



Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division

The Bobwhite Quail Initiative Eligibility, Ranking and Funding

The Bobwhite Quail Initiative (BQI) is a voluntary and experimental program to restore quality early successional habitat for bobwhite quail, songbirds, and other farm wildlife, improve water quality and reduce soil erosion. BQI counties include: Baker, Bleckley, Bulloch, Burke, Colquitt, Crisp, Dooly, Dodge, Dougherty, Emanuel, Houston, Jones, Jenkins, Laurens, Lee, Mitchell, Terrell, Treutlen, Screven and Sumter.

Technical assistance is available to everyone, including landowners outside of the focus areas.

Eligibility for BQI incentive payments:

- Properties must be located in one of the 20 BQI counties.
- Minimum property size for enrollment is 50 contiguous acres.
- Properties must include commercial row crop agriculture or be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program Longleaf Pine Conservation Priority Area (CPA).
- Commercial shooting preserves are not eligible for incentive payments.
- Sites predominated by exotic grasses are not eligible for enrollment until the grasses have been substantially controlled.
- Incentive payments will not be provided for previously-established habitat.



BQI Enrollment:

- Sign-up is continuous, although ranking and enrollment will be based on the funding cycle.
- Proof of ownership (or owner agreement) is required prior to time of property enrollment.
- Scoring, ranking and enrollment will be for individual crop fields, CPA tracts, and adjacent forest stands ≥ 10 acres.
- Contracts will be issued per cooperator(s) for all lands enrolled in a given focus area.
- Annual habitat and compliance evaluations will be conducted by WRD biologists.
- During each enrollment period, WRD biologists will evaluate applications, contact cooperators, assist with developing plans, and score proposals.
- Scored proposals will be forwarded to the BQI headquarters office where funding will be approved based on competitive ranking by focus area.
- A minimum score will be required for enrollment into the program.
- Proposals which are not funded but which score above the minimum will be automatically rolled into the next funding cycle, and will be ranked competitively with new applications.

Funding:

- Incentive contracts are for 3 years, and are renewable annually based on cooperator performance.
- Funds will be approved based on the ranking score.
- Incentive payments are \$40/per acre per year to establish and maintain dry field borders, hedgerows, fallow patches, and/or center pivot corners.
- Incentive payments are \$120/per acre per year to establish and maintain irrigated field borders and/or hedgerows.
- Cost share payments are \$5 per acre per year for prescribed burning in thinned pine forests adjacent to crop fields.
- Conservation Tillage Bonus payments will be awarded at \$1/per acre per year or \$100/per field proposal, whichever is greater. Fields must be in conservation tillage for at least 2 of the 3 contract years to be eligible for bonus payment, paid at the end of the contract period.
- Maximum payment: \$10,000 per property, landowner, and focus area during the three year contract period.
- Funding will be annually distributed to landowners contingent upon successful implementation of habitat practices and approval by WRD biologists.
- After WRD approval, funds will be distributed by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
Funding is allocated only if all BQI specifications are met.

Special Conditions:

- *Cooperators enrolled in the monitoring program must agree not to conduct predator control, artificial feeding, and/or release of quail or other game birds in or around the contract area (unless otherwise recommended or approved by the WRD biologist).*

BQI applications are available from: the Wildlife Resources Division, Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, or Farm Service Agency regional offices.

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Bobwhite Quail INITIATIVE

Wildlife Resources Division
Game Management Section



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