

PRAIRIE NEWS

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

September 2012

35451 253rd Street
Kimball, SD 57355



Pheasant Update:

After a very mild winter, the pheasant population was quite robust in the spring and successfully hatched numerous young birds. Around the dugouts and in the fields, we often spotted hens with eight or nine chicks following closely behind them.

As summer progressed, we realized that Brule County was headed for a dry year. Much of the eastern portion of South Dakota shared the drought, although rain did fall sporadically. With our fields divided in four locales across Brule County, we were able to achieve some good crops. Most noticeably, our dugouts are no longer flooded, as they have been for many years, and lakebeds that have not been accessible in almost a decade are now dry enough to plant.

Most fortuitously, we did have enough rain in August to ensure excellent food plots. With the combination of these and our CRP land, the pheasants should stay content and close to home. After planting a vegetable mix for silage early in the spring, we have some fields with late corn designated primarily for hunting. This crop should provide outstanding cover for our birds and be easy walking for our hunters. ☺



Lodge Update:

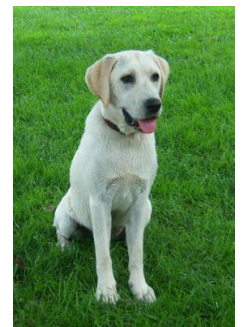
We are moving into the final stages of construction! After the main structure of the building was completed, the interior work began and consumed most of the summer. While the builder, plumber and electrician finish the last details inside, we are moving outside to work on landscaping. Building the deck is the next big project, and meanwhile



furniture and appliances are on their way to the Lodge. We will be updating the website with new pictures soon!

Other News:

Archie, one of our beloved Labrador hunting dogs, just completed his training course with great success! He is in top form and ready for opening weekend.



Our AKC Hunt Test program was 16 for 17 this season, with two dogs Senior titled and under two years of age. One is a female who completed her last Senior stake at 15 months! Our dogs are trained year round and eagerly await opening day.

Hunting Tips:

Wingshooting success is achieved by applying the appropriate techniques and consistent mechanics. Whether you are a walker, wingman or blocker, several tricks can transform a novice into a sharpshooter. A gun that fits, along with proper shell and choke selection, has its obvious advantages, but relevance is lost when hurried, off-balance shots are taken.

The most important factor to improving accuracy begins with how the gun is held during a hunt. Resting the gun on either shoulder is not only a safety concern; it also delays the shoulder mount and time needed to locate the target. Distance is drastically increased and broad side shots often turn to curling tail shots. Refine your mount by properly placing one hand in a comfortable position on the forend. The index finger should be out of the trigger guard with the thumb or index finger in position to release the gun specific safety. The gun is now out in front of you in a safe, muzzle-up position. A useless motion is eliminated and more time to evaluate distance and speed is created.

Another helpful factor involves your feet. For example, many activities, such as golf or baseball, depend on balance and evenly distributed body weight. In an ideal situation, your lead foot is pointed exactly where your full pattern will contact the desired target (Break Point). The time saved by properly holding the gun may result in the half step needed to align your feet, body and gun. The main objective is to create an efficient swing once the target has been located to time of trigger pull.

Most importantly, we would all agree that **a safe shot remains the best shot.** Constant awareness and evaluation of everyone's location allows a shooter to concentrate solely on the target with no hesitation. Shooting windows are constantly changing in conjunction with the terrain and cover of any particular hunt. Field awareness avoids risky shots and will ultimately end in more shots for all.

The following are labels for three methods of wingshooting:

- 1) The first is **snap-shooting**, which is to point the gun quickly at the spot the target will likely be and shoot. This is touted as the best method when hunting game such as grouse and woodcock in dense woods.
- 2) The second is the **swing-through** method, commonly used on crossing targets. The shooter starts his swing behind the bird, accelerates rapidly, shoots as soon as the barrel "blots out" the target but keeps swinging past. This method is favored for ducks over decoys and pheasants or partridges on open fields.
- 3) The final technique is **sustained lead**. The shooter starts swinging with the barrel ahead of the target, shoots and maintains follow-through. This is said to be ideal for long-range pass-shooting doves, ducks and pheasants.

How well do these three methods work? **A shotgun is meant to be dynamic and moving.** If the barrel is stopped at all during a shot, missed or wounded game will follow.

Therefore, snap shooting is the worst method. It does work, but it breeds too many bad habits that ruin performance on other species. There are plenty of snap shots who can limit ruffed grouse coverts, but fare dismally on waterfowl or pheasants. If the bird surprises them at close range, they often score, but as soon as they have time to evaluate the shot, they seize up.

Sustained lead can be effective but takes a great deal of time and targets to learn. Estimating lead is difficult at long range since the birds appear to be moving slower than they really are.

The swing-through is superior because it is fast, versatile, and easy to master. Proficient wing shooters generally use some variation of the swing-through method.

Everybody shoots differently, so rather than clutter up one's mind with which method to use for a given situation, it's best to get on our five stand range to determine what style of shooting works best for you.