

FACT SHEET:

IMPACTS OF THE CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM IN MINNESOTA

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has helped Minnesota farmers achieve conservation goals on their operations for two decades.

Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), CSP provides financial and technical assistance for producers to maintain agricultural production on their land, and simultaneously address resource concerns with conservation practices.

In 2021, **172,127** acres in Minnesota were enrolled in CSP, including both newly enrolled and renewed acres.



Helping producers achieve their conservation goals

CSP contracts are five years in length with a one-time renewal. In 2021, there were **198** new and renewed CSP contracts in Minnesota.

Of the contracts awarded in 2021, approximately **56%** were awarded to producers new to the program and **44%** were existing contract renewals.

In 2021, **12** active CSP contracts were held by beginning farmers and ranchers.

\$17.8 MILLION

Total assistance allocated to Minnesota producers from 2021 enrollments and renewals. These funds will be spread out over the five-year contract period.

Protecting the state's water, soil, and natural resources

When enrolled in a CSP contract, producers develop conservation plans with their local NRCS technicians. These plans include an assortment of practices and enhancements they can then implement on their operations to benefit natural resources, such as water quality and soil health.

Top five CSP practices in Minnesota (ranked by the number of contracts utilizing the practice)

- 1 Pest management conservation system
- 2 Nutrient management
- 3 Cover crops
- 4 Reduce risk of pesticides in water and air by utilizing integrated pest management (IPM) prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression (PAMS) techniques (CSP enhancement)
- 5 Reduce risk of pesticides in surface water by utilizing precision pesticide application techniques (CSP enhancement)



CSP helps protect Minnesota's waterways

The top allocated funds in Minnesota all contribute to protecting the state's waterways. Funding is dedicated to reducing the risk of water contamination from pesticides and reducing nutrient losses from farm fields into surface waters. CSP supports prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression techniques to manage pesticides. The program also supports precision agriculture technologies and techniques for improving nutrient uptake efficiency. These practices help keep pesticides and fertilizers out of waterways, protecting water quality throughout the state.

Decreases in CSP funding impact producers

Due to lowered funding for the program, the number of CSP contracts for Minnesota producers has decreased during the past five years.

TABLE 1. CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM IN MINNESOTA, 2017 TO 2021

Year	New and renewed contracts	Acres	Obligations
2017	1,115	940,201	\$84,469,844
2018	590	388,325	\$43,993,392
2019	273	157,104	\$19,423,967
2020	223	189,794	\$21,902,708
2021	198	172,127	\$17,791,151

Source: Minnesota NRCS

CSP gives producers the tools they need to be successful

This year, the Center for Rural Affairs surveyed CSP users in five Midwestern states. A majority expressed overwhelming support for the program.

- **81%** of all respondents reported they intend to renew their CSP contracts.

Current CSP users had this to say about the program:

“ I really like the program. It has allowed me to put conservation practices on the land I normally would not have. Very pleased. ”

“ The CSP program folks I worked with at our local NRCS office are excellent and were incredibly helpful to me. ”

“ CSP has increased my awareness of the health of pastures and erosion control practices. It has been a kick-start to my five-year improvement plan. I will continue to grow in management, [information], and skills of monitoring and managing. ”

Notes & sources

- 1 Unless otherwise indicated, written years refer to the federal fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30.
- 2 “Natural Resources Conservation Service.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, nrcs.usda.gov. Accessed November 2022.
- 3 Personal communication, Keith Kloubec, Minnesota U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Aug. 22, 2022.
- 4 “RCA Data Viewer.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/rca-data-viewer. Accessed November 2022.

