

Windbreaks take time; rewards are long-term

By Pat Schiefen
pjschiefen@nwkansas.com

Jan and Perry Lohr have seen an investment of time and effort grow into rows of large evergreens that shelter their house. The Lohrs received the Windbreak Award for their efforts.

The couple married in 1976 and in 1977 moved into their house which was on the edge of a wheat field. The quarter of ground where the house is was bought by Perry's grandfather in the 1940s.

"Most of the trees are Eastern Red Cedars and we planted them by hand," said Jan. "We dug ditches and watered them that way. We planted at least 200 trees."

"In the early 90s we lost five or six due to damage from a freezing rain. We've lost more deciduous trees especially cottonwoods."

She said the trees that were planted on the south side of their house was part of their son's, Justin, forestry project in 4-H in 1994. Justin also planted trees at the Sherman County Fairgrounds.

With the drought, she said, they have been watering the trees with a sprinkler from May till November.

Last winter we had problems with the rabbits eating the trees. She said she finally took food

out to the pheasants and rabbits sheltering in the trees.

Perry was born and has lived all of his life in Sherman County. He graduated from Goodland High School in 1974. His parents were the late Kenneth and Joyce Lohr.

Jan said she moved to Goodland when she was in grade school. Her parents were the late Alvin and Beth Rethmann. She graduated in 1976.

The couple has two children, Justin and Sasha. Justin is married to Brooke and have a four-month-old son, Breck and live in Goodland. Sasha is married to Aaron Smith and they live in Jefferson City, Mo.

Perry is disabled from a stroke four years ago when he was 47. He had worked for the Department of Transportation for 18 years and was working at the Kit Carson Correctional Facility in Burlington when he got sick.

"It was a big adjustment," said Jan. "Perry's Grandpa and Dad both had heart problems."

She said, we hobby farmed the rest of the quarter of ground before but now the ground is rented out.

Perry spends his time gardening, on the Inter-



Jan and Perry Lohr stand in front of one of the evergreen trees that surround their house and protect it from the weather. The Lohrs planted the main windbreak in 1978 and have continued to plant trees every year.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

See TREES, Page 10



CONGRATULATIONS SHERMAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT AWARD WINNERS:

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WINDBREAK AWARD

Jan and Perry Lohr

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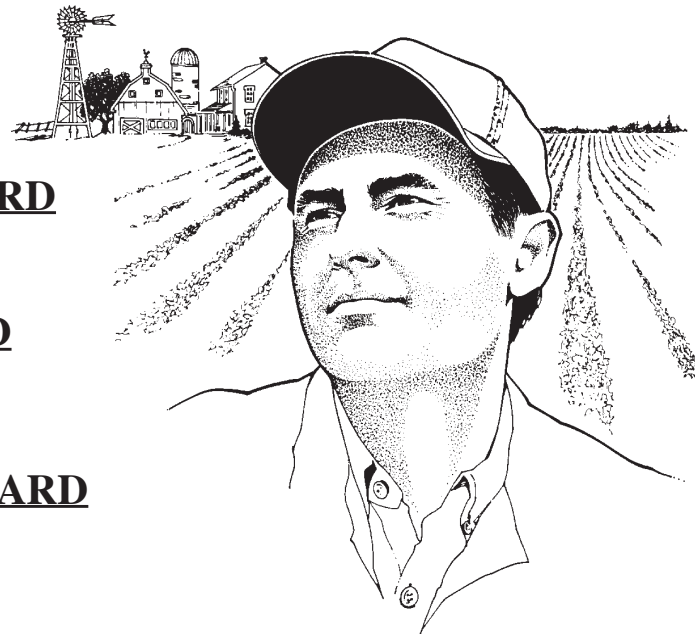
HONORABLE MENTION LIMERICK

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STATE POSTER AWARD

THIRD PLACE

Shaley Miller



"Serving Northwest Kansas"

TREES, from Page 9

net and watching Nascar.

"I plant tomatoes, corn, green beans, potatoes and beets," he said. "And have tried growing most everything."

"We finally got the asparagus going after two years," Jan said.

Jan has worked for 19 years at the First National Bank and is the assistant vice President in charge of loan operations.

"I make sure things get processed correctly," she said.

Perry is the treasurer for the Elks and she belongs to PEO Chapter ID. He spent ten years on the fair board. Jan is the llama superintendent for the fair.

We both helped in 4-H especially when our kids were members, she said. The kids raised steers, hogs, rabbits, llamas and goats.

"We had a lot of rabbits," she said. "The building had to be air conditioned."

The temperature needs to be around 70 degrees for rabbits to breed and to have good fur at the fair. At one time we had almost 50 rabbits.

"I missed the goats," she said. "We had Nubians."

Justin had a llama and when the goats had kids the llama would let the little goats climb on him when he was lying down, Jan said. Llamas make good guard animals. In South America they are used for meat, pack animals and for wool.

"All we have right now is two dogs," she said. "We have high hopes that our grandkids will want to raise animals."

"We love being in the country," Jan said.



Jan Lohr pets one of their two German Shepherds at their home in Sherman County. Jan and Perry Lohr won the Windbreak Award for this year.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

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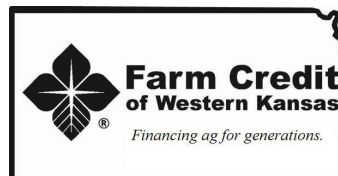


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Alliance expanding kids program

By **Sandy Rodgers**
Sherman County Conservation District Manager

In addition to all the exciting and fun things I get to do in my job everyday, I am President of the Northwest Kansas Conservation and Environmental Alliance.

We will shorten that up to just "The Alliance."

The Alliance is made up of District Managers from the seven counties in the Northwest Corner of our great State. The members include Jeanne Dunn, Cheyenne County, Bev Elder, Wallace County, Janice Cogan, Rawlins County, Danielle Freeman, Thomas County, Diana Solko, Decatur County, Dana Charles, Logan County and myself.

We started meeting in 2000 but our By-Laws were adopted and signed on Sept 11, 2001. We were all traveling to Colby for our meeting early that morning and began hearing the news and getting phone calls from our families about what had happened in New York City.

I don't think any of us will forget that morning. Should we go on to our meeting? Should we go



Alliance members include Jeanne Dunn, Cheyenne County, Bev Elder, Wallace County, Janice Cogan, Rawlins County, Danielle Freeman, Thomas County, Diana Solko, Decatur County, Dana Charles, Logan County and Sandy Rodgers, Sherman County.

home? Anyway, we all arrived at our meeting and aside from adopting the By-Laws, we just sat there stunned but comforted by each other's company.

Our original goal was to come together and work on grants for funding for our local Districts and it just kind of evolved into an educational forum for Conservation Issues.

We have been lucky enough to receive grants for some of our projects which have included hosting the State Envirothon Meet at St. Francis in 2004, we held an Eco-Meet at the Nature Conservatory located south of Oakley in 2005 as well as a "Linking Girls to the Land" event

in Cheyenne County.

In 2006 we co-sponsored the Eco-Meet for our area with the Sternberg Museum in Hays. Last year we held our first "Conservation Kids Roundup" at Colby.

Fourth graders from all seven counties represented by the Alliance were invited to the Community Building in Colby to participate in an educational and fun day learning about everything from the Eco-System, Soils, Non-Point Source Pollution, Skins and Skulls from the Wildlife Dept to Water Conservation.

The Alliance wrote for and received a grant to cover the expenses of the school buses mileage

and a noon meal for the kids. More than 200 students attended last year and we are scheduling our second "Roundup" for April 30.

Our group is affiliated as a project of the Western Prairie Resource and Conservation Development Council and has assisted the Council with projects.

We are a great team. We all have the same job in different counties and network on our day to day issues too. In spite of our District Conservationists teasing us about just wanting to get out of the office and go to lunch, we really are proud of our accomplishments.

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Sherman County annual report for 2007

SHERMAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007

This is the Annual Report of the Sherman County Conservation District for the Calendar year of 2007.

The 2007 Annual Meeting was held Feb, 12, 2007 at the VFW in Goodland. Mr. and Mrs. Max Linin received the Banker's Award and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Allaman were recipients of the Windbreak Award. Danny Farmer was recipient of the Friends of Conservation Award.

One hundred thirty cooperators enjoyed the meal furnished by the District and local banks. Lynn Ihrig introduced the Barbershop Connection who provided the entertainment for the evening. Lynn Ihrig was re-elected to the board by secret ballot.

Thirty-six plaques were presented at the 2007 Annual Meeting for the Poster, Limerick, Essay and Computer Technology Contest. Sandy Rodgers, District Manager presented conservation programs prior to the contest.

The Goodland Star-News published the Annual Soil Conservation Edition. KLOE/KKCI radio continues to support conservation throughout the year.

Sherman County Farmers continue to support conservation in Sherman County. All Compliance plans are on schedule. Approximately 512

CRP contracts are in place for approximately 60,003.4 acres. The State Water Resources Cost Share funded jobs for 2007 included tanks, livestock wells, pipelines and septic systems that were failing. There are 36 active EQIP contracts, one Wetland Reserve Program contract, one Conservation Security Program contract and four Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program contracts in Sherman County.

The Sherman County Conservation District continues a strong education and information program. A fair booth was displayed in August. Sandy Rodgers, District Manager worked with fifth and sixth graders on the Poster, Limerick, Essay and Computer Technology Contest. The third through fourth Grades also participated in the Poster and Limerick Contest. Sandy gave programs in the classroom. In May the local fourth graders along with fourth graders from surrounding counties met in Colby and attended the first "Conservation Kids Roundup" sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Conservation and Environmental Alliance.

The District Board awarded John Mosbarger, Nate Linin and Molly Witzel all graduating seniors in Sherman County a scholarship to attend the college of their choice.

The District offers grass seed, flags, trees, rabbit netting, and weed barrier for sale as a service to area cooperators, as well as, providing

additional funding for the District Programs.

Sherman County Conservation District paid dues to the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, the KACD Auxiliary, Western Prairie RC&D, and the Kansas Association of Conservation District's Employees Organization.

The District works closely with their conservation partners, including State and National legislators, NRCS, County Commissioners, K-State Extension, Wildlife and Parks, FSA, Groundwater Management District No. 4 and many others to reach mutual conservation goals.

The District continued their Memorandum of Understanding with Wildlife and Parks concerning cost share funds. Sandy Rodgers serves as the Conservation District's representative to the Western Prairie RC&D with Fred Hall serving as alternate. Greg Nemechek represents the Sherman County Commissioners. Greg Nemechek, Sandy Rodgers, Mary Volk, Janet Rumble, and Fred Hall serve on the local advisory committee for Western Prairie RC&D and Fred Wedel serves as an advisor to that group.

The Sherman County Conservation District Manager, Sandy Rodgers, continues to participate in the Northwest Kansas Conservation and Environmental Alliance. This group consists of District Managers representing seven County

Conservation Districts. Their objective is to search for funding through grants and foundations to enhance and ensure a quality environment for future generations in Northwest Kansas. Sandy was re-elected president of the group.

The District offered prize money to 4-H and individual fair booths that carried a conservation theme.

Mr. and Mrs. Dean Graber, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Ihrig, Bill Selby and Sandy Rodgers attended the KACD Convention held at Wichita in November.

Shaley Miller, Dani Mangus and Cory Sampson all placed in the State Poster and Limerick Contest.

The District reviewed their long-range program and also reviewed the memorandums of understanding with all cooperating agencies.

The Sherman County Conservation District's objective is to promote locally led conservation and to assist landowners and operators apply conservation practices to the land with the technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Conservation Office is available for assistance to anyone needing help solving his or her conservation needs. The District Board meets the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of every month with the exception of July.

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SHERMAN COUNTY Farm Bureau

Former supervisor honored as a friend

The Sherman County Conservation District Board is presenting Ralph Duell with the Friends of Conservation Award at their Annual Meeting Feb 11th. Ralph's many years of dedicated service to Conservation in Sherman County is gratefully being recognized.



Ralph Duell, Friend of Conservation Award

Ralph and Wava started farming the Sherman County in 1950 and bought their present farm located five miles north and one mile of east of Goodland in 1959. The Duell's received the Bankers Award in 1974 and the Goodyear Award in 1991.

Land Conservation practices have always played an important role in their farming operation. Ralph served on the the Conservation District Board as an advisor from 1956 to 1959 and was elected as a Conservation District Supervisor in 1959 and served until 1989.

Ralph and Wava's family includes a son Tom and wife Mary Nell, a son Tim and wife Pat Ault-Duell and daughter Kristi and husband Dan Howard. The Duell's have 4 grandchildren.

The Goodland Star-News congratulates all the Conservation award winners.



Shaley Miller received Third place for her "Make a wish for conservation" poster at the State Conservation District Convention.

CONSERVATION TREES SPRING PLANTING REMINDER

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Grazing during a drought, back-up plans

By Roger W. Tacha

Resource Conservationist, Colby

It DID rain this year, and the range actually greened up and grew! We all hope the relief from the severe drought continues. However, we will not and should not soon forget the drastic conditions we experienced over the last five to seven years.

We obviously cannot make it rain or snow, but we CAN make back-up plans (contingency plans) for the next year if it does not rain. A contingency plan for drought comprises several factors — some are just normal range management topics, and some are specifically for the drought itself.

ANIMAL NUMBER (stocking rate) is the factor most commonly in the limelight. Most producers reduced animal numbers by 10 to 100 percent during the recent drought! If it is not green, it is certainly not growing! Cull early. Cull heavy. Good record keeping tells which animals go first.

Conservative stocking rates in both wet and dry times are a wise management tool to prepare for the very looming, long-term drought. It will likely take years for the range grasses to rebuild root systems and vigor after what they have been through. If your math and forward planning says you can maintain a certain stocking rate for the upcoming year, try it. But if things start looking bleak, reduce numbers quickly.

ANIMAL TYPE is another factor. Diversifying to run both stockers and cows gives a lot of flexibility for dealing with no rain. Stockers are readily “disposable.” However, adding stockers to a cow operation means initially reducing cow numbers, and this sort of move means planning for it months ahead. If this sort of “change” is a knee-jerk reaction to drought about one-third of the way through the grazing season, it is probably already too late.

WEANING TIME — another factor. Removing the half-grown youngsters from the range a month earlier than “normal” might mean the cows get two to four weeks more grazing before they’re out of groceries too. This is admittedly short term, but it adds a little cushion before you take the next step (which could be one of several things).

SUPPLEMENTAL FORAGE may be fea-

sible — or it may be just “fooling yourself,” depending on what and where the feed is. If there is a nearby crop field with residue, volunteer, or weeds, it might be feasible. If it is about the end of the normal grazing season, even actual feeding might be absorbable. But if it is mid-summer, consider carefully! This is an expensive quick fix.

TRANSPORTING the herd to “parts unknown” could be an option. It has been done, but this too will likely be very expensive.

GRAZING ROTATION SYSTEMS are certainly a valid and proven tool, both in and out of drought. Many are using them. They work! Predicted available grazing days for each individual pasture can easily be calculated PRIOR to the grazing season. Right along with this, the needed REST for each pasture is determined. The REST between grazing periods is what makes these systems work!

The grazing days and resting days hinge on a combination of all these things: stocking rate, length of grazing period, grass species, grass production, and number of grazing cycles during the season.

COMBINING HERDS might be another possibility. If adequate water is available to serve a higher stocking rate, this tool will automatically allow more REST to all pastures.

DEFERRED GRAZING is simply not grazing a certain pasture. This can be incorporated into a regular grazing system, whereby a different pasture is deferred each year. Potential benefits are winter grazing area, stock-piled forage for drought, improved wildlife habitat, and fuel-load buildup for prescribed burning. Obviously, this needs to be planned months in advance. It is feasible and a smart management option.

Monitoring climatic and ecological factors can provide trigger points which can help to predict the chance of whether or not to take contingency plan actions. Moisture received to date to “normal” amounts can then be tied to the amount of grazing period remaining. Seventy to 80 percent of grass growth has already occurred by mid-July. By making these moisture-production comparisons, if there is a serious forage deficit, it should be evident.

Again, with the exception of rain, all the fac-

tors listed above are ones people can control. Rather than reacting to drought with possible bad decisions, developing a contingency plan is a proactive way to start next year’s grazing.

If you would like to learn more about contin-

gency planning or would like help in developing a plan, please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office located at the Sherman County Farm Service Center, 210 W. 10th.

Grazing: Back to the basics

By Steven W. Cussins

Rangeland Specialist, Ulysses

Getting back to the basic needs of livestock is the key to grazing management. What is meant by back to the basics?

All living things have three basic needs to survive. These are environment (a place to stay), water, and food.

In over 30 years of experience with plant and livestock performance, including raising and testing livestock in a total confinement operation, I learned that managing for the basic needs increased production.

When any of those needs were not met, performance decreased and gains took longer to recover. When we address soil, water, plant, and animal concerns, the basic needs are being addressed to promote increased performance.

Environment

What environmental needs do animals have? One definition is a dry, warm place to rest or sleep. Another is the effective temperature (ET)

an animal needs for optimum production.

In a confinement operation, those needs are managed by artificially controlling the animal’s comfort zone. In an outdoor operation, the animal has to control its own comfort zone.

Although we cannot control the external environment, our management may include providing areas to minimize the external environment and developing plans outside the box to help meet the animal’s ET. For example, this might include windbreaks, shade, and temporary housing. Although the external environment is out of our control, managing for the last two basic needs is within our planning capabilities.

Water

A fact known about water is that every living thing needs it to survive. When water is lacking for 12 hours, the time it takes to regain production lost is five days.

With this in mind, planning is essential for

See **GRAZING**, Page 16

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GRAZING, from Page 15

improving grazing distribution in rangelands. When planning your water needs, some points to remember are size and type of livestock, daily requirements, and distance between watering locations.

Develop a water system to match your livestock size and numbers. This should include time at the tank. Herds travel together and if the boss cow leaves before the rest have a drink, the remaining cows may not get their required supply.

Your plan should include the daily requirement for livestock needs. For example, a lactating cow and dry cow have different requirements. Another factor is the temperature. As temperature increases, so does the animal's needs. You should plan on a three-day supply, so if the water source is down, all animals' needs are maintained. The next aspect is how many watering facilities are needed to promote proper grazing distribution. Terrain, cross fencing, and distance to water facilities all affect animal movement. Develop your plan to meet the needs.

Food

The final critical need is food. In rangelands, plants are the necessary resource to manage. If livestock have to graze all day long, their efficiency is reduced. Jim Gerrish talks about building your solar panel in his book MIG, The Grassroots of Grass Farming.

He discusses managing your soil, hydrological cycles, and plants by leaving enough plant material to build an efficient solar panel. His example is to think of your grass as 43,560 square feet of solar panel. He describes grasses as energy efficient when they cover the entire acre.

Other studies from Utah State University, University of Wyoming, Oklahoma State University, and Kansas State University discuss the need to leave grass standing. This allows for energy to be converted for plant re-growth, root development, and nutrient storage.

Your solar panel, if managed properly, will provide the nutrients for livestock. The idea of "take half-leave half" by weight should be the target. How do you get there?

What we know is rest restores plant health and vigor. A rotation system, be it a two-pasture

switch back, four-pasture cell, or a 12-paddock grazing system, provides rest following a rotational grazing system. This will improve plant health and vigor, and animals don't have to spend all day foraging.

These systems do work if managed properly. Some comments producers might make after following a rotational-grazing system are, "We have too much grass," or "We need to put more animals in," but in reality, they are achieving the "take half-leave half" rule. Those individuals are excited about how much their grass is improving along with improved animal performance.

By planning to meet the three basic needs, environment, water, and food through proper management of our resources, a more efficient solar panel is developed.

For more information about grazing needs, please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office located at the Sherman County Farm Service Center, 210 W. 10th.

For more information about conservation programs, visit the Kansas NRCS Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov.

District youth contest winners

Posters 3rd and 4th grade

- 1st Lindsey Geeska
- 2nd Savannah Brighton
- 3rd Tristan Cooper
- Honorable Mention, Braxton Redlin
- Honorable Mention, Ruby Smith

Posters 5th to 8th grade

- 1st Nicole Sederstrom
- 2nd Holton Witman
- 3rd Garrett Taylor
- Honorable Mention, Kristina Stasser
- Honorable Mention, Gerell Miller

Limericks 3rd and 4th grade

- 1st Dani Mangus
- 2nd Katie Seeger
- 3rd Amber Chaffman
- Honorable Mention, Hiram Hendrich
- Honorable Mention, Sophia Williams

Limericks 5th to 8th grade

- 1st Kristina Stasser
- 2nd Ellie House
- 3rd Brooke Fairchild
- Honorable Mention, Berkley White
- Honorable Mention, Gannon Ihrig

Essays

- 1st Halie Price
- 2nd Nicole Sederstrom
- 3rd Sabre Yarbrough
- Honorable Mention, Amanda McClary
- Honorable Mention, Carlee Cooper

HyperStudio Stacks

- 1st Holton Witman
- 2nd Kristina Stasser
- 3rd Brianna White
- Honorable Mention, Fiona Cruz
- Honorable Mention, Kolt Trachsel

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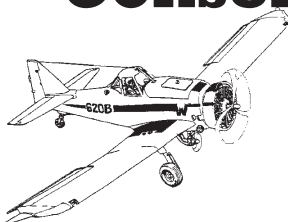
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