

March 6, 2015

IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT COST SHARE

With the cold weather, nobody is really thinking about irrigation management at this time, but it's a good time to be thinking about ordering some watermark sensors and ETgages through the Upper Big Blue NRD, Little Blue NRD or Lower Big Blue NRD. Or if you need to replace some sensors or equipment, now is the time to put those orders in.

Watermark sensors monitor soil water status and give you digital readings while atmometers estimate crop water use. Both can be used in conjunction to provide efficient, season-long irrigation water use. These tools can save you money and save water. Previous reports indicated farmers implementing these tools save on average 2 inches of water per year on each acre.

Take advantage of cost share programs through your NRD. On the front page of our website at saline.unl.edu, I have posted the cost share program forms that need to be filled out by March 31st. If you need help understanding what you need, give me a call or utilize your local NRD contact person.

NEW COMPUTER IRRIGATION APPS

The former extension educator in Lancaster County, Tom Dorn, was excellent at creating spreadsheets for irrigation management tools. One time I came up with a new spreadsheet idea and I put a crude template together and Tom put the polish on it. When Tom retired, there was a promise to turn his irrigation computer spreadsheet tools into four new computer Apps available on Apple and Android. These are now all available to anyone and worth trying and using. They help irrigators to better manage water resources.

Crop Water App - This free App was updated to help calculate the last irrigation of the season and utilizing watermark sensor information.

Water Meter Calculator App - Will help you calculate the number of inches of irrigation water applied based on your water meter readings. This App will help you use an irrigation water meter as a management tool. On the display, it will show your acre inches pumped, inches per acre pumped and total inches irrigation water pumped for the season.

Irrigation Cost App - Computes the annualized cost of owning and operating an irrigation system. The App allows the user to figure operation cost to apply an inch of water. What if your neighbor wants you to irrigate for them? It can be useful in those calculations.

Irrigate Pump App - Calculates pumping plant's efficiency powered by diesel, electricity, gasoline, natural gas or propane if the user keeps accurate fuel use records. Figures potential savings if you could bring the unit up to standards and also figures payback years if repairs and/or improvements are made. This app is based upon the Nebraska Pumping Plant Performance Criteria (NPPPC), a standard used by irrigation design engineers worldwide. Defining the original criteria involved manufacturers, Nebraska Tractor Test data, and field evaluations of pumping installations.

For more information go to the UNL Extension website called <http://water.unl.edu/cropwater>



There are YouTube videos that show step-by-step how each App works on your iPad or Smartphone. Just another way how farmers can use new management tools to get more crop per drop in the future.

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