



uses a drift retardant. He installed GPS swath control equipment to his sprayer to prevent overlap. He started utilizing a farm weather data service to regulate water application on irrigated acres.

He also invested in the equipment necessary for these activities up front and plans to use his CSP incentive payments to offset costs. Moody estimates a savings of \$4,000 on chemicals and fertilizer for his 1,150 acres.

Excited about the possibilities the program offers, Moody says, "I think Grandpa would be pleased that I am boosting conservation efforts on the farm, and that I am maximizing production by using modern farming technologies." Clearly, Moody is carrying on his family's conservation and production legacy. •

Preservation Perseverance

Program fosters active farm conservation efforts.

Looking across the rolling hills of the Missouri River bluffs, Mark Moody recalls the appreciation his grandfather, like his father before him, had for the land. Maintaining a connection to this land's history and carrying on family tradition keep this sixth-generation Auburn, Nebraska, farmer's roots firmly in the ground.

His grandparents, Vern and Verna Moody, were featured in the June 1957 issue of *Successful Farming* magazine for embracing new farming and homemaking practices. Vern used terracing, had well-established grassed waterways, and was the first farmer in the area to use 30-inch rows. Meanwhile, Verna diligently planted trees around the farm. "They were progressive thinkers, and at the same time, they were conscientious land stewards," Moody says.

It comes as no surprise that production and conservation are important to him. "When people need to make a living and care about the land, they notice things like the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), especially in this part of the country where farms have extremely erodible sugar clay soil and average 36 inches of rain each year on 5 to 17% slopes," he says.

When CSP was introduced in 2009, Moody had already been no-tilling with a corn-soybean crop rotation for 15 years. Fields are terraced with waterways and drain tile, and timber is maintained along creeks. He also has CRP filter strips, quail habitat plantings, and wildlife food plots.

One program requirement is that producers must implement at least one new conservation activity in the first year of the contract. Moody chose three. He added low-drift nozzles to his sprayer and

The CSP Defined

USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is different from other government programs in that it is a working lands program, not a land retirement program. It was developed with the understanding that all the conservation in the world won't matter if farmers can't continue to make their living off the land. While previous federal farm programs focused on disaster payments and controlling soil erosion, CSP provides financial and technical assistance to conserve and to enhance soil, water, air, and wildlife.

Stephen Kennedy (pictured above, left), resource conservationist at the USDA NRCS Auburn field office, says, "The goal of CSP is to offer financial incentives to producers for providing ecosystem services like clean air and water, abundant wildlife, and a healthy environment for all of us – all without jeopardizing their bottom line." •