

PROGRAM INFORMATION

EQIP: CONTRACTS ARE BEING OBLIGATED FOR 2026 FUNDS. MORE CONTRACTS WILL BE OBLIGATED AS FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE. **SIGN-UP NOW FOR 2027 FUNDS TO ENSURE NOT MISSING THE CUTOFF DATE.**

CSP: CONTRACTS ARE BEING PREPPED FOR RANKING FOR 2026 FUNDS. CURRENTLY, THE RANKING DEADLINE IS JUNE 1ST. PRE-APPROVALS AND OBLIGATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE SOMETIME AFTER JUNE 1ST. **SIGN-UP NOW FOR 2027 FUNDS TO ENSURE NOT MISSING THE CUTOFF DATE.**

NSWCP: NSWCP FUNDS ARE APPROVED MONTHLY FOR FLOW METER ONLY AND SOIL MOISTURE SENSOR APPLICATIONS. ALL OTHER IRRIGATION APPLICATIONS FOR UNDERGROUND PIPE, SURGE VALVES, ETC. ARE REVIEWED FOR FUNDING 4 TIMES A YEAR, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER, FEBRUARY, AND MAY (FOR SLIPPAGE). APPLICATIONS MUST BE SIGNED BY THE OWNER. INSTALLATION WORK CANNOT BE STARTED UNTIL APPROVED. - AS A SIDE NOTE, ALL NON-IRRIGATION APPLICATIONS ARE APPROVED MONTHLY.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT: As of now, USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT IS NOT ACCEPTING NEW APPLICATIONS DUE TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 14315. NO NEW GRANT AWARDS WILL BE MADE UNTIL USDA FINALIZES AND ISSUES NEW REAP REGULATIONS. APPLICANTS WITH APPLICATIONS ON FILE CAN REAPPLY ONCE THE NEW REGULATIONS ARE EFFECTIVE. THERE IS NO TIMELINE SET FOR WHEN THE NEW REGULATIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JOLENE JONES AT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE KEARNEY USDA SERVICE CENTER AT 308-455-9840 OR AT JOLENE.JONES@USDA.GOV.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY 20: TBNRD BOARD MEETING**
- MAY 25: MEMORIAL DAY – BANKS & GOV'T OFFICES CLOSED**
- JUNE 1: CNPPID BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**
- JUNE 8 THRU AUG 30: CNPPID 12 WEEK IRRIGATION SCHEDULE**

Precipitation this Fall/Winter

Below is a chart showing precip from Nov.-April at the Tri-Basin NRD office. Oct. is not included in the total's. Oct. just shows the last month of good precip. Nothing this bad since fall/winter of '88/'89. I noticed '21/'22 being 0.55 inches less than this year. May at 4.06 inch average doesn't look good. Look at the rains on page 4 half way through May.

	Inches of Precipitation at TBNRD Office			
	Normal	'25/'26	'21/'22	'88/'89
October	1.58	1.88	1.40	0.09
November	0.90	0.44	0.15	0.39
December	0.59	0.02	0.33	0.10
January	0.51	0.20	0.21	0.50
February	0.67	0.23	0.00	0.36
March	1.46	0.14	0.75	0.13
April	2.46	1.58	0.62	0.01
Totals	6.59	2.61	2.06	1.49

CURTIS'S COLUMN

Up and running in 2026!!!

The Tri-Basin Irrigator is up and running in 2026.

Hello. My name is Curtis Scheele. I am the Water Management Specialist with the NRCS covering the three counties in the Tri-Basin NRD (TBNRD) of Gosper, Phelps, and Kearney counties. My office is located in Holdrege. See page 4 for the phone and addresses of the three NRCS offices within the TBNRD, CNPPID, the TBNRD, and UNL Extension.



I would like to welcome those receiving the Irrigator for the first time as well as those returning subscribers. This newsletter is sent bi-weekly during the crop season – FREE of charge.

My goal is to provide you with irrigation and nitrogen information across the TBNRD that is short and to the point. To our neighbors and others across this great state of Nebraska, I hope this information can benefit you all as well. Together, we need to protect and preserve our most valuable natural resource, WATER, that we all rely on each and every day.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, simply provide me with your email address. You can call your local NRCS office (see page 4) or you can email me at curtis.scheele@usda.gov. Benefits of receiving via email are direct links to websites, receiving weekly Crop ET information, and other information as appropriate.

Archived copies from 2018 to present are available on the Tri-Basin NRD's website at <https://www.tribasinrd.org/information-outreachnews/tri-basin-irrigator-newsletter>. You can contact me for older issues.

2026 Crop ET Sources!!!

1. I will email weekly Crop ET information from TBAWMN sites each week. See map on page 3 for locations. These sites are additional Crop ET locations to the Mesonet stations. To be added to this email list, contact Curtis Scheele at curtis.scheele@usda.gov or call 308-995-6121, Ext. 3. The info will still be on page 3 of this newsletter, but you can receive it more timely by receiving the weekly email.
2. The weekly Crop ET information from the TBAWMN sites will be posted each week on the Tri-Basin NRD's website. See page 3 of this newsletter for the link.
3. The CropWatch website shown on page 3 of this newsletter will have the Crop ET for the past 7 days, past 3 days and the future 3 days. Accum. GDD is included. You can save the URL for the Mesonet station nearest you. You can select from any of the stations across Nebraska. 7 of the stations are within or neighbor the TBNRD.
4. The ET Texting Service will give daily Crop ET for the 3 Mesonet stations within the TBNRD (Smithfield 2E, Holdrege 5N, Axtell 5NE). This free service will start June 1st. More information will be available in a future issue of this newsletter.

Snowmelt Forecast Well Below Average

Lake McConaughy is at nearly 50% capacity and is holding around 865,000 acre-feet of water. Central customers can expect a full irrigation supply in 2026.

The extremely dry weather experienced over the winter and early spring in the local region was also experienced in the mountain ranges of Wyoming and Colorado. This is monitored very closely by Central as snowmelt is one major factor that affects flows into Lake McConaughy.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s April forecast shows that spring water runoff from mountain snowmelt in the North Platte River Basin above Glendo Dam is expected to be well below average this year. Snowpack is well below average and the Upper North Platte River Basin is in severe drought. From April through July, total runoff is expected to reach approximately 140,000 acre-feet, which is only 15% of the 30-year average. Snowpack and runoff started about 30 days earlier than normal, with a snow-water equivalent to approximately 9-10 inches less than normal.

Total conservation storage capacity of the North Platte Reservoir system is approximately 2,815,800 acre-feet. At the end of March, the combined storage content in the North Platte Reservoirs was only 67% of the 30-year average. Seminole Reservoir and Pathfinder Reservoir in Wyoming both are expected to have very low-capacity levels this year.

Visit www.cnppid.com or follow @CNPPID on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for updates throughout the year.

TRI-BASIN NRD NEWS



Chemigation Permit Deadline: June 1, 2026

Chemigation is an effective and efficient way to apply fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides through an irrigation system. Nebraska law requires an annual chemigation permit for each injection site used to apply fertilizer or agricultural chemicals through an irrigation system.

Renewal forms were mailed in March and must be signed, completed, and returned with payment to the Tri-Basin NRD by June 1, 2026. Renewal permits are \$15. New permits are \$50. For new permit questions contact Tri-Basin NRD at 308-995-6688. Newly permitted systems must be inspected before use. You will need to contact us when your new system is ready.

A valid chemigation applicator license is required to apply any agricultural products, including fertilizer and chemicals, through irrigation systems. If a system crosses an open waterway, such as an irrigation canal, an additional form with limitations must be completed before the chemigation permit can be approved.

Chemigation systems must be inspected every three years. If your system is due for inspection, Tri-Basin NRD staff will contact you this summer. Routine inspections are conducted from June through August and must be completed for the permit to remain eligible for renewal the following year.

For more information about chemigation permits, see the Tri-Basin NRD website at

<https://www.tribasinprd.org/groundwaterwater-quality/chemigation>.



Nice to Meet all of you!

Hello all! Welcome to a new year of crop production and managing our irrigation. My name is Christopher (Chris) Termunde. I am new to the area and to my role as the area’s Extension Instructor for water and crops. My experience is in plant disease, so I have been spending time learning about our water resources and irrigation.

I thought that it would be a good idea to share some of the resources I have been using to learn. Some of these you may have heard of, some you may not have. I will put QR-codes at the bottom of this article so that you can access those sites. The first is the UNL Water site. This site covers everything from water resources, like a ground water map, agricultural production, irrigation, and manure management. The site also has several articles on nitrate management. It’s a good resource for getting started. Of course, there is also the CropWatch website where Extension educators and specialists write on all the major research or issues that are occurring in Nebraska fields. CropWatch is an excellent resource even if you have issues other than water that you want information on. Since I have spent the last few years in research, I also spend time learning about irrigation through peer reviewed journal articles.

As a new Extension Instructor, I want to let all farmers and those involved in the agriculture industry to know that I am here to help, though it brings to mind the words “I’m from the government and I’m here to help” line so famously spoken from President Reagan. I have a heart of a servant. I have spent my career before this as a police officer in south GA and truly want to serve my communities. I believe that this position allows me to do that. I also enjoy solving problems. This position allows me to do both!

My Goals for the Year

Being a plant pathologist, while working towards understanding general agronomics and irrigation, I have several goals for my first year in this position. One of them is to meet as many farmers as possible in this area to get to know them and help them as I can. Next, there was confirmed tar spot of corn in Phelps County in 2024. It has more than likely spread to other counties in the area. I need to confirm that it has so that research can be conducted in our area. The last thing on my list is to have an end of harvest year in review. For the year in review, I want to have you, the farmers, come and tell the community how the year went and lessons learned that will change how you do things in the next year. Or tell us the things that went really well and what will you keep doing. I want this year in review to be fun and educational for everyone involved.

Thank you for what you do for your communities, state and nation. While I know it doesn’t seem like it at times, but you keep us moving forward with the work you do.

You can reach me at my office, e-mail or cell phone:

Office locale: 1308 Second Street, Holdrege, NE 68949

Office number: 308-995-4222

Cell number: 229-886-0327

E-mail: ctermunde2@unl.edu

UNL Water



CropWatch



NAWMN CROP ET INFORMATION

Additional Information and other ET resources can be found at websites listed under "Crop ET Information" below.

Inches of Crop Water Use (ET) =

Reference ET x Kc

Crop Coefficients (Kc)			
Corn		Soybeans	
Stage	Kc	Stage	Kc
2 leaf	0.10	Cotyledon	0.10
4 leaf	0.18	1st Node	0.20
6 leaf	0.35	2nd Node	0.40
8 leaf	0.51	3rd Node	0.60
10 leaf	0.69	Beg. Bloom	0.90
12 leaf	0.88	Full Bloom	1.00
14 leaf	1.01	Beg. Pod	1.10
16 leaf	1.10	Full Pod	1.10
Silk – Beg. Dent	1.10	Beg. Seed	1.10
¼ Milk Line	1.04	Full Seed	1.10
Full Dent (½ Milk)	0.98	Yellow Leaf	1.00
¾ Milk Line	0.79	Beg. Mat.	0.90
Black Layer	0.60	Full Mat.	0.20
Full Maturity	0.10	Mature	0.10

Site	April 27 – May 3		May 4 – May 10	
	Reference ET	Rain	Reference ET	Rain
1	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	NA	NA	NA	NA
3	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	NA	NA	NA	NA
6	NA	NA	NA	NA
7	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	NA	NA	NA	NA
9	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	NA	NA	NA	NA
11	NA	NA	NA	NA

CROP STAGE INFORMATION

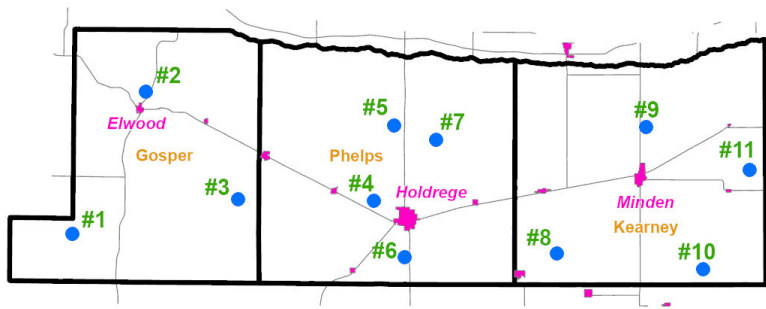
Corn (Not Planted to Emerging stage): Nothing at this time.

Avg. daily water use from May 4 – May 10 was 0.00"-0.00".

Soybeans (Not Planted to Emerging stage): Nothing at this time.

Avg. daily water use from May 4 – May 10 was 0.00"-0.00".

May 4-May 10 (11 of 11 TBAWMN sites reporting): Average weekly rainfall was NA (range NA to NA). Average weekly ET for corn was 0.00 and for soybeans was 0.00.



2026 Map of TBAWMN Sites across the Tri-Basin NRD

CROP ET INFORMATION

TBAWMN Sites: <https://www.tribasinrrd.org/tbawmn>

CropWatch: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/gdd-etdata>

Texting: Sasha Hahn at TBNRD: 308-995-6688

CORN STAGE		DESCRIPTION
V2	2 Leaves	Leaf stage is defined by number of leaves with visible collars. The collar is a discolored line where the leaf meets the stalk. This line circles the stalk. TIP: Mark the 6th leaf or a higher leaf by cutting a notch in it or some other way so as to know that leaf number. Reason is the lower leaves will be lost as the plant develops. Flag or somehow mark the plant in the field as a reference plant when determining later leaf (vegetative) stages.
V4	4 Leaves	
V6	6 Leaves	

SOYBEAN STAGE		DESCRIPTION
VC	Cotyledon	Shortly after emergence. Cotyledons and unifoliate leaves are unfolded. (1 node)
V1	First Node	One trifoliate leaf has 3 leaflets. V1 is the first trifoliate leaf with unrolled or unfolded leaflets. Leaflet edges are no longer touching. (2 nodes = 1 unifoliate + 1 trifoliate)
V2	Second Node	V2 has 2 nodes on main stem, each with a trifoliate leaf with unfolded leaflets. Plant as 3 nodes total: 1 unifoliate + 2 trifoliates

LAKE AND RIVER LEVELS

CNPPID Reservoir Elevation and Capacity as well as Platte River Flow data listed below and other locations can be found on CNPPID's website at <http://cnppid.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/lakeRiverData.html>.

	May 14, 2026, 8:00 AM	1 Year Ago
EI. & Cap. – Lake McConaughy	3229.2 ft - 49.3%	3238.7 ft - NA%
Inflows to Lake McConaughy	166 cfs	365 cfs
Flows on the North Platte at North Platte	233 cfs	257 cfs
Flows on the South Platte at North Platte	142 cfs	147 cfs
Flows on the Platte at Kearney	21 cfs	119 cfs

Help Us Out Eddie!!!

Youtube Video - Click the link below

[I Love a Rainy Night by Eddie Rabbitt](#)

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

NRCS Nebraska www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov
 Farm Service Agency www.fsa.usda.gov
 TBNRD Home Page www.tribasinrrd.org/
 Central Irrigation District www.cnppid.com/cropwatch.unl.edu
 UNL Cropwatch cropwatch.unl.edu
 UNL Extension extensionpubs.unl.edu/
 Drought Monitor <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/nadm/Home.aspx>
 No-till On The Plains www.notill.org
 Soil Health: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/
 NE State Irrig Assoc www.nebraskastateirrigationassociation.org/

RAINFALL

Rainfall amounts listed below and other locations come from NeRAIN which can be found at website <https://nednr.nebraska.gov/NeRain/Maps/maps>.

Location:	May 1 – May 13	May 1 – May 13
Elwood 1.81 mi. NW:	0.25	0.25
Loomis 0.2 mi. SW:	0.09	0.09
Holdrege 0.49 mi. WNW:	0.06	0.06
Minden 7.2 mi. W:	0.07	0.07
Minden 8.8 mi. ESE:	0.00	0.00

Average Rain for May in Holdrege = 4.06 Inches

*** If you wish to receive this newsletter via e-mail, or have any questions, comments or ideas, feel free to contact Curtis Scheele at the NRCS office in Holdrege or you can email him at curtis.scheele@usda.gov. ***

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

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 PO Box 798
 Holdrege, NE 68949-0798
 308-995-6121, Ext. 3

309 Smith Street
 PO Box 41
 Elwood, NE 68937-0041
 308-785-3307, Ext. 3

1005 South Brown Street
 Minden, NE 68959-2601
 308-832-1895, Ext. 3



Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District

415 Lincoln Street
 PO Box 740
 Holdrege, NE 68949
 308-995-8601



Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

1723 Burlington Street
 Holdrege, NE 68949
 308-995-6688



Nebraska Extension

1308 2nd Street
 Holdrege, NE 68949
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PO Box 146
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