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June 7, 2006

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USDA ANNOUNCES FY 2006 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM CONTRACTS

101 Contracts Selected in Oregon's Watersheds

PORTLAND, OR, June 6, 2006— Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced the funding of 4,404 Conservation Security Program (CSP) contracts across the United States, Puerto Rico and Guam. In Oregon's 2006 CSP watersheds, the Upper Grande Ronde and Upper Klamath Lake, 101 producers will be awarded contracts.

"All successful applicants have achieved high technical standards for protecting soil and water quality," said Bob Graham, Oregon NRCS State Conservationist. "These are model conservation farmers and ranchers who have invested their time and money into conservation for years. Based on their conservation leadership and action on private lands, over \$1.6 million will be infused into the local economy of these two watersheds from the Conservation Security Program this year."

Work done by the producers in this year's selected CSP watersheds will significantly benefit both their own watersheds and the people and resources downstream.

This is the third year Oregon had selected CSP watersheds. Over the last two years contracts were awarded to 1,016 conservation stewards in 11 watersheds, with annual payments totaling over \$25 million statewide. Contracts range in length from 5 to 10 years.

Nationally, the FY 2006 CSP contracts offered cover more than 3.7 million acres of private land in 60 watersheds nationwide, which translates to nearly a \$440 million long-term investment in conservation over the next ten years. USDA expects to fully invest the \$259 million provided by Congress for FY 2006. That amount covers prior CSP contracts and includes \$50 million for the new FY 2006 contracts. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will begin notifying the selected producers over the next two weeks.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that rewards private landowners for their ongoing stewardship of natural resources. CSP touches all agricultural production sectors from livestock operations to cropland and from orchards and vineyards to sugar bush and nursery crops. The 2006 contracts encourage them to further conserve and improve soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on their operations, while, at the same time, creating incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance.

NRCS financial and technical assistance promotes the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes. The state-by-state breakdown of selected CSP contracts is as follows:

See chart for breakdown (pdf):

<http://www.usda.gov/documents/statebystatecsp062006.pdf>

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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