



Pheasants Forever

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For Immediate Release

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Stearns County's Farm Bill Biologists Take One-on-One Approach to Washington

Pheasants Forever wants to build on 1.3 million acres of wildlife habitat success

Saint Paul, Minn. – August 6, 2009 – Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever [Farm Bill Biologists](#) recently took a short break from meeting with private landowners to meet with legislators and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representatives on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The meetings focused on the success of the Farm Bill Biologist program and the need for more Farm Bill Biologist positions in additional states to maximize wildlife habitat impact.

Farm Bill Biologists touting the program included Jason Selvog of Waite Park, Minnesota; Kelsi Niederklein of North Platte, Nebraska; Matt Morlock of Brookings, South Dakota; and J.D. Armstrong of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The foursome represent [Pheasants Forever](#) and [Quail Forever's](#) improved model of conservation program delivery. Designed to educate farmers and landowners about the benefits of conservation programs, as well as assist those farmers and landowners after programs have been implemented, Pheasants Forever first began employing Farm Bill Biologists in 2003 and now has 36 Farm Bill Biologists working in six states – Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. In just over six years, Farm Bill Biologists have contacted and consulted 28,065 landowners, resulting in the improvement of nearly 1.3 million acres!

Primarily, Farm Bill Biologists work to accelerate enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and other Farm Bill conservation provisions that work with farm operations. Funding comes through diverse sources, including USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), so Farm Bill Biologists add wildlife technical assistance in USDA offices. Biologists met with NRCS officials, including Acting Associate Chief Ginger Murphy, Acting Associate Deputy Chief for Management Terrell Erickson and Chief of Staff Jason Weller. They discussed conservation issues with Jonathan Coppess, Administrator for the Farm Service Agency and Lynn Tjeerdsma, USDA's Farm Service Agency's Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs. The Farm Bill Biologists also met with legislators, including Senator Al Franken (D-MN), Senator John Thune (R-SD), Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI).

"The way to create wildlife habitat on the landscape is by meeting with landowners one-on-one, listening to their desires and concerns, and then finding programs that best fit their situations," Jason Selvog said, "Those same principles apply when we're talking about expanding the Farm Bill Biologist program nationally – meeting one-on-one with policy makers and telling them how successful this model has been and where it can go with the right support." Contacting over 5,000 landowners since 2004 has allowed Selvog, based out

of Stearns County USDA Service Center in Waite Park, to help landowners improve nearly 19,000 acres through over 850 conservation program contracts.

"There is no question that we have a very successful track record in delivering what we set out to do," said Jim Inglis, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologist Coordinator, "This program will grow in the states where it already exists, and will launch in new states. Getting our message to the nation's capital will hopefully accelerate that process, which in turn accelerates the wildlife habitat mission of Pheasants Forever."

To contact a Farm Bill Biologist in your area, click here: [Farm Bill Biologists](#). For more information on the Farm Bill Biologist program, contact Jim Inglis, Farm Bill Biologist Coordinator, at (419) 569-1096 or via email at jinglis@pheasantsforever.org.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are non-profit conservation organizations dedicated to the protection and enhancement of pheasant, quail, and other wildlife populations in North America through habitat improvement, land management, public awareness, and education. PF/QF has more than 125,000 members in 750 local chapters across the continent.