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The early colonials called them partridges and some still refer to them as “pah-tidges” today. As the colony of Georgia was settled, small farms and clearing increased and the settlers continued to burn the woods off each year just as the Indians had done before. Georgia’s high quail population resulted from these low intensity agriculture and forestry practices that were commonly applied throughout most of the state, especially during the late 1800s through the mid-1900s. While no one knows when quail became a popular game bird, it was likely in the 1800s with the invention of the scattergun. In the early 1900s, Georgia became known as the quail capital of the world and in 1970, the bobwhite quail was designated as Georgia’s official state game bird. However, as quail hunters and other wildlife conservationists know, quail populations throughout the U.S. and Georgia have declined dramatically. Data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Breeding Bird Survey indicate that from 1966 to 2018, Georgia’s quail population declined by more than 72% (Figure 1, Appendix). This decline has led to a reduction in the number of quail hunters and quail harvest. In 1962, an estimated 135,000 hunters harvested about 4 million quail in Georgia, but by 2019, the number of hunters had declined to 12,742, and the reported quail harvest to about 279,291 (Figure 2, Appendix)—with nine out of ten being pen-raised birds. Quail populations have declined dramatically due to the significant loss of quality habitat and a variety of land-use changes. Compounding landscape level changes, such as “clean farming” practices, larger agricultural fields, increased use of agricultural pesticides and conversion of farmland and native rangeland to exotic grass pastures have resulted in a precipitous decline. In addition, increased acreage in intensively managed short rotation pine plantations, decreased use of prescribed fire and increased urbanization have all led to the loss of habitat connectivity (Photo 1). Quail in Georgia will likely never return to the widespread abundance experienced in the early 1900s, but their numbers have increased in many areas due to improved management. The good news is that more is known about managing bobwhite quail than any other upland game bird. The first step to improving habitat conditions for quail is developing a management plan that considers the entire life history of the bobwhite relative to the current habitat conditions. To increase quail populations, management practices must address the factor that is most limiting the quail population in each situation. For example, planting food plots to increase fall foods will not result in more birds if the limiting factor is brood habitat.  To read the article in it's entirety go to:  https://georgiawildlife.com/sites/default/files/wrd/pdf/quail/Quail%20Management%20Booklet.pdf  July 2020 |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | USDA Opening Targeted EQIP Signup in 10 States  Related ATTRA Publication:  [Federal Working Lands Conservation Resources for Sustainable Farming and Ranching](https://attra.ncat.org/product/federal-conservation-resources-for-sustainable-farming-and-ranching/)  USDA announced that it is providing $10 million to support climate-smart agriculture and forestry through voluntary conservation practices in 10 targeted states. [This assistance, available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1793821) (EQIP), will help agricultural producers plan and implement voluntary conservation practices that sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on working lands. Producers in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin can apply for this funding opportunity. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service selected these states based on demonstrated demand for additional support for climate-smart practices. Each state will determine its own signup period, with signups expected to begin on or around June 24, 2021, in most states.  Sustainable Agriculture News Briefs - June 30, 2021 |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | As comedian Henny Youngman once joked, "Americans are getting stronger. Twenty years ago, it took two people to carry $10 worth of groceries. Today, a five-year-old can do it." | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Members and Game Farm License Holders  From Southeast Trophy Deer Association <[info@southeasttrophydeerassociation.com](mailto:info@southeasttrophydeerassociation.com)  The BOD’s of the SeTDA want to remind and invite you to attend one of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee’s (FWC) public meetings regarding captive wildlife regulations in Florida. There    will be four different dates at four different locations throughout the state. The BOD’s of the SeTDA encourage you to attend and to give your feedback on updates related to captive wildlife. The more people from our industry sharing opinions, concerns and giving constructional input, the louder our voices and the stronger we stand.  Thank You,  Southeast Trophy Deer Association  Board of Directors Captive Wildlife Rule Development for  Reporting Requirements Public Meetings  --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will be hosting public meetings to encourage input on captive wildlife regulations in Florida regarding reporting requirements for injuries, bites and escapes involving captive wildlife.  These meetings will give the public the opportunity to interact directly with FWC Captive Wildlife Section staff and provide feedback. The primary purpose of these meetings is for stakeholders to engage staff and make recommendations on reporting requirements for injuries, bites and escapes involving captive wildlife.  FWC staff is engaging the public and individuals who hold captive wildlife permits to solicit input on reorganizing and updating rules related to captive wildlife. In consideration of our geographically diverse stakeholders, public engagement meetings will be held in four locations throughout the state. We encourage attendance at these meetings to facilitate involvement with staff as they develop possible rule amendments. Interested stakeholders unable to attend will also be able to provide comments in writing or on the FWC web page at [https://myfwc.com/license/captive-wildlife/](https://southeasttrophydeerassociation.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4533d88274bca7d28a1bbdab3&id=c8f170cd46&e=9b5b62749d).  Meeting Dates and Locations (6:00 PM to 8:00 PM)  Jacksonville - July 12, 2021  Hilton Garden Inn Jacksonville JTB/Deerwood Park  9745 Gate Pkwy N  Jacksonville, FL 32246  Panama City - July 13, 2021  Hilton Garden Inn Panama City  1101 US Highway 231  Panama City, FL 32405  Palm Beach Gardens - August 3, 2021  Embassy Suites PGA Boulevard – Palm Beach Gardens  4350 PGA Boulevard  Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  Tampa - September 15, 2021  Embassy Suites Tampa Brandon  10220 Palm River Road  Tampa, FL 33619  Rule Development Goals  FWC will be reviewing rules related to the above topics in an effort to increase public safety, animal welfare and consistency of our rules.  Staff looks forward to working with all stakeholders as we move forward in this process and encourages participation from anyone interested in captive wildlife in Florida.  July 11, 2021 | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Honey hunters in Mozambique use special calls to recruit the services of birds known as honeyguides. The birds lead the humans to bees' nests and in return, they get the leftover beeswax. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | USDA Agriculture clip June 30, 2021 | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | USDA Announces $500 Million for Expanded Meat & Poultry Processing Capacity as Part of Efforts to Increase Competition, Level the Playing Field for Family Farmers and Ranchers, and Build a Better Food System  Release & Contact Info  Press Release  Release No. 0154.21  Contact: USDA Press  Email: [press@usda.gov](mailto:press@usda.gov)  Council Bluffs, I.A., July 9, 2021 – Today, USDA is announcing it intends to make significant investments to expand processing capacity and increase competition in meat and poultry processing to make agricultural markets more accessible, fair, competitive, and resilient for American farmers and ranchers. This is one of several key steps that USDA will take to increase competition in agricultural markets, pursuant to President Biden’s Executive Order on promoting competition and as part of USDA efforts to build a more resilient supply chain and better food system. Together, USDA’s actions will help farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and consumers all get a fair shake.  Specifically, USDA announced its intent to invest $500 million in American Rescue Plan funds to expand meat and poultry processing capacity so that farmers, ranchers, and consumers have more choices in the marketplace. USDA also announced more than $150 million for existing small and very small processing facilities to help them weather COVID, compete in the marketplace and get the support they need to reach more customers. USDA is also holding meatpackers accountable by revitalizing the Packers and Stockyards Act, issuing new rules on “Product of USA” labels, and developing plans to expand farmers’ access to new markets.  “The COVID-19 pandemic led to massive disruption for growers, food workers, and consumers alike. It exposed a food system that was rigid, consolidated, and fragile. Meanwhile, those growing, processing and preparing our food are earning less each year in a system that rewards size over all else,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “To shift the balance of power back to the people, USDA will invest in building more, better, and fairer markets for producers and consumers alike. The investments USDA will make in expanding meat and poultry capacity, along with restoration of the Packers and Stockyards Act, will begin to level the playing field for farmers and ranchers. This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the food system so it is more resilient to shocks, delivers greater value to growers and workers, and offers consumers an affordable selection of healthy food produced and sourced locally and regionally by farmers and processors from diverse backgrounds. I am confident USDA’s investments in expanded capacity will spur millions more in leveraged funding from the private sector and state and local partners as our efforts gain traction across the country.”  The announcement USDA is making today is part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s historic commitment to fight monopolization and promote competition across the economy. They are also aligned with USDA’s vision of a food system that is fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient, one that supports health and ensures producers receive a fair share of the food dollar while advancing equity and combating the climate crisis.  In the coming months, USDA will take additional steps to promote competition and make a series of additional investments under USDA’s Build Back Better Initiative focused on building a better food system.  Market Concentration in Agriculture  As key agricultural markets have become more concentrated and less competitive, farmers and ranchers are getting squeezed from both sides. Markets for farm inputs—like seeds and fertilizer—are now dominated by just a few companies. Meanwhile, farmers and ranchers have fewer and fewer options for selling their products. The result is that often family farmers and ranchers are getting less, consumers are paying more, and those in the middle are taking the difference.  Dominant companies can use their power to engage in abusive practices and make it harder for farmers, ranchers, and consumers to get a fair price. [Farmers’ share](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-dollar-series/) of every dollar spent on food has declined consistently from 35 cents in the 1970s to around just 14 cents in recent years.  Concentration in food processing has contributed to bottlenecks in America’s food supply chain, too. Just a few meatpackers, with a few large processing facilities, process most of the livestock that farmers and ranchers raise into the meat that we buy. For example, just four large meat-packing companies control over 80 percent of the beef market alone. One of the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic is that this system is too rigid and too fragile. When COVID slowed or shuttered meat processing, many farmers had no place to go. Farmers were forced to depopulate their animals, while grocery store shelves went bare and demand for food assistance spiked. These vulnerabilities are not new. And, given current concerns about climate and cybersecurity, these risks are likely to grow even more sharply in the future.  USDA is announcing the following initiatives to increase competition in agricultural markets, and build more resilience supply chains:  Investing More Than $500 million to Increase Competition and Capacity in the Meat and Poultry Processing Markets.   * USDA will commit $500 million of USDA’s [Build Back Better Initiative](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/08/usda-invest-more-4-billion-strengthen-food-system) funds through the American Rescue Plan to support new competitive entrants in meat and poultry processing. USDA will provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to address concentration within the meat and poultry sectors and relieve supply chain bottlenecks by supporting new meat and poultry processing facilities. These facilities will create competitive opportunities for producers in local and regional food systems so that farmers and ranchers have access to better choices and fairer prices. USDA has issued a [Request for Information (RFI)](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Meat%20Processing%20RFI.pdf) to solicit public input into its strategy to improve meat and poultry processing infrastructure and will hold targeted stakeholder meetings and other public engagement to better understand the needs, gaps, and barriers to fair and competitive meat processing markets.   Providing more than $150 million to Strengthen Existing Small and Very Small Processing Facilities and Help Them Weather COVID, Stay in the Marketplace, and Expand Capacity   * USDA will invest more than $55 million in strengthening existing small and very small meat processing capacity, benefitting smaller producers and processing plants. USDA has made $55.2 million available for [Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/21/usda-invests-552-million-grants-increase-capacity-and-expand-access)s to support expanded meat and poultry slaughter and processing capacity and efficiency while maintaining strong inspection and food safety standards. * USDA will dedicate $100 million to help small and very small processing plants weather the volatility and unexpected costs that COVID imposed.  With American Rescue Plan funds, USDA [will provide $100 million](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsis.usda.gov%2Fpolicy%2Ffederal-register-rulemaking%2Ffederal-register-notices%2Fovertime-and-holiday-inspection-fee&data=04%7C01%7C%7C1c62d0e4200c41c1323a08d9424f4e60%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637613730657400354%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=tc0%2BGR69flVaMaODMPpzpk7mCwGav4yVbO%2BI2QPxrTo%3D&reserved=0) to reduce the financial burden of overtime inspection fees for small and very small poultry, meat and egg processing plants, which provide farmers with local alternatives and greater capacity to process livestock.   Leveling the Playing Field for Independent Family Farmers and Ranchers   * USDA will revitalize the Packers and Stockyards Act to fight unfair practices and rebuild a competitive marketplace. The Packers and Stockyards Act was designed to ensure a fair and competitive marketplace and protect farmers against abuse at the hands of large businesses in the livestock and poultry industry. But the previous administration systematically weakened the law’s scope. To facilitate effective enforcement of the Act, USDA will be conducting [three rulemakings](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/11/usda-begin-work-strengthen-enforcement-packers-and-stockyards-act). First, the rulemakings will clarify the conduct that USDA considers a violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act, including conduct that is unfair, deceptive, or unjustly discriminatory against farmers and growers. Second, they will address oppressive practices in chicken processing. Third, the rulemakings will reinforce the longstanding USDA position that it is not necessary to demonstrate harm or likely harm to competition in order to establish a violation of the Act. * USDA will develop a plan to increase farmers’ and ranchers’ access to new markets, and promote their ability to receive a fair return. As per the President’s Executive Order on promoting competition, USDA will develop a plan to increase opportunities for farmers to access markets, including by supporting value-added markets and local and regional food distribution systems. USDA will also analyze and recommend policies to address the impacts of concentration in seeds and in the retail sector on family farmers, and propose strategies to enhance transparency and accountability in key markets. Together, these initiatives will give farmers more choices on how they buy and sell so that they aren’t at the mercy of a handful of dominant processors and distributors. * USDA will issue new rules on labeling so that domestic farmers and ranchers don’t have to compete with foreign companies that mislead consumers. On July 1st, USDA [announced intent](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/07/01/usda-announces-efforts-promote-transparency-product-usa-labeling) to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the “Product of USA” meat labeling term..   Building a Better Food System and Strengthening the Food Supply Chain  Citing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent supply chain disruptions, earlier this month USDA announced plans to invest more than $4 billion to strengthen critical supply chains through [USDA’s Build Back Better initiative](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/08/usda-invest-more-4-billion-strengthen-food-system) to strengthen and transform the food system, using funding from the American Rescue Plan and the Consolidated Appropriations Act. The $500 million commitment to invest in meat and poultry processing today begins to detail how the $4 billion will be deployed. The new effort will strengthen the food system, create new market opportunities, tackle the climate crisis, help communities that have been left behind, and support good-paying jobs throughout the supply chain. A transformed food system will provide producers with a greater share of the food dollar and make agriculture a more compelling career. It will also improve nutrition and the health status of Americans, reducing the costs of healthcare and diet-related diseases.  Through USDA’s Build Back Better initiative, USDA will help to ensure the food system of the future is fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient; supports health with access to healthy, affordable food; ensures growers and workers receive a greater share of the food dollar; and advances equity as well as climate resilience and mitigation.  While USDA’s Build Back Better initiative addresses near- and long-term issues, recent events have exposed the immediate need for action. USDA’s actions to promote competition and the intention to invest in additional small- and medium-sized meat processing capacity will spur economic opportunity while strengthening resilience and certainty for producers and consumers alike.  This announcement also furthers the Biden-Harris Administration’s work on strengthening the resilience of critical supply chains as directed by Executive Order 14017 on America's Supply Chains. USDA’s efforts to strengthen the food system is a vital component of the Administration’s whole-of-government response to address near-term supply chain challenges to the economic recovery. Through the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force, of which Secretary Vilsack is a member, the Administration is convening stakeholders to diagnose problems and surface solutions—large and small, public or private—that could help alleviate bottlenecks and supply constraints related to the economy’s reopening after the Administration’s historic vaccination and economic relief efforts.  ﻿#USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | [Alachua County Small-Producer Agriculture Capital Support Grant](https://attra.ncat.org/alachua-county-small-producer-agriculture-capital-support-grant)  Related Attra Publication  Alachua County, Florida's, Board of County Commissioners is funding a [mini-grant to Alachua County-based farms and ranches](https://alachuacounty.us/depts/sustainability/pages/ag-grant.aspx) that earn between $1,000 and $250,000 per year. Funding is for capital and equipment expenditures that will positively impact these operations' income. The total grant request must not exceed $5,000. To reduce inequity in marginalized communities, this grant will also prioritize small farms and ranches that are owned by black, women, indigenous, and persons-of-color. Applications are due by July 30, 2021  contact by email : [SMAACA@alachuacounty.us](mailto:SMAACA@alachuacounty.us)  Alachua County’s Office of Resilience, Climate Change, and Sustainability  12 SE First Street, 2nd Floor County Manager’s Office  Gainesville, FL 32601 | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Secretary's Corner  ATHENS, Ga. — The American Mosquito Control Association has June 20-26 as National Mosquito Control Awareness Week, and with summer and the first tropical storm of the season arriving simultaneously this year, we’re getting warm, wet weather at a time when more folks are spending time outside. This combination is sure to signal a rise in mosquito interactions, making it a perfect time to think about mosquito control around your home and community.  While most people are familiar with the flying adult stage of mosquitoes, understanding the larval stage is crucial for successful control. Mosquitoes are united by the need for standing water in order to develop from egg to pupa. The absence of water does not mean a total absence of mosquitoes, as deposited eggs can remain dormant for a period of months — and up to years — waiting for the proper conditions. However, the necessity of water for mosquito development makes identifying water sources one of the key components of integrated mosquito management (IMM).  IMM is a five-step process, distilled from established integrated pest management practices, to help you safely and effectively manage mosquitoes:  1. Education: It is important for clients and stakeholders to understand the basics of mosquito biology to make informed decisions. Historically, large-scale pesticide applications were common in communities, but their impact on ecosystems was so severe it led to a total paradigm shift in mosquito management. Thankfully [DDT](https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/ddt-brief-history-and-status) is no longer used, but some of the same concerns about the negative impacts of pesticides on native insect populations persist today, even with modern ultra-low volume (ULV) applications.  2. Surveillance: This step may be used interchangeably with scouting. As with other pest scouting methods, there are various practices, from active sweep netting to passive traps, that may be deployed in field sites. The goal remains the same — sample populations to identify the relative abundance of important species and disease vectors so that you can make good management decisions.  3. Source reduction: This step is linked to the need to identify and, whenever practical, remove resources that allow mosquito populations to persist. The most well-known of these are so-called “tip and toss” programs. As the name suggests, this entails a concerted effort to empty any and all vessels containing standing water as regularly as possible during the warmer months. Such vessels typically include items such as flower pots, children’s toys, tires, buckets and tarps. Another potential source that may be worth assessing are large stands of ground cover, especially English ivy. Ivy patches are a favorite daytime resting place of adult mosquitoes and removal may greatly aid control efforts.  4 and 5. Larviciding and adulticiding: These steps encompass using insecticides for the respective mosquito life stages. Because of the concerns for pollinators and beekeepers, larviciding should be used in conjunction with any adulticiding program to mitigate the potential for non-target effects on other insects. Larviciding is typically done with so-called “dunks” placed into the water where larvae or pupae are present. These typically include ingredients such as methoprene, or biological control agents such as Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) and spinosad. As with any insecticide application, it is important to ensure that the chosen chemical is labeled for the pest you are trying to control.  Adulticiding efforts are carried out by licensed pesticide applicators due to the necessity for specialized equipment and restricted-use chemicals. The improper use of adulticides can have a dramatic effect on native insect populations. Because adulticides act by contact, they will not discriminate between species. Adulticide applications are best done later in the day to minimize impacts on day-flying insects, especially pollinators.  As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. To prevent bites, it is best to wear light-colored and loose-fitting clothing. Additionally, mosquitoes cannot fly faster than about 3 miles per hour, so a simple box fan may be enough to discourage feeding. [DEET](https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/deet) is typically the gold standard for repellents, but those with sensitive skin or nasal passages might consider lemon eucalyptus oil or products containing [picaridin](http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/PicaridinGen.html).  For more information on mosquitoes be sure to reach out to your local University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agent or consult UGA Extension Circulars [1154](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1154&title=Best%20Practices%20of%20Integrated%20Mosquito%20Management), [1155](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1155) and [1188](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1188), which are all about mosquito biology, behavior and management — and protecting pollinators in the process.  –James Murphy, University of Georgia  Happy Hunting  Dr. Gary S. Davis  Exec. Sec. SEGB&HPA  www.segamebirds.us | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | |

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| |  | | --- | | For many years, Georgia has been known as the “Quail Capital of the World.” This title was justified by the state’s excellent population of wild Northern Bobwhite (Colinus virginianus), or bobwhite quail. The early colonials called them partridges and some still refer to them as “pah-tidges” today. As the colony of Georgia was settled, small farms and clearing increased and the settlers continued to burn the woods off each year just as the Indians had done before. Georgia’s high quail population resulted from these low intensity agriculture and forestry practices that were commonly applied throughout most of the state, especially during the late 1800s through the mid-1900s. While no one knows when quail became a popular game bird, it was likely in the 1800s with the invention of the scattergun. In the early 1900s, Georgia became known as the quail capital of the world and in 1970, the bobwhite quail was designated as Georgia’s official state game bird. However, as quail hunters and other wildlife conservationists know, quail populations throughout the U.S. and Georgia have declined dramatically. Data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Breeding Bird Survey indicate that from 1966 to 2018, Georgia’s quail population declined by more than 72% (Figure 1, Appendix). This decline has led to a reduction in the number of quail hunters and quail harvest. In 1962, an estimated 135,000 hunters harvested about 4 million quail in Georgia, but by 2019, the number of hunters had declined to 12,742, and the reported quail harvest to about 279,291 (Figure 2, Appendix)—with nine out of ten being pen-raised birds. Quail populations have declined dramatically due to the significant loss of quality habitat and a variety of land-use changes. Compounding landscape level changes, such as “clean farming” practices, larger agricultural fields, increased use of agricultural pesticides and conversion of farmland and native rangeland to exotic grass pastures have resulted in a precipitous decline. In addition, increased acreage in intensively managed short rotation pine plantations, decreased use of prescribed fire and increased urbanization have all led to the loss of habitat connectivity (Photo 1). Quail in Georgia will likely never return to the widespread abundance experienced in the early 1900s, but their numbers have increased in many areas due to improved management. The good news is that more is known about managing bobwhite quail than any other upland game bird. The first step to improving habitat conditions for quail is developing a management plan that considers the entire life history of the bobwhite relative to the current habitat conditions. To increase quail populations, management practices must address the factor that is most limiting the quail population in each situation. For example, planting food plots to increase fall foods will not result in more birds if the limiting factor is brood habitat.  To read the article in it's entirety go to:  https://georgiawildlife.com/sites/default/files/wrd/pdf/quail/Quail%20Management%20Booklet.pdf  July 2020 |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | USDA Opening Targeted EQIP Signup in 10 States  Related ATTRA Publication:  [Federal Working Lands Conservation Resources for Sustainable Farming and Ranching](https://attra.ncat.org/product/federal-conservation-resources-for-sustainable-farming-and-ranching/)  USDA announced that it is providing $10 million to support climate-smart agriculture and forestry through voluntary conservation practices in 10 targeted states. [This assistance, available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1793821) (EQIP), will help agricultural producers plan and implement voluntary conservation practices that sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on working lands. Producers in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin can apply for this funding opportunity. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service selected these states based on demonstrated demand for additional support for climate-smart practices. Each state will determine its own signup period, with signups expected to begin on or around June 24, 2021, in most states.  Sustainable Agriculture News Briefs - June 30, 2021 |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |

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| |  | | --- | | Members and Game Farm License Holders  From Southeast Trophy Deer Association <[info@southeasttrophydeerassociation.com](mailto:info@southeasttrophydeerassociation.com)  The BOD’s of the SeTDA want to remind and invite you to attend one of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee’s (FWC) public meetings regarding captive wildlife regulations in Florida. There    will be four different dates at four different locations throughout the state. The BOD’s of the SeTDA encourage you to attend and to give your feedback on updates related to captive wildlife. The more people from our industry sharing opinions, concerns and giving constructional input, the louder our voices and the stronger we stand.  Thank You,  Southeast Trophy Deer Association  Board of Directors Captive Wildlife Rule Development for  Reporting Requirements Public Meetings  --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will be hosting public meetings to encourage input on captive wildlife regulations in Florida regarding reporting requirements for injuries, bites and escapes involving captive wildlife.  These meetings will give the public the opportunity to interact directly with FWC Captive Wildlife Section staff and provide feedback. The primary purpose of these meetings is for stakeholders to engage staff and make recommendations on reporting requirements for injuries, bites and escapes involving captive wildlife.  FWC staff is engaging the public and individuals who hold captive wildlife permits to solicit input on reorganizing and updating rules related to captive wildlife. In consideration of our geographically diverse stakeholders, public engagement meetings will be held in four locations throughout the state. We encourage attendance at these meetings to facilitate involvement with staff as they develop possible rule amendments. Interested stakeholders unable to attend will also be able to provide comments in writing or on the FWC web page at [https://myfwc.com/license/captive-wildlife/](https://southeasttrophydeerassociation.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4533d88274bca7d28a1bbdab3&id=c8f170cd46&e=9b5b62749d).  Meeting Dates and Locations (6:00 PM to 8:00 PM)  Jacksonville - July 12, 2021  Hilton Garden Inn Jacksonville JTB/Deerwood Park  9745 Gate Pkwy N  Jacksonville, FL 32246  Panama City - July 13, 2021  Hilton Garden Inn Panama City  1101 US Highway 231  Panama City, FL 32405  Palm Beach Gardens - August 3, 2021  Embassy Suites PGA Boulevard – Palm Beach Gardens  4350 PGA Boulevard  Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  Tampa - September 15, 2021  Embassy Suites Tampa Brandon  10220 Palm River Road  Tampa, FL 33619  Rule Development Goals  FWC will be reviewing rules related to the above topics in an effort to increase public safety, animal welfare and consistency of our rules.  Staff looks forward to working with all stakeholders as we move forward in this process and encourages participation from anyone interested in captive wildlife in Florida.  July 11, 2021 | |

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| |  | | --- | | USDA Announces $500 Million for Expanded Meat & Poultry Processing Capacity as Part of Efforts to Increase Competition, Level the Playing Field for Family Farmers and Ranchers, and Build a Better Food System  Release & Contact Info  Press Release  Release No. 0154.21  Contact: USDA Press  Email: [press@usda.gov](mailto:press@usda.gov)  Council Bluffs, I.A., July 9, 2021 – Today, USDA is announcing it intends to make significant investments to expand processing capacity and increase competition in meat and poultry processing to make agricultural markets more accessible, fair, competitive, and resilient for American farmers and ranchers. This is one of several key steps that USDA will take to increase competition in agricultural markets, pursuant to President Biden’s Executive Order on promoting competition and as part of USDA efforts to build a more resilient supply chain and better food system. Together, USDA’s actions will help farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and consumers all get a fair shake.  Specifically, USDA announced its intent to invest $500 million in American Rescue Plan funds to expand meat and poultry processing capacity so that farmers, ranchers, and consumers have more choices in the marketplace. USDA also announced more than $150 million for existing small and very small processing facilities to help them weather COVID, compete in the marketplace and get the support they need to reach more customers. USDA is also holding meatpackers accountable by revitalizing the Packers and Stockyards Act, issuing new rules on “Product of USA” labels, and developing plans to expand farmers’ access to new markets.  “The COVID-19 pandemic led to massive disruption for growers, food workers, and consumers alike. It exposed a food system that was rigid, consolidated, and fragile. Meanwhile, those growing, processing and preparing our food are earning less each year in a system that rewards size over all else,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “To shift the balance of power back to the people, USDA will invest in building more, better, and fairer markets for producers and consumers alike. The investments USDA will make in expanding meat and poultry capacity, along with restoration of the Packers and Stockyards Act, will begin to level the playing field for farmers and ranchers. This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the food system so it is more resilient to shocks, delivers greater value to growers and workers, and offers consumers an affordable selection of healthy food produced and sourced locally and regionally by farmers and processors from diverse backgrounds. I am confident USDA’s investments in expanded capacity will spur millions more in leveraged funding from the private sector and state and local partners as our efforts gain traction across the country.”  The announcement USDA is making today is part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s historic commitment to fight monopolization and promote competition across the economy. They are also aligned with USDA’s vision of a food system that is fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient, one that supports health and ensures producers receive a fair share of the food dollar while advancing equity and combating the climate crisis.  In the coming months, USDA will take additional steps to promote competition and make a series of additional investments under USDA’s Build Back Better Initiative focused on building a better food system.  Market Concentration in Agriculture  As key agricultural markets have become more concentrated and less competitive, farmers and ranchers are getting squeezed from both sides. Markets for farm inputs—like seeds and fertilizer—are now dominated by just a few companies. Meanwhile, farmers and ranchers have fewer and fewer options for selling their products. The result is that often family farmers and ranchers are getting less, consumers are paying more, and those in the middle are taking the difference.  Dominant companies can use their power to engage in abusive practices and make it harder for farmers, ranchers, and consumers to get a fair price. [Farmers’ share](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-dollar-series/) of every dollar spent on food has declined consistently from 35 cents in the 1970s to around just 14 cents in recent years.  Concentration in food processing has contributed to bottlenecks in America’s food supply chain, too. Just a few meatpackers, with a few large processing facilities, process most of the livestock that farmers and ranchers raise into the meat that we buy. For example, just four large meat-packing companies control over 80 percent of the beef market alone. One of the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic is that this system is too rigid and too fragile. When COVID slowed or shuttered meat processing, many farmers had no place to go. Farmers were forced to depopulate their animals, while grocery store shelves went bare and demand for food assistance spiked. These vulnerabilities are not new. And, given current concerns about climate and cybersecurity, these risks are likely to grow even more sharply in the future.  USDA is announcing the following initiatives to increase competition in agricultural markets, and build more resilience supply chains:  Investing More Than $500 million to Increase Competition and Capacity in the Meat and Poultry Processing Markets.   * USDA will commit $500 million of USDA’s [Build Back Better Initiative](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/08/usda-invest-more-4-billion-strengthen-food-system) funds through the American Rescue Plan to support new competitive entrants in meat and poultry processing. USDA will provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to address concentration within the meat and poultry sectors and relieve supply chain bottlenecks by supporting new meat and poultry processing facilities. These facilities will create competitive opportunities for producers in local and regional food systems so that farmers and ranchers have access to better choices and fairer prices. USDA has issued a [Request for Information (RFI)](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Meat%20Processing%20RFI.pdf) to solicit public input into its strategy to improve meat and poultry processing infrastructure and will hold targeted stakeholder meetings and other public engagement to better understand the needs, gaps, and barriers to fair and competitive meat processing markets.   Providing more than $150 million to Strengthen Existing Small and Very Small Processing Facilities and Help Them Weather COVID, Stay in the Marketplace, and Expand Capacity   * USDA will invest more than $55 million in strengthening existing small and very small meat processing capacity, benefitting smaller producers and processing plants. USDA has made $55.2 million available for [Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/21/usda-invests-552-million-grants-increase-capacity-and-expand-access)s to support expanded meat and poultry slaughter and processing capacity and efficiency while maintaining strong inspection and food safety standards. * USDA will dedicate $100 million to help small and very small processing plants weather the volatility and unexpected costs that COVID imposed.  With American Rescue Plan funds, USDA [will provide $100 million](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsis.usda.gov%2Fpolicy%2Ffederal-register-rulemaking%2Ffederal-register-notices%2Fovertime-and-holiday-inspection-fee&data=04%7C01%7C%7C1c62d0e4200c41c1323a08d9424f4e60%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637613730657400354%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=tc0%2BGR69flVaMaODMPpzpk7mCwGav4yVbO%2BI2QPxrTo%3D&reserved=0) to reduce the financial burden of overtime inspection fees for small and very small poultry, meat and egg processing plants, which provide farmers with local alternatives and greater capacity to process livestock.   Leveling the Playing Field for Independent Family Farmers and Ranchers   * USDA will revitalize the Packers and Stockyards Act to fight unfair practices and rebuild a competitive marketplace. The Packers and Stockyards Act was designed to ensure a fair and competitive marketplace and protect farmers against abuse at the hands of large businesses in the livestock and poultry industry. But the previous administration systematically weakened the law’s scope. To facilitate effective enforcement of the Act, USDA will be conducting [three rulemakings](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/11/usda-begin-work-strengthen-enforcement-packers-and-stockyards-act). First, the rulemakings will clarify the conduct that USDA considers a violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act, including conduct that is unfair, deceptive, or unjustly discriminatory against farmers and growers. Second, they will address oppressive practices in chicken processing. Third, the rulemakings will reinforce the longstanding USDA position that it is not necessary to demonstrate harm or likely harm to competition in order to establish a violation of the Act. * USDA will develop a plan to increase farmers’ and ranchers’ access to new markets, and promote their ability to receive a fair return. As per the President’s Executive Order on promoting competition, USDA will develop a plan to increase opportunities for farmers to access markets, including by supporting value-added markets and local and regional food distribution systems. USDA will also analyze and recommend policies to address the impacts of concentration in seeds and in the retail sector on family farmers, and propose strategies to enhance transparency and accountability in key markets. Together, these initiatives will give farmers more choices on how they buy and sell so that they aren’t at the mercy of a handful of dominant processors and distributors. * USDA will issue new rules on labeling so that domestic farmers and ranchers don’t have to compete with foreign companies that mislead consumers. On July 1st, USDA [announced intent](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/07/01/usda-announces-efforts-promote-transparency-product-usa-labeling) to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the “Product of USA” meat labeling term..   Building a Better Food System and Strengthening the Food Supply Chain  Citing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent supply chain disruptions, earlier this month USDA announced plans to invest more than $4 billion to strengthen critical supply chains through [USDA’s Build Back Better initiative](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/08/usda-invest-more-4-billion-strengthen-food-system) to strengthen and transform the food system, using funding from the American Rescue Plan and the Consolidated Appropriations Act. The $500 million commitment to invest in meat and poultry processing today begins to detail how the $4 billion will be deployed. The new effort will strengthen the food system, create new market opportunities, tackle the climate crisis, help communities that have been left behind, and support good-paying jobs throughout the supply chain. A transformed food system will provide producers with a greater share of the food dollar and make agriculture a more compelling career. It will also improve nutrition and the health status of Americans, reducing the costs of healthcare and diet-related diseases.  Through USDA’s Build Back Better initiative, USDA will help to ensure the food system of the future is fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient; supports health with access to healthy, affordable food; ensures growers and workers receive a greater share of the food dollar; and advances equity as well as climate resilience and mitigation.  While USDA’s Build Back Better initiative addresses near- and long-term issues, recent events have exposed the immediate need for action. USDA’s actions to promote competition and the intention to invest in additional small- and medium-sized meat processing capacity will spur economic opportunity while strengthening resilience and certainty for producers and consumers alike.  This announcement also furthers the Biden-Harris Administration’s work on strengthening the resilience of critical supply chains as directed by Executive Order 14017 on America's Supply Chains. USDA’s efforts to strengthen the food system is a vital component of the Administration’s whole-of-government response to address near-term supply chain challenges to the economic recovery. Through the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force, of which Secretary Vilsack is a member, the Administration is convening stakeholders to diagnose problems and surface solutions—large and small, public or private—that could help alleviate bottlenecks and supply constraints related to the economy’s reopening after the Administration’s historic vaccination and economic relief efforts.  ﻿#USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | [Alachua County Small-Producer Agriculture Capital Support Grant](https://attra.ncat.org/alachua-county-small-producer-agriculture-capital-support-grant)  Related Attra Publication  Alachua County, Florida's, Board of County Commissioners is funding a [mini-grant to Alachua County-based farms and ranches](https://alachuacounty.us/depts/sustainability/pages/ag-grant.aspx) that earn between $1,000 and $250,000 per year. Funding is for capital and equipment expenditures that will positively impact these operations' income. The total grant request must not exceed $5,000. To reduce inequity in marginalized communities, this grant will also prioritize small farms and ranches that are owned by black, women, indigenous, and persons-of-color. Applications are due by July 30, 2021  contact by email : [SMAACA@alachuacounty.us](mailto:SMAACA@alachuacounty.us)  Alachua County’s Office of Resilience, Climate Change, and Sustainability  12 SE First Street, 2nd Floor County Manager’s Office  Gainesville, FL 32601 | |

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| |  | | --- | | Secretary's Corner  ATHENS, Ga. — The American Mosquito Control Association has June 20-26 as National Mosquito Control Awareness Week, and with summer and the first tropical storm of the season arriving simultaneously this year, we’re getting warm, wet weather at a time when more folks are spending time outside. This combination is sure to signal a rise in mosquito interactions, making it a perfect time to think about mosquito control around your home and community.  While most people are familiar with the flying adult stage of mosquitoes, understanding the larval stage is crucial for successful control. Mosquitoes are united by the need for standing water in order to develop from egg to pupa. The absence of water does not mean a total absence of mosquitoes, as deposited eggs can remain dormant for a period of months — and up to years — waiting for the proper conditions. However, the necessity of water for mosquito development makes identifying water sources one of the key components of integrated mosquito management (IMM).  IMM is a five-step process, distilled from established integrated pest management practices, to help you safely and effectively manage mosquitoes:  1. Education: It is important for clients and stakeholders to understand the basics of mosquito biology to make informed decisions. Historically, large-scale pesticide applications were common in communities, but their impact on ecosystems was so severe it led to a total paradigm shift in mosquito management. Thankfully [DDT](https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/ddt-brief-history-and-status) is no longer used, but some of the same concerns about the negative impacts of pesticides on native insect populations persist today, even with modern ultra-low volume (ULV) applications.  2. Surveillance: This step may be used interchangeably with scouting. As with other pest scouting methods, there are various practices, from active sweep netting to passive traps, that may be deployed in field sites. The goal remains the same — sample populations to identify the relative abundance of important species and disease vectors so that you can make good management decisions.  3. Source reduction: This step is linked to the need to identify and, whenever practical, remove resources that allow mosquito populations to persist. The most well-known of these are so-called “tip and toss” programs. As the name suggests, this entails a concerted effort to empty any and all vessels containing standing water as regularly as possible during the warmer months. Such vessels typically include items such as flower pots, children’s toys, tires, buckets and tarps. Another potential source that may be worth assessing are large stands of ground cover, especially English ivy. Ivy patches are a favorite daytime resting place of adult mosquitoes and removal may greatly aid control efforts.  4 and 5. Larviciding and adulticiding: These steps encompass using insecticides for the respective mosquito life stages. Because of the concerns for pollinators and beekeepers, larviciding should be used in conjunction with any adulticiding program to mitigate the potential for non-target effects on other insects. Larviciding is typically done with so-called “dunks” placed into the water where larvae or pupae are present. These typically include ingredients such as methoprene, or biological control agents such as Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) and spinosad. As with any insecticide application, it is important to ensure that the chosen chemical is labeled for the pest you are trying to control.  Adulticiding efforts are carried out by licensed pesticide applicators due to the necessity for specialized equipment and restricted-use chemicals. The improper use of adulticides can have a dramatic effect on native insect populations. Because adulticides act by contact, they will not discriminate between species. Adulticide applications are best done later in the day to minimize impacts on day-flying insects, especially pollinators.  As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. To prevent bites, it is best to wear light-colored and loose-fitting clothing. Additionally, mosquitoes cannot fly faster than about 3 miles per hour, so a simple box fan may be enough to discourage feeding. [DEET](https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/deet) is typically the gold standard for repellents, but those with sensitive skin or nasal passages might consider lemon eucalyptus oil or products containing [picaridin](http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/PicaridinGen.html).  For more information on mosquitoes be sure to reach out to your local University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agent or consult UGA Extension Circulars [1154](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1154&title=Best%20Practices%20of%20Integrated%20Mosquito%20Management), [1155](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1155) and [1188](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1188), which are all about mosquito biology, behavior and management — and protecting pollinators in the process.  –James Murphy, University of Georgia  Happy Hunting  Dr. Gary S. Davis  Exec. Sec. SEGB&HPA  www.segamebirds.us | |

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