

Little Arkansas River WRAPS

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Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers

In this issue, we are high-lighting the work of a father and son, **Arlo and Anthony Unruh**. The Unruhs have been farming near Galva, in McPherson county, their whole lives. Arlo grew up on the family farm which housed a dairy in his younger years and then moved to solely grain/cropland. Arlo's son, Anthony, is now the 4th generation to farm, and while he has been helping on the farm since he was young, he became financially invested about 14 years ago.

The Unruhs produce milo, corn, soybeans, and wheat crops. They farm their private farm as well as spend much time custom planting, harvesting, and spraying applications. The Unruhs strive to conserve their natural resources, keeping soil on the fields and improving soil health. A few ways they do this is by: 1) no-till, the Unruhs are currently 100% no-till farming, 2) incorporate rye cover crops ahead of soybeans, they do this for soil health and weed control management, and 3) incorporate compost, for the past two years, the Unruhs have incorporated compost into their fertility program. Anthony says they want to put down good organic nutrients, rather than commercial fertilizers when feasible. They have been using pure-grade QLF liquid fertilizers that contain molasses sugars. These sugars boost the biology in the soil, and in turn, make nutrients that have been tied up, or unavailable, more accessible to the crops. They are enthused about doing things to unlock nutrient potential.

Arlo and Anthony have participated in several of the Little Arkansas River WRAPS programs to include the sediment BMP program, the Atrazine BMP program, where they chose to reduce atrazine use on several of their fields, and the City of Wichita's Offsite BMP program. When asked if he had anything to share pertaining to their involvement with these programs, Anthony said this: "contact with the WRAPS group has always been an easy and pleasant experience and he appreciated the on-site consultations. The extra income to try some new practices to conserve the environment is appreciated as well." Anthony noted that, "losing topsoil from runoff and tillage is something they think about often and wished to avoid. The only water they want to see leaving their fields should be clear."

When asked for any advice that he could share with his fellow producers, Anthony modestly replied: "I've learned over the years to try to find a system that works and then give it time to see it through. Don't worry about what is working on someone else's farm, don't question or second-guess what is working on yours." **Thank you Arlo and Anthony for your family's continued dedication to improving agriculture in the Little Arkansas River Watershed!**



Livestock Program: Consultations, Funding, and Helpful Tips

The Little Arkansas River WRAPS program can offer you funds to adjust your livestock practices. These practices include, moving feeding pen sites, rotational grazing, grazing cover crops, alternative watering systems, and more! Consultations can take place throughout the entire Little Arkansas River Watershed, however, funding is available only in the Turkey Creek subwatershed. If interested in a livestock consultation, contact Ron Graber at 620-727-5665 or rgraber@ksu.edu.

Bale Feeding Site Tips:

- Locate hay feeding sites at least 100 feet from waterways, streams, and/or ditches and maintain a vegetative buffer.
- Use a hardened feeding site to compensate for muddy conditions.
- Consider using bale processing, unrolling, or grinding.
- Move the feeding site frequently. Stockpile waste and manure often for composting.

Pen Management Tips:

- Clean pens regularly. This reduces solids leaving pens and ensures vigorous, weed-free buffer vegetation.
- Hay the buffer area to remove nutrients.
- Ensure pen runoff flows evenly into and across buffer.
- Contact your watershed specialist and register with KDHE if confining 300+ animal units.

The Flickner Innovation Farm Field Day was a Huge Success!

Ray Flickner, of Flickner Innovation Farm, joined forces with Kansas Corn to put on a spectacular field day on August 31st. The field day was included as a stop on Kansas Corn's annual summer listening tour. It was a beautiful sunny Tuesday morning in Moundridge Kansas, with nearly 100 people present and ready to learn all kinds of innovative ways to utilize cover crops, conserve and protect water, mitigate over use of chemicals and drift, improve soil health, suppress weeds, and so much more! The day also included LIVE inter-seeder and drone demonstrations. The event was sponsored by the Ray Flickner family and Innovation Farm, Kansas Corn, the City of Wichita, MKC, and Ag360 Insurance. One picture just did not do the day justice!

Brian Wedel, of Heartland Irrigation, and Ray Flickner kick off the event!



Central Prairie Coop gave attendees an inter-seeder demonstration.



Below: Jonathan Aguilar, K-State, speaks about water technology at the Goering Water Technology Farm.



Below: DeAnn Presley, K-State, speaks from a soil pit about cover crops and soil health.



It was a tour bus kind of tour!



Upcoming Events:

Be on the look out for more information about a few great events that will take place early in 2022!

- Flickner Winter Field Day – Summary of 2021 practices/studies on water management, soil health and more! Date – TBD
- Little Arkansas River WRAPS Field Day on Soil Health and Cover Crops – TBD
- McPherson County Conservation District Annual Meeting – January 31, 2022
- Harvey County Conservation District Annual Meeting – February 7, 2022

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