CSP Farmer Profile: Kevin Green

*Keeping it “Green” in Central Illinois*

The Green family in Fithian, Illinois has been farming for almost 120 years. They manage 800 acres of no-till corn and soybeans, forests, prairies, and wetlands located in scenic Vermilion County and have been protecting their natural resources for generations.

Owner, Kevin Green has participated in conservation programs for many years. He manages his wildlife and wetlands through USDA’s Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). He also participates in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Rural Forest Landowner Assistance Program that offers cost-share and assistance to manage forestland, and works with numerous other programs that assist with soil and water management activities on his operation.

According to Kevin Green, “Managing my natural resources is a top priority. I also serve on the local Soil and Water Conservation District board and I am the past chair of the local Pheasants Forever chapter.” With so many conservation practices in place on his farm, Kevin was happy when the NRCS’ Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) came out in 2009.

“Kevin is an extremely conservation-minded individual and a motivated producer. He has many valuable conservation practices in place on his land and participates in numerous conservation programs. CSP is a perfect fit for Kevin,” says Glen Franke, NRCS District Conservationist for Vermilion County.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), administered by USDA NRCS, is a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional conservation practices and improve, maintain and manage existing ones. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forestland, and agricultural land.

Green holds two CSP contracts, one for his cropland and one for his forestland. Remarking on the benefits of CSP, Green said, “CSP has allowed me to develop new grassed waterways, windbreaks, and riparian field borders. It has also allowed me to attract more wildlife to my forest land.”
“The payment program was appealing,” said Green. In Illinois the average CSP per acre payment for the 1st sign-up was $24 for cropland. This really adds up for those managing larger acreage.

On CSP sign-up, Green said, “I keep good records for my fertility program, based on University of Illinois Nutrient Management guidelines. I also keep up-to-date soil samples and yield records. Since I keep my records organized and accessible, the CSP sign-up went pretty easy. NRCS technical staff were helpful and walked me through the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT), which calculates a score that measures both the conservation I have in place, and the practices I plan to install.”

According to Franke, “Many landowners in Vermilion County—and within our whole region—could benefit from CSP. Farmers who practice conservation tillage, have grassed waterways to control erosion where they are needed, filter strips to protect streams or other water bodies on their farms, and manage their nutrients should apply.”

The Conservation Stewardship Program is now available statewide through continuous enrollment with announced cut-off application dates for ranking periods. The next ranking cut-off is expected in early 2011. To learn if CSP is right for your operation, visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html, or call your local NRCS office.

For more information go to www.ilstewards.org or contact: Devin Brown, Conservation Policy Advocate, devin@ilstewards.org, 618-771-0237.