

ing all resources of concern for the entire agricultural operation. The farmer is paid 15 percent of the base payment plus 75 percent (90 percent for beginning farmers) of the average practice costs.

The maximum annual payment for Tier I is \$20,000. For Tier II the maximum, annual payment is \$35,000 and for Tier III the maximum, annual payment is \$45,000.

Farmers are eligible for enhanced payments if they do extra activities. These activities include using multiple conservation practices, participating in research, demonstrations or pilot projects, and carrying out an assessment of their plan.

It is important to remember that CSP covers new practices as well as maintenance of existing practices. There are a number of eligible practices including nutrient management, integrated pest management, residue management, air quality, energy, rotations, and others.

The CSP contracts can be modified at any time with approval by the Secretary and producer. In addition, they may be terminated, by the producers, without having to refund payments received,

if the farmer is in compliance with the terms of the contract at the time of termination. Finally, if there is a change in the land tenure interest the contract is terminated unless the new operator agrees to the contract continuation and there is written notification given within 60 days.

The CSP represents a significant change in the approach to the government farm programs. It could represent a boost to farmers' income. The national average cropland rent in 2001 was \$71 per acre. Assuming this is the price used, a farmer in Tier I would receive \$3.55 per acre for the base payment. If the practice cost was \$10 per acre, for example, the farmer would receive an additional \$7.50 per acre. The total payment, then, would be \$11.05 per acre. This amount could be increased if the farmer participated in any of the activities for enhanced payment.

At this writing the final rules have not been written. The NRCS handbook will be used to identify the eligible practices. The State Conservationist, in consultation with others, will determine the resources of concern for an area. The law states that the rules must be written within 270 days of enactment of the bill.

Table 1: Summary of Conservation Security Program Participation Levels

Tier	Base Pay Rate*	Length	Maximum Annual Payment	Minimal Requirements**
I	5%	5 years	\$20,000	address one resource of concern on enrolled portion
II	10%	5 – 10 years	\$35,000	address one resource of concern for entire farm
III	15%	5 – 10 years	\$45,000	system for all resources of concern for entire farm

* Base payment is 2001 national average rental rate for a specified use or an appropriately adjusted rate to ensure regional equity.

** Resource of concern determined at the state level.