



National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Conservation Stewardship Program Conservation Enhancement and Practice Choices for 2012 and their Environmental Benefit Ranking Score

Terms

Conservation enhancements are available to all CSP participants who are willing to adopt the enhancement on their operation, or who are willing to improve an existing conservation activity so that it fully meets the requirements for the enhancement. Some enhancements apply to all four CSP land use categories -- cropland, pasture, rangeland, or forested land -- though most apply to one or two land use types specifically. For more information, see USDA/NRCS website for CSP at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/financial/csp/?&cid=stelpfdb1046187>.

Regular conservation practices are available to CSP participants who, when they sign-up for the program, are not already meeting or exceeding the stewardship threshold for the three to five priority resource concerns for their state or region and who could use the practice to help meet additional stewardship thresholds.

Conservation baseline activities are also scored with similar environmental benefit point values for ranking and payment purposes. Those existing conservation activities are not listed below. More information on those activities can be found on the NRCS website listed above under the heading "Operations Baseline Data Questions" and more information on the point values can be found on the same website under "Conservation Measurement Tool Inventory Questions" and then "CMT Scoring Process".

Point values are based on the overall level of expected environmental benefits from improvement or adoption of the enhancement or practice for soil conservation, soil quality, water conservation, water quality, air quality, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity, as determined by NRCS using their "conservation practice physical effects (CPPE)" system.

Please note: Conservation enhancements and practices eligible for selection in CSP may change over time, as may point values. We will keep this list updated as changes are made, though there may be a small delay time depending on how quickly we receive the changes from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**2012 CSP Enhancements and Practices
Listed From Highest Scoring to Lowest Scoring**

Note:
CSP Conservation Enhancements in Regular Typeface
Regular Conservation Practices in Italics

<u>Enhancements and Practices</u>	<u>Environmental Benefit Score</u>
Continuous No-Till for Organic Farming Systems	62
Continuous No-Till	62
Conversion of Cropped Land to Grass-Based Agriculture	59
Continuous Cover Crops	55
Extend Riparian Forest Buffers	48
Management Intensive Rotational Grazing	45
Resource Conserving Crop Rotations	44
Decrease Irrigation Water Quantity or Convert to Non-irrigated Crop Production	44
Use Legume Cover Crops as a Nitrogen Source	42
Use of Cover Crop Mixtures	42
Use of Deep-Rooted Crops to Break Up Compaction	42
Plant Annual Cover Crop to Scavenge Residual Nitrogen	42
<i>Cover Crop</i>	42
<i>Riparian Forest Buffer</i>	42
Extend Filter Strips or Riparian Herbaceous Buffer	41
Using N from Legumes, Manure, Compost for 100% N Needs	41
Rotation of Livestock Feeding and Supplementation Areas	40
<i>Tree or Shrub Establishment</i>	40
Prairie Restoration	37
<i>Windbreak or Shelterbelt Establishment</i>	37
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	37
Irrigation System Automation	36
<i>Irrigation Water Management</i>	39
<i>Prescribed Grazing</i>	36
Drainage Water Management	35
<i>No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed with Residue Management</i>	35

<i>Critical Area Planting</i>	35
Multi-species Native Perennials for Biomass and Habitat	33
Increase On-Farm Food Production with edible woody buffers	33
Remote Monitoring & Notification of Irrigation Pumping Plant Operation	33
Use Regional Weather Networks for Irrigation Scheduling	33
<i>Irrigation Water Management</i>	33
<i>Pasture and Hay Planting</i>	33
<i>Alley Cropping</i>	33
Monitor Key Grazing Areas to Improve Grazing Management	31
Renovate Windbreak, Shelterbelt, or Hedgerow for Wildlife Habitat	31
High Level Integrated Pest Management	31
Integrated Pest Management for Organic Production Systems	31
On-farm Composting of Farm Waste	31
<i>Conservation Crop Rotation</i>	31
<i>Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitat</i>	31
<i>Windbreak or Shelterbelt Renovation</i>	31
<i>Range Planting</i>	30
<i>Filter Strip</i>	29
Use Drift-Reducing Nozzles, Low Pressures, and Lower Boom Heights to Reduce Drift	28
Extend Field Borders	28
Riparian Buffer for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife	28
<i>Mulch Till with Residue Management</i>	28
Improve Energy Feedstock Productions with Alley Cropping and Short Rotation Woody Crops	27
<i>Ridge Till with Residue Management</i>	27
Drainage Water Management for Nutrient, Pesticide, and Pathogen Reduction	26
Reduce the Concentration of Nutrients Imported onto the Farm	26
GPS Targeted Spray Application	25
Transition to Organic Cropping Systems	25
Split Application of Nitrogen Based on a PSNT Test	25
<i>Mulching</i>	25
<i>Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management</i>	25
Establish Pollinator and/or Beneficial Insect Habitat	24
Controlled Traffic System	24

Intercropping to Improve Soil Quality & Biodiversity	24
Use of Non-Chemical Means to Kill Cover Crops	24
On-Farm Research and Demonstration Projects	23.4
On-Farm Pilot Testing Projects	23.4
Leave Standing Grain Crops Un-harvested for Wildlife	23
Precision Application Technology to apply Nutrients	23
<i>Watering Facility</i>	23
<i>Upland Wildlife Habitat Management</i>	23
Land Apply Only Treated Manure (composting or anaerobic digester)	22
<i>Field Borders</i>	22
<i>Stream Habitat Improvement and Management</i>	22
<i>Closure and Treatment of Forest Roads, Trails, and Landings</i>	22
Stockpiling Forages to Extend Grazing Season	21
Forest Stand Improvement for Soil Quality	21
Patch Burning to Enhance Wildlife Habitat	20
Biological Suppression and Other Non-Chemical Means to Suppress Weeds and Invasives	20
Transition to Organic Grazing Systems	20
Apply Controlled Release Nitrogen Fertilizer	20
Shallow Water Habitat	19
Fuel Use Reduction for Field Operations	19
Plant Tissue Tests and Analysis to Adjust Nitrogen Application Rates	19
Split Application of Fertilizer 50% After Crop Emergence	19
<i>Early Successional Wildlife Habitat Development and Management</i>	19
Grazing Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat	18
Incorporate Native Grasses and Legumes into 15% or More of Forage	18
Non-Chemical Pest Control for Livestock	17
<i>Prescribed Burning</i>	17
<i>Forest Trails and Landings to Provide Access</i>	17
On-farm Forage-based Grazing System	16
Irrigation Pumping Plant Evaluation	16
<i>Brush Management</i>	14
Use NUTBAL PRO System to Monitor Livestock Nutritional Quality	13
<i>Forage Harvest Management</i>	13
Harvest Hay in Manner to Allow Wildlife to Flush and Escape	12

Retrofit Water Facility for Wildlife Escape	12
Apply Nutrients No More Than 30 Days Before Planting	11
Nitrogen Stabilizers for Air Emissions Control	10
Multi-Story Cropping & Sustainable Management of Non-Timber Forest Plants	10
<i>Residue Management, Seasonal</i>	10
Managing Calving to Coincide with Forage Availability	9
Wildlife Friendly Fencing	9
Apply Phosphorus Fertilizer Below Soil Surface	9
Use Non-Burning Alternatives for Prunings and Crop Residues	8
<i>Forest Slash Treatment</i>	8
Variable Frequency Drive Electric Motors	7
<i>Fuelbreak</i>	6
<i>Firebreak</i>	6
<i>Tree/Shrub pruning</i>	6
Create Forest Openings to Improve Hardwood Stands	5
<i>Fencing</i>	4