



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Demonstration Network

Water is the life blood of agriculture. In Nebraska the state's 8.2 million acres of irrigated land is vital to the state's economy. Concern about the availability of irrigation water is growing. Maximizing the net benefits of irrigated crop production through an appropriately designed agricultural water management program is important because many areas in the state are involved in significant management changes to conserve irrigation water. Growers are challenged to practice conservation and increase crop water use efficiency while meeting the crop water requirements for maximum net return. The Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Demonstration Network (NAWMDN) was formed by the University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension in partnership with the Upper Big Blue NRD in 2005. This interdisciplinary group includes growers from south central Nebraska, NRDs, NRCS, UNL Extension Specialists and Educators. The goal of the Network is to enable transfer of high quality research information to Nebraskans through a series of demonstration projects established in farmers' fields and implement newer tools and technologies to enhance crop water use efficiency and energy savings. This project has established a system for testing cutting-edge technologies and has created a network that is enabling the adoption of water and energy conservation practices. Water management demonstration projects have been conducted on grower fields to provide educational opportunities for water and energy conservation. Demonstrations include the installation of ETgages to monitor crop water use and Watermark granular matrix sensors to monitor soil water status to make informed decisions on water management. An internet web site has been created to allow other clients to utilize information about crop water use produced by the network. Some participants have reported saving up to 2-3 inches of irrigation water and the related energy savings. In this presentation, I will share info about the (NAWMDN), its operation, goals, and accomplishments.

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