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# CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

January 30, 2020 Emily Armstrong

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# CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

**What is it?**

**History of the program**

**How evaluated**

**Past and Present**

**Additionality**

**Ranking**

**Payments**

**Other General Information**





# What is CSP?



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# CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

**CSP is for working lands. It is the largest conservation program in the United States with 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled in CSP**

**The purpose of CSP is to help agricultural producers maintain, manage and improve their existing conservation systems while also installing and adopting additional conservation activities to further their conservation performance**





# CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

**It is based on the operation so the entire Ag. Or Forestry operation is looked at**

Have to include everything owned and then everything they have effective control over

Not eligible on CRP, WRP, or other easement lands

**CSP participants will receive an annual land use payment for operation-level environmental benefits they produce. Under CSP, participants are paid for conservation performance: the higher the operational performance, the higher their payment.**

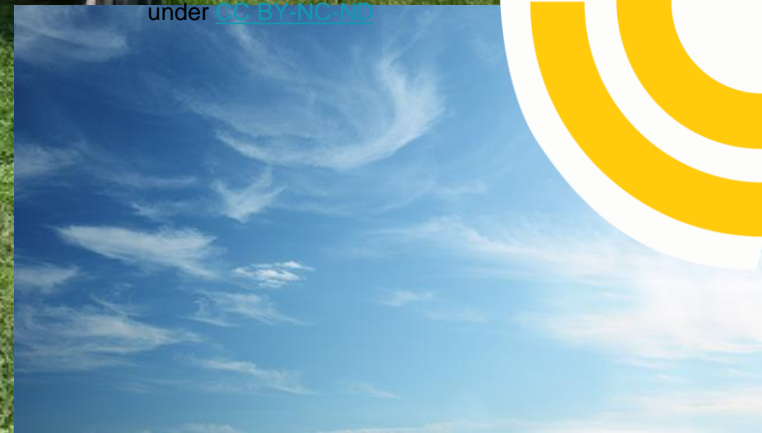




# History of CSP



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# CSP Classic



- **First – Conservation Security Program**
  - Administratively very complex
- **2008 Farm Bill changed this to the Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - Still complicated and complex
- **2014 Farm Bill kept the Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - Started to align CSP with other NRCS programs
  - Focused on RCs
  - Connect available enhancements to existing NRCS conservation practice standards
  - Even within the Farm Bill there were changes based on contract year
- **2018 Farm Bill kept the Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - Changed focus to Soil Health and cover crops
  - Funding pool for Organic
  - Formalized support for Urban Agriculture
  - Aligning CSP with EQIP more



# CSP Renewals



- **Every CSP contract has the ability to renew for another 5 year contract once**
- **This looks at the entire Ag. Operation at the time of enrollment so newly acquired lands can be added**
- **With the 2018 Farm Bill, if a participant elects to not renew there will be a two year cooling period before they can apply for CSP again.**
- **Also with the 2018 Farm Bill CSP renewals will have to be ranked and compete against each other.**
  - Used to be that they did not have to be ranked.





# Benchmark Evaluation



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# Evaluation



- **Each land use is evaluated separately**
  - AgLand and Forestry were separate applications and evaluations
  - Cropland
  - Pasture
  - Forestland
  - Farmstead
  - Associated Ag.





# Past ways



- **Security had a workbook to get through**
- **Stewardship had questions looked at by land use and management system for 2014-2016 contracts**
  - Conservation Management Tool
- **Stewardship then changed and used a different evaluation system that lined up more with Resource Concerns for 2017-2019 contracts**
  - Still looked at by land use and management system
  - CAET (Conservation Activity Evaluation Tool)



# Present Way



- **Now applications will be looked at using the Conservation Desktop (Toolkit replacement) and the CART (Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool)**
  - This includes CSP renewals
- **Each land unit will be assessed (evaluated) for RC and then there will be a report rollup by land use**
  - Stewardship eligibility is to have TWO RC met or exceeded a the time of application

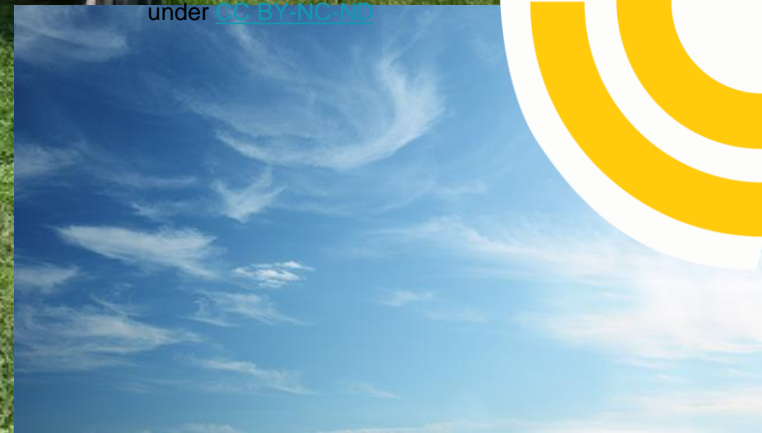




# Additionality



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# CSP Classic requirements

- **Every land use has to have an additionality planned**
  - Can be a practice or enhancement
- **Exception to this is on Farmstead or Associated Ag. land use.**
  - If certain benchmark resource concerns are met these land uses do not have to have an additionality planned





# CSP Renewal requirements

- **Every land use has to have an additionality planned**
  - Can be a practice or enhancement
- **Exception to this is on Farmstead or Associated Ag. land use.**
  - If certain benchmark resource concerns are met these land uses do not have to have an additionality planned
- **The additionalities chosen have to met or exceed two additional priority RCs**
  - Past additionalities that were implemented become part of the stewardship evaluation



# CSP Practice versus Enhancements

- **Practices**
  - Typical NRCS practices you are familiar with
  - Generally paid at 10% of what it costs to put in
    - So, if needed to address a RC then it would be better to install under EQIP
- **Enhancements**
  - These are based on practices but go above and beyond the general criteria to looking at the additional criteria
  - For example, if someone has been practicing prescribed grazing then a CSP enhancement would give the option to enhance that practice with activities such as grazing management to improve plants for wildlife, or grazing management to reduce soil compaction, or grazing management to improve riparian function
  - On cropland, someone could already be doing cover crop and then a CSP enhancement would improve the cover crop benefits by making the cover crop be multispecies





# Favorite NY Practices and Enhancements

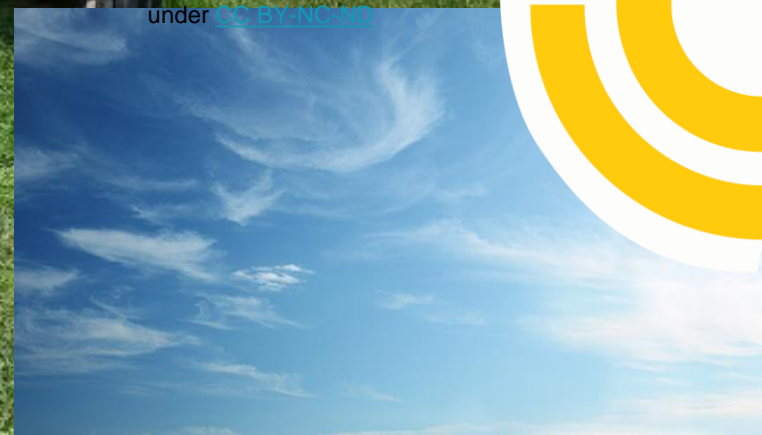
- **Practices**
  - Secondary containment facilities
  - Pollinator Habitat
  - Cover crop
- **Enhancements**
  - Multispecies Cover Crop
  - Precision applied nutrients or pesticides
  - Pollinator or Monarch habitat



# Ranking



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# Ranking



- **Past**
  - Ranking was done in contracting software Protracts much like EQIP
  - Agland applications ranked against each other
  - Forestry applications ranked against each other
- **Present**
  - Will now be done as part of CART
  - Current proposed ranking pools
    - Agland
    - Forestry
    - Renewals
    - Organic
    - Urban



# Payments



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# The Bottom Line



## Conservation Stewardship Payments

- **CSP payments are done on an annual basis**
- **Contract payments are based on two components**
  - Payments to maintain the existing conservation stewardship based on the operation type and the number of resource concerns that are met at the time of application
    - Half is the number RC met at the time of application multiplied by a given rate
    - Half is the acres of each land use multiplied by a given rate per land use
  - Payments to implement additional conservation activities
    - That is the individual rate for each practice or enhancement
    - Made for the units of the activity actually completed in the past fiscal year
- **All CSP contracts will have a minimum annual payment of \$1500**



# The Bottom Line



## Conservation Stewardship Payments

- **CSP payments are made after successful documentation of the practice or enhancement**
  - This can be entirely done by internal staff such as after implementing a designed practice
  - OR
  - After getting paperwork from the producer
    - Records kept, test results, pictures, etc..





# Additional General Information



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# CSP others



## Eligibility

- **Still basic things needed with FSA and NRCS**
  - AGI, HEL, Wetland compliance
- **A field verification will be done along the way to make sure assessment completed accurately as well as determine if planned additionalities will be feasible**



# CSP Paperwork



## Contract Documents

- **NRCS-CPA-1202 and CPC appendix**
- **NRCS-CPA-1155, Conservation Plan Schedule of Operations**
- **Conservation Stewardship Plan**
- **Conservation Plan Map**
  - Outlines the areas where enhancements are going to be done





# Summary



- **CSP in general looks at the entire Ag. Or Forestry operation benchmark evaluation and pays on that as well as requires one additionality per land use**
  - Rewards for the good work already done
- **It has had a complex and evolving history but is now lining up more with EQIP and will hopefully be more streamlined evaluated in 2020 using the CART**
- **That assessment will need to show two RC met at time of application and that one additionality is planned per land use for basic eligibility**
- **CSP pays on an annual basis for the existing stewardship as well as the additionalities planned for that year**



# Summary



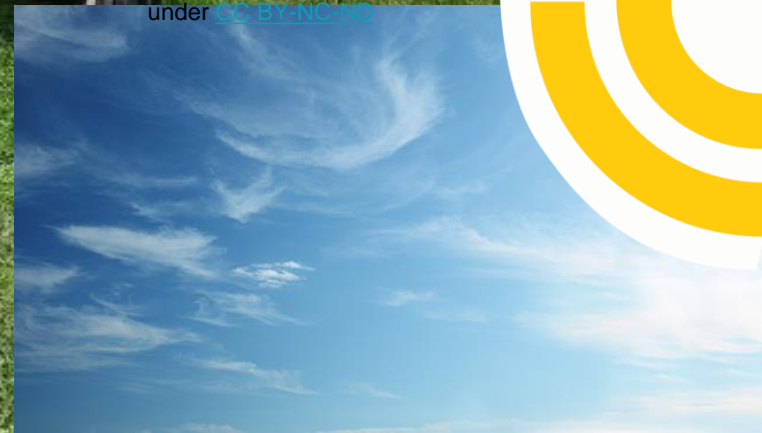
- **CSP applications are ranked against like applications**
- **High ranking applications are offered a contract until we have spent all of the FA**
- **CSP pays on an annual basis for the existing stewardship as well as the additionalities planned for that year**







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# Questions?

