



### WATER CONSERVATION AWARD

**Darrel Shaffer is this year's winner for the Water Conservation Award.** The basis of selection of the winner was determined considering the following: Adoption of improved irrigation management techniques, such as irrigation scheduling, system improvement, and remote monitoring and/or control; adoption of cropping systems to match irrigation system capacities; adoption of appropriate tillage systems to reduce soil water evaporation and improve soil water storage from precipitation; evidence of field tests for the evaluation of irrigation system performance; submission of crop water budgets that track soil water levels, irrigation applications and rainfall events and yield performance; improvement and/or development of on-farm or ranch water supplies.

To earn the award, Darrel has installed two pivot systems with EQIP assistance. The pivot systems were put on the ground he farms that's owned by Marvin Pinkston, located northwest of Dighton. Along with owning the ground, Marvin also helped out by doing the underground work that it took to set the systems up. The two systems cover roughly 155 acres.

Both systems were put in this past April, and are designed to aid in a 35% reduction of water usage in the next three years. There were several reasons Darrel gave for starting such a project. One, obviously was to ultimately use less water, but it's also a labor saving practice, as they no longer flood irrigate the area.

Darrel sees the benefits of the project through the even distribution of the water on the fields. With the pivot systems, he doesn't have to worry about a concentration of the water at one end of the field or the other, as happened with flood irrigation. Another benefit he's seen has been the ability to get the ground closer to the no-till operation that he typically uses on the rest of his acres.