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WORKSHOP SUMMARY: FEDERAL FARM PROGRAMS— WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR QUAIL?

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Federal Farm programs have had a wide range of impacts on wildlife over the years. Some programs have been extremely harmful to wildlife while others have, intentionally or accidentally, been beneficial to wildlife. Frequently, the same program that is beneficial to wildlife in one part of the country has been less beneficial or even harmful in other parts of the country. This has usually been a result of trying to make one program and set of rules fit all conditions across the U.S.

This workshop examined the tools the 1996 Farm Bill provided to quail managers—the new programs and revised aspects of older programs. Don McKenzie, Wildlife Management Institute, presented the Washington view of the development of the Farm Bill and its conservation provisions.

Agricultural Liaison biologists have a unique opportunity to blend wildlife considerations into the various farm programs. Reggie Thackston, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), discussed how the Farm Bill programs were developed from the perspective of an Agricultural Liaison biologist.

Some states had very little input into farm programs prior to the 1996 Farm Bill. There was no State Technical Committee operating and only minor input channels were available to them. Breck Carmichael, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, discussed the opportunities opened by the 1996 Farm Bill.

“Partnerships” is the new buzz word of the 1990’s. David Howell of Quail Unlimited in Indiana discussed how their Memorandum Of Understanding with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works, and how local chapters are impacting and supporting the adoption of quail-friendly practices.

North Carolina made it a high priority to take advantage of the opportunities the Farm Bill presented. Terry Sharpe, North Carolina Wildlife Resources, discussed their progress.

Folks wax nostalgic when discussing the “good old days” of the Soil Bank and its wildlife benefits. Bill Baxter, Nebraska Game and Parks, discussed the progress of Farm Bills on Great Plains wildlife.

An open discussion of other success stories and failures of other states concluded the workshop.

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