DESCRIPTION & BENEFITS

If you have cropland or an expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract, there’s a new initiative to bring Iowa pheasants back. State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) — *Iowa Pheasant Recovery* is for Iowa landowners who want to return pheasants to their property.

The *Iowa Pheasant Recovery* initiative makes available a new CRP practice. It’s designed to restore native grasslands and wetlands where they will be the most beneficial for ring-necked pheasants. It’s specifically designed to increase populations of ring-necked pheasants where their preferred habitats have been eliminated.

Pheasant and other grassland birds are particularly vulnerable to harsh winters and wet springs. Restoring top quality winter and nesting/brood-rearing habitat will help pheasant populations recover and could boost annual harvest by 100,000 roosters.

Other grassland birds and species, especially pollinators, will benefit, too. Most of all, Iowa’s natural resources will benefit from reduced erosion and improved water quality.

Starting in 2013, eligible producers can sign up at their local [USDA Farm Service Agency](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/)

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**Thick stands of warm season grasses or shrubs provide the cover pheasants need during snowy winters.**

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**ELIGIBLE COUNTIES**

The practice is available in counties that have the best potential to recover pheasant populations by providing additional habitat.

All areas shown in green on the map are eligible for *Iowa Pheasant Recovery* CRP sign-up.

These counties have the best odds of recovering pheasant numbers with additional top quality habitat.

Landowners in other counties may be eligible for other SAFE CRP contracts.  

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If you miss the the crow of a rooster, the thrill of the hunt or the brilliant flash of color as a brace of birds bursts into flight, a new program can help you restore the pheasant population in Iowa.
ELIGIBLE PRACTICES
Establish winter cover, nesting cover and develop food plots.

PURPOSE
- Increase populations of ring-necked pheasant and other grassland wildlife species
- Benefit threatened or endangered species, or those with a significant decline
- Improve, connect or create high quality grassland and wetland habitat
- Provide nesting, brood and winter cover
- Provide habitat for beneficial pollinators
- Improve water quality
- Reduce erosion

PAYMENTS
Rental Rate
- Based on maximum soil rental rate established for the three predominant soils
- 10- to 15-year contract length

Cost-share
- 50 percent cost-share to establish the practice

ELIGIBILITY
- Land that was cropped or considered cropped four out of the six years from 2012 to 2017.
- Eligible cropland includes row crops, small grains and forage crops grown in an acceptable rotation

SEEDING SOURCES
The Iowa DNR recommends planting native Iowa prairie seed types. These grasses and wildflowers are suitable for Iowa’s weather and growing conditions. Plant materials can be purchased at local nurseries and seed dealers.

MORE INFORMATION
www.fsa.usda.gov/ia
www.iowadnr.gov/crp

PARTNERS
Iowa Department of Natural Resources, USDA - Iowa Farm Service Agency, USDA - Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, Iowa Department of Agriculture - Division of Land Stewardship, Conservation Districts of Iowa and Iowa County Conservation Boards.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is a nationwide Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) with continuous sign-up. The SAFE initiative allows public and private organizations and state and federal agencies to propose areas where new CRP acreage is essential to benefit endangered, threatened or high priority fish and wildlife species. There are two active SAFE CRP areas in Iowa: Gaining Ground for Wildlife proposed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to establish grassland/wetland habitat statewide, and Habitat for Early Successional and Neotropical Migratory Forest Birds proposed by the Conservation Districts of Iowa in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette and Winnishiek counties.