

Tri-Basin Irrigator

Volume 22, Issue 10

September 17, 2026

PROGRAM INFORMATION

EQIP: ALERT - SIGN-UP DEADLINE FOR 2027 FUNDS IS

OCTOBER 16, 2026 - ALERT THIS HAS BEEN MOVED UP
BASICALLY ONE MONTH FROM PREVIOUS YEARS.

CSP: ALERT - SIGN-UP DEADLINE FOR 2027 FUNDS IS

OCTOBER 16, 2026 - ALERT THIS HAS BEEN MOVED UP
BASICALLY ONE MONTH FROM PREVIOUS YEARS.

NSWCP: APPLICATIONS CAN BE TAKEN ANY TIME.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SIGNED BY THE OWNER. INSTALLATION
WORK CANNOT BE STARTED UNTIL APPROVED.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT: FOR PROGRAM
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

SEPT 8: CNPPID BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

SEPT 16: TBNRD BOARD MEETING

REMINDERS for 2026!!!

CSP Contract Holders:

- Get your 2026 records and documentation to your local NRCS office ASAP so you don't risk being in violation of your contract. NRCS staff need time to review and certify your scheduled practices and enhancements prior to September 30th. If there are issues with documentation or other items, there may not be time to have them resolved and thus your payments and or contract could be in jeopardy. Letters were sent mid to late summer reminding contract holders to have these records turned in by September 1st.

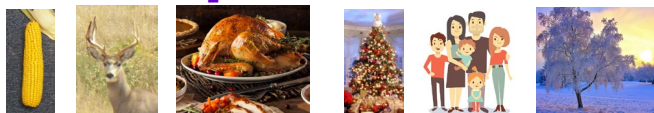
EQIP Contract Holders:

- Get your soil moisture sensor charts submitted to NRCS along with rainfall and flow meter readings. The sooner these get turned in the sooner we can pay.

FINAL Tri-Basin Irrigator for 2026!!!

Another year of the Tri-Basin Irrigator has come to an end. Thank you for receiving this newsletter. I hope you received helpful information this past crop season. For 2027, if you would like to receive this newsletter via email, email me at curtis.scheele@usda.gov. Or call me at 308-995-6121, Ext. 3.

Take time to stop and enjoy the simple pleasures of life!



**Until next season, may you be blessed
with a safe and wonderful harvest,
winter, and spring!!!**

CURTIS'S COLUMN

New Program for Nitrogen Starting in 2027!

Do you want to be part of a nitrogen program starting in 2027 where you make the choices? You get to determine how much nitrogen you are applying and on how many acres. Per Acre payments are made accordingly. Could be \$14.00 per acre, could be more, could be less.

First thing that needs done is to create a nitrogen plan for 2027. How much nitrogen do you want to apply and on what acres? Do you want to apply one nitrogen rate on a full pivot or all pivots? Or do you want to apply 2 different rates per pivot? You can apply 2 different rates on half pivots or on smaller plots. Will you apply all nitrogen early, will you apply more than 50% after crop emergence, will you fertigate, etc?

You will need to know how you are going to apply the proper amounts of nitrogen on your half pivots or smaller plots. You can apply different nitrogen baseline amounts early and fertigate the same rate on all acres to equal your total nitrogen applications. If not fertigating, the different rates of nitrogen can be applied accordingly with your application equipment.

At the end of the year, simply harvest so that you can keep track of the yields on the different nitrogen scenarios. This can be as simple as watching the yield monitor. Just record the different yields on the different nitrogen scenarios.

For payment, you will need to know your nitrogen cost per lb and the price per bushel of corn. Payments are only based off nitrogen input costs and the yield profit. If you make no changes from your normal operation, there are no payments on those acres because that is what you are already doing.

If you can save 20 lbs per acre of nitrogen at \$0.70 per lb, and lose zero yield from your normal operation, that equates to a \$14.00 per acre savings. Let's say half of your pivot is 65.0 acres. If you applied 20 lbs less nitrogen per acre on half the pivot and the other half is your normal application, and both halves have equal yield, then your payment will be \$14.00 per acre x 65.0 acres equaling a payment of \$910.00 for that one pivot. If you did this on all your pivots, your payment would be:

- 10 Pivot Farm = \$9,100.00 per year
- 20 Pivot Farm = \$18,200.00 per year
- 30 Pivot Farm = \$27,300.00 per year

These payments are very similar to our CSP annual payments, but without the documentation and hoops.

What is this program you ask? Well, you may have figured it out. This simple program is what I am calling the DIY-N (Do It Yourself-Nitrogen) program. You manage it and you pay yourself. This program is yours to compare different nitrogen rates on your own fields in order to see if you can make money by cutting back on nitrogen. This program can be a lifetime of annual payments where CSP goes for 5 years.

You've heard me speak about nitrogen at Pesticide/Nitrogen Certification meetings. I have provided numerous UNL On-Farm Research data and TAPS data at these meetings and in previous Tri-Basin Irrigator newsletters. But every operation is different and that's why this program is so unique. Every field is a research field. You just have to compare different scenarios on your own operation and figure out the payments to yourself.

To sign-up for DIY-N, simply visit with your Crop Consultant or fertilizer dealer. Let them know what you are comparing and they can help with the parameters of the project or be able to help apply the different rates of nitrogen.

CNPPID NOTES



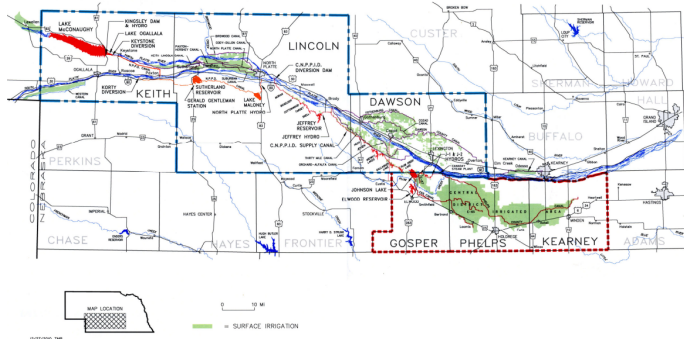
Irrigation Staff Needs Your Help

As a reminder, we ask neighbors to be mindful of fencing on Central property, so we don't have to ask them to move fence while we do our work. We do understand that it is convenient for some people to use our maintenance roads along their fields to place electric fence. However, it becomes more work and frustration for everyone if a fence needs to be moved or if repairs are needed to the canal roads and banks caused by cattle.

So, we're asking that folks are cognizant about fencing and keep fences and cattle off the maintenance roads and out of the canals. We would also like to remind those with pivot crossing permits that they are responsible for filling in the pivot tracks.

We appreciate your help and hope you have a safe and bountiful harvest this year!

THE CENTRAL NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER AND IRRIGATION DISTRICT



Find us at www.cnppid.com or @CNPPID on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.

Visit Colors of Water Tool <https://cnppid-cow.vercel.app>

TRI-BASIN NRD NEWS



Conservation Tree Planting

Now is the time to start planning for conservation tree planting next spring.

Windbreaks can protect fields, reduce soil erosion along field boundaries, provide wildlife habitat, and add long-term value to your property. Tri-Basin NRD can help by providing tree planting services for windbreaks, as

well as bundles of trees for landowners who prefer to plant their own. Contact Tri-Basin NRD or your local NRCS office to decide what types and numbers of trees and shrubs will work best for your site. Cost share is available to landowners planting a minimum of 850 feet. The form for ordering hand-plant trees will be available in November on our website, www.tribasinnr.org.



NEBRASKA EXTENSION EXTRAS



Another Season Come and Gone

Every year around Husker Harvest Days, or as harvest starts to come into view, I catch myself thinking, "Another year has come and gone." The growing season always seems to move faster than expected. At the same time, when you look back at everything that happened—planting delays, irrigation decisions, insect pressure, disease questions, equipment breakdowns, high fuel costs, and marketing decisions—it is easy to remember moments that felt impossible to work through. But somehow, solutions were found, decisions were made, and those problems became part of the story of the year. That is why the end of the season is a good time to do more than just park equipment and move on to next year. Once the crops are harvested, take some time to evaluate the year while the details are still fresh. A notebook, yield maps, irrigation records, soil test results, spray records, and even a few notes from conversations during the season can help turn a busy year into useful information for next year's decisions.

Start with the basics. Which fields yielded better than expected, and which fields fell short? Was the difference related to planting date, hybrid or variety selection, soil type, fertility, weed control, irrigation timing, hail, disease, or another factor? If one field struggled, was it a whole-field problem or did certain areas consistently drag down the average? Looking at yield maps beside soil maps, irrigation patterns, and field history can help identify problems that may be fixable.

Water management is another area worth reviewing. Did irrigation start at the right time, or did the crop show stress before the first irrigation? Were there times water was applied because the calendar said to irrigate rather than because the crop and soil needed it? If soil moisture sensors, ET tools, or crop water use estimates were used, did they change any decisions? If they did not, why not? The value of these tools comes from using them to make better-timed irrigation decisions, reduce unnecessary pumping, or protect yield during critical growth stages.

Fertility decisions also deserve a close look. Did nitrogen rates match yield potential and crop removal? Were there areas where the crop looked short of nitrogen or where lodging suggested too much? Did split applications, inhibitors, manure, cover crops, or irrigation water nitrate contribute to the final nitrogen program? End-of-year notes can help identify whether next year's fertility plan should be adjusted by field, yield goal, soil test level, or irrigation practice.

The goal of this year-end review is not to criticize every decision made during a difficult season. The goal is to learn from the year while the information is still available. Every farm had challenges, and every field has something to teach. Taking time now to evaluate what worked, what did not, and what should be tried next can make next year's decisions more confident and more profitable.

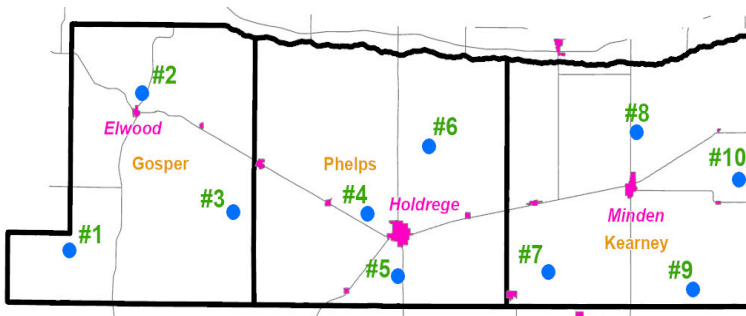
NAWMN CROP ET INFORMATION

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

	Aug 31 – Sept 6		Sept 7 – Sept 13	
Site	Reference ET	Rain	Reference ET	Rain
1	1.70	1.50	1.20	0.46
2	2.00	0.90	0.80	0.30
3	1.90	1.15	1.00	0.00
4	1.80	0.99	1.20	0.15
5	2.10	0.00	1.30	0.20
6	1.60	0.57	1.10	0.17
7	2.10	0.57	1.00	0.17
8	1.70	0.70	0.90	0.17
9	1.80	0.20	1.20	0.34
10	1.60	0.14	1.10	0.36



2026 Map of TBAWMN Sites across the Tri-Basin NRD

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

CROP STAGE INFORMATION

Corn (R5.5-Full Dent-1/2 Milk Line to Full Maturity stage): R6-Black Layer signals the end of the kernel growth for the season. 0.0 inches needed for yield. Parts of the plant may still be green. R6-Full Maturity, husks and leaves no longer have green on them.

Avg. daily water use from Sept 7 – Sept 13 was 0.07"-0.14".

Soybeans (R6-Full Seed to Mature stage): R7-Beginning Maturity, 0.0 inches needed for yield. R8-Full Maturity, 95% of pods have reached their mature color. Mature means beans are ready for harvest.

Avg. daily water use from Sept 7 – Sept 13 was 0.02"-0.19".

Sept 7-Sept 13 (10 of 10 TBAWMN sites reporting): Avg. weekly rainfall was 0.23 (range 0.00 to 0.46). Avg. weekly ET for corn was 0.71 and for soybeans was 0.95.

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
R5.8	3/4 Milk Line	The starch line is 3/4 the way down the kernel, heading towards the cob.
R-6	Black Layer	The starch line has advanced to the cob. Physiological Maturity. Black layer formed, kernel moisture is between 25%-35% moisture. 0.0 inches needed for yield.
R-6	Full Maturity	Husks and leaves are no longer green.
SOYBEAN STAGE		DESCRIPTION
R6.5	Full Seed / Yellow Leaf	Leaves begin to yellow rapidly, beginning in the lower canopy and progressing upwards.
R7	Beginning Maturity	At least one normal pod that has attained its final mature color (tan or brown, depending on variety) is present on any main stem node. 0.0 inches needed for yield.
R8	Full Maturity	95% of the pods have reached their mature pod color.
	Mature	Ready to harvest.

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>.

	Sept. 17, 2026, 8:00 AM	1 Year Ago
El. & Cap. – Lake McConaughy	3200.9 ft - 22.0%	3221.9 ft - NA%
Inflows to Lake McConaughy	327 cfs	1770 cfs
Flows on the North Platte at North Platte	340 cfs	734 cfs
Flows on the South Platte at North Platte	327 cfs	1770 cfs
Flows on the Platte at Kearney	57.6 cfs	671 cfs



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/
 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:	Sept 3 – Sept 16	May 1 – Sept 16
Elwood 0.03 mi. E:	1.72	14.81
Loomis 0.2 mi. SW:	1.66	15.88
Holdrege 0.49 mi. WNW:	1.00	13.46
Minden 7.2 mi. W:	0.86	13.93
Minden 8.8 mi. ESE:	0.36	16.58

Average Rain for May-Sept in Holdrege = 16.38 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

1609 Burlington Street
 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
 308-832-2280, 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
 308-995-4222

PO Box 146
 Elwood, NE 68937
 308-785-2390

424 North Colorado
 PO Box 31
 Minden, NE 68959
 308-832-0645

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