



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) West River Grassland Nesting Birds

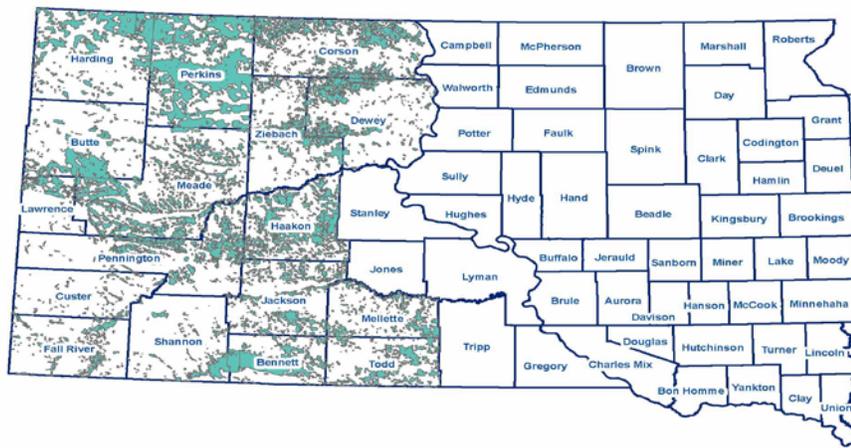
Overview

SAFE is a new CRP concept that allows States to develop a Continuous Signup Practice which will permit producers to install practices that benefit high priority State wildlife conservation objectives through the use of targeted restoration of vital habitat.

A proposal developed by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks addresses habitat critical to declining grassland birds native to western South Dakota. Some of the targeted species include the short-eared owl, grasshopper sparrow, dickcissel, bobolink, sharp-tail grouse, long-billed curlew and upland nesting waterfowl. The goal of the project is to establish dense nesting cover on 18,000 acres of eligible cropland and or cropped wetlands. This proposal was accepted by the State Technical Committee, State FSA Committee and received final approval from the National FSA Office.

Targeted Area

Areas targeted for this practice include all counties west of the Missouri River except Jones, Stanley, Gregory, Tripp and Lyman Counties. Producers in the targeted area that meet regular CRP eligibility requirements will be eligible to offer cropland and/or cropped wetlands under this practice.



Land Eligibility

Eligible cropland includes cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agriculture commodity during 4 of 6 crop years from 1996 through 2001 and is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Size Requirements

A minimum width/length of 600 feet will be required unless the area offered is adjacent to an existing CRP acreage or an area that is managed in a manner that provides quality nesting cover that when added together would meet this requirement.

Annual Payments, Cost Shares and Incentives

In addition to an annual payment which is based on the counties updated average dryland rental rate and soil productivity, cost shares and incentive payments will be provided as follows:

- Annual Rental Payments will be earned for 10 to 15 years.
- Cost shares of up to 50% for the establishment of the practice.
- Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) equal to \$10 per acre for each full year up to 10 years. This payment is made upfront at the time the contract is approved. SIP will be offered on new CRP land only.
- Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) equal to 40% of the total eligible cost to establish the practice. This payment is issued once the practice has been completed.

Grass Cover Requirements

To be eligible for C/S, this practice shall improve habitat for grassland nesting birds by establishing a Dense Nesting Cover (DNC). The DNC shall consist of a minimum of 2 species of tame or native grass species and 1 legume or forbs best suited for the area being offered.

Wetlands contained within the offer will be restored to the maximum extent technically possible to represent the original wetland hydrology.

Where to Apply

Offers for this practice will be accepted at the local county FSA Office where a producer's land is administered for FSA purposes. NRCS will provide technical service and a Pheasant Forever Biologist will be available to consult in many of the designated counties.