

Harkin: More than \$17 Million in Conservation Program Payments Coming to Iowa

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
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Program was created by Harkin in 2002 farm bill, improved in 2008 farm bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today commended Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on his announcement that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin issuing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) payments this month to thousands of farmers and ranchers in all fifty states to help maintain and improve the natural resources on their land. In Iowa alone, more than 1,400 producers will receive a total of \$17,320,411. As the then Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Harkin authored CSP in the 2002 farm bill and then improved and strengthened it in the current farm bill, the *Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008*

. Harkin remains a senior member of the Agriculture Committee and continues to work for conservation initiatives.

“As farmers and ranchers respond to the ever-growing demand for food, feed and fuel from our agricultural lands, CSP will help conserve and protect our natural resources for generations to come,” said Harkin. “I commend Secretary Vilsack and his team for their work to further conservation efforts and implement CSP. This program is showing to be a success by providing farmers and ranchers with financial incentives that reward good conservation practices and encourage additional strong land stewardship.”

CSP is a voluntary program delivered by the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) that financially rewards producers who conserve resources in a comprehensive manner by (1) adopting and carrying out new, additional conservation activities; and (2) improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation activities. The program is designed to recognize and reward producers for adopting and maintaining sound stewardship on their land and to provide financial incentives for increasing conservation efforts. CSP is offered to support conservation on private and tribal agricultural land and non-industrial private forest land in all 50 states and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands areas. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced or geographic location. For more information, contact your local NRCS service center or visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>