Policy Update

Karl Anderson
Director, Government Relations
Congressional Visits Day

CCAs teaming up with scientists and students showing the value of the research to practitioner pipeline
CVD 2020

March 2-3, 2020

Local boards nominate

$500 match for travel expenses
CCA Conservationist of the Year Award

A Project of the Agribusiness MOU

Exceptional conservation advice and results

Innovation and leadership in conservation

Contribution to the transfer of conservation knowledge
Supported by

ASA
USDA-NRCS
NACD
NASDA
TFI
ARA
SYNGENTA
CROPLIFE AMERICA
We have a Winner!

November 22 at USDA

Presented by NRCS Chief Matt Lohr
MOU Coming to an End

WORKING TO CONTINUE MOU

MAKE CCA CONSERVATIONIST AWARD PERMANENT
Clarified definition of TSP to include ag retailers and farmer co-ops

Authorizes an alternative certification method where TSPs could be certified by a third-party

Streamlined certification process
TSP Survey

33 Respondents
Are you currently a TSP?

- Yes: 56%
- No: 44%
Why no longer a TSP?

- Inability to get paid
- No value
- Too much time for no financial return
- Too many hoops to jump through
- No demand from customers
- Ever changing criteria and training needed
- Difficulty working with NRCS
Findings:

- Ag Learn access
- Paperwork requirements and timely approvals
- NRCS bureaucracy & communication
- Mismatch between program requirements and grower needs
- Inconsistency
- Recognition of credits and ed from certifications already completed
- Communications to growers about services available
We recommend convening a group of stakeholders, to identify specific challenges and opportunities within the TSP program to ensure that it is efficient and effective.

- Consistency of requirements
  - Overtime
  - Within and Across States
- Recognition of credits and education from certifications already awarded

Greater coordination between CCA and TSP requirements is required. We recommend greater coordination of existing CCA and TSP registration and educational requirements.

Trusted Farm Advisors (such as CCAs, field agronomists, or Soil Health Consultants) are most desired by producers for cropland conservation technical assistance. The current TSP program is key to increasing conservation implementation. Improved accessibility of resources available to the program, we believe that NRCS should use the TSP program available in the private sector as a way of complementing NRCS outreach.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact TFI Director of Agronomy, April 10, 2019

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RE: Comments for the Implementation of changes to the Technical Service Provider Program in the 2018 Farm Bill

Dear Ms. Ashford-Kornbarger:

The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) along with the American Society of Agronomy and the Agricultural Retailers Association are pleased to provide you with these comments addressing the implementation of the changes to the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program as defined in Sec. 2502. Delivery of technical assistance the 2018 Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill clarified the definition of a TSP to include commercial entities such as agricultural retailers and farmer co-operatives and develop a streamlined process by which certain qualified employees could be certified under the program. The bill also provides authority for these non-Federal entities to act as a certifier for technical service providers.

Across the industry the need and the value of the TSP program is recognized to assist farmers in the planning and implementation of conservation practices. However, there are obstacles to participating in the TSP program that have made it unattractive for some highly qualified individuals that would otherwise be interested in the program. Specifically, current TSP’s and TSP’s that have let their registration expire are looking for improvements to the following items:

- Communications
  - Website and online information
  - Availability of NRCS staff for help
  - Training and demonstration for practice standards
    - AgLearn access and functionality
      - Overlap/Duplication with other training programs
      - Matching educational needs with programs
  - Use of NRCS Tool Kit
  - Access and security requirements for AgLearn
  - Requirements and timely approvals
    - Collaborate with State Technical Committees

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact TFI Director of Agronomy.