

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION NEWS

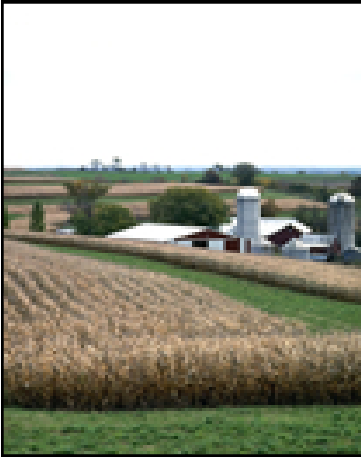
A PUBLICATION OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Editor: Gerald F. Talbert

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The New Conservation Stewardship Program



USDA recently announced the release of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), created in the 2008 Farm Bill. CSP is a revised version of a 2002 Farm Bill program, the Conservation Security Program. CSP encourages agri-

cultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations. It provides financial and technical assistance to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. CSP provides opportunities to both recognize excellent stewards and deliver valuable new conservation.

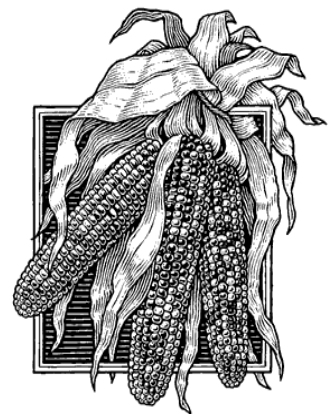
The original Conservation Security Program was unique in USDA's long list of conservation incentive programs because its intent was to reward those farmers who have already implemented good stewardship practices and also encourage more applications with a three tiered structure of conservation systems. The conservation community had lobbied for many years for such a program.

A voluntary incentive approach to put conservation on the land relied on those stewardship role models in every community to, in effect, demonstrate the benefits of conservation best management practices to their neighbors. However, often when a cost-sharing or grant program was later created to encourage others to install those prac-

tices, the good steward was ineligible because he had already put the practices on the land. Although such farmers were usually not inspired to implement these practices primarily as a demonstration but rather as an improvement to their farming operation, their leadership and example inadvertently cost them the financial incentive that their more cautious neighbors would eventually receive. CSP was created to reward those conservation leaders who were always unintentionally excluded and provided additional incentives for them to do more.

The Conservation Stewardship Program continues the focus on rewarding good stewardship and encouraging more conservation work but made some revisions to program structure and requirements. Instead of the program being offered in only two watersheds in each state each year, CSP now is offered everywhere on a continuous signup basis. The program used to be structured on three tiers of conservation systems but is now based on a more flexible structure of implementation.

CSP will review an applicant's self-screening checklist and a more flexible contract for annual payments will be developed that will include existing practices and new best management practices. A supplemental payment may be earned by participants receiving an annual payment who also



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adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation.

The entire operation must be enrolled and must include all eligible land that will be under the applicant's control for the term of the proposed contract that is operated substantially separate from other operations. Through 5-year contracts, payments will be made as soon as practical after October of each year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year. For all contracts, CSP payments to a person or legal entity may not exceed \$40,000 in any year, and \$200,000 during any 5-year period. Each CSP contract will be limited to \$200,000 over the term of the initial contract period.

NRCS at State headquarters, in consultation with the State Technical Committee and local working groups, will focus CSP on natural resources that are of specific concern for Maryland. Agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land will be ranked separately.

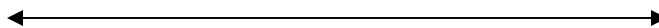
Producers interested in CSP are encouraged to begin the application process by completing a producer self-screening checklist. The self-screening checklist helps potential applicants decide for themselves whether CSP is the right program for them. The level of environmental benefit to be achieved will be estimated to determine eligibility, rank applications, and establish payments.

For a pre-approved applicant, NRCS will request the applicant's conservation activity records and conduct on-site field verification to ensure that information provided by the applicant was accurate prior to contract approval. Once information is verified, NRCS and the applicant proceed to develop the contract.

Interested applicants can begin the process by visiting http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp/ and clicking on 2009 Conservation Stewardship Self-Screening Checklist. Submit the completed checklist to the District office for a subsequent farm visit and evaluation.

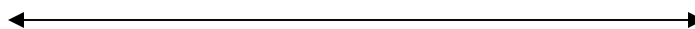
Custom Cover Crop Seeding Service

As part of the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share Program's (MACS) 2009 – 2010 Winter Cover Crops Program, a directory of cover crops contractors has been created for custom seeding operations. If you would like to hire someone to seed cover crops, review the directory on the Maryland Department of Agriculture website at http://www.mda.state.md.us/resource_conservation/financial_assistance/cover_crop/index.php and click on the Cover Crops Contractors Directory in the box on the right under "More Info".



2009 Value Added Producer Grant

USDA Rural Development has announced the availability of approximately \$18 million in competitive grants for fiscal year (FY) 2009 to help independent agricultural producers enter into or expand value-added activities. This may include using existing agricultural products in non-traditional ways and/or merging agricultural products with technology in creative ways. Application deadline is November 30, 2009. See details at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/applicants.htm>.



2008 MACS Annual Report

The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program (MACS) posted accomplishments for 2008:

- **Capital projects completed with state and federal funds**—523 projects at a cost of \$3,769,104 which removed 650,000 lbs. of nitrogen and 97,300 lbs. of phosphorus.
- **Cover Crops**—1,180 projects at a cost of \$6,733,398 which removed 1,750,000 lbs. of nitrogen and 41,000 lbs. of phosphorus.
- **Manure Transport**—132 projects at a cost of \$520,357
- **Nutrient Management Plans**—185 plans cost-shared at a cost of \$227,409
- **Total poultry, dairy and beef manure managed daily with waste storage structures:** 1,569 tons of manure for 25,950 animal units (1,000 lbs. per animal unit).



Outstanding Employee Award

Andy Thomas (right), Soil Conservation Engineering Technician, receives the 2008 Outstanding Employee Award from Lee McDaniel, President of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) at the MASCD Summer Meeting held at Solomons Island on July 26—29, 2009. Andy has had 24 years of experience in conservation work and was honored for his efforts in training four new employees over the last two years in conservation principles, surveying, conservation planning and practice design, and using federal software programs. At the same time, he exceeded his own planning goals. Andy is well respected in the Baltimore County agricultural community.

Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past.

—Charles Kellogg, *The Soils That Support Us*, 1956

Pasture Walk

Dave Martin (kneeling), Baltimore County Extension Agent, discusses aspects of good pasture and hay management as part of a Pasture Walk on August 20th on the Wayne McGinnis farm in White Hall. Dave and Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist, gave presentations on soil fertility, hay, mowing, grazing pressure and weed control concerning a cow-calf (beef) operation. For future Extension events, check <http://baltimorecounty.umd.edu/AgricultureandNaturalResources/index.cfm> and click on “Upcoming Agricultural Meetings” on the right side.



District Outreach

Speakers from the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District are available at no charge to give presentations on natural resource conservation programs in agricultural and urban areas. If your organization or school would like to hear about the ways that conservation practices can improve soil, water and air quality for any land use, contact the District office at 410-666-1188, extension 3 to request a speaking engagement.

Baltimore County Soil Conservation
 District
 9831 Van Buren Lane
 Cockeysville, MD 21030
 Phone: 410-666-1188; Fax: 410-666-0179
<http://www.mascd.net/BCSCD>



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BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

A political subdivision of the State of Maryland, the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was established in 1944. Its mission is to protect the natural resources of Baltimore County and assist landowners in implementing sound conservation measures. The District is managed by a Board of Supervisors, five appointed county residents who take an oath of office to serve their community. The staff is composed of federal, state and district employees.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Charles Conklin—Chairman
- Thomas Reynolds—Vice Chairman
- Stephen Smith—Treasurer
- Vernon Foster—Supervisor
- Mike McGinnis—Supervisor
- David Martin, Secretary, Cooperative Extension
- Bud Sparks, Supervisor Emeritus

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS

- Daniel Dorsey Pat Ghingher Lucy Wright
- Diana Gutierrez

DISTRICT STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Jim Ensor, District Manager
- Essy Frey, Administrative Assistant

AGRICULTURAL

- Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist, NRCS
- Andy Thomas, Soil Conservation Eng. Tech., MDA
- Ciara McMurtrie, Planner/Outreach Specialist, MDA
- Jared Wagner, Soil Conservation Planner, MDA

URBAN

- Jeff West, Urban Conservationist
- Quintin Cornwell, Urban Conservationist
- David Bachman, Urban Conservationist
- Sara Campbell, Urban Conservationist, Balto. Co.

All District services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP YOU!

The Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) will pay up to 87.5% of the installation cost of these practices for qualifying landowners:

- Waste Storage Grassed Waterway
- Riparian Buffer Winter Cover Crop
- Diversion Field Border
- Heavy Use Area Protection Filter Strip
- Roof Runoff Mngt. System
- Sediment Basin Stream Fencing
- Nutrient Mgt. Plan Strip Cropping
- Spring Development Stream Crossing
- Trough or Tank Critical Area Planting

If you would like to see if you qualify or you'd like more information on these or other conservation practices, a conservation plan for your property or updating an old plan, mail or fax this form to us and we will contact you.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Fax to: 410-666-0179 or mail to:

Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
 9831 Van Buren Lane
 Cockeysville, MD 21030