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Water Technology Farms Expanded and Field Days Scheduled

Water Conservation Techniques Being Demonstrated on Established Farms

The Kansas Water Office (KWO), Kansas State University and Northwest Kansas Technical College is providing an opportunity to see first hand what is taking place on the Water Technology Farms by hosting a series of Field Days in August. Each location will showcase the technology that has been implemented and the results to date.

Last year three Water Technology Farms: Roth/Garden City Company, T & O Farms, LLC and WaterPACK/ ILS, were created in response to public input and identified in the *Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas (Water Vision)*. These demonstration farms were initiated in southwest/south central Kansas and are three year pilot projects featuring the installation and testing of the latest irrigation technologies on a whole field scale with a primary focus on water conservation.

"We greatly appreciate the leadership and innovation from these stakeholders who are willing to participate in these demonstration farms and the partners who also believe in these projects," said KWO Director Tracy Streeter. "While we need to evaluate the performance of these farms for multiple years, the preliminary results from a water savings and economic standpoint are encouraging. There is growing evidence that water use reductions coupled with irrigation technology adoption and water management will result in positive effects on the aquifer and the producer's bottom line."

In addition to these existing farms, 13 more Water Technology Farms via partnerships, including generous support from the Kansas Corn Commission, have been established in western Kansas. Throughout August each farm will host a Field Day.

- Monday August 7 - Circle C Farms, 10 a.m., Healy, Kansas *(RSVPs are required by Aug. 5)*
  - *Owned and operated by Steve Compton*
- Friday, August 11 – Hatcher Land and Cattle, 2 p.m., Liberal, Kansas

    - *Owned and operated by Nick Hatcher*
- Monday, August 14 –WaterPACK/ILS, 2 p.m., Larned, Kansas
    - *Owned and operated by Innovative Livestock Services, LLC*
- Tuesday, August 15 – T&O Farms, LLC 10 a.m., Garden City, Kansas *(RSVPs are required by Aug. 11)*
    - *Owned and operated by Tom Willis*
- Monday, August 21 – Northwest Technical College, 10 a.m., Goodland, Kansas
    - *Owned by Goodland area producers*
- Thursday, August 31 – Big D Farms, 9 a.m., Holcomb, Kansas
    - *Owned by Garden City Company and operated by Dwane Roth*

In addition to understanding how the technologies work, the field days are great opportunities to learn from local producers, irrigation companies, soil moisture sensor dealers and other entities about options and experiences towards improving irrigation water use. In 2016 alone, the field days had a collective attendance of 375 people wanting to learn something new as well as wanting to share their experience with fellow producers.

This year in addition to producers participating in the Water Technology Farms, Northwest Kansas Technical College is also participating by providing learning and workforce development training for its students. Northwest Kansas Technical College's Precision Agriculture department and landowners around in surrounding counties have partnered to develop 10 Water Technology Farm projects. In these projects, the students and landowners receive in-field training and hands on experience implementing water efficiency technologies. With supplier partnerships, students will be exposed to multiple types of soil moisture probes, pivot controls, irrigation scheduling systems and other water management tools.

KWO provides financial assistance to Kansas State University's efforts to give technical support to each technology farm. K-State is deeply involved in establishing and monitoring the farms to help answer the producers' specific questions and concerns about the new technology.

"K-State is working with partners to help address questions and concerns about the new irrigation technologies so in the future, farmers will fully embrace the technology appropriate for their operation and situation," said Jonathan Aguilar, water resource engineer with K-State Research and Extension, based in Garden City, Kansas. "Each farm is set up slightly different, depending on the primary concern the producer has. For example, one farm has three adjacent spans with different modes of application for comparison purposes. In all fields, soil moisture sensors are installed and tested for accuracy as feedback or for its performance in the different soil types."

The farms are supported by: Kansas Water Office; K-State Research and Extension; Kansas Corn Commission; Northwest Groundwater Management District No. 4, Groundwater Management District No. 1, Seaman Crop Consulting; Servi-Tech Expanded Premium Services, LLC; United Sorghum Check-Off Program; Garden City Coop, SW KS Groundwater Management District No. 3; Kansas Department of Agriculture; Conestoga Energy Partners; Teeter Irrigation; Dragon-Line; Helena; Kansas Geological Survey; Ogallala Aquifer Program; Syngenta; Hortau; Kansas Farm Bureau; KSU Mesonet; AquaSpy; Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission; Crop Metrics; Netafim; Valley Irrigation; and Presley Solutions, American Irrigation; WaterPACK, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Western Irrigation Supply House and Ag Systems, Inc.; Tri-State Irrigation; John Payne; TerrAvion; Phytech; Great Plains Precision Ag; Western Sprinkler; Finney County Conservation District; On Target Solutions, Lindsay Corporation, Woofter Irrigation

Visit the KWO Website, www.kwo.org for more information on each field day or call 1-888-KAN-WATER.

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