



**A TREE-PLANTING** demonstration on Van Dorf Farm was one feature of the CRP 20th anniversary farm tour in Saline County.

Much of the land already was enrolled in CRP CP10, which involves cool-season grasses. He also signed up for the CRP-BOB program co-sponsored by the MDC and the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This program provides cost sharing for some quail-friendly management not covered by CRP.

Dillon installed small food plots in the cool-season grasses and sowed legume seeds among the grass to provide better nutrition for wildlife. He planted shrubs to offer woody cover for quail, rabbits and other small animals.

Stop three was Van Dorf Farm, 1,100 acres of production agriculture run by Larry Pointer. Most of the acreage is corn and soybeans, but Pointer set aside 40 acres for CP22, a practice that encourages tree planting along stream corridors. (See cover story.)

J.R. Wade and his grandson, Justin, hosted the final stop on the tour, a 3,000-acre production-agriculture operation in the fabled duck-hunting area of Malta Bend. The senior Wade has been farming for more than 50 years. Justin joined him in 1996. Like Pointer, they grow corn and soybeans on most of their land, but they decided the best use for 200 acres along a stream was to return it to its historic condition.

CP23 enabled the Wades to re-create wetlands. They used CP9 to create shallow-water habitat. Taking this flood-prone land along a stream out of production actually increased the farm's profitability by saving the cost of farming marginally productive acres. It also gave Justin a place to pursue his love of waterfowl hunting and created habitat for animals from salamanders and furbearers to migratory songbirds.

**Cooperation is key**

Hoskins says the economic benefits of CRP have extended far beyond the program's

original goals. Quail and other wildlife help attract out-of-state hunters and anglers who spend \$1.5 billion annually at Missouri businesses.

"The Conservation Department's partnership with the Farm Service Agency and the NRCS is putting CRP on the ground across the state," Hoskins says.

Jef Hodges, regional director for Quail Unlimited, notes that Missouri is one of six states that each received 20,000-acre CP33 allocations for upland bird habitat buffers. He says cooperation between the Conservation Department and the FSA has enabled Missouri to enroll 17,000 acres in this highly beneficial conservation practice.

"I can tell you from firsthand experience that CP33 projects around the state are working," Hodges says. "We have seen increases in quail numbers ranging from 100% to almost 400% around fields that have CP33 installed. We know the program works."

Kelley says soil is the foundation of Missouri's economy. "You and I know we are just caretakers of our land, and that is what CRP is about."

*Low is news services coordinator for the Missouri Department of Conservation.*

**CRP benefits**

- S**INCE its inception, the Conservation Reserve Program has resulted in:
  - 400 million tons of topsoil saved
  - 50 million tons of atmospheric carbon tied up in vegetation each year, slowing global warming
  - 36 million acres enrolled nationwide (8% of available cropland), with an average payment to landowners of \$48.90 per acre
  - 1.6 million acres enrolled in Missouri (7.5% of the state's cropland) on 22,000 farms, saving soil and enhancing wildlife
  - \$105 million in annual payments to Missouri farmers

**Turning ideas into actions**

**T**HE seeds of the Conservation Reserve Program were sown in the 1950s when the USDA realized the importance of soil conservation on private land, according to Larry Adams, USDA Farm Service Agency. Congress translated that growing awareness into action with the Federal Food Security Act of 1985. Article XII of the act provided financial incentives for farmers to take cropland out of production. The program sought to reduce both soil erosion and farm commodity surpluses. CRP succeeded at both goals, Adams says.

Working in partnership with state and federal farm and wildlife agencies, Congress added provisions that allow management of land set aside under CRP in ways that would enhance enrolled acres' usefulness to wildlife. The result was a bevy of conservation practices — CPs, for short — which farmers and landowners could engage in without violating the terms of their CRP agreements. Many CPs came with further federal cash incentives to encourage landowners' use.

**CRP in Missouri — by the numbers**

CRP acres .....	1,572,700
Contracts .....	36,198
Farms .....	22,014
Avg. payment per acre .....	\$68.47
Total annual payments .....	\$104,535,000
% of cropland enrolled .....	7.48%

**Top five CRP practices**

Top five CRP practices	Acres enrolled
1. Established grasses (CP10)	832,019
2. Introduced grasses (CP1)	361,213
3. Native grasses (CP2)	174,539
4. New tree plantings (CP3A)	20,725
5. Upland bird habitat buffers (CP33)	12,887

**Newsmakers**

**FFA members gain New Century Farmer experience**

Eric Schoff, Hamilton, and Megan Schmidt, Laredo, were selected among 40 participants in the elite 2006 New Century Farmer Program, a special project of the National FFA Foundation. They took part in an intensive five-day seminar July 17–21 in Des Moines, Iowa. The program is designed to help develop youth who are committed to pursuing a career in production agriculture.

"The New Century Farmer Program helps today's premier young farmers to prepare for a highly competitive global marketplace, and to develop the professional and personal skills that will help them lead successful careers in production agriculture," says Larry Case, national adviser of the National FFA Organization. "The program provides valuable learning that participants will take home and apply to their own farming operations, as well as resources and a network of contacts that they can draw upon throughout their careers."

The New Century Farmer Program is sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. and Rabobank as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Participants representing 21 states learned from industry experts and each other in a series of workshops and sessions on topics ranging from the global marketplace to farm financing and demographic trends to risk management.

**MJCA elects new leaders**

The Missouri Junior Cattlemen's Association announces its newly elected board of directors. They include Jordan Hunter, Fair Grove; Hannah Lea, Cuba; Lanny Farrington, Callao; Keaton Kendrick, Palmyra; Anna Jones, Paris; Jessica Weigand, Warrensburg; and Matthew Kahrs, Hughesville. Second-year board members include Tyler Richter, Steelville; Tyler Keatts, Marionville; Scott Ray, Paris; Holly Bellis, Orrick; and Kyle Kendrick, Palmyra.

In addition, Missouri Beef Queen Rori Schlender, Sedalia, and Missouri Beef Ambassador Rachael Keathley, Montgomery City, will serve in ex-officio positions on the board of directors.

The MJCA board is planning several activities for the upcoming year, including a leadership conference and activities during the 2006 Missouri Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show Dec. 7-9 at the University Plaza Hotel/Springfield Expo Center in Springfield.

**MBIC executive moves on**

Steve Taylor has left his post at the Missouri Beef Industry Council, Columbia, to become the CEO of the Appaloosa Horse Club in Moscow, Idaho.

Taylor started with the beef council in early 1987, just after the nationwide checkoff program was launched. He leaves behind a solid program with a reputation for a good mix of checkoff-funded activities at the state level and effective support of national and international marketing efforts.

"It's been a remarkable experience to work with such high-quality volunteers and staff members at MBIC," Taylor says. "I'm not sure I can adequately express how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve the beef community of Missouri. There is no doubt that I have gained considerably more in friendships, support and good examples of commitment than I've been able to give. I'll always treasure the people and the education."

An MBIC search committee for a new executive, led by David Dick, Sedalia, MBIC board chairman, started the process of applications and interviews in July.



**STEVE TAYLOR**

**AFA marks 10th anniversary**

The Agriculture Future of America organization, based in Kansas City, is celebrating 10 years of existence. AFA was founded in 1996 by R. Crosby Kemper Jr. to encourage and support college students who are preparing for careers in agriculture. AFA creates a professional network that promotes lifelong learning and building lifelong alliances. The 2006 AFA Convention is set for Nov. 2-5 in Kansas City.

**Extra incentives for conservation**

Annual rental payments for CRP contracts are based on the agricultural rental value of the land. The average rental rate in Missouri is \$66.47 per acre. Cost-share assistance to establish the practice is provided for up to 50% of the participant's costs. Some of the continuous sign-up practices offer additional incentives to persuade landowners to enroll acreage into the program. Contact your local Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service office to learn more.