

2015 Water Quality Award – Joe & Mary Cramer

The basis of selection of individual awardees are determined on the following points:

- a. Quality of water quality improvement and protection work.
- b. Adoption of cropping, grazing, and animal feeding operation practices to reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacterial contamination of surface waters.
- c. Practices may include, but are not limited to: Conversion of cropland to total no-till farming systems (high residue levels), planting grass or forested riparian 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.

Joe & Mary Cramer received the Water Quality award. Upgrades were made to the watering and pasture system operated by Joe, which is located north of Healy. The project was completed in the spring of 2014 with the addition of a solar water pump and a 12 foot tire tank for livestock. The tank is split between two pastures, with corals built around it to help manage rotation options. There are roughly 90 acres of pasture on the south side and nearly a half section to the north.

The new upgrades were needed when the south pasture lost its available water source, so Joe knew they had to do something to avoid constantly hauling water to the location.

The biggest challenge was with the installation of the system and the technical issues with the pump. Joe has gotten to know some folks on the tech support line, who have been very helpful in getting it up and going again. Despite these challenges the benefits have been profound. Not only have they been able to save time and work by not hauling water, but they have also been able to better utilize the grass available through pasture rotation. At the time of completion they were able to rotate roughly 60 pair through the 329 pasture system, but usually average around 40. Currently they are running their 19 bulls in the pasture.