



## THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

5410 Grosvenor Lane • Bethesda, MD 20814-2197

Tel: (301) 897-9770 • Fax: (301) 530-2471

17 March 1995

Dear Section and Chapter leader:

The farm bill re-authorization process offers an opportunity for wildlife professionals to enhance wildlife habitat on 400+ million acres of farmland in the United States. The farm bill drives many land use decisions on private land and effects wildlife habitat profoundly.

The Wildlife Society is actively involved in the farm bill debate and has a technical review paper, **1995 Farm Bill: Wildlife Options in Agricultural Policy**. The authors include Society members who are experts in agricultural research, management and policy. The report explains the features in the 1985 and 1990 farm bills that affect wildlife and makes recommendations for improvements in the 1995 bill.

Several key TWS findings are:

- 1) The Conservation Reserve Program should be continued, stress longer term or permanent easements, and target key habitats for enrollment;
- 2) Set-aside cropland should be idled for five to ten years, rather than on an annual basis;
- 3) The Wetland Reserve Program, which offers incentives to conserve wetlands, should be funded fully;
- 4) Swampbuster should be strengthened through better enforcement and accurate inventories;
- 5) The sodbuster provision, which specifies that new, highly erodible land cannot be brought into production without a conservation plan or subsidies will be lost, must be continued and strengthened;
- 6) Conservation Compliance must be enforced to effectively reduce soil erosion; and
- 7) State Technical Committees should be established and should have significant authority as defined by the 1990 Farm Bill; and much more.

The enclosed TWS fact sheet briefly describes general wildlife considerations for the farm bill and may be used as a handout at your meetings.

Also enclosed is the Wildlife Management Institute report **How Much Is Enough?: a Regional Wildlife Habitat Needs Assessment for the 1995 Farm Bill**. The report was prepared by professional wildlife managers, many of whom are TWS members. They synthesized the available science and used professional judgement to identify specific goals for stabilizing and restoring wildlife populations.