

Get smart about water use

By JOANN PIPKIN and
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MISSOURI has a tremendous supply of groundwater that, in most cases, is pure. According to Bob Broz, University of Missouri Water Quality Program director, Columbia, approximately 37% of Missourians get their water from groundwater sources, while 63% take water from surface supplies.

Yet, water quantity may not be the bottomless pit we often think it is. Broz says with the exception of alluvial plains along the rivers and high karst areas, groundwater levels across the state have dropped in recent years. He cites a 40-foot drop in the water table for drinking-water resources at Warrensburg.

How much danger is Missouri in when it comes to water quantity and quality? "There may not be much health danger, but as water supplies are taxed with more people using that water, the groundwater travels farther and erodes away at whatever is in its path," Broz explains. "It is kind of like the oil issue. Conservation is probably the biggest thing we have to combat consumption. So, let's look at ways to conserve water and reuse it."

Key Points

- Water is an important natural resource to protect.
- Groundwater levels are dropping across the state.
- Consider farming practices that conserve or recycle water.

The agriculture industry is constantly working to create systems that conserve or make better use of our most precious natural resource via aquifers, streams, rivers, ponds or precipitation.

The USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program has identified a range of promising water conservation options for today's farmers and ranchers. They include management of:

■ **Soil.** Apply practices that build quality, resulting in a porous, well-structured soil that allows water to infiltrate and remain for use by plants.

■ **Plants and livestock.** Select plants, such as drought-tolerant species and native varieties, that maximize water availability in crop rotations or pastures. Use Management-intensive Grazing systems where applicable.

■ **Water.** Apply practices to your farm or ranch operation that help capture, conserve and recycle water.



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■ **Irrigation.** Determine the amount and timing of irrigation for efficient water use. Monitor water application for crop needs and soil moisture con-

tent. Consider the latest user-friendly electronic devices.

For more information on water conservation and the Sustainable Agriculture

Network, visit www.sare.org. For more about the Missouri Water Quality Program, visit www.mowin.org.

Pipkin writes from Republic.

News Briefs

Pork program lets producers give a voice to the industry

GARY Oberdiek, a pork producer from Platte City, spoke for the pork industry at the March 22 Lions Club meeting in Kearney. This marked Oberdiek's sixth presentation to civic groups and the 100th presentation done by Missouri pork producers.

These producers are volunteers for a pork checkoff-funded program called Operation Main Street that is designed to upgrade the pork industry's image at the local level.

"I believe the OMS program gives the general public a better understanding of the pork industry," Oberdiek says. "Along with discussing the pork industry in general, I also give them insight as to how I run my farm. I know everything I do impacts me, my family and my neighbors. I want them to know that I do everything possible to protect the environment.

"After all," he adds, "we all drink the same water and breathe the same air."



Bioenergized FFA officers

THE new FFA state officers received the keys to a flexible-fuel Chevy Uplander, donated for their use by the Missouri Corn Growers Association and the Missouri Corn Merchandising Council, at the 79th Missouri FFA State Convention held April 19-20 in Columbia. Pictured are: Sebastian Los, Brandon Ray, Zane Privette, Megan Dohrman, Kerri Mulford, Jordan Branstetter and Jayne Glosemeyer.

Operation Main Street volunteers in Missouri include: Gordon Becton, Princeton; Marcus Belshe, Henley; Brian Bogue, Holt; Steve Brier, Nevada; Kathy Chinn, Clarence; Wally Dyer, Higginsville; Jim Fisher, Middletown; Shannon Goosen, Cole Camp; Art

Halstead, Ashland; Scott Hays, Monroe City; Jason Helton, Princeton; Bill Kessler, Mexico; John Kleiboeker, California; Sharon Oetting, Concordia; Brent Sandidge, Marshall; Tim Steinkamp, Taylor; Ann Ulmer, Columbia; and Tony Weldon, Wentzville.

Blunt appoints dairy experts

GOV. Matt Blunt has appointed three dairy industry experts to the State Milk Board.

Erwin Gadd, Jefferson City, retired from the Missouri Department of Health in 1991. Gadd holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and a master's degree, both from University of Missouri-Columbia. **Patricia Mahoney**, St. Louis, is the environmental health supervisor for the City of St. Louis Health Division. **Robert Cary**, Canton, is a self-employed dairyman and serves as director of Prairie Farms Dairy Inc.

Their reappointment is subject to Senate confirmation for term ending on Sept. 28, 2010.

MFU awards Wiggins honor

THE Gary Wiggins Memorial Scholarship was awarded to **Laura Ketsenburg**, Monroe City, and **Nathan Vickers**, El Dorado Springs, by the Missouri Farmers Union at the 100th anniversary convention

in West Plains. The \$500 scholarships are presented in memory of Gary Wiggins, a former legislator and rural advocate.

'07 Warnstaff scholarships

THE Missouri Agribusiness Association announces the following Dean Warnstaff Scholarship winners for 2007: **Hollie Elliott**, Springfield; **Tera Dover**, Monett; and **Sarah Jackson**, New Cambria. Each receives a \$1,000 scholarship provided by the Missouri Agribusiness Association's Dean Warnstaff Foundation.

"These three students were chosen out of many agriculture students across the state," says E.L. Reed, Chillicothe, head of the Dean Warnstaff Foundation Board of Trustees. "Their credentials set them apart as future leaders in agriculture."

Applications for the annual scholarships are available in August and have an October deadline. To apply, students must be attending a four-year college and majoring in a field related to agriculture.