



Press releases for Upper Big Blue NRD Programs from 2004-2007

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UPPER BIG BLUE

Natural Resources District

105 N. Lincoln Ave.
York, Nebraska 68467
(402) 362-6601
Fax (402) 362-1849
www.upperbigblue.org

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

February 26, 2004

UPPER BIG BLUE NRD RAIN GAUGE READERS NEEDED...FREE RAIN GAUGES PROVIDED.

The Upper Big Blue NRD is looking for volunteers to take rain gauge readings at their home and/or place of business. The Upper Big Blue NRD is partnering with 12 other NRDs statewide to develop the “**Nebraska Rainfall Assessment and Information Network (NeRain)**”. Approximately 800 volunteers are needed to form the **NeRain** network of rain gauge readers across Nebraska. The information that **NeRain** volunteers will provide through their readings will affect local, State of Nebraska and National Weather Service reporting.

The Upper Big Blue NRD will furnish free rain gauges for volunteers to use. This gauge is a special unit that is approved by the National Weather Service, which is necessary for the reporting work and for taking vital measurements. These gauges measure in hundredths of an inch. The Upper Big Blue staff will conduct a training session on how to properly record and submit data.

Through these daily readings, volunteers will have a direct impact on how weather conditions will be reported in Nebraska. The daily rainfall reports may provide accurate information for irrigation scheduling to prevent groundwater pollution and excess irrigation use in both rural and urban settings, as well as developing more definitive weather forecasting techniques that may be inherently unique to the State of Nebraska and individual NRDs.

The **NeRain** program is funded through a grant made available by The Nebraska Environmental Trust. The heart of the program is identifying Nebraskans willing to collect and record rainfall and snowfall data. This daily data will need to be forwarded via the Internet to a central computerized clearing house stationed in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) where the data would be immediately accessible to weather spotters, consultants, planners and the public. For volunteers that do not have Internet access, daily reporting may be made to the Natural Resources District office for submission to the computer-clearing house. In other words, if you would like to become a volunteer for the **NeRain** program and you do not have the Internet to report your readings or you might not know how to use the Internet, you can simply submit your daily readings to your district office, in this case the Upper Big Blue NRD in York, Nebraska.

The Natural Resources Districts that are in the **NeRain** network are the Little Blue, Lower Big Blue, Upper Big Blue, Lower Republican, Middle Republican, Upper Republican, Tri-Basin, Central Platte, Twin Platte, South Platte, North Platte, Lower Loup, and Upper Loup NRDs.

If you are interested in becoming a **NeRain** volunteer, please contact Marie Krausnick, Lead Water Resources Technician, Upper Big Blue NRD at (402)-362-6601.

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NEWS RELEASE
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May 24, 2004

Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District Offers Free Water Testing for Nitrates in Hamilton County

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District (NRD) is making it easier for Hamilton County residents to test irrigation wells, household wells for nitrate levels in Hamilton County. Residents can pick up test bottles for use in sampling at the Hamilton County Cooperative Extension Service located at the county courthouse in Aurora. (The Cooperative Extension Service phone number is 694-6174). The test bottles will have an instruction sheet detailing the proper method for collecting water samples.

Residents are asked to bring back their water samples to the Cooperative Extension Service on Mondays and Tuesdays of any week this summer. Upper Big Blue NRD personnel will pick-up the samples on Wednesdays, test for nitrates, and mail the results to the person requesting the test. District patrons can test one or all wells they use for irrigation or rural household use. There is no charge for nitrate testing. Urban household and business tap water users are also encouraged to sample their tap water.

Irrigators are strongly urged to have their irrigation wells tested for nitrate. Once the level is known, the producer can take credit for that nitrogen prior to application of additional fertilizer. If producers combine nitrate levels in the well water, with deep soil samples to determine nitrate/nitrogen that may already be present in the soil, ag producers can save money on their yearly fertilizer application. In addition to saving money, excess nitrogen is not applied to the crop, which will minimize the amount that may be leached into the groundwater.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set 10 parts per million as the maximum contaminant level (MCL) in drinking water in public systems. Nitrates above 10 parts per million are a health concern particularly for infants, pregnant women, and the elderly. An infant under six months of age who drinks nitrate-contaminated water may develop methemoglobinemia, commonly called "blue baby syndrome." The condition occurs when nitrates are reduced to nitrites in the stomach, and the nitrites bond to the hemoglobin in the blood, forming methemoglobin, which decreases the capacity to transport oxygen. At greatest risk are infants drinking formula diluted with nitrate-contaminated water. There is little evidence that breast-fed infants develop methemoglobinemia from exposure to nitrates ingested by the nursing mother. You should always consult your family physician for treatment of methemoglobinemia. It is

important to detect and eliminate the source of excessive nitrates. Boiling water is ineffective in battling nitrate contamination. In fact, it increases nitrate concentration.

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District offers free nitrate testing year-round for all residents of the district which includes parts of Adams, Butler, Clay, Fillmore, Hamilton, Polk, Saline, Seward counties and all of York County. Water samples can also be dropped off at the Upper Big Blue NRD office at 105 N. Lincoln in York, however, as a special service for the residents of Hamilton County, the Upper Big Blue NRD is partnering with the Cooperative Extension Service in Aurora as a drop-off location for samples. If you would like more information, please call Marie Krausnick, Upper Big Blue NRD Lead Water Resources Technician, at (402)-362-6601.

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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

APRIL 12, 2005

Upper Big Blue NRD can assist producers with Conservation Security Program enrollment by providing required records

If you are considering applying for entry into the Conservation Security Program, you will need several supporting documents for submission. The Upper Big Blue NRD has on file producers' "Crop Water Use", "Groundwater Quality", "Irrigation Scheduling" and "Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) Cost-Share Assistance" reports. If you have submitted any of these reports to the NRD from 2002-2004, you will need copies of these to enroll in the USDA's Conservation Security Program as administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

As a service to citizens in the Upper Big Blue NRD, upon request, the forms that you have on file at the NRD can be assembled and photocopied free of charge to help assist you with fulfilling the supporting documents requirement of the CSP enrollment process. You can contact the Upper Big Blue NRD at (402) 362-6601.

Once you have your reports from the Upper Big Blue NRD, contact your local NRCS office to schedule an appointment to discuss CSP enrollment. In York County, contact the NRCS at (402) 362-5700.

According to the NRCS, the Conservation Security Program was created as part of Farm Bill 2002 and "is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payment for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. CSP provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands. Working lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and rangeland, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agriculture operation."

CSP is available in all 50 states, and the Caribbean and Pacific Basin areas. In the State of Nebraska, all or part of 17 counties including Adams, Butler, Clay, Dundy, Fillmore, Gage, Hall, Hamilton, Jefferson, Kimball, Lancaster, Pawnee, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer, and York are in

the CSP target area. (The Upper Big Blue NRD, comprises all or parts of Adams, Butler, Clay, Fillmore, Hamilton, Polk, Saline, Seward and York counties).

Sign-up for the CSP program will end Friday, May 27, 2005, and the delineated CSP sign-up geographic areas is not scheduled into CSP rotation for another eight years after 2005.

“It is important to get started gathering reports and supporting documents as soon as possible to begin the enrollment process. The Upper Big Blue NRD staff is happy to serve District citizens in gathering the required reports,” says John Turnbull, General Manager of the Upper Big Blue NRD.

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If you would like information on any of the services that the Upper Big Blue NRD provides, or have any questions/comments, please feel free to contact:

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