

NEWS RELEASE



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

Note to Editor: Release and watershed map on NRCS website, under "News".

Secretary Announces Conservation Program Sign-up, revises eligible areas

LINCOLN ---Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns today announced the 2006 Conservation Security Program sign-up to start Feb. 13, 2006 to March 31, 2006. He also said that 60 watersheds will be in this sign-up instead of the preliminary selection of 110 watersheds announced last fall.

In Nebraska, that means landowners in the Upper Little Blue Watershed and the Middle South Platte-Sterling Watershed will be able to apply for the program. The Upper Little Big Blue Watershed includes parts of nine Nebraska counties of: Jefferson, Thayer, Fillmore, Clay, Nuckolls, Webster, Adams, Kearney and Franklin Counties and a small portion of Republic County in Kansas. Portions of Cheyenne and Deuel Counties are also eligible as part of the Middle South Platte-Sterling watershed that is mostly in Colorado.

Landowners in the previously announced Middle Republican Watershed will NOT be eligible to apply for the program this year. This watershed includes parts of Nuckolls, Webster, Kearney, most of Franklin, Harlan and Phelps counties in NE. Kansas counties impacted include Republic, Jewell, Smith, and Phillips.

In his statement the Secretary indicated that available funding is the reason for the reduction of watersheds.

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NRCS State Conservationist Steve Chick said “We have been holding public meetings in these areas to help people get ready for the program sign-up. “People in the targeted area should be preparing their applications to be turned in on February 13th or soon thereafter. For those folks not in the sign-up area, they will have more time to install their conservation practices to be further ready for future enrollments.”

To be eligible for the Conservation Security Program, most of a producers operation must be within the selected watershed boundaries.

Producers begin the application process by filing out a self-assessment workbook to determine if they meet the basic qualifications for CSP. Self-assessment workbooks are available in hard copy at NRCS offices in USDA Service Centers or on-line at www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov. Applicants will also need to complete documentation folder of their farming or ranching operations for the land they wish to enter. These folders are available at the NRCS offices only in the target watersheds.

“This program takes some preparation by the landowner to show the conservation work he or she has been doing. It’s not a matter of walking in, signing a form, and walking out. They will need to show some records of grazing rotations, fertilizer applications, or irrigation management,” Chick.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. Additional information about CSP is available at your local USDA Service Center or ww.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.

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