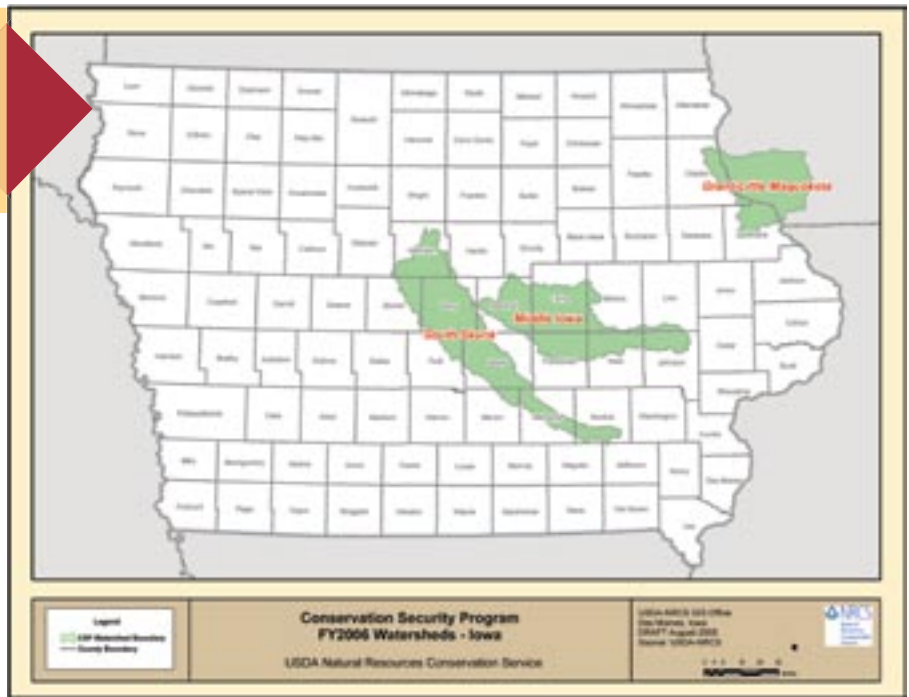


Conservation Security Program watersheds for 2006 include the South Skunk, in central and southeast Iowa, the Middle Iowa River, in central and eastern Iowa, and the Grant-Little Maquoketa Watershed.



on CEMSA or an EMS before your watershed is selected.”

Lake City, Iowa farmer Dwight Dial says that his participation in CEMSA got noticed right away when he applied for CSP. “The local NRCS office was very impressed with the work we did through the CEMSA program. So much so that they asked if they could use it while working on our CSP application. Overall, they were impressed.”

And many farmers have seen that there’s real money at stake with CSP. A Tier One contract can translate into \$20,000 a year. A Tier Two contract might mean a five- to ten-year contract of up to \$35,000 a year. A Tier Three contract can turn into a five- to 10-year contract worth up to \$45,000 a year.

For farmers who want to learn more about CSP, a copy of the CSP Self Assessment Workbook is available from the NRCS Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp, or at local USDA Service Centers.

TMDLs and CEMSA

Some farmers and others who reside in ag-dominated watersheds in Iowa may also find themselves working on TMDLs in the next couple of years.

A TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) is the maximum amount of a pollutant that can enter into a waterbody without pushing it over the maximum allowable threshold and

into violation of established water quality standards.

Ellison says that if a TMDL is developed for an agricultural watershed, CEMSA could become a critical component of a farmer’s documentation process.

“I think that CEMSA could provide an exceptional framework for determining what farmers need to do to

deal with TMDLs, while maintaining their momentum toward improved profitability.

“When it comes down to it, it’s my hope that CEMSA participants will have a personalized record of where they’re at, and that they will have a system in place that guides them toward continuous improvement,” Ellison concludes. ♦

Get it all started now

There’s a lot going on in the farming landscape. Change is coming and farmers are going to be asked to manage for and document performance. For those who are participating in CEMSA and Watershed Programming, going to the nitrogen Conference seems like a no-brainer.

But, looking just a little ways into the future, it becomes clear that almost any Iowa farmer has a reason to show up and get started on the journey to improved performance.

To learn more about TMDL watersheds in Iowa: <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/index.html>.

Get a current comprehensive listing of impaired waters in Iowa:

<http://www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/wqa/303d.html#2004>