



Fact Sheet

Sangamon County Northern Bobwhite Quail Conservation Initiative

Overview

Owners and operators of certain cropland in Sangamon County may enroll eligible land in a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) conservation practice entitled State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), also known as CP38.

USDA's Farm Service Agency will conduct sign-up for SAFE on a continuous (ongoing) basis until all acreages allotted for enrollment in Sangamon County by USDA are expended. Producers can offer land for enrollment in SAFE, as well as other CRP programs, at the Sangamon County USDA Service Center located at 2623 Sunrise Drive, Springfield IL.

The Sangamon County SAFE proposal has been approved by USDA to address state high-priority wildlife objectives for establishment of Northern Bobwhite Quail habitat as stated in the State Fish and Wildlife Action Plan. Conservation practices currently offered under CRP are adjusted under SAFE to meet the specific habitat needs of the Northern Bobwhite Quail. Implementation of the SAFE program will increase the quantity and quality of habitat for the species and, as a

residual effect, offer healthier ecosystems beneficial to other wildlife species in Sangamon County. The Service Center's goal is to restore and enhance 2,000 acres of Northern Bobwhite Quail habitat.

Producers interested in voluntarily offering acreages into the SAFE program can enroll acres in CRP contracts for 10 – 15 year terms and is the producer's option. In exchange, producers receive annual rental payments, incentives (practice specific) and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land. Producers enrolling in CRP enter into contracts with USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). FSA administers CRP on behalf of CCC.

Eligibility Requirements

Producers with land in Sangamon County may enroll in the SAFE program provided they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- the offered acreage meets the cropping history requirement under CRP (four of the six years from 1996 to 2001);
- the site is located within the demographic boundary of Sangamon County and is appropriate

for the practices associated with SAFE; and

- the cumulative acreage for all CP38 acreage enrolled in SAFE does not exceed the Sangamon County 2,000 acre SAFE allocation.

The land must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Available Management Practices

Through the Sangamon County SAFE Program, producers create habitat that is beneficial to the Northern Bobwhite Quail. This may involve planting trees, grasses, forbs or other species that restore or improve quail habitat. Specific eligible practices are listed below:

- CP38A – Filter strips and Riparian Forested Buffers
- CP38C – Tree Planting, Hardwood Tree Planting.
- CP38E – Introduced Grasses, Native Grasses, Wildlife Habitat Development, Grass Already Established, Wildlife Food Plot and Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds.

CCC requires that practices under SAFE be managed during the life of the contract. The management requirements are tailored to

the individual practice.

Fishing and hunting are allowed on CRP-enrolled land, including SAFE. As with other conservation practices and programs under CRP, certain restrictions apply.

Rental & Incentive Payments

Contract payments will be based on the Average Soil Rental Rate for the three predominant soil types listed in the contract acreages of each enrollment. Soil Rental Rates are established by the CCC and a listing of the rates for Sangamon County is available at the Sangamon County FSA office.

In addition to the payments described above, CCC will pay up to 50 percent of the eligible cost of establishing a permanent cover.

USDA will provide the following incentive benefits to participants in the SAFE program.

- an up-front one time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (CRP-SIP) of \$100 per acre, which is made after the contract is approved; and
- a Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs for SAFE practices. CCC issues this one-time payment after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

Contracts

The effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. In certain circumstances, producers may defer the effective date for up to six months.

Sangamon County Northern Bobwhite Quail Conservation Initiative Cooperating Agencies

Sangamon County FSA will administer this CRP-SAFE program with technical assistance from USDA's Sangamon County Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Sangamon County Soil and Water Conservation District will implement a public outreach program to inform producers on the availability of the program in Sangamon County.

More Information

For more information about Sangamon County's SAFE program contact the following agencies at;

- Sangamon County FSA
2623 Sunrise Dr., Suite 2
Springfield, IL 62703
241-6635 extension 2
- Sangamon County NRCS
2623 Sunrise Dr., Suite 1
Springfield, IL 62703
241-6635 extension 3
- Sangamon County SWCD
2623 Sunrise Dr., Suite 1
Springfield, IL 62703
241-6635 extension 3

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