



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Two Curtis Families Meet USDA Leader

Landowners recognized by Pheasants Forever at National Pheasant Fest

Omaha, Neb. – February 2, 2011- Dorris and Jerrod Burke along with Stan and Marilyn Pilcher of Curtis, Nebraska were recognized by Pheasants Forever for their commitment to conservation. The Burkes and Pilchers were also thanked for their land stewardship by Tom Vilsack, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, as part of a press conference to announce Pheasants Forever's 3 millionth acre of habitat work in Nebraska.

The Burke and Pilcher families were recognized as two of 14 Nebraska families across the state that contributed to the 3 millionth acre of habitat impacted by Pheasants Forever since 1987. Nebraska is the first state within the Pheasants Forever organization to reach the 3 million acre accomplishment.

“The 3 million acre accomplishment is the result of the dedication and passion of local chapters and their volunteers as well as the many unique and productive partnerships that we have in Nebraska”, stated Pete Berthelsen, Pheasants Forever Senior Field Coordinator. “Project by project, acre by acre, we’re working to make a difference for Nebraska’s wildlife”.

Some of the habitat programs and accomplishments the two families were recognized for include: a family farm land that is enrolled into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Corners For Wildlife program, performing wildlife management practices that include the use of prescribed fire, planting winter cover food plots, and planting shrub thickets. In addition, Jerrod serves as a commissioner for the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and Stan is a past recipient of the 2008 Master Conservationist of the Year award. Their local Pheasant Forever chapter, the Medicine Creek chapter, will be holding its 20th anniversary banquet will be held in Stockville on Saturday, April 2nd.

In addition to congratulating the families, Secretary Vilsack also announced a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup would occur from March 14 to April 15 targeting up to 4 million acres for acceptance.

“Over the past 25 years, support for CRP has grown thanks to strong backing from partners like Pheasants Forever, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, hunters, fishermen and other outdoor sports enthusiasts,” said Vilsack. “Not only has CRP contributed to the national effort to improve water and air quality, it has preserved habitat for wildlife, and prevented soil erosion by protecting the most sensitive areas including those prone to flash flooding and runoff. Today’s announcement continues the Obama Administration’s effort to conserve sensitive areas and improve wildlife habitat.”

"It's been a great day for the birds," remarked Howard Vincent, President and CEO of Pheasants Forever & [Quail Forever](#). "On the day we thank the chapters, agency partners, and landowners of Nebraska for reaching the three million acre milestone, Secretary Vilsack joins us with news that will help create millions more acres of habitat next year through CRP. We are very pleased."

About Nebraska Pheasants Forever

The Elkhorn Valley Chapter in Madison, Stanton, and Pierce Counties was Nebraska's first chapter of Pheasants Forever, having formed on March 4, 1986. The following spring, Pheasants Forever chapters improved 2,857 acres in Nebraska. From those humble beginnings, Pheasants Forever now completes about

3,900 habitat projects annually in the state. Those projects include wetland restorations, nesting cover establishments, land acquisitions, prescribed burning maintenance and winter cover plantings. Today, Nebraska boasts 60 Pheasants Forever chapters, 4 Quail Forever chapters, 10,000 members and spends over \$3 million in the state each year on habitat projects, habitat equipment and youth education. For more information on accomplishments and habitat programs in Nebraska, log on to: www.NebraskaPF.com.