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SUGGESTS WAYS FOR HUNTERS TO COOPERATE WITH FARMERS

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J. Paul Miller, of the U. S. Biological Survey, yesterday (November 18) placed squarely upon the shoulders of sportsmen most of the blame for shortcomings of farmer-sportsmen game conservation programs. He addressed members of the fifth annual New York State Wildlife Conference held in Kingston under the auspices of the New York State Conservation Council.

Great hope for better hunting through cooperation between farmers and sportsmen, however, was expressed by the speaker, who recently completed a 2-year field study of wildlife management as a supplementary farm enterprise.

The future of upland-game hunting in this country will depend upon the success or failure of farmer-sportsmen programs, he said. The farmer produces most of the game and provides places for hunting. More than 60 percent of the potentially "hunnable" area in New York, for instance, is devoted primarily to agricultural uses.

Quail, pheasants, and Hungarian partridges are entirely dependent upon farm-lands for their existence, Miller stated. The cottontail rabbit and ruffed grouse thrive best on certain agricultural lands. More than 80 percent of the game taken in New York is produced on farm lands.

Sportsmen ask farmers to provide a place for game to live, food for game, and most important, access to the land for hunting, but privileges are often abused. As a result many farmers post their lands against trespass.

"The one feature which appeals most to farmers in all cooperative programs is the promise of protection to property through restricted and controlled hunting," Miller stated. "That is little to ask. From my own experience, I have found it considerably more pleasurable to hunt when I can feel I am an invited guest, even when the bag permitted by an association is less than that allowed by State law. No farmer who must make a living from the soil can afford to plant food patches, provide extensive protective cover, patrol his property, and handle a multiplicity of associated details for the small amount of cash usually paid for hunting rights. Sportsmen who are able can put up cash, but those who cannot afford such expenditures may advance the program by contributing time and effort."

Sportsmen can help by establishing small refuges or seed stock areas, the speaker pointed out. Even with ample food and cover, game will not increase unless sufficient protection is furnished to prevent killing off the increase, he concluded.

Two recent publications touching on this subject are available. They are Farmers' Bulletin 1719, Improving the Farm Environment for Wildlife, and Farmers' Bulletin 1759, Game Management on the Farm. Both can be obtained free from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.