

# Natural Resources News

Winter 2000

A Newsletter of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Vol.

Come visit our web page to find out more about what we can do for you: <http://dbdec.nrc.state.ne.us/tpnrd>

## Free Nitrogen - "So to Speak"

Soil in many fields contain residual nitrate which crops are able to use as nutrition, just as they use fertilizer. In fact, some soil contains so much residual nitrate that it's possible to apply less fertilizer, or eliminate it entirely, without reducing crop yield. University of Nebraska soil specialists estimate that one-third of cropped fields have enough residual nitrate to justify reducing fertilizer application. This can help reduce ground water contamination and boost a producer's net return.

Soil nitrogen comes from two sources: residual nitrate and organic matter. Residual nitrate is plant-available nitrogen that remains in the soil after the previous year's crop is harvested.

Soil nitrogen can also come from the mineralization of organic matter in the soil, which releases ammonium-and-nitrate-nitrogen.

Taking soil samples is the only reliable way to find out how much residual nitrate a field contains. It is important to follow proper sampling procedures if you want to receive valid results.

The following recommendations come from University of Nebraska soil scientists and NebGuides. These NebGuides contain more detail about how to take soil samples (see page 2). It is best to sample for nitrates in the spring before planting. First, divide a field into uniform areas based on soil type, slope and cropping history. Sample the upper middle and lower portions of the field separately. No soil sample should represent more than 40 acres.

Sampling should be done to a depth of 3-4 feet for corn in sandy soils. Soil cores can be

collected at random or in a grid pattern. Using a probe, auger, spade or posthole digger, collect 15-20 cores for each sample. Air dry the soil and have the samples tested at a reliable laboratory.

**The district has a cost-share program to assist producers with deep soil sampling.**

Irrigation water can be another important source of nitrogen for the crop. When nitrate concentrations in water approach or exceed 10 parts per million, irrigation water can be counted as a nitrogen credit. The amount of N supplied by irrigation water can be calculated by multiplying the nitrate concentration (in parts per million) times two for every 9 inches of water applied. For example, applying 18 inches of water with 10 ppm nitrate would give you a nitrate credit of 40 pounds per acre ( $10 \times 2 \times 2 = 40$ ). The estimated nitrogen credit should be based on the amount of irrigation water you would apply in a year with above-average rainfall. This will prevent an N deficiency if you end up using less irrigation water during the season then you



estimated.

To determine N in irrigation water, wells should be pumped for at least 24 hours before the water sample is taken. It's best to take the sample during the peak irrigation season and then have the sample tested at a reliable laboratory.

**The district has an ultra sonic meter that can be used to measure the flow from your well. This measurement along with an hour meter can help determine the amount of water applied per acre.**

Continued on page

## 1999 Conservation Award



Harms Inc of Brule

The Harms Family came to Brule in 1909. Milan became a full time partner with his mother Margaret, until purchasing Harms Inc. in the late 1970's.

Both Margaret and Milan passed away in 1997. Harms Incorporated is now owned by Jo Anne Harms and their five children: Patty, Jean, Amy, Brad & Faye.

Late in the 1950's, area farmers and Brule citizens organized the "Brule Watershed".

In 1961, the first small dam was constructed north of Brule on Harms' rangeland. The main watershed dam was constructed in 1969 north of the Harms' farm and waterways were built on the Harms, land east of Brule to provide drainage to the South Platte River.

The Brule Watershed Dam construction project was designed and supervised by the USDA Soil Conservation Service (Natural Resources Conservation Service).

In 1994, the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Engineers cooperated with Milan to find a cost-effective way to correct other flooding problems. Two small dams were constructed in Harms' rangeland; and Highly Erodible land was terraced and seeded to native grasses to help control water run-off.

A total of 389 acres of Highly Erodible land was enrolled by the Harms into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 1996. Native grasses were planted in the spring and fall of 1996. Fences were constructed to exclude livestock.

## Free Hazardous Waste Collection!

The collection is to take place April 29, 2000 (tentative date) and accepted items include: batteries, paint products, oil and fuel additives. Items **NOT** accepted include tires, medical waste, radioactive materials, furniture, appliances and PCB's. The collection site will be at 1402 N. Sycamore, North Platte, behind the city shop. Questions about materials and quantities accepted will be answered by calling (308)534-8100. Watch the media beginning in March for the day of collection.

Free Nitrogen continued from page 1

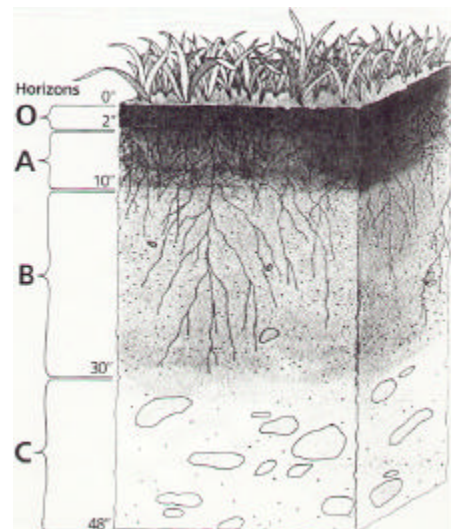
For more information on cost-share for deep soil sampling, the ultra sonic meter and how we can help you determine your residual nitrates, please contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Office.

**For information on residual nitrates contact the Lincoln County Extension Office and ask for these NebGuides:**

G89-913 - "Adjusting Nitrogen Fertilizer for Corn Based on Nitrate levels in Soil and Irrigation Water" (this is a formula for calculating pounds per acre of nitrogen contributed by residual nitrate in the soil)

G91 - 1000-"Guidelines for Soil Sampling."

G-87-829 - "Fertilizer Nitrogen Best Management Practices."



## Is Your Well Registered?

Have you just purchased some land, or maybe inherited some land? Have you taken over the family operation? Are you concerned that programs in the future could place restrictions on ground water irrigation wells? Would you just like to make sure your irrigation well is registered in your name? If so then you can contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District or the Nebraska Department of Water Resources.

Most people don't think about updating the registration for irrigation wells when land transfers ownership. It is important to keep all files up to date. To check and see if your well is registered, and to whom it is registered, you can phone or visit our office or you can access our web site (under related links).

**Should your well need to be updated, it only takes a few minutes to fill out the proper paper work, and it costs NOTHING!**

All you need to know is the legal description of where your well is located.

## Chemigation Training

Any person engaged in the application of chemicals by means of Chemigation must be certified. For applicator certification, producers must attend a training session and pass a written exam. Sessions will be held:

Feb 12	1:30p.m. MT	Golden Spur	Ogallala
Feb 28	9:30a.m. MT	Oak Leaf	Grant
March 7	1:00p.m. CT	WCREC*	North Platte
March 30	10:00a.m. MT	4-H Bldg	Imperial
April 11	1:00p.m. CT	WCREC*	North Platte
April 17	10:00a.m. MT	TBA	Benkelman
May 15	1:00p.m. CT	WCREC*	North Platte

There is a \$15 charge for initial certification and \$10 cost for re-certification. If you have any questions feel free to contact Bill Carhart at the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Office.

\*University of Nebraska West Central Research & Extension located in North Platte

## NOTICE!!

Before you drill a new well within **50 feet of the edge of a stream or river, or on an island in the Platte River** contact the Department of Water Resources in Lincoln at (402)471-2663.

### Natural Resources District 2000 Election Board of Directors

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District will have five of the eleven positions up for election in 2000. Individuals will be nominated at the Primary Election in May, elected at the General Election in November and take office in January 2001. The length of a term for a Director is 4 years.

Filing forms and subdistrict information is available in the County Clerk's Offices and the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Office. Individuals need to send or deliver the filing form to the Secretary of State's office in Lincoln, NE. by the filing deadline.

#### Filing Deadlines:

<b>Incumbents</b>	<b>February 15, 2000</b>
<b>Non-office Holders</b>	<b>March 1, 2000</b>

## Legislative Information

Legislative Information is available on the Internet at:

[www.unicam.state.ne.us/index.htm](http://www.unicam.state.ne.us/index.htm)

[www.nrc.state.ne.us](http://www.nrc.state.ne.us)

## Irrigation Wellhead Buffer Demonstration

There is still funding available for those who are interested in signing up for a demonstration site. The area will be established to perennial grasses or grass/legume mixtures. No pesticides will be applied or mixed on the buffer area. Maintenance of the vegetation to control weeds and desired plant cover is the responsibility of the participant for a ten year period.

The minimum size is .7 acres (equivalent to a 100 foot radius around the well). For more information contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District or the local Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Twin Platte Natural Resources District**

<b>Board of Directors.....</b>	<b>Sub-District</b>
Kent Boyer.....(H)368-7275.....	4 (Chairperson)
Jim Rubenthaler.....(H)584-3578.....	At-large (Vice-Chairperson)
Doug Stack.....(W)535-8308.....	3 (Secretary)
Jim Meismer.....(H)284-6509.....	5 (Treasurer)
Bob Peterson.....(H)532-2689.....	2
Joe Wahlgren.....(H)537-3136.....	2
Todd Kramer.....(H)764-2421.....	1
Jeff Baldrige.....(H)534-7780.....	1
Roric Paulman.....(H)386-4413.....	4
Jerry Weaver.....(W)534-9240.....	3
Frank Svoboda.....(H)284-3147.....	5

<b>Staff Members.....</b>	<b>Position</b>
Kent O. Miller.....	General Manager
Dave Slattery.....	Conservation Programs Coordinator
Bill Carhart.....	Range Programs Coordinator
Glen Bowers.....	Water Programs Coordinator
Ann Fisher.....	Water Programs Technician
Ardis Lehmkuhler.....	Administrative Assistant
Kathy Clark.....	Field Office Secretary, North Platte NRCS



Natural Resources News is the official publication of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. This quarterly publication is partially funded by a 319 Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or would like to be placed on our mailing list please feel free to submit them to:

Twin Platte Natural Resources District  
 C/O Ann Fisher, Water Programs Technician  
 P.O. Box 1347  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347  
 Phone: (308)535-8080  
 Fax: (308)535-8207  
 e-mail: tprnd@nponline.net

**Managing Small Acreages Workshop**

A workshop is scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup> to provided small acreage landowners information on how to better utilize and improve their property. Topics include: attracting wildlife and songbirds, planting trees for windbreaks, raising livestock, growing edible fruits, and establishing wild flow-ers. The program will conclude with a discussion of using pesticides safety and protecting ground water. For more information contact the Lincoln County Extension Office or the WCREC at (308) 532-3611 ext. 130.

**Upcoming Events:**

- February**
- 5 Small Acreage Workshop - 10 a.m. CST at WCREC
  - 9-10 Ag Expo at D&N Event Center - all day
  - 10 Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Director's Meeting - 3 p.m. CST\* 
  - 21 President's Day - Office Closed
- March**
- 9 Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Director's Meeting - 3 p.m. CST\*
- April** 
- 9 Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Director's Meeting - 7:30 p.m. CDT\*
  - 28 Arbor Day - Office Closed
  - 29 Hazardous Waste Collection Day (tentative date)
- \* Board Meetings are held in the United Nebraska Bank Center North Platte

**Twin Platte**

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
 111 South Dewey Street  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347

Postal Patron