



WATER QUALITY AWARD

The basis of selection was determined on the following: Quality of water quality improvement and protection work; adoption of cropping, grazing, and animal feeding operation practices to reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacterial contamination of surface waters; practices may include; conversion of cropland to total no-till farming systems, planting grass or forested buffers, development of a nutrient management plan, installing livestock waste management systems, rotational grazing, improved livestock watering distribution systems, moving livestock operations out of riparian areas, creation of stabilized stream crossings, and mortality management.

The winner of the Water Quality Award is Yaeger Feedlot, operator Irvin Yaeger. Upgrades to Yaeger Feedlot began roughly in 2002 and was completed in 2006. The work that was done was a new waste lagoon and a berm that was built to help the pens drain properly. The operators worked with the USDA to design and develop a run-off plan. Not only is the run-off collection better for the environment, but the crops in the area have benefited as well. The upgrades were needed to satisfy KDHE's rules and regulations and to be more environmentally friendly.

The biggest challenge throughout the project was the initial cost and Irvin's dwindling patience in getting everything done. Despite these challenges, the benefits have been profound. Not only is the lot drier which makes it easier for workers to get things done, but the beef has been of better quality as well; packers tend to like the cleaner animals! The operation currently is feeding 1500 head, but in non drought years can be up to 3,000 when full.