

# Little Arkansas River WRAPS

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## 2022 Ag Report: An Eye on the Tap

Story by: Melissa Harvey, Kansas State University, KCARE - <https://express.adobe.com/page/10Pzo4q2bl4ed/>

For farmers and ranchers in Kansas, drought concerns are always looming, so community conversations about conservation and water use are ongoing and vital. Concerns are ever present about ponds dwindling to muddy puddles, and recently irrigators learned that the Ogallala Aquifer – a main water source for the state – declined last year by an astounding two feet in parts of Kansas.

The urgent work on water conservation forms part of the foundation for the Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE). Established by Kansas State University, KCARE works to coordinate water and natural resource research, including multiple projects addressing aquifer declines.

But that's only the tip of the iceberg: think "quality," in addition to "quantity." Consider oil, trash, pet waste or chemicals seeping into storm drains after a downpour, or pesticides and fertilizer leaching off a farmer's fields. Maybe sediment washes away from construction sites or erodes from streambanks. All are examples of "non-point source pollution," and over time it negatively impacts the water from your faucet, the pond on your farm, or the rivers and reservoirs you visit. In fact, many states have named non-point source pollution as the leading cause of water-quality problems.

For more than 20 years, KCARE has been helping reverse those harmful effects by empowering a team of watershed specialists who actively partner with producers, municipalities, and other important water users to identify and implement science-based solutions to improve water quality. "We must conserve Kansas water while also safeguarding the quality of the waters we enjoy here," said Associate Director for the College of Agriculture and K-State Research and Extension Susan Metzger. She said KCARE watershed specialists actively partner with water users to implement on-the-ground practices that assist both producers and municipalities to limit the amount of sediment and nutrients entering Kansas waters. This grassroots approach works. Metzger said the program has prevented tens of thousands of tons of sediment from entering rivers and reservoirs.

"The desire of clean water is a constant in our communities," said KCARE watershed specialist Ron Graber. "Our job is to listen to producers and other stakeholders, and help folks work toward common goals. I think we're all making a difference." Graber said that the work has evolved over the years, from identifying water quality concerns, to implementing solutions, or best management practices that match a community's needs. Best management practices can range from planning alternative livestock watering facilities, to reducing atrazine use on cropland, to stabilizing streambanks. Watershed specialists provide technical assistance to producers to explain which solutions are right for their specific situation and assist farmers to identify financial programs to offset costs.

"This important work goes beyond providing the public with facts and figures. It remains successful because each team member combines scientific expertise with a focus on relationships and people," Metzger said. "If you get to know someone and then explain how we can create a solution together, it's more effective than just telling them to fix a problem," said Graber. "When we work together, then it's a win for Kansas water."



## Cover Crop Field Day Success



The Little Arkansas River Watershed WRAPS group hosted a Cover Crop Field Day on September 13<sup>th</sup> which was attended by 24 local producers and agency folks. The day began at Kelvin and Scott Neufeldt's cover crop field near Inman where topics discussed included cover crop mixes, biomass, and soil health improvement. Then the group headed east of Moundridge to two properties operated by Gary and Bryson Huxman. These two stops demonstrated cover crops (left photo) for livestock grazing, discussed alternative watering systems for grazed cover crops, manure management, as well as NRCS programs. At the last Huxman stop, Deann Presley of K-State (right photo) spoke about the soil health benefits of cover crops. One thing of great interest to the group was soil moisture retention in these cover crop fields. Even with current drought issues in the watershed, the soil probe sunk through a few feet of soil with ease! We thank those that hosted and attended the event for making this field day a huge success.





## Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers

In this issue, we are starting a 2-segment story featuring **Mr. Greg Goering**, and the **Goering Family Farm**. The Goering Farm, dates back to the early 1900's when Greg's grandparents settled east of McPherson. The farm is now operated by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation Goering family members. A little tidbit to put the farm in historical perspective: Grandpa Goering once reminisced about how he was finishing the roof of their (still-standing) big barn when he heard the sirens going off from town declaring that WW I had ended on November 11, 1918.

Greg Goering grew up on the farm and joined the family operation after graduating Kansas State University. In 1989, he married Tammy, and together they moved to the family farm with their two children, Trenton and Taylor in 2001. Greg has worn several hats, he has worked as a territory manager for Norden, an animal health company, and is now senior sales manager for Covetrus. Tammy is co-owner of McPherson Eye Care. Both are still very active in running day-to-day farm operations. Now grown, Trenton and Taylor both strive to improve the family farm. Taylor and her fiancé, Cole, have an active role in all aspects of the day-to-day farming operation. Cole has been an integral part of the operation for over 8 years. Trenton and his wife, Danielle, are stationed at Ft. Huachuca in Arizona for the next 3 years, however, they enjoy helping out when at the farm.

The Goering Farm has grown into a diversified farming operation including wheat, dry-land and irrigated corn and beans, and grain and feed sorghum. They provide custom farm work as well as crop share or cash rent. The Goerings are proud of their up-to-date equipment and technology use. Greg and the Goering Farm have participated in several Little Arkansas River WRAPS programs. Most recently, they participated in the new livestock program where they installed 4 tire tank alternative watering systems on cropland so that they could rotational graze about 50 cattle pairs on 204 acres. They also installed 163 acres of cover crops under the program. In addition, they have participated in the Atrazine program, using no atrazine on corn crops, and reduced rate on milo.

The next "Productive Producer" installment will be the second segment on Greg Goering and the Goering Farm. Be sure to check it out in our next newsletter, which will be released in early 2023. This segment will include more on the Family's WRAPS program interactions, field day education program(s), and words of wisdom from Greg Goering himself!

YOU CAN FOLLOW THE  
GOERING STORY AT:  
[WWW.TTGOERING.COM](http://WWW.TTGOERING.COM)

## Livestock and Nutrient Management Incentive Programs

- 1. Livestock BMP funding available!** Ready to get your livestock out of the stream? Let the Little Arkansas River WRAPS program help you do it! Sand and Turkey Creek sub-watersheds are considered priority targeted areas for nutrient and bacteria removal in the Little Arkansas River Watershed's newest WRAPS project. If you have livestock in these areas and are interested in our programs and/or financial incentives, please contact us using the contact information on the back!
- 2. Cropland BMP funding available!** Sand and Turkey Creek sub-watersheds were listed as "needs improvement" for nutrient usage and loading by the KDHE. The WRAPS program can provide financial incentives to producers in both these sub-watersheds to implement nutrient BMPs, such as precision agriculture, in high priority fields with high runoff potential.

**Save the Date:** The **Flickner Innovation Farm Winter Meeting** will be Thursday, January 12, 2023 in Inman, KS. Watch your email or follow us on social media (see below) for more details regarding this meeting!

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For more information, visit our website at [www.kcare.k-state.edu](http://www.kcare.k-state.edu). We are on social media, too!

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