 19, 2006—USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced that Conservation Security Program (CSP) contract modification requests will be accepted between August 1 and September 15, 2006 for fiscal year 2004 and 2005 CSP contract holders for certain contract modifications.

“The modification request period will provide an opportunity for 2004 and 2005 CSP participants to demonstrate their interest in further enhancing their conservation systems,” said NRCS State Conservationist Bob Graham.

When initial CSP contracts were developed, NRCS and the landowners worked together to develop a CSP Stewardship Plan. In many cases, the stewardship plan included new enhancements and/or additional acres for coverage in future years. Participants now have the opportunity to add additional conservation practices to their CSP contract and receive increased funding.

Previous modification periods show that CSP enrollees have added more conservation practices and activities since first signing up and are seeing their annual payments increase. Because of previous contract modifications, FY 2004 payments to FY 2004 CSP contract holders totaled \$19.8 million compared to \$32.5 million in FY 2006. This represents a 64% increase in payments to FY 2004 CSP enrollees and a significant investment in the environmental quality of the Nation’s working lands.

“This shows that CSP is doing what it was designed to do: reward the best land stewards and encourage them to do even more,” Graham said.

-more-

NRCS...Helping people help the land.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

The current August 1st to September 15th modification period will allow CSP enrollees to request certain modifications to existing 2004 and 2005 contracts. Three types of modifications can be proposed by contract holders.

- *Tier Transitions:* Contract modifications will be allowed to advance tiers on the operating unit identified in the benchmark agricultural operation delineation and still under the participant's control. The addition of land identified in the benchmark agricultural operation that will not result in a transition from a Tier I contract to a Tier II or Tier III contract will not be allowed during this modification period.
- *Adding Newly Acquired Land:* For Tier III contracts and those contracts that are advancing to Tier III during this modification period, contract modifications will be allowed to add newly acquired land. No newly acquired land will be added to Tier I or Tier II contracts during this modification period, unless they are advancing to Tier III.
- *Adding Enhancements:* For Tier III contracts and those contracts that are advancing to Tier III during this modification period, contract modifications will be allowed to add new enhancements that have been established, or that are planned for future application. No new enhancements will be added to Tier I or Tier II contracts that are not advancing to a Tier III contract during this modification period.

The decision to proceed with the modification requests is based on the President's proposed FY 2007 CSP budget level. Actual funding available for modification requests will be determined by the final '07 budget, and NRCS will make decisions on modification requests once '07 CSP funding is known.

FY 2004 and 2005 CSP contract holders will be receiving further instructions from their local NRCS service center for more information about submitting a modification request.

###