

Conservation Reserve Program is boon to wildlife

COLLEGE PARK, Md.— Although you can't grow crops on land signed up under the Conservation Reserve Program, you can grow wildlife. In fact, increased habitat for both upland wildlife and waterfowl is one of the goals of the new program.

The Conservation Reserve Program, designed to retire highly erodible cropland, is an excellent opportunity for landowners to devote some land to wildlife habitat, says Anna Lynn, a biologist with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Sign up for the program is from March 3 to 14.

"Food supply is generally not a problem for most upland wildlife except during late winter months," explains Lynn. "Suitable cover is the critical factor that is missing in many areas for feeding, nesting, escape from predators and winter protection."

The best nesting areas for quail, rabbits, and pheasants, are grassy areas located next to a woody cover with a dense understory. The woody vegetation provides a safe haven from predators and harsh weather. This woody cover can be provided by woodlots, windbreaks, hedgerows, and clump planting of trees and shrubs. "So if you sign up 10 acres, you might want to plant nine acres of trees and one acre in a grassy border for wildlife."

Lynn recommends planting nesting cover in strips at least 50 feet wide to lessen the chances of foxes, dogs, cats, raccoons finding the nests.

Many of these practices including establishment of permanent grasses and legumes, tree planting, permanent wildlife habitat, and field windbreaks are eligible for 50 percent cost sharing

under the Conservation Reserve Program.

Also eligible for cost sharing are shallow water areas for wildlife. "Waterfowl and other wetland wildlife also need undisturbed nesting, feeding, and resting habitat," Lynn says. Shallow ponds will provide good habitat if they meet the following criteria:

- At least 50 percent of the pond has

a depth of three feet or less, with optimum shallow depths ranging from six to 18 inches to promote plant growth.

- For dabbling ducks, 50 to 75 percent of the pond should be shallow and vegetated with clumps of emergent or floating plants.

- Wildlife ponds may need a water control structure to allow manipulation of water levels.

- Ponds should have a 50- to 150-foot vegetated buffer strip around them to serve as a nesting area. Recommended plantings include alfalfa, clovers, timothy, orchardgrass and ryegrass.

In addition to the cost sharing available under the Conservation Reserve Program, the Maryland Forests, Parks, and Wildlife Service has announced it will make

\$20,000 in cost share funds available on a 50-50 basis for planting certain wildlife covers. Tax deductions for building ponds are available under the state's Waterfowl Restoration Program.

For more information about these programs, contact your local Soil Conservation Service office listed in the phone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Factors that determine seed quality

KALAMAZOO, MI — Germination, as reflected by the seeds' ability to produce a stand, is what farmers most readily associate with seed quality, according to Dr. Tony Kust, manager of quality assurance for Asgrow Seed Company. However, genetic and physical purity, uniformity of seed size and shape and pathological properties all influence the quality of a bag of seed.

"Genetic purity is always a major concern," Kust says. Production departments do everything possible to ensure purity, including growing out samples of each kernel size of every lot to check for genetic off-types. Sophisticated lab techniques are also used to check for purity by examining the genetic "fingerprint" of hybrid seed.

"Physical purity—freedom from foreign material, cracked seed, weed seed and other crop seed is a quality factor every farmer has the right to expect," Kust observes. "With the technology available in today's modern seed plants, contaminated seed should be a thing of the past."

Some of the same equipment used to clean the seed helps insure

uniformity of seed size and shape, quality factors which are essential to planting accuracy, especially with plate planters, Kust explains.

"Underplanting due to improper sizing is potentially as serious to the producer as low germination rates," he says. "Likewise, overplanting may induce stress and

cause excessive barrenness. It is also a waste of seed."

Finally, pathological quality is constantly monitored to detect the presence of seed-borne disease. That is rarely a problem with hybrid seed corn, Kust acknowledges, but it cannot be overlooked.

"Each of these factors is important to farmers because they can affect yields and profits," asserts Kust. "At every stage of production, from the field to storage, samples are drawn, counts are made and quality is assessed to ensure that farmers are receiving the best seed possible."

Delmarva Poultry Industry kicks off fund drive

GEORGETOWN, Del. — David VanHoose, first vice president and fund drive chairman of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. (DPI), has announced that the goal for the 1986 DPI Fund Drive has been set at \$330,000. Nearly 200 volunteer workers from communities throughout the Delmarva broiler area were in attendance at the recent kick-off meeting. DPI is the 4,000-member, non-profit trade association that represents all phases of the billion dollar poultry industry on the Delmarva Peninsula.

William V. Roth, Jr., Senior U.S. Senator from Delaware, was the featured speaker for the evening. Roth has been an avid supporter of the poultry industry and praised

the poultrymen for their independence and positive attitudes, noting that they do not look for special benefits from government but just the opportunity to compete on equal terms.

VanHoose, who is general manager of Paramount Poultry/Cargill, Inc., reported a total of \$174,615 in cash and pledges had been collected to date. These "investments" to DPI will be used

for research, educational programs, legislative and promotional activities, all aimed at helping the continued progress of the broiler industry in the area. He thanked the workers for their interest and accomplishments to date, but noted there was much hard work ahead to reach the \$330,000 goal by the final reporting date of March 27th.



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