

WEATHER MODIFICATION PROGRAM

This year the Western Kansas Weather Modification Program will begin its 40th consecutive year of operation. Since its first year in 1975, it has been the **Number One** program for Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1. There have been 8 independent evaluations that have shown a 27% to 35% success rate in hail suppression. The evaluations have also shown a benefit to cost ratio as being 37 to 1. Therefore, for every dollar spent on the Weather Modification Program, there is a potential for 37 dollars to be placed back in the community. If a crop is hailed out, the irrigation water used is considered to be a waste of the valuable resource. The Program not only benefits crops but also vehicles, property, and wildlife. The upcoming 2014 season will see the program shrink to its smallest size since it began. Much of this decline is attributable to the program being a convenient scapegoat by the uninformed for the current prolonged drought. If the public wants to continue this valuable program, they need to let their County Commissioners know they are in favor of participating in the Program. We understand that the County Commissioners usually only hear from those in opposition. **Counties are currently only being charged \$0.052 per acre of cropland and \$0.022 per acre of rangeland. The District pays a portion of this amount, if the County is located in GMD1.** We will be holding the Weather Modification Program Annual Meeting in Leoti this year at the **4-H Building on February 27, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. CST.** A presentation will be given explaining the process of cloud seeding, its capabilities and limitations as well as its use in other states and private industry as a tool for water management and property protection. Several of the currently operating weather mod programs are for rain augmentation only. This provides additional rain during the growing season. The Chief Pilot, Meteorologist and GMD1 Staff will be on hand to answer questions. Be sure to attend so you can make an informed decision on the Program.

LOCAL ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA (LEMA) HIGHLIGHTS

LEMA Vote: There will be one more meeting before a vote is taken in order to describe the entire LEMA proposal including all uses besides irrigation (cities, feedlots, industrial etc.) and penalties for overpumping. The meeting will also contain voting procedures and places to vote. Plans are being made to have a voting area in each County on different days. If you cannot make the voting day in your County, hopefully you can make one of the voting days in the other Counties. It has also been suggested that voting should take place in the District office during office hours for several days prior to and perhaps after the County voting days. A 67% District wide voter approval has been suggested at county meetings to approve the LEMA.

LEMA Voting Process: In order to vote, you must be a legal owner of a permitted Water Right or a Water Use Correspondent officially recognized by the Division of Water Resources as such. An official Water Use Correspondent is a person who has been specified by an owner of record by filling out a notarized Kansas Division of Water Resources "Water Use Correspondent Form No. DWR 1-207.2". The Water Use Correspondent will receive the Water Use Report and other documentation for the Water Right listed on the form. Each owner and/or Water Use Correspondent can vote only once. In other words, if a person is both an owner and a Water Use Correspondent, they will only be able to receive one ballot for voting. Each person's vote must be tied to a Water Right. A Water Right can only be used by one person. Therefore, if a married couple (both are owners) only has one Water Right, only one of the two people would be able to vote using that Water Right Number. Voting will be by paper ballot with the county designation included. To receive a ballot, voters will sign by the water right number they are representing with their vote.

Irrigation Units: Wells must be physically tied together prior to the starting date of a LEMA. Owners or tenants must supply a map showing the location of the wells along with underground pipe. They must also sign an agreement before a notary acknowledging the irrigation unit's total acre feet LEMA allocation and acknowledging the permitted annual authorized acre feet per well.

County Appraiser Info: A question from a previous LEMA Meeting was whether or not the reduction in the County tax base would be a hardship to a County due to a LEMA. A County Appraiser was consulted and he indicated that the loss of funds would be minimal due to the current method of appraising irrigated ground.

LEMA Appeals: The GMD#1 Board will act as an appeal board for extreme cases that might not fall into specific categories during a LEMA process. Guidelines are being developed for handling of wells in EQIP, WRCP, CRP and other nonuse, occurring during the 2008 through 2012 comparison years.

LEMA Penalty Considerations: The Sheridan 6 LEMA penalties were reviewed for possible ideas. A couple of ideas that stood out included: 1) Current state law applicable to a LEMA is a \$1,000 fine for everyday that pumping takes place in excess of their allocation, plus an automatic two year suspension of their water right for exceeding their allocation. 2) The Sheridan 6 LEMA modified this to: if a person exceeds their total allocation quantity by less than 4 acre feet per calendar year, they would receive a \$1000 fine for every day that pumping was taking place in excess of their allocation and if they exceed their amount by more than 4 acre feet, there would be an automatic two-year suspension of the water right. Some people wanted to know why they should consider using the same penalties as Sheridan 6. It was pointed out that the Chief Engineer has already approved allowing a 4 acre feet overpump "cushion". Without it, there would be an automatic two-year suspension, if just a portion of an acre foot was overpumped. It would give the person time to realize they were overpumping their 6 year LEMA amount.

LEMAs Compared to MYFAs: When in a LEMA, a well must not exceed the **annual authorized acre feet** amount (the amount that was given to you when your water right was first approved and certified years ago). With the 6 year District wide proposed LEMA, a well must also not exceed the overall 6 year LEMA amount. With a Multi-Year Flex Account (MYFA) the well can exceed its **annual** authorized acre feet amount (that was given to you when your water right was first approved and certified years ago) as long as it does not go over the overall 5 year MYFA amount. All MYFAs last 5 years. The Board is working with the Division of Water Resources to hopefully come up with a solution that would allow a well to exceed the **annual** authorized acre feet amount per year as long as the 6 year LEMA amount is not exceeded for wells in an "Irrigation Unit".

Next LEMA Meeting: A date has not been set at this time for the next LEMA meeting, since a few more details must be resolved. As soon as the meeting dates are set, we will send out a notice and put it in the local newspapers as well as on our website: <http://www.gmd1.org>

GMD#1 ANNUAL MEETING

The 41st Annual Meeting of the Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 will be held in Leoti, Kansas in the Community Building at the Wichita County Fairgrounds on **March 18, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. (CDST)**. The proposed 2015 Budget will be reviewed. Brownie Wilson with the Kansas Geological Survey will be presenting an update on the District's Modeling Project as well as current static water levels. Tracy Streeter from the Kansas Water Office will report on the latest water legislation and future water plans. Jan King will be answering questions on guidelines for water rights that have been in EQIP, WRCP, CRP and other nonuse conservation programs. The Wallace County Representative will be voted on. Applicants must declare their candidacy for the position by February 26, 2014.

DATES OF INTEREST

February 24, 2014 Ogallala Aquifer Advisory Committee Meeting Scott City, KS at the Majestic Restaurant 10:30 a.m. CST

February 26, 2014 Deadline for Applications to Declare Candidacy for Wallace County Representative

February 27, 2014 Weather Mod Annual Meeting at Leoti, KS in the Community Bldg. at Fairgrounds 10:00 a.m. CST

March 1, 2014 Water Use Report Deadline

March 18, 2014 Annual Meeting at Leoti, KS in the Community Bldg. at Wichita County Fairgrounds 1:30 CDST

April 1, 2014 Verified Claims Deadline

April 15, 2014 through September 15, 2014 Weather Modification Program Operational Season

July 15, 2014 Budget Hearing 10:00 a.m. CDST at District Office

FLOWMETER DEADLINE

Just a reminder, during their regular March 19, 2013 Board Meeting, GMD #1 Board of Directors voted to amend *K.A.R. 5-21-6 Water-measuring devices* and require flowmeters on all points of diversion (wells) in the District.

Hour meters will no longer be allowed in lieu of flowmeters.

The flowmeters will need to be properly installed **before the first use of water in 2014.**

Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1

P.O. Box 604, 906 W. 5th

Scott City, Kansas 67871

(620) 872-5563

Check Out Our Website: <http://www.gmd1.org>