

Pheasant News and Notes

March 2024



Trivia Question

According to the newly released 2022 Census of Agriculture, about 6% of U.S. farms had agricultural product sales of at least \$1 million. What proportion of total U.S. product sales did these farms account for: one quarter, one half, or three quarters?

USDA and Legislative News

During the 2024 Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic last week in Sioux Falls, USDA Under Secretary Robert Bonnie [announced a new general signup period](#) for the Conservation Reserve Program. The signup will run from March 4th through March 29th. According to the [Federal Register notice](#), current CRP enrollment stands at 24.8 million acres, or about 2.2 million under the 27-million-acre statutory cap. Only 482,000 acres are set to expire on September 30th, 2024, so USDA will need to limit acceptance of new and re-enrolled acres to no more than about 2.68 million across the general, continuous, and Grasslands signups held between now and October 1st.

Todd Bogenschutz (Technical Committee, Iowa) asked Alan Lange of USDA-FSA how they plan to balance enrollments to stay under the cap. He replied, "We are closely monitoring enrollment and providing the Secretary information [on which] to base decisions. CCRP [i.e., the signup for Continuous CRP practices besides CREP] is being managed through a batching process. The first batching will take place March 15, see [attached Notice](#). In that process all CCRP offers are reviewed and enrollment volume monitored to manage the acreage cap. CCRP enrollment volume will be used to inform the amount of general CRP and grassland CRP that will be accepted. No one signup type is being prefaced over another, rather the Secretary is using the offer data to allow for maximum enrollment allowed by the acreage cap. Ultimately the decision of how much volume to reserve for CCRP is up to the Secretary and we are working to support him with data." Thanks to Todd and Alan for sharing that information.

FSA also announced criteria for re-enrollment of SHIPP contracts into other forms of CRP in the Prairie Pothole states. You can find details [here](#).

In speaking with a few folks at Pheasant Fest, hopes were dimming about passing a new Farm Bill in 2024. It seems most likely that a new bill will need to wait until next spring, but a surprise is still possible. You'll recall the current bill, which was extended last fall, now expires on September 30th.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

As most of you have heard already, our National Pheasant Plan partnership is losing another of its foundational members. Jim Inglis, who has served on our Management Board since its formation in 2016, [announced his retirement from PF](#) last month. Jim has been with PF since 2001 in various capacities, lastly as Government Affairs Director. We thank Jim for his long service to our partnership and wish him well in retirement!

It was great to see a number of you at Pheasant Fest last week. The event drew a record 35,415 attendees to Sioux Falls. Highlights included:

- USDA Under Secretary Robert Bonnie announced the Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project. The new initiative will, through the Working Lands for Wildlife Program, dedicate \$13 million in FY2024 improve bobwhite quail populations across the country to deliver quail-friendly Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) practices on working lands.
- As mentioned above, Bonnie and Farm Service Agency Administrator Zach Ducheneaux also announced a new General Signup period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which is set to run from March 4-29, 2024.
- South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem signed a conservation license plate bill into law at the event on Friday.
- PF/QF held partnership meetings with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service to coordinate around shared goals. A workshop on recreational access issues was also held with key partners. The participants of these three meetings also gathered to discuss strategies for “Building a Better Wildlife Professional,” especially those delivering conservation on private lands. Several folks who are also involved in the AFWA Private Lands Working Group’s recent activities on this topic attended the meeting, so there was a sense that a larger partnership may be emerging to address the training and development problem.
- A day-long upland bird technical session was held for the first time at Pheasant Fest. Presenters included James Martin (University of Georgia), Dwayne Elmore (Tall Timbers Research Station), Grant Ravary (Ohio State University), D.J. McNeil (University of Kentucky), Dave Naugle (University of Montana), Julia Debes (NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Communications Director), and myself. The session also included six posters from current and recent graduate students studying pheasants, bobwhites, and hunter participation. Thanks again to Jess McGuire, Andy Edwards, and Audrey Hawk for organizing a great session.
- The bulk of the show was, of course, all the vendor displays and seminars about all things upland game bird. Where else can you meet and greet virtually any breed of gun dog you can think of?

Thanks to all the PF&QF staff who planned and executed such a huge event. Next year’s show will be March 7-9, 2025, at the Kansas City Convention Center.

Finally, just a reminder that our next Management Board meeting will be Monday, March 25th in conjunction with the [North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. If anyone has agenda items they’d like to add, just let me know.

Pheasant-relevant Media

[Pheasant Fest & Quail Classic breaks attendance record](#)

[USDA announces general CRP signup to bolster wildlife, water, soil and climate resources](#)

[Pheasants featured on CBS Sunday Morning’s nature segment](#)

[Michigan’s pheasant release program growing slowly](#)

[Inside the escalating funding and farm bill battles](#)

[Ernst: Farm bill passage in 2024 is doubtful](#)

[Farm bill debate: All about base acres](#)

[USDA releases 2022 Census of Agriculture data](#)

[Climate change and wild turkeys: new study overturns conventional wisdom](#)

[Nature has value. Could we literally invest in it?](#)
[Fake scientific papers push research credibility to crisis point](#)
['Rat Dck' among gibberish AI images published in science journal](#)

Recent Literature

[Biesek, J., S. Wlazlak, and M. Adamski. 2024. Pheasant hatchability and physicochemical features of egg and extra-embryonic structures depending on eggshell color. *Poultry Science* 103:103338.](#)

[Green, R. E., et al. 2024. Difference in concentration of lead \(Pb\) in meat from pheasants killed using lead and iron \(Fe\) shotgun ammunition. *Science of the Total Environment* 916:170356.](#)

[Sage, R., M. Woodburn, S. McCready, and J. Coomes. 2024. Winter game crop plots for gamebirds retain hedgerow breeding songbirds in an improved grassland landscape. *Wildlife Biology* \(early online version\).](#)

[Wyckoff, S. T., T. C. Judkins, N. M. Nemeth, M. G. Ruder, J. A. Martin, M. R. Kunkel, K. B. Garnett, K. G. Adcock, D. G. Mead, and M. J. Yabsley. 2024. Surveillance for selected pathogens and parasites of Northern Bobwhite \(*Colinus virginianus*\) from western Oklahoma, USA, 2018–20. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* \(early online version\).](#)

[Roth, A. P., et al. 2024. Sex-specific resource use by wild turkeys in response to hunting activity. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Wanner, C. P., A. C. Pratt, and J. L. Beck. 2024. Wintering greater sage-grouse preferentially select shrub microhabitat characteristics within the home range. *Rangeland Ecology and Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Wann, G. T., et al. 2024. Estimates of Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan daily nest survival from multiple sites in the Southern Rocky Mountains of Colorado. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 19\(1\):4.](#)

[Decker, D. J., et al. 2024. Building human-dimensions/social science capacity to support wildlife agencies: lessons from New York's 50-year experience. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife* \(early online version\).](#)

[Hulting, K. A., et al. 2024. Seed mix design and floral resources drive multitrophic interactions in prairie restoration. *Journal of Applied Ecology* \(early online version\).](#)

[Zhang, C., et al. 2024. Automatic bioacoustics noise reduction method based on a deep feature loss network. *Ecological Informatics* 80:102517.](#)

Trivia Answer

The 105,384 farms with sales over \$1 million accounted for three quarters of all U.S. agricultural products sold, and 31% of farmland. The 1.4 million farms with sales of \$50,000 or less accounted for 74% of farms, 25% of farmland, and 2% of sales. More highlights from the new survey can be found [here](#).

This update is brought to you by the National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan and Partnerships. Our mission is to foster science-based, socially-supported policies and programs that enhance wild pheasant populations, provide recreational opportunities to pheasant hunters, and support the economics and social values of communities. You can find us on the web at <https://nationalpheasantplan.org>.