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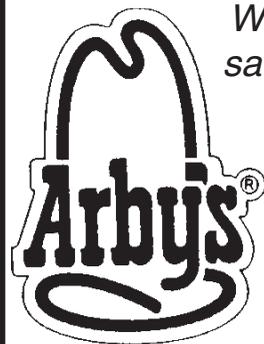


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Installing the working parts of his game-bird watering system was the inventor, Martin Hilt of St. Francis. Game farms can now have a more efficient, cleaner way of providing birds with water.

— Photo by Karen Krien/The Saint Francis Herald

## Watering system helps birds get a good drink

By Karen Krien

*The Saint Francis Herald  
karen.k@nwkansas.com*

A St. Francis man has developed and manufactured a bird-watering system he says will assure that birds on game farms — or those in the wild — will be able to get a drink.

For the last three years, Hilt has been working on a system that would be better suited for watering on farms where birds are raised to sell to hunting reserves. He developed the plans several years ago and has established EverFlow Watering Systems to make the system.

The system gives the birds clean, continuous water, he said. Because of a patented technology to prevent water from freezing, the birds are able to drink warm, clean water.

Warm water, Hilt said, keeps the birds' core body temperature constant so they experience less stress. Better yet, there is less work for the bird producer and the system does not require electricity.

Hilt said he and his wife Charlotte raise about 60,000 chuckar partridges and quail to sell each year. He knew there had to be a better way for the birds to get to water.

Hilt, along with many other game bird raisers, used a hog waterer for the birds. It was ineffective, he said, and birds were lost. The hog waterer stands about 18 inches high. There is a 6-inch opening on each side, with a slanted piece allowing enough room for only one or two birds at a time to get to the water.

Because the opening is off the ground, a cement block is placed so the bird can get up to the water. This watering device works, he said, but it is not adequate. It takes the young birds 24 to 36 hours to even figure out where the water

is. Then, the opening is large enough that small birds can fall in and drown.

The birds fly up and sit on top of the hog waterer system, so when the lids are opened, the feces, dirt and anything else on the lid falls down into the water.

Mrs. Hilt said no one wants to clean the waterer because it's filthy.

The new watering system has more water space and allows birds of all ages to drink. The lid of the waterer lifts off, exposing the plumbing for easy cleaning. It is easy to install, Hilt said. No electricity is required, but an underground water line is necessary. Built-in lids close the water trough when it is not in use.

Hilt said it took about three years to perfect the system. He said he sometimes called on his uncle, Henry Hilt, bouncing ideas off of him or asking what he thought might work better.

He sent the plans to have a form made, then it was sent to a manufacturer. That might have seemed like the end of his problems, he said, but the directions weren't exact. He and Henry had to make adjustments and the system still had to be assembled.

Hilt, when assembling, designed and built equipment to help the process go smoother.

He said he likes to "tinker" and his wife says he is always thinking about something to make a good thing better. He said he can't afford to go out and buy equipment, so takes what he has and builds it to fit his needs. His shop is filled with equipment which he or his dad, who died several years ago, made.

For more information on the EverFlow Watering system, call him at (785) 332-3200, e-mail [springcreekbirds@hotmail.com](mailto:springcreekbirds@hotmail.com) or go to [www.springcreekgamebirds.com](http://www.springcreekgamebirds.com).