

Local Farmer Welcomes NASA Team in Moundridge

Story by: *Melissa Harvey, Kansas State University, KCARE*

Ray Flickner, owner and operator of Flickner Farms and the founder of the Flickner Innovation Farm, had an “out of this world” experience with a team of NASA Earth scientists as part of their *Space for Ag* listening tour on August 24th.

The Flickner Farm in Moundridge was only one stop for the NASA team, who traveled to Kansas to have face-to-face conversations with farmers about how NASA can use its technological capabilities to provide better information to producers. During the visit, Ray was able to explain the types of technologies he uses on his farm, and how his use of irrigation technology, remote imagery, soil moisture monitors, plant sensors, and other tools assist him with making responsible management decisions. The NASA Earth team, led by Dr. Brad Doorn (NASA Earth Science Program Manager, Water Resources and Agriculture), discussed how they hope to make data more accessible and useful for farmers. This includes satellite imagery that can tell how much groundwater is available in a specific location, evapotranspiration (ET) data, and more.

With dry cornstalks rustling in the background, the group discussed how climate – particularly water shortages and high temperatures – is a major factor for farmers across the nation, and that tools to help mitigate the effects of climate extremes are essential. To learn more about the NASA Earth Sciences Division, go to: <https://appliedsciences.nasa.gov/what-we-do/food-security-agriculture>.



Photo Credit: Dan Donnerl, KSRE

Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers



In this issue, we are high-lighting the work of **Mr. Adam Grieser**, a life-long resident of Hesston, Kansas. Adam showed interest in farming at a young age while visiting his grandfather’s farm near Buhler, where he first encountered crop and livestock production. He then worked on a farm through high school and in 2009, he started farming his grandfather’s ground. His interest in agriculture continued to grow and he began to buy his own ground and partnered with the late Mr. Craig Ewy, a well-respected producer in the Little Arkansas River Watershed. Grieser pays tribute to Ewy during the interview and mentions that he would not be where he is today without Ewy’s knowledge, mentoring, and kindness.

The Grieser family (left photo) maintains cropland acreage in Harvey, McPherson and Sedgwick counties and pastureland in Marion County, where they have cow/calf pairs and sell finished beef to individuals. Grieser farms primarily row crops, to include corn, beans, milo and some wheat (this past year). Grieser and Ewy both worked to improve their farming practices to protect the environment and local water quality. Together, they implemented several best management practices (BMPs) which include no-till, cover crops, and reduced atrazine applications. Adam said they are a 100% no-till operation.

“The Ewy ground I farm has been in no till for over 25 years and the newer ground that was not in no-till has now been transitioned over to no-till”. Adam also said that he utilized cover crops for weed control and has been using them for grazing for the past 10 years or so. They maintain a minimum of 500 acres of cover crops each year. Grieser tried something new this year in the wheat crop. He planted cover crops into the wheat stubble, trying to “grow” or produce his own nitrogen. That’s innovation!

During their partnership, Grieser and Ewy were involved in the Little Arkansas River WRAPS Atrazine program. The program gave them a financial incentive to try utilizing less atrazine on their farmland, and the outcome was a positive one. Adam said, even though he no longer has any acres enrolled in the Atrazine program, he continues to use a reduced-rate of the herbicide. He went on to add that he has continued to see improved weed control, even with reduced applications. Grieser said that he would recommend the WRAPS programs to fellow watershed producers, stating that it was easy to sign up. When asked what his aspirations were for the future, the answer was simple, “to increase efficiency on the entire operation and to continue to grow and expand.” **Thank you, Adam Grieser, for your continued dedication to improving agriculture and protecting our water resources in the Little Arkansas River Watershed!**

EPA's Proposed Changes to Atrazine Mitigation

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing new mitigation measures to protect aquatic environments from atrazine. If finalized, the measures would reverse a 2020 policy decision implemented by the Trump administration that loosened restrictions for growers near rivers and streams. Under the new proposal, growers located in watersheds with atrazine concentrations that exceed 3.4 µg/L would have to reduce runoff or reduce their application rates. That level is far lower than the 15 µg/L threshold adopted by the Trump administration.

As summarized by EPA in their press release, "EPA is proposing the following measures for all atrazine labels to decrease atrazine runoff from treated fields:

- Prohibit application when soils are saturated or above field capacity (i.e., the soil's ability to retain water);
- Prohibit application during rain or when a storm event, likely to produce runoff from the treated area, is forecasted to occur within 48 hours following application;
- Prohibit aerial applications of all formulations; and
- Restrict annual application rates to 2 pounds of active ingredient or less per acre per year or less for applications to sorghum, field corn, and sweet corn.

In addition, EPA is proposing to add a "picklist" to labels that would require growers to select a combination of application rate reductions and/or runoff control measures when using atrazine in watersheds with atrazine concentrations that exceed the CE-LOC of 3.4 µg/L."

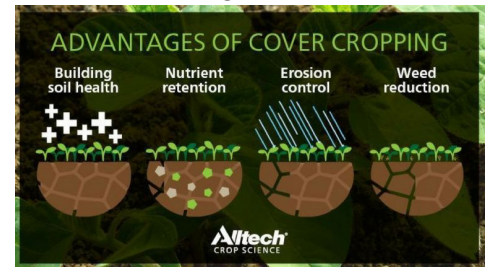
Additional details can be found at <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0266-1625>. The EPA issued an extension to the public comment window on August 2nd in response to requests made by multiple agriculture organizations. Public comments will be accepted until October 7th at <https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0266-1627>.

Upcoming Events

1. Cover Crop Tour - September 13th

Come join us on Tuesday, September 13th for a three-stop cover crop tour! The tour will begin in Inman and end east of Moundridge by 10:30 AM. No need to register. Coffee and pastries will be provided. See below for agenda details.

- 8:00 AM - Meet at Kelvin and Scott Neufeldt's: 280 14th Avenue, Inman, KS
 - Topics will include cover crop mixes, biomass and soil health improvement.
- 8:45 AM - Gary and Bryson Huxman's field: 2541 Arrowhead Road, Moundridge
 - The group will visit 2 of the Huxman's cover crop fields!
 - Topics will include cattle grazing cover crops, alternative watering systems for grazed cover crops, manure management and NRCS programs for grazing covers.



2. Save the date! The Fickner Innovation Farm Winter Meeting will be on Thursday, January 12, 2023 in Inman, KS.

Contacts

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For more information, visit our website at www.kcare.k-state.edu. We are on social media, too! Follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook under the name: @KStateKCARE.

