
Chapter 1
Executive Summary



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Wildlife habitat management and agricultural production need not be mutually exclusive uses of the land resource. In fact, wildlife management on agricultural lands may provide short- and long-term benefits to agricultural operations. Opportunities exist today for landowners to adopt technologies that benefit agriculture and wildlife as part of their agricultural operation.

Technologies to benefit agriculture and wildlife on croplands, rangelands, and forest lands include: 1) specific technologies (e. g., the undercutter plow], 2) integrated management systems (e.g., organic farming), 3) regional management strategies (e.g., Wisconsin's Dodge County Interagency Project), and 4) information transfer technologies (e.g., the Coverts Project in Vermont and Connecticut). Each technology benefits agriculture by promoting sustainable agricultural production or satisfying a landowner's objectives in managing his land; the technologies benefit wildlife by enhancing wildlife habitat on agricultural lands.

Before proper development and implementation of agriculture/wildlife technologies will occur, some fundamental problems related to agriculture and wildlife interactions need to be overcome. The common perception that wildlife habitat conservation and agriculture production are mutually exclusive land uses needs to be addressed. Federal programs may need to be redirected to incorporate multiple objectives. Another issue to be addressed is the perceived trade-off in agricultural practices be-

tween short-term profits from the land and maintenance of the land's long-term productivity.

Federal policies and programs that integrate wildlife conservation and agriculture production could be established to overcome constraints to technology development and adoption and to encourage landowners to use practices that will maintain long-term resource productivity. Potential policies and programs in the 1985 Farm Bill could foster integration of agriculture economic policies with natural resource conservation policies and promote development and implementation of innovative technologies to sustain agriculture and the resource base. Opportunities exist for improving the effectiveness of Federal programs by amending current policies or by increasing appropriations for programs.

Some of the report's proposals would require redirection of available funding or increased appropriations to satisfy program objectives. Others, such as a cross-compliance policy or conservation reserve, may be able to reduce Federal funding because they address dual objectives of resource conservation and commodity production control. A Federal commitment to encourage improved management of the Nation's private land resources for private and public benefits could provide the necessary leadership for successful landowner implementation of any available or future techniques.