FACT SHEET:
IMPACTS OF THE CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM IN SOUTH DAKOTA

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has helped South Dakota 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, 337,167 acres in South Dakota 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 140 new and renewed CSP contracts in South Dakota.

Of the contracts awarded in 2021, approximately 54% were awarded to producers new to the program and 46% were existing contract renewals.

In 2021, 27 active CSP contracts were held by beginning farmers and ranchers.

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

1. Nutrient management
2. Pest management conservation system
3. Prescribed grazing
4. Cover crops
5. Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses (enhancement)

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.
South Dakota is a top CSP participant

In 2020, South Dakota ranked No. 9 in total acres enrolled in CSP.

Decreases in CSP funding affect producers

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

TABLE 1: CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 2017 TO 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New and renewed contracts</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Obligations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>640,424</td>
<td>$37,950,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>902,967</td>
<td>$46,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>666,035</td>
<td>$26,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>196,369</td>
<td>$16,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>174,395</td>
<td>$10,800,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: USDA NRCS CSP National Data and South Dakota 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.