

**News Release****Contact:** [alicia.rodriguez@usda.gov](mailto:alicia.rodriguez@usda.gov)**USDA Announces May 29<sup>th</sup> Application Cutoff for CSP**

**Albuquerque, N.M., April 6, 2020** – The next deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications to be considered for funding this year is May 29, 2020. Through CSP, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners earn payments for expanding conservation activities while maintaining agricultural production on their land. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

“CSP continues to be a very effective tool for private landowners working to achieve their conservation and management goals,” said Xavier Montoya, NRCS State Conservationist in New Mexico. “It is the largest conservation program in the United States with more than 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled.”

Changes in the 2018 Farm Bill authorize NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023 and makes some improvements to the program. These updates include:

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high-ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres.
- Higher payment rates are now available under the 2018 Farm Bill for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.
- Provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by the deadline to ensure their applications are considered for 2020 funding.

**About the Program**

CSP is offered in New Mexico through continuous signups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of a tribe.

For additional information about CSP, contact your local service center. USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be



working with producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with NRCS, Farm Service Agency, or any other Service Center agency are required [to call their Service Center](#) to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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