THE 2002 FARM BILL
WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

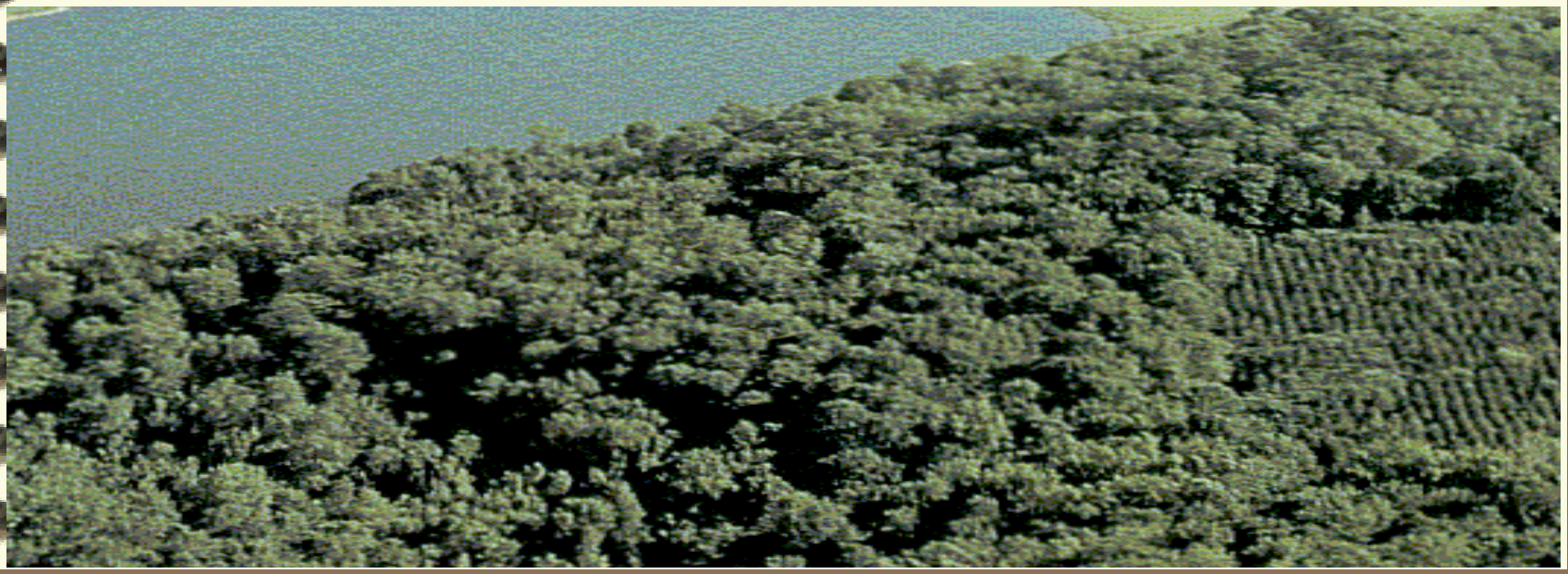
A Northeast Wildlife Habitat Needs Assessment for the 2002 Farm Bill

Prepared By Northeast Upland Habitat Technical Committee

Scott Klinger, Chair, Pennsylvania Game Commission

FOREST LAND

- ✔ 80,000,000 ACRES
- ✔ 30% Decline in seedling/sapling since 1978
- ✔ Only 250,000 acres of old growth forest



FARMLAND

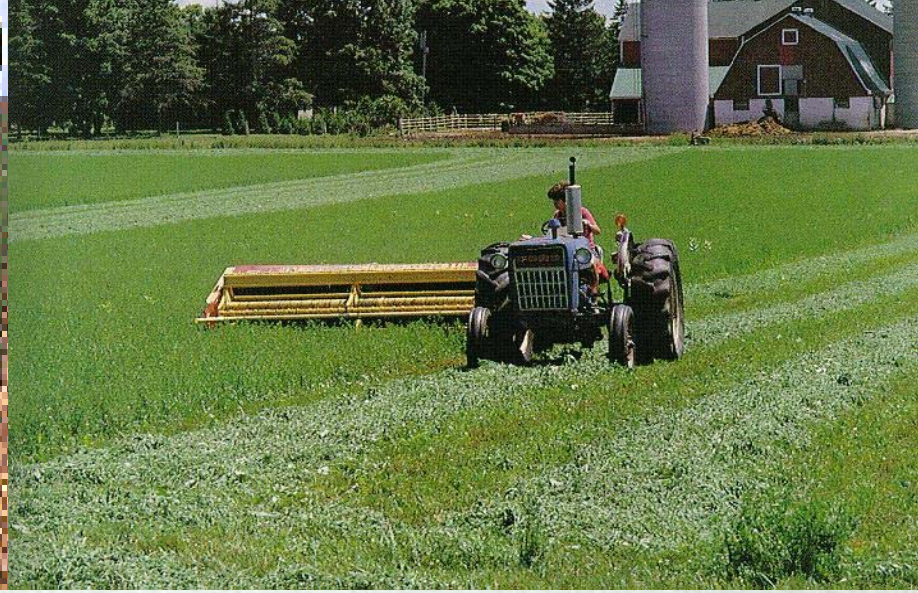
- ✔28.0M ACRES
- ✔16.0M CROPLAND
- ✔7.0M PASTURE
- ✔50% DECLINE in Farmland SINCE 1950
- ✔75% DECLINE IN PASTURE
- ✔OLD FIELDS ENDANGERED HABITAT

WETLANDS AND DEEP WATER HABITATS

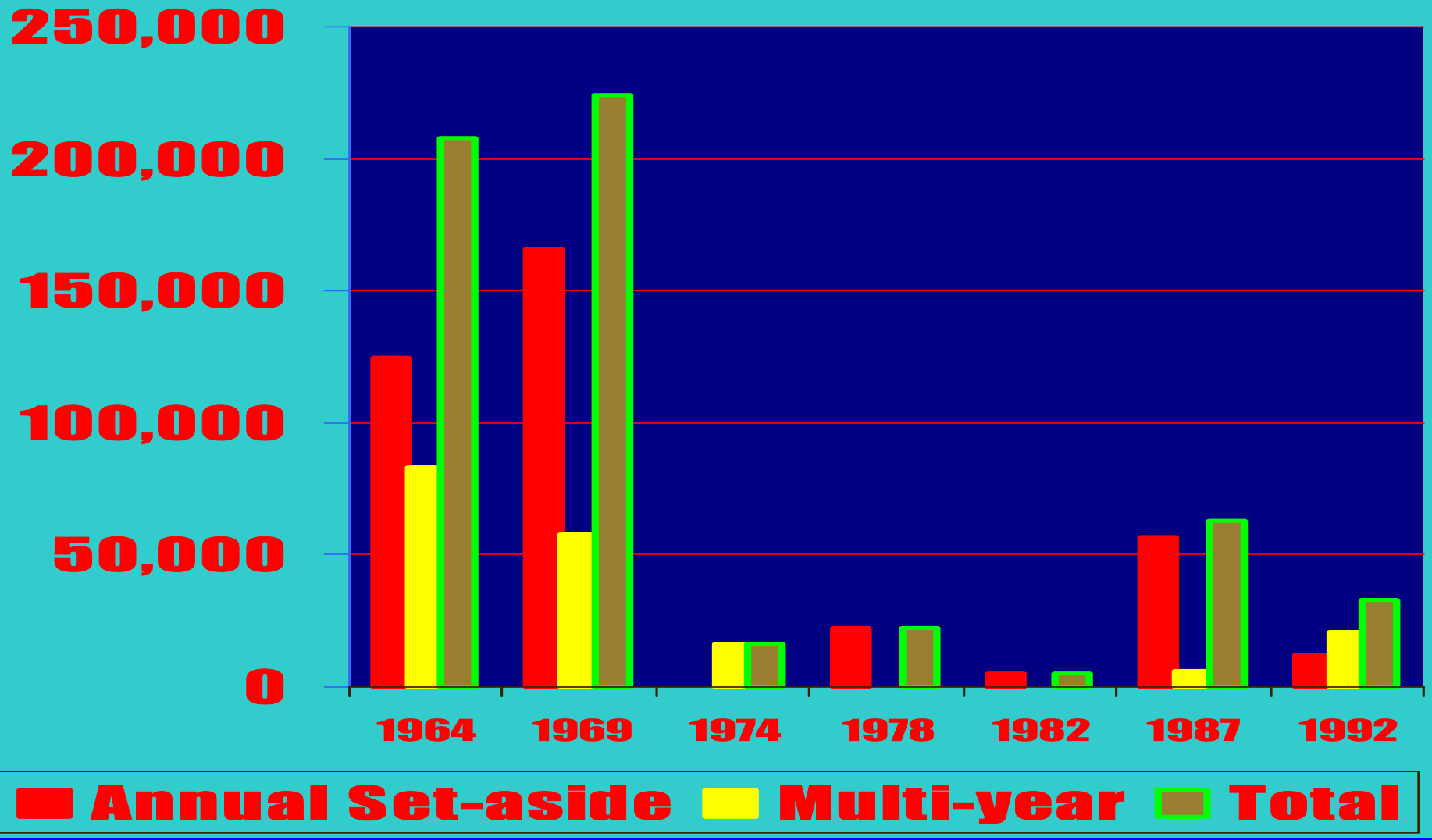
- ✔ 500,000 ACRES
- ✔ 50% DECLINE IN WETLANDS SINCE PRE-SETTLEMENT
- ✔ HIGHEST NUMBER OF ENDANGERED SPECIES
- ✔ WATER QUALITY

URBAN/RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✔ 16.0M ACRES
- ✔ 3.0M ACRES ADDED SINCE 1992
- ✔ INCREASED FRAGMENTATION



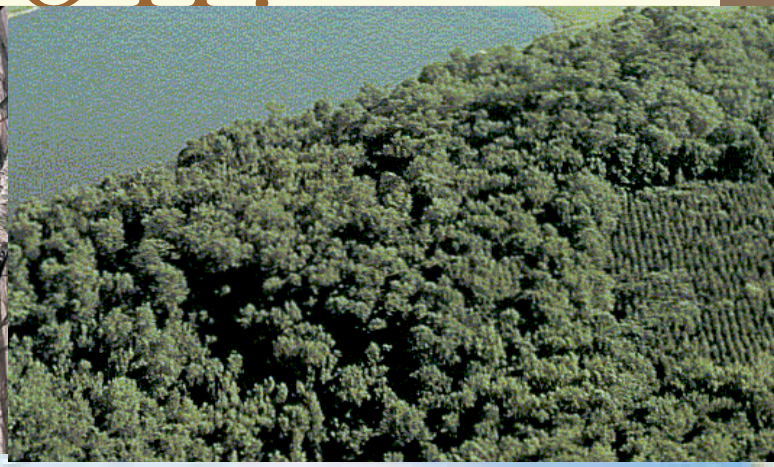
TRENDS IN USDA SET-ASIDE ACRES

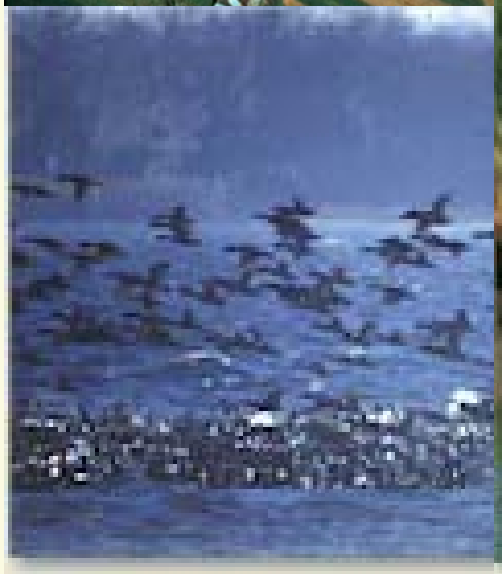


IDLE FIELDS-AN ENDANGERED HABITAT

50
Birds/Route
0
1966
2002

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH? HOW WILL WE DO IT?



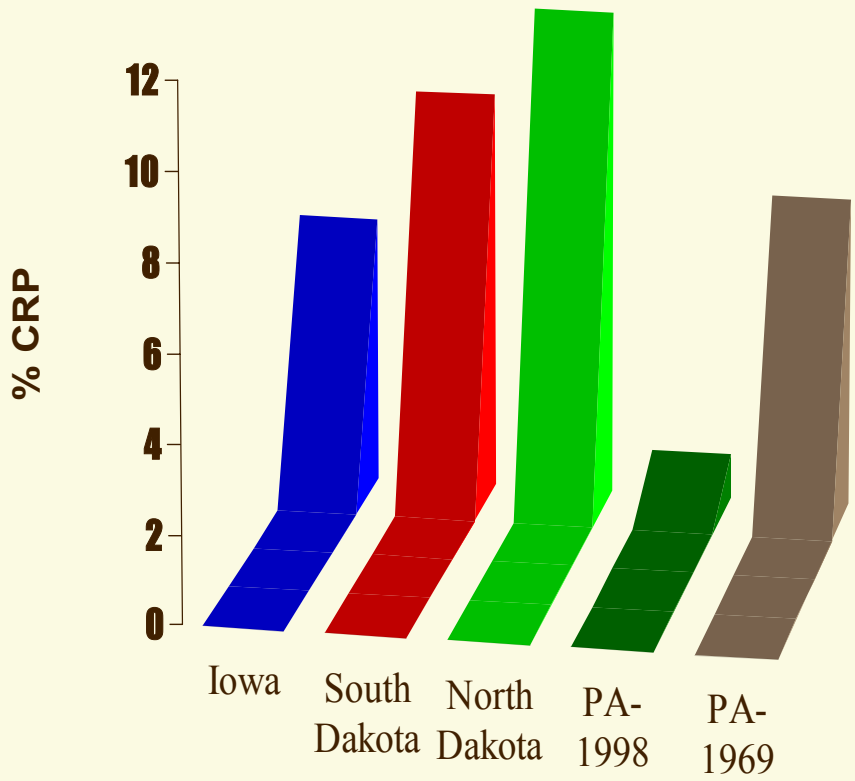


HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH FOR THE NE REGION?

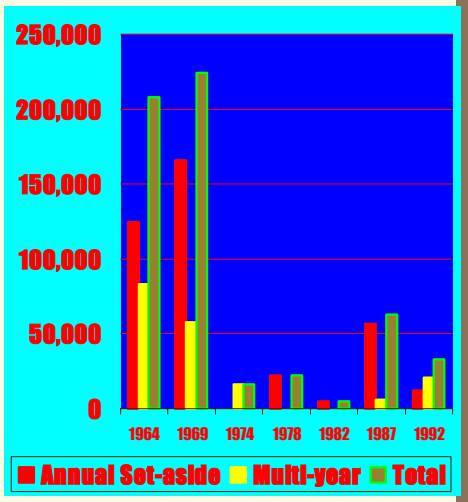
- ✔ 2,400,000 ACRES OF SECURE GRASSLAND NESTING COVER
- ✔ 800,000 ACRES OF WETLANDS
- ✔ 440,000 ACRES OF RIPARIAN BUFFERS
- ✔ 5,000,000 ACRES OF EARLY SUCCESSIONAL FOREST
- ✔ 26,000,000 ACRES OF MATURE FOREST

% OF CROPLAND IN USDA RETIREMENT PROGRAMS

1998



Trend in Abundance of Ring-necked Pheasants



Birds/Foot Hour

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

1930 1935 1940 1945 1950 1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995

Year

WHY DOES THE CRP NOT WORK IN PA

- ✔ EXISTING SOIL RENTAL RATES ARE TO LOW
- ✔ RENTAL RATES DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUE OF LAND
- ✔ FARMS ARE SMALL
- ✔ LIVESTOCK FARMING VSGRAIN FARMING
- ✔ PA HAS MORE HEL AS A % OF CROPLAND THAN ANY OTHER STATE

- ✔ WE NEED A PA CREP……>>>>>

CREP:

USDA/State Partnership

CREP: A PLAN TO RESTORE PA'S FARMLAND ECOSYSTEMS

- TARGETS 265,000 ACRES OF CROPLAND AND MARGINAL PASTURE
- HIGHER RENTAL PAYMENTS
- 59 COUNTIES
- STATE/FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP
- $400,000,000 OVER THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS
- MONITORING AND RESEARCH

PGC/NRCS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

- ✔ 20 - Wildlife Habitat Biologists to deliver technical assistance to landowners
- ✔ Soil Conservation Technicians to assist with administrative duties
- ✔ Coordination and use of 28 NWSG Drills
- ✔ Land Managers
- ✔ Farm Game Managers

Cool Season Grasses and Legumes

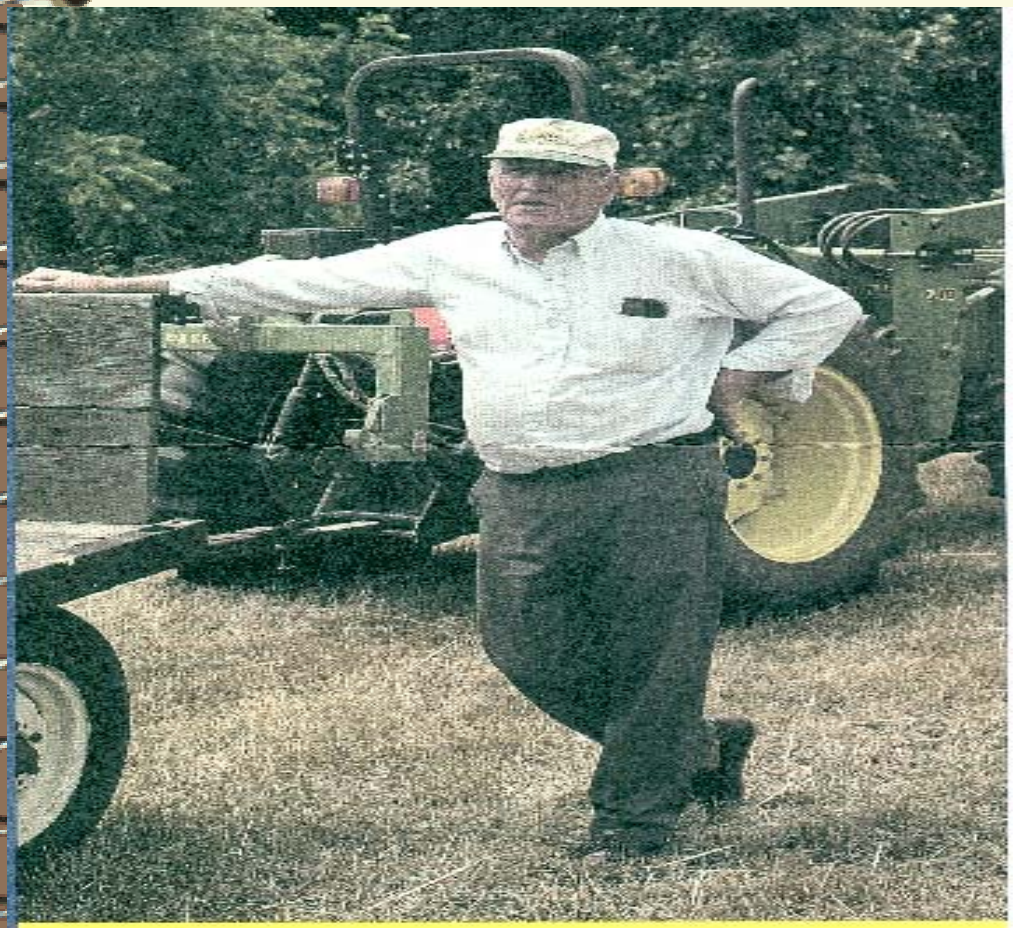
49,754 ACRES

NATIVE WARM SEASON GRASSES and FORBS 20,058 acres

Forested Riparian Buffers

7,908 Acres or 790 miles

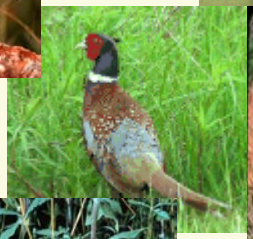
You do everything you can to be a wise steward of your land & water.



- FARM THE BEST
- CREP THE REST

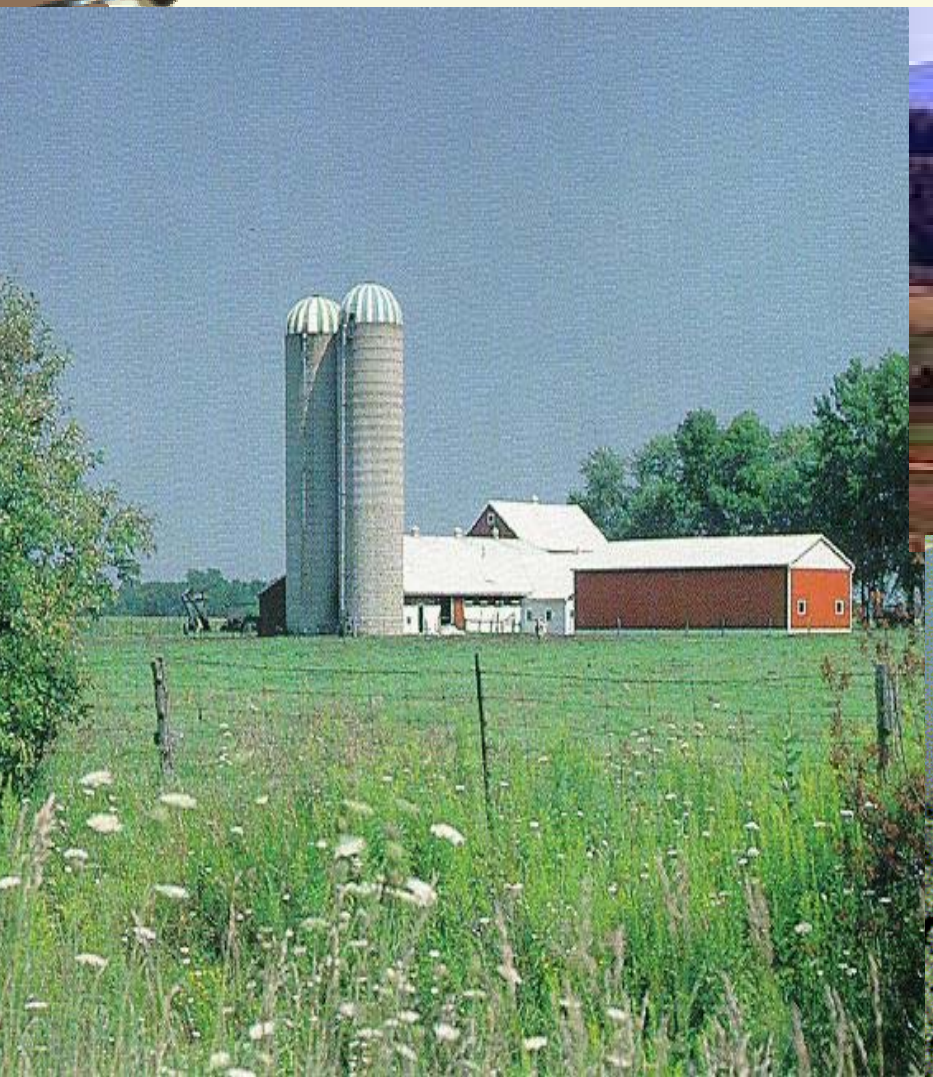
- VERY SHORT
- SHORT
- MEDIUM
- TALL

- DENSE



- SPARSE

AND…IMPROVE WATER QUALITY, REDUCE EROSION AND INCREASE FARM INCOME



- CAN WE RESTORE DECLINING GRASSLAND BIRD POPULATIONS?

Conservation Reserve Program

- ✔ Raise Cap to 63.9 million acres
- ✔ Base rental rates on land values
- ✔ CCRP/CREP-8,000,000 acres
- ✔ target 10% of a states HEL cropland

New Programs

- ✔ Establish an easement program to protect/manage old field/shrubland communities on 5,000,000 acres in the NE
- ✔ Establish an easement program for all continuous/CREP practices on 1,000,000 acres nationwide
- ✔ Establish a short term 2-3 year set aside program to control production/with conservation cover

Technical Assistance

- ✔ Provide $150 million nationwide for fish and wildlife technical assistance
- ✔ Encourage NRCS and State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to enter into Cooperative Agreements to deliver technical assistance to landowners
- ✔ Provide matching federal funds to State Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- ✔ Monitor the effectiveness of habitat improvements

NEW TESTAMENT
ASSEMBLY OF GOD