March 2007

MIAMI COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Water Wisdom

Water Quality: Not just for Water.

We all know that water quality is very important, but did you know that it is important for your livestock.

While improving the water quality for the livestock, producers can simultaneously improve rangeland quality. Research in Wyoming concluded that cattle do 77% of their grazing within 1,200 feet of their water source. In that particular study, 65% of the pasture was more than 2,400 feet from water, but supported only 12% of the grazing usage.

A study in Missouri researched distances beef cattle traveled to water and how it affected the grazing distribution and utilization of available forage. They tested a 160 acres pasture and found that the pasture carrying capacity could be increased an additional 14 % by simply keeping livestock within 800 feet of water.

In Canada a study was designed to see the rate of gain affects from water provided by a trough versus a dugout. On average it was found that the cattle offered trough water gained .5 lbs or more per day than cattle who drank from a dugout.

Installing livestock waterers and fencing out ponds and streams, can affect the water quality. Fencing out a pond is the optimal choice for water quality, but even the installation of a watering facility away from the pond or any riparian area will enhance water quality. Studies have shown that cattle will drink from a watering facility rather than a pond or stream 80% of the time. Cattle would rather walk up to a clean mud free water access than stomp through mud and muck to get a drink at pond or stream. Limiting access to these areas is important as cattle will use the water source to cool off on hot days.

K-State Research and Extension has put out a publication with a number of different alternative water sources and the benefits and disadvantages of each. Below is a chart that shows some of this information. We have a copy of the handbook that we would be happy to give you any information out of it you my like. You may also download it at http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/glwq/pdf/FINAL Waterer handbook.pdf

Animal Drink Delivery Comparison Chart

Item	Primary Advantages	Primary Disadvantages	Estimated Cost
Concrete waterer	Long useful life; low operation costs	Tanks are heavy; not available at most farm supply stores; shipping costs may be high	About $350, not including shipping or installation
Limited access watering point	Simple and inexpensive; reduced bank erosion; less sediment and fewer nutrients entering streams	Few options for location of watering point	$200 or more depending on size and site conditions
Hardened surface access and rock channel crossing	Easily adapted to various stream sizes and locations; quick installation; long useful life; low maintenance	Relatively expensive; must have suitable site and stream characteristics	About $2,000-$7,000 for materials and installation
Super insulated waterer	No need for supplemental heat to prevent freeze-up	Can be damaged if allowed to freeze repeatedly, especially when not in use	About $500, not including freight and installation
Bottomless tank	Large capacity at comparatively low cost compared with other tanks; serves as water storage as well as drinking device	Permanantly located; can't be moved as can galvanized or fiberglass tanks	Concrete (30' x 30' x 6" pad) $1400; rebar, bolts, overflow pipe $300; rings $1,700
Tire tank	Simple and inexpensive; durable and non-breaking	Removal of part or all of one sidewall to make the tank is difficult; tire size may limit water storage for larger herds	Tire can be obtained free in some cases. Cement for bottom about $25; plumbing (values and fittings) $120-$150; water pipe $0.40/ft.; drain pipe $1.10/ft.; sand and gravel surround $100
Fiberglass or galvanized tank	Because of stored water the larger the tank, the smaller the water delivery capacity needed to supply the animals; can be easily moved as needed	Galvanized steel and fiberglass tanks don't last as long as concrete; empty tanks will blow in the wind	10' diameter galvanized tank $500; 300 gal. fiberglass tank $180

Location of Combined USDA offices still under review

A public hearing was held recently in Johnson County to hear their concerns of moving the USDA NRCS and FSA offices to Miami County. Naturally, Johnson County landowners are unhappy about the move and vowed to fight the action with all of their resources. Johnson county landowners suggested the only fair way to deal with a combined office is if a new office were located in Spring Hill that would serve both counties.

Consolidation of the two offices is an effort by the two USDA offices to live with an ever-shrinking budget. It is most cost effective for the two agencies, FSA and NRCS to be in the same building to share resources. They have agreed on the same consolidation plan. However, Harold Klaege, NRCS State Conservationist, commented that while he would like to believe that the 11 offices that are being consolidated this year would be enough to balance the budget, he is not certain that more consolidations will not be needed in the future.

Consolidation of the offices makes it difficult for the conservation districts of the counties involved as they currently work out of the NRCS office space rent free with equipment and Internet service provided. Without the local NRCS presence, the affected offices will need to make other arrangements.

As Miami County already has existing space in our building to absorb the Johnson County operations, this is the most cost effective move. If a new office space was chosen in the Spring Hill there would be added cost of moving and wiring the new space for the USDA operations plus it would be further for the bulk of producers. Johnson County has one of the smallest workloads of the entire State. We are all aware that even the northern part of Miami County is becoming more and more urbanized. Bill Fuller, FSA State Director, told the audience that landowners have the option to do their program signup in other adjourning counties in an effort to save mileage. Most landowners will be within 30 miles of a USDA office even with the consolidation.

While we are sympatric with the concerns of the Johnson County landowners, we do feel that office consolidation is better than cutting employees especially at the field level. With the consolidation plan all employees will maintain jobs at their pay level

Change is never easy, and the combining of the two offices will have its share of hurdles but our plans are to serve our customers and continue our work of protecting our natural resources. We know our landowners will help us make a smooth transition.

Hidden Money in Your Feedlots

By: Herschel George, K-State Watershed Specialist for Marais des Cygnes Basin

The price of fertilizer could be the one thing that will cause producers to look at the value of the manure used as fertilizer. A few years ago a producer was interested so we tested their manure. The results showed the manure was high enough that it only required 6.3 ton per acre to put 40 # P2O5 into the soil. According to the fertilizer prices one ton of manure was worth $4.40/ton. Nearly all of us have some manure stored in a barn or shed that needs hauled. Even more manure may be out there in the old big round bale feeding sites.

If you need an economic incentive, maybe the price of fertilizer will inspire you to clean those manure piles up and get it applied to the cropland early this fall. If you need help on how to collect a manure test, or understanding the manure test, give me a call at 913-294-6021 or email me at Hgeorge@ksu.edu .

New Buffer Coordinator Hired.

I am really looking forward to meeting and working with all of our Miami County landowners and residents.

Hi, I am Stacy Maimer-Johnson, the new Program Coordinator for the Miami County Conservation District. You may have met me on my first day of work at the Miami County Conservation District annual meeting on February 12th. I am a Miami County native; you probably may know me or at least some of my family. My parents are Mike and Becky Maimer of the Richland community.

I am a 2000 graduate of Paola High School and continued my education at K-State University. While in Manhattan, I met and married a soldier from Fort Riley, Ben Johnson, and after a short time in Phoenix, we have returned to make our home in Miami County. We are currently living in Osawatomie.

I am excited to get back to my farm roots. When my mom told me of a position at the conservation office I was excited to apply. Spending time in the office on the computer and in the field with the landowners staking buffers or at schools working with students is a perfect fit for my background in farm, art, and education training. As programs coordinator, my two biggest responsibilities are to serve as the buffer coordinator for our county and to provide educational projects to students and our landowners.

My dad has nearly 20 acres of buffers installed on land he owns or operates so I have had an opportunity to see first hand the benefits of buffers and also to learn from him how they work into his farming operation. I am currently trying to familiarize myself with all of the guidelines for the buffer program. I look forward to meeting with landowners in the field as we develop filter strips along their streams.

As far as the other major part of my position, education, I am getting lots of activities scheduled in April. I am looking forward to teaching 4th grade students about the water cycle when they come to Ag days at the Miami County Fairgrounds. I also plan to help with the E.A.R.T.H. (Earth Awareness Researchers for Tomorrow's Habitat) workshop for 6th graders. I remember as a student going with my class to take water samples at the stream so I am looking forward to requests from teachers to take their students to the stream. Continuing the District's Poster, Limerick and Essay contest and developing other educational opportunities are all part of my position that I am looking forward to as well.

I am really looking forward to meeting and working with all of our Miami County landowners and residents. I hope you will stop by the office to see if you are interested in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Buffer program or to see if I can provide an educational program for your students or organization.

Equipment Available:

The Miami County Conservation District has a 400 bushel manure spreader available for rent by Miami County landowners. The district provides this equipment as a service to landowners. Proper waste utilization is important to protect water quality and our natural resources. Please contact us at 913-294-3751 Ext 101 to schedule a time to use the spreader.

Miami County Conservation District

Miami County Conservation District
100 N Angela Ste. 3
Paola, Ks 66071

Phone: 913-294-3751 Ext. 101
Fax:913-294-3386
E-mail: jenny.jasper@ks.nacdnet.net

It's Your District!

The Miami County Conservation District is a tax supported sub-division of State Government. The service it provides is governed by the board of supervisors elected by you, the voting public.

Miami County Conservation District

Friends of the Earth!

"Water Wisdom" is financed by a grant from the State Conservation Commission Non Point Source Pollution Control Fund and the State Water Plan Fund.

Did you Know...

- It takes just 40 days for most Americans to earn enough money to pay for their food supply for the entire year. In comparison with the 129 days it takes the average American to earn enough money to pay federal, state and local taxes for the year.
- Eating about 20 tart cherries a day could reduce inflammatory pain and headache pain.
- Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain Vitamin D
- A hive of bees flies over 55,000 miles to bring you one pound of honey.
- A spear of asparagus can grow 10 inches in one day!
- The average farmer produces enough food to feed about 129 people, 97 in the U.S. and 32 abroad.
- One acre of trees can remove about 13 tons of dust and gasses every year from the air.
- One large new tractor may cost as much as $200,000
- A combine can harvest enough wheat in 9 seconds to make 70 loaves of bread
- One acre of wheat can produce enough flour to furnish a family of four with bread for nearly ten years
- Wheat flour is an ingredient in many brands of licorice