

USDA Photo Feature

Soil Conservation Service, Room 6116-S

United States Department of Agriculture

Washington, D.C. 20250



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Soil and water conservation is increasing dramatically nationwide as a result of recent farm legislation. By tying USDA program benefits to soil conservation efforts, USDA officials say the nation's long-term agriculture production outlook will be greatly enhanced. (USDA photo no. 1087X1098-22)

Wildlife, Land Benefit From Conservation Efforts

If you're seeing more wildlife in the countryside these days, noticing more farmland planted in grass or trees, or seeing less sediment in streams, you're seeing the results of some major changes in agricultural conservation programs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates more than 200 million acres of farmland may be better protected as a result of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985.

Its conservation reserve program has been called the most important agricultural conservation effort of the 20th century. Under the program, farmers are converting some of the nation's most highly erodible cropland to protective cover of trees and grass.

To date, nearly 240,000 farmers have put more than 25 million acres into the reserve. Up to 45 million acres may be entered into the reserve by its 1990 deadline.

Other provisions encourage farmers to develop and carry out conservation plans for highly erodible farmland, to preserve wetlands, and to leave highly erodible grassland and woodland in grass or trees rather than converting it to cropland.

(continued on back page)



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Wetlands provide a critical habitat for many species of waterfowl. Many farmers are preserving their wetlands in accordance with the conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act. (USDA photo no. 1087X1099-10)



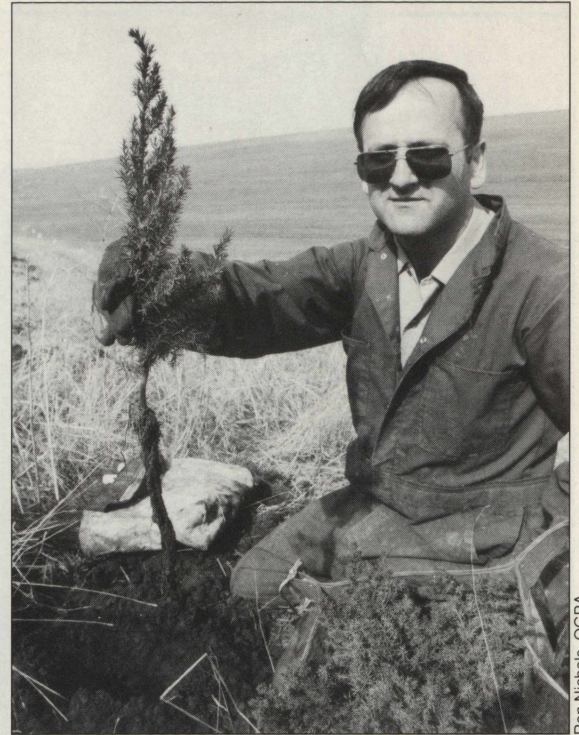
Under the "sodbusting" provision of the Farm Bill, farmers can lose USDA program benefits if they break out highly erodible grassland or woodland to grow crops without an approved conservation plan. (USDA photo no. 88BW0877-5a)

Lynn Betts, SCS



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Highly erodible lands introduced into the conservation reserve program can provide substantial wildlife habitat for a number of species including upland game birds like this pheasant. (USDA photo no. 88BW0849-35)



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Many landowners are providing permanent wildlife habitat by planting trees on highly erodible acreage. In addition to providing food and cover for wildlife, the trees and grass protect the soil from the devastating effects of soil erosion. (USDA photo no. 88BW0664-24a)



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Officials are hoping to eliminate erosion scenes like this through the cooperation of landowners. SCS provides technical assistance to landowners developing soil conservation plans. (USDA photo no. 88BW0666-19)



Ron Nichols, OGPA

Thousands of landowners are protecting their highly erodible land and staying eligible for USDA program benefits by developing conservation plans by Jan. 1, 1990. (USDA photo no. 88CN1250)



Ron Nichols, OGPA

(continued from front page)

Under one of the provisions, USDA's Soil Conservation Service estimates farmers will be developing 800,000 conservation plans by Jan. 1, 1990, to stay eligible for certain USDA program benefits.

These soil and water conservation efforts are helping reduce erosion and sedimentation, improve water quality, reduce crop surpluses, reduce the cost of commodity programs and increase wildlife habitat. □

With so many conservation plans needed by 1990, USDA sponsors group planning meetings where farmers learn about conservation planning and often do their own plans. (USDA photo no. 88BW0876-12)

Editors: Magazines and newspapers may obtain black and white glossy prints from the Photography Division, Room 4404-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300; telephone (202) 447-6633.

For more information on conservation provisions in the Food Security Act of 1985, contact the Soil Conservation Service, Information Staff, Room 6114-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 telephone (202) 447-4543.