



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)

**For Release:** July 1, 2010

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## Comments Solicited on Refuge Farm Program

Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in northern Oklahoma is currently reviewing farming activities that take place on the Refuge. As part of this process the public is being invited to provide early comments on potential issues or concerns that should be considered.

On many refuges throughout the nation, farming programs provide benefits for both resident and migrating animals. For example, farming programs provide supplemental forage for resident and migratory wildlife, manage undesirable and/or invasive vegetation, restore native habitats and aid in the recovery of threatened or endangered species, and in some cases provide a safe resting spot for migrating waterfowl and help to keep them off private farm fields. Farming programs also provide increased wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education opportunities.

Salt Plains manages 1,231 acres of cropland. The farming program is conducted primarily by refuge staff, with a small number of acres (26 acres of wheat) grown through a cooperative farming agreement with a local farmer. Farming has been accomplished primarily to provide food for wintering and migrating geese, ducks, and cranes. Deer, upland game birds, and song birds also benefit. No genetically modified crops are used on Salt Plains NWR.

This comment period is known as ‘Scoping’ under the National Environmental Policy Act. During scoping the Refuge is looking for general comments on the farming program. These comments will assist in determining the next course of action. Comments will be accepted until August 1, 2010. Comments should be sent to [Greg\\_Birkenfeld@fws.gov](mailto:Greg_Birkenfeld@fws.gov), or mailed to Refuge Manager Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Rt 1, Box 76, Jet, OK 73749

This review of the Refuge’s farming program is part of a nationwide review of all Refuge farming programs. For the status of farming programs being reviewed throughout the southwest and commenting instructions please visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html>

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