

POLICY MINUTE **More Kansas Producers Have CSP Opportunities in 2005**

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In early November, USDA announced a new round of watersheds would be eligible for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) during the 2005 fiscal year (FY). The new and expanded set of watersheds relative to the first year of the CSP should mean new opportunities and significant incentives coming to producers for adopting and/or maintaining various conservation practices.

For FY 2005, USDA identified 202 watersheds across the country, including six in or predominantly in Kansas and a seventh predominantly in Colorado that just reaches into the northwest corner of Kansas. That Kansas has seven watersheds eligible in FY 2005 out of 202 is a great opportunity for expanded efforts, building on the experiences of the first year of the program.

In FY 2004, two of the 18 watersheds eligible nationally included substantial areas in Kansas, specifically the Lower Little Blue watershed and the Lower Salt Fork Arkansas watershed. While the number of watersheds was limited, the amount of conservation dollars were still very significant. A total of 84 CSP contracts were approved in the two watersheds, covering 46,676 acres and providing \$807,866 in first-year payments.

With the new watersheds eligible for FY 2005, the number

of producers involved could grow substantially with payments likely to reach several million dollars annually. Specific information on the seven newly-eligible watersheds affecting Kansas is included in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. CSP Watersheds in Kansas - FY 2005

Watershed	Kansas Counties Included in Watershed	Estimated Number of Farms in Watershed	Estimated Acres in Farms (less CRP)
Lower Big Blue	Clay Marshall Nemaha Pottawatomie Riley Washington	1,749	922,026
Delaware	Atchison Brown Jackson Jefferson Nemaha	1,785	583,443
North Fork Ninescah	Kingman Kiowa Pratt Reno Sedgwick Stafford	1,041	508,145
Upper South Fork Solomon	Graham Rooks Sheridan Sherman Thomas	534	627,071
Upper Walnut	Butler Chase Harvey Marion Sedgwick	970	494,140
Middle Arkansas - Lake McKinney	Finney Greeley Hamilton Kearny Scott Wichita	924	1,198,660
Arikaree	Cheyenne	538	918,678

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Funding

While the eligible watersheds have been announced, details on the actual sign-up procedure and time period is yet to be determined. Funding for FY 2005 was not secured until the omnibus appropriations bill was approved in Washington this month.

In addition to the appropriations process, there has been some political actions in Washington that may eventually affect funding for the CSP. When ag disaster assistance was passed by Congress in October, the legislation was funded within the budget by cutting the expected cost of the CSP through a cap on total CSP spending over the ten-year budget planning cycle. This cap was set at \$6 billion, a reduction from the then-current estimate of \$9 billion over ten years.

Whether or not this cap eventually limits the program, it will not limit the current year's projected spending or enrollment. In fact, the CSP has thus far been limited by individual fiscal year spending caps placed in the appropriations bills. For FY 2005, funding was capped at \$194 million in the appropriations bill. In announcing funding for the CSP in FY 2005, USDA split the \$194 million into \$162 million for new FY 2005 sign-ups and \$32 million for second-year

payments on contracts approved in FY 2004.

Additional Resources

There are several resources on the web or in local NRCS offices to assist producers in the eligible watersheds. A self-assessment workbook available in the office or on the web is the first step in looking at conservation issues and practices to be addressed in the CSP:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/pdf_files/CSP_SelfAssess_Workbook_F.pdf

The self-assessment can also be completed online at the following website:

csp.sc.egov.usda.gov/

Additional program information from NRCS is available on the national or state websites for CSP or via links on the Conservation Programs page of the Policy section of AgManager:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/

<http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/2005/csp2005.html>

agmanager.info/policy/conservation/default.asp

Figure 1. CSP Watersheds in Kansas - FY 2005

