

Farmers Save Money and Water Through the Use of Technology

Area farmers have altered their irrigation scheduling to save money and water. One comment from a producer during the summer of 2008 was “My neighbor has run his pivot around 4 times, but the sensors in my fields are still showing the soil is wet, so I still plan to wait before irrigating.” Producers are receiving assistance with irrigation management from the Little Blue NRD and the University of Nebraska Extension Service. This project is an extension of NAWMDN (Nebraska Ag Water Management Demonstration Network) whose goal is to assist the producer in knowing when to start and stop irrigating for the season.



Producer and staff setting up an ET gage

The equipment used is an ET (evapotranspiration) gauge and 3 soil moisture sensors per field which are buried up to 3 feet deep to record a soil profile. The technology measures the amount of water the crops use on a daily basis and the amount of moisture available in the soil to be utilized (as the graph demonstrates). One producer commented, “This equipment has saved me time and money 100 times over.”

Two field days were presented this past summer near Chester and Shickley with about 100 people in attendance. The Little Blue NRD has over 90 producers throughout the District participating in this program going on its third year of existence. The crops vary from corn, soybeans and alfalfa, along with different irrigation systems.

There is an initial cost for the electronic equipment to run the system in which the Little Blue NRD will be offering at a discounted rate for the 2009 growing season. This program is receiving assistance from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, LBNRD, UNL-Extension and NRCS. If you are interested contact the NRD office in Davenport at 402-364-2145 or your local NRCS office. Equipment orders are being taken currently.

An in-depth informational meeting will be held on December 2nd at 1 pm at the LBNRD office in Davenport where staff will be demonstrating and explaining this project more fully.



Producer and staff reading soil moisture sensors.