

PRAIRIE NEWS

<http://SD-PheasantHunting.com>
1-855-SD Lodge

January 2014

35451 253rd Street
Kimball, SD 57355

Happy New Year:

The year "2014" is rendered in a 3D, textured font where each digit is composed of green pine needles, giving it a natural, forest-like appearance.

The past year was simply wonderful, but we predict more pheasants, excellent hunters, great weather, fantastic food, exceptional dogs, tall crops, and never-ending fun for 2014. And, of course, lots of rain because we're still farmers at heart, and plenty of rain is always critical. As we don't actually have a magic wand, hopefully at least half of our wishes will come true ☺

Pheasant Summit Report:

Last month, we encouraged everyone to attend the Governor's summit on pheasant habitat to learn about changes and innovations that might impact pheasant hunting. For anyone who missed all or part of the meeting, the videos of each speaker's presentation are still available online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/pheasantsummit/default.aspx>.



To briefly recap, Jeff Vonk, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) opened the meeting and welcomed Governor Dennis Daugaard. The theme was how to preserve our long history of pheasant hunting as the modernization of farming techniques continues to eliminate more and more pheasant habitat. Although hunting is economically important, particularly to many small communities throughout the state, revenue from agriculture is orders of magnitude greater so farming remains the primary focus of governmental policy in our state.

The next speaker was Tony Leif, Director of the Wildlife Division of GFP. He provided a very interesting history of pheasants from their introduction to South Dakota to their expansion and the development of their hunting season. During the past ten years, an average of 1.8 million pheasants have been harvested each year, with the eastern half of South Dakota accounting for 95 percent of that total. Mr. Leif particularly emphasized that long-term pheasant population trends are controlled by habitat, and annual population fluctuations are dictated by weather.

Then Barry Dunn, Ph.D., a Dean at SDSU College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, discussed land use. South Dakota consists of slightly more than 49 million acres, and the conversion of grassland to cropland has continued throughout our state's history. About 17 million acres of cropland existed in the 1920's and had grown to about 20 million acres by the

1940's. Now the total is approximately 44 million acres, with about 2 million acres having been converted in the past five to seven years. Dr. Dunn touched on several factors impacting this shift such as the market demand for ethanol and the recent increase in real estate values. He also noted the potential for precision agriculture to capture the yield potential on the best land as an alternative to conversion.

Bruce Knight, Principle and Founder of Strategic Conversation Solutions, LLC, provided information on modern agricultural production. He talked about the worldwide food requirements as global population continues to increase and the resulting threat to habitat as conversion proceeds. Similar to Dr. Dunn's precision agriculture concept, Mr. Knight presented sustainable intensification as a method of producing more crops on the very best land and the key to finding a balance between productivity and wildlife.

The next speaker was Dave Nomsen, the Vice President of Governmental Affairs for Pheasants Forever. His presentation focused on conservation practices and touched on changes in CRP enrollment that impact habitat availability and technological advances that drive crop yields. Mr. Nomsen emphasized that caring for lands considered marginal for farming is good for wildlife. He noted that if we make a conscious decision to protect, preserve and expand pheasant habitat, we can maintain pheasant hunting as an important component of our quality of life.

Finally, Jim Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism, discussed pheasant hunting and tourism. He talked about media and market strategy, and he provided a profile of the average hunter with some historical statistics. Creative messaging is important to reach the target audience, and Mr. Hagen's department has information available about hunting partnerships and sponsorships.

Participants at the meeting then separated into smaller discussion groups and returned afterwards to share their findings. Many ideas were generated but were too extensive to detail to the live audience, so the GFP will consolidate and make those available later. The overall message of the event was:

FARM THE BEST, SAVE THE REST

Prairie Puzzle:

The answer to last month's question about binary explosives was aluminum powder and ammonium nitrate. Congratulations to our first place winner Mr. Hammond from Tennessee, second place winner Mr. Cluchey from South Carolina, and third place winner Mr. Harrison from Arizona.

January question: ***Pheasants are not native to North America. From which Asian country did the ringneck pheasant originate?***

- a) Japan b) China c) Thailand d) Mongolia e) Indonesia

Please submit your answer by January 15, 2013 to be included in the prize drawing for a free Dakota Prairie Lodge & Resort hunting hat. Responses will be accepted via mail, phone, or email. Good luck!