

The first round sign-up for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) will end Sept. 30. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers CSP, and is reminding operators to apply soon.

The Conservation Stewardship Program is a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional conservation practices and improve, maintain and manage existing ones. In return for their stewardship, producers will receive a payment.

The 2008 Farm Bill authorized the Conservation Stewardship Program. Congress revamped the program to increase its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry producers. The Conservation Stewardship Program is available statewide for the first time.

According to NRCS State Conservationist Steve Chick, this change to the Conservation Stewardship Program is good news for Nebraska.

“Now that CSP is available statewide, more of our farm, ranch and forest land operators can participate, and more of Nebraska’s working lands will have conservation practices installed that protect our natural resources,” Chick said.

Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forestland - a new land use for the program - and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

Producers interested in applying for CSP may learn more about the program online at www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov where a self-screening checklist can help producers determine if CSP is right for their operation. Information is also available at the NRCS office in Imperial.