USDA Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funds now available for the Pacific Island Area

On May 10, 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that producers nationwide are invited to apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, CSP offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. CSP is available on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land. The deadline to be considered for the next ranking and funding period is June 25, 2010.

Depending on your willingness to implement additional stewardship enhancements, and the size of your operations, you may be able to receive up to $40,000 per year throughout the five-year contract.

CSP is a new program in the Pacific Islands Area, and we’d like to see our land stewards apply for this program. A requirement of this program is that the applicant must be the operator of the land and show control of the land for a five year period.

We encourage you to contact your local NRCS office as soon as possible to begin the application process. NRCS will only have a short timeframe after June 25 to complete the ranking process. Each operator who applies will schedule an appointment with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to review their farming or ranching operation and rank each application. To locate the NRCS field office nearest you please visit the following website: http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/index.html.

NRCS staff will then conduct on-site field verifications of the top ranking applications. Once the participant has been field-verified and approved for funding, then a contract will be developed. Contracts will include all the land controlled by an operator.

The Conservation Stewardship Self-Screening Checklist can help determine if this program is suitable for your operation. You can find this information on the NRCS national site http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html or contact your local USDA Service Center office today to learn more.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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