

LBNRD SHORTNOTES

What is CHEMIGATION?

Chemigation is the application of any chemical, fertilizer or pesticide through a producers irrigation system. To legally chemigate in the district, an operator must be certified to apply chemicals and obtain a chemigation permit from the Little Blue Natural Resources District. In order to be certified a person must complete a chemigation safety course and pass an exam every four years. Producers planning to chemigate during the growing season **must renew chemigation permits by June 1st of each year.**

- Chemigation renewal permits cost \$20 and must be submitted to the LBNRD. An irrigation system that has not been renewed prior to June 1 deadline cannot apply chemicals through the system until a new permit is obtained.
- New permits cost \$60 and the applicant cannot use the system until it passes an mandatory inspection by the district.
- An inspection for a re-newal permit is required every three years however random chemigation inspections are required by state law and are conducted throughout the season.
- If chemigating is necessary, on short notice, emergency permits can be obtained at a cost of \$250.
- Irrigation systems meeting chemigation law standards will then be allowed to operate within 72 hours of application.

In the mid-1980's the Nebraska Legislature passed LB284, called the Chemigation Act, to protect our groundwater from possible contamination. Chemigation violations will be submitted to county attorneys. Penalties consist of Class I, II, III, or IV misdemeanors or a civil fine.

Right: LBNRD inspecting check valve.



Required Equipment for Chemigation

1. **Irrigation Pipeline Check Valve**: must be bolted against the well. It must provide a watertight seal against reverse flow.
2. **Vacuum Relief Valve**: located on the pipeline between the irrigation pump and the irrigation pipeline check valve.
3. **Inspection Port**: it must have a minimum opening of 4" and be situated in such a way that the inlet to the low pressure drain can be seen. Often the vacuum relief valve connection can serve as the inspection port.
4. **Low Pressure Drain**: located on the bottom of the pipe between the irrigation pump and the irrigation pipeline check valve. It must have an opening of least 3/4 inch diameter and can't extend into the horizontal pipe beyond the inside surface of the bottom of the pipe. A hose must be used to drain any solution at least 20 feet away from the irrigation water sources.
5. **Chemical Injector Check Valve**: located between the point of the chemical injection into the irrigation pipe and the chemical injection pump. It needs to hold at least 10 lbs. per square inch of water pressure. For water driven injection pumps, an alternative to the minimum opening pressure is a vacuum relief valve located in the injection line.
6. **Simultaneous Interlock Device**: the irrigation pump and the chemical injection pump shall be interlocked so that if the pumping plant stops, the injection pump will also stop.

CHEMIGATION POSTING

- The Nebraska State Statute 46-1130 states "**POSTING OF SIGNS**. Signs shall be posted which provide notice that chemicals are applied in irrigation water in the field in areas being treated by means of chemigation with chemicals which appear on the restricted use list in Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act or chemicals for which labels require posting."
- The penalty for not posting is rather stiff. "Any person who violates any of the provisions of the Nebraska Chemigation Act for which a specific penalty is not provided shall be 1) subject to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars or 2) guilty of a Class IV misdemeanor. Each day of continued violation shall constitute a separate offense. The court may issue such injunctive orders as may be necessary to prohibit continued violations of the Nebraska Chemigation Act."
- **Little Blue NRD Chemigation Regulations Regarding Chemigation Posting.**
- A sign shall be posted at each usual point of entry into a treated area, adjoining farmstead or residential area, along any public road where public exposure may occur, and at the point of chemical injection if located outside the treated area. Each sign shall be posted in such a manner that it is clearly visible and legible.
- The sign shall contain the words: "KEEP OUT, PESTICIDES IN IRRIGATION WATER".
- The letters on the sign shall be a color which clearly contrasts with the background and the letters shall be at least 2 1/2 inches in height.
- Each sign shall be posted and maintained during the chemigation period and until the end of re-entry period as specified by the chemical label. The sign shall be posted no sooner than 48 hours prior to the start of chemigation and shall be removed, covered or otherwise made illegible, no later than 48 hours after the end of the re-entry period.
- If you have any questions about posting signs, the chemigation rules and regulations, or need signs, please feel free to contact the Little Blue Natural Resources District at 402-364-2145.