

Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program (VFESP)

The Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program is a State incentive program that provides one-time payments to farmers for enrolling in the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Agricultural producers who engage in conservation planning on cropland or pasture and receive an NRCS CSP Assessment will receive a one-time initial payment from the State of \$2,000, followed by an additional State payment of \$7,500 if they are offered and sign a CSP contract.



Eligibility:

- Farms required to comply with the Required Agricultural Practices
- Must be applying for and/or receiving CSP assistance on associated agricultural lands
- Must meet NRCS eligibility criteria, including up-to-date Farm Services Agency records.

To update records or enroll, find your local agency at www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator

Program Information:

- Applicants must apply for the Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Stewardship Program before the NRCS Deadline (**October 20th 2023**).
- Applicants must then apply separately for the Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program supplemental payment before **November 3rd 2023**.
- After submission of both applications, grantee must work with the NRCS to complete their CSP Assessment in order to receive the \$2000 initial incentive payment.
- Grantee must be both eligible for and awarded a CSP contract AND sign the CSP contract offered in order to receive the \$7,500 additional incentive payment.
- The NRCS will submit the documents to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets once they are completed. Prior to receiving payment, the Agency must receive a) a complete CSP Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool Report (CSP Assessment), b) a signed NRCS-CSA-1155 or NRCS-CSA-1156 contract, if eligible.

Program Contact:

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Applications can be found online at agriculture.vermont.gov/CSP-Assist or by contacting the Water Quality Division at (802) 828-2431