

Water Quality

This year's winner of the Water Quality Award is Ranger Feeders.

The basis of selection of individual awardees will be 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.

Upgrades to the waste storage system was started by Shelby Jones at Ranger Feeders when they signed up for EQIP back in 2010. After KLA and other consultants put plans together, construction began in 2012. The work that was done includes the addition of a 43,413 cubic yard waste pond and another smaller one that is 3,756 cubic yards. These additions temporarily store agriculture waste such as manure, wastewater, and contaminated runoff. In conjunction with these 2 ponds, 3 diversion terraces totaling 9,953 cubic yards were installed to divert a stream around an existing animal feeding operation. As part of the contract, waste transfer systems were put into place from storage ponds to an irrigation or distribution system. A pumping plant was put into place to achieve this as well. The waste storage ponds were also sealed or lined and a solid/liquid waste separation facility was installed. All construction of these upgrades were completed in 2014.

The changes were made so Ranger Feeders could stay in compliance with state regulations. The old system was getting outdated and needed an upgrade.

The biggest challenge that has arisen, according to manager Aaron Conine, was probably Shelby staying up on the paperwork, and he added that Shelby would probably tell you that it was the cost.

Despite these challenges the benefits have been profound. Not only have they been able to save time and work by not having to pump water, but they have also been able to keep the fresh water clean and bad water where it needs to be.

On average Ranger Feeders might have around 12,000 head at any given time, so that is a lot of waste to have to deal with. Aaron mentioned that it seems like yesterday that the project started, it was a lot of work, but they are glad it is done.

At this time will you please welcome Aaron Conine to accept the Water Quality award for Ranger Feeders.