

# H2info

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**CHENEY LAKE WATERSHED, INC**  
Citizens Working for Clean Water

**Summer 2011**

## Local Farmer Brings KELP Home

By Howard Miller

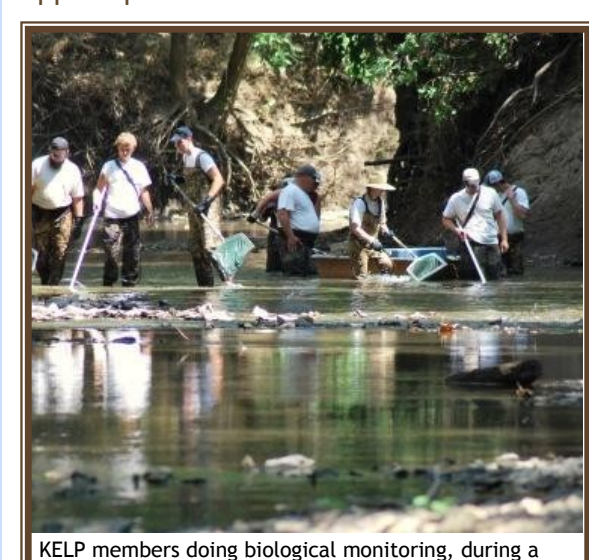
Kelp, it's not just seaweed anymore. And as Jerry Clasen, who farms near Nickerson, discovered, he liked KELP and what it did for his understanding of environmental issues in Kansas. Jerry was part of a group that participated in the Kansas Environmental Leadership Program, KELP, in 2010. KELP is a year-long program that brings people from different walks of life together to learn about various regional environmental issues from around the state. Jerry says he joined KELP because he wanted to learn more about those issues. "I wanted to see for myself what was fact and what was fiction. With the misconceptions about what is happening to our environment, I wanted to know what I could believe." Jerry continues, "I learned that not all the issues are black and white. Sometimes both sides have good points as to why they look at things the way they do." As part of the KELP experience, Jerry took part in mediation training at the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution associated with Bethel College. Jerry says that helps him to look at both sides of an issue rather than focus on his point of view.

Jerry operates a 2,400 acre no-till & strip till farm west of Nickerson where he raises wheat, alfalfa, soybeans and corn. His farm doesn't have any irrigated crops. Jerry says he likes to use no-till and strip till as ways to conserve moisture since the groundwater in his area is not suitable for irrigation. But farming isn't the only enterprise Jerry has. He operates a welding and manufacturing shop that has 4 full time employees. In the shop, they build parts for Kuhn Krause (Krause Plow) and also build strip till mini-baskets that are marketed through Shields Industries and Schaben Industries.

Jerry says at first, he wondered if participating in KELP was going to be a worthwhile activity, but when he started attending he was ready and eager for the next 3-day session to begin. He found it interesting to look at different issues that people face across the state, from groundwater contamination in Hays to rapidly diminishing groundwater in the Garden City area. One thing that really stood out to Jerry in the session at Garden City is the fact that using the aquifer at the present level is not sustainable. When the wells run dry, it will have a disastrous effect on the Kansas economy. Without groundwater, fewer crops can be grown to feed the cattle and as those feedlots leave, so will revenue to the State. Other highlights for Jerry were the session at Topeka where he got to see the Capitol area firsthand, including the Senate and House Chambers and legislative offices. Towards the end of his time with KELP, Jerry enjoyed seeing the Equus Beds recharge project. Here, the City of Wichita is drawing high flow water from the Little Arkansas River and cleaning it to drinking water- standards before injecting it into the aquifer. Jerry said it was neat to see how the City had started this project as a way to keep high chloride water in parts of the aquifer from contaminating the portion of the aquifer that supplies part of the water for citizens in Wichita.



Jerry Clasen and fellow participant, Dane Baxa, build a rain garden during one of their sessions.



KELP members doing biological monitoring, during a field day in August 2010.

Overall, Jerry says he felt privileged to get the opportunity to hear so many experts present on various subjects. He continues, "I got lots of knowledge from some of the best experts out there." Jerry went on to say that KELP was a great learning experience and he liked how his group bonded during their time in KELP. Many who have gone through the KELP program have shared the same sentiments and found it to be an educational and worthwhile program.

The KELP program continues today under the leadership of Brandi Nelson as a way to bring persons of diverse backgrounds together to see and learn about environmental issues that people all over the state of Kansas are addressing.

"It was a kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn't even feel like talking loud, and it wasn't often that we laughed, only a little kind of low chuckle."

Mark Twain, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"

## New Funds Available for Work on Your Farm

By Lisa French



There are several good opportunities available now for conservation work in the Cheney Lake Watershed. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Cheney Lake Watershed have some new options available for 2011-2012.

As in the past, we have funding available from the City of Wichita to construct perimeter fence around expired CRP contracts. This year, funds are also available from EQIP for CRP fence. It is possible to use both programs with total payments not to exceed 100% of the actual cost for fence construction. And as usual, we can also help find cost share for watering systems on those CRP acres. This is a tremendous opportunity that shouldn't be passed up if you have CRP that expired in 2010 or that will expire in 2011 or 2012. The Wichita funding is available for any expired CRP contract within the Cheney Lake Watershed.

Also, Cheney Lake Watershed has some grant funds available to meet conservation goals for 2011-2012 in priority areas of the watershed. These goals include:

- Up to 200 acres of cropland converted to permanent vegetation
- Relocation of a pasture feeding site (might include fence, water source, feed pad)
- Relocation of feeding pens near a stream (fence, water source, access road, windbreak, etc.)
- Off-stream watering systems for livestock

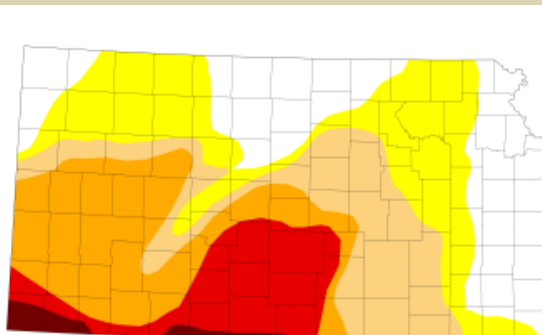
Stop by our office or call 620-665-0231 (ext 4) if you would like more information.

## You Can't Feed Your Way Out Of Drought

by Dave Pratt

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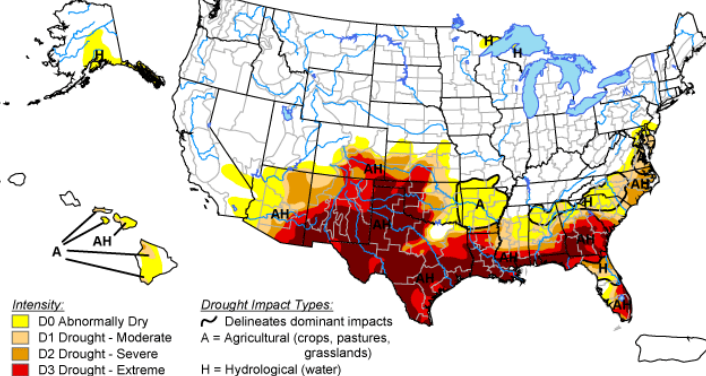
**A note about local conditions:** Although we have had some timely rains in recent weeks, most of our watershed has been short on moisture since last fall. Your grass has already passed the prime growth period for this year and the forage production may have been reduced by 20%. Well-managed rangeland will be more resilient in dry conditions. Monitor your range conditions carefully and destock accordingly. To maintain adequate root reserves for plant health, don't graze more than half of the year's production. A good rule of thumb is to destock 30% by weight if your rainfall Nov-April was less than 80% of average. All destocking should be done by July 15. - LF



Released Thursday, June 30, 2011  
Richard Heim/Liz Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC

## U.S. Drought Monitor

June 28, 2011  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



**Intensity:**  
D0 Abnormally Dry  
D1 Drought - Moderate  
D2 Drought - Severe  
D3 Drought - Extreme  
D4 Drought - Exceptional

**Drought Impact Types:**  
A = Agricultural (crops, pastures, grasslands)  
H = Hydrological (water)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Released Thursday, June 30, 2011  
Author: Richard Heim/Liz Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC

http://drought.unl.edu/dm

Ranchers in the Southern U.S. are in the grips of a severe drought. The decisions they make in the coming weeks and months could have repercussions that last for decades. Their most important decision will involve destocking. The oldest rule of range management is to match the stocking rate (forage demand) to the carrying capacity (forage supply). In drought, the carrying capacity goes down. That means you need to destock. You can't feed your way out of a drought. Just in case that didn't sink in, let me put it this way, YOU CAN'T FEED YOUR WAY OUT OF A DROUGHT!

Drought feeding is expensive. Since you don't know when the drought will break, you could wind up paying for the animals several times over. Drought feeding leads to overstocking, deteriorated pastures and bankrupt ranchers.

Which classes of livestock should you sell? That depends on your enterprise mix, the amount of feed you have and market conditions.

If we need to destock severely in a business with cows, replacements and stockers, we'd probably liquidate the stockers first. Next we might think about either culling the cows heavily or selling the replacements since they are most vulnerable to nutritional stress. If there is no feed at all you need to destock completely. Regard less of the degree to which you destock, you need to preserve the capital from livestock sales in investments that will replace a portion of the lost revenue from production. There is a date on your property when, if it hasn't rained, you know you are in trouble. We call that your "Critical Rain Date." It's the day you get serious about destocking.

For more from David Pratt on managing during drought, visit [www.ranchingforprofit.com](http://www.ranchingforprofit.com) and click on "Newsletters and Articles". If you would like to receive his thought-provoking, twice-monthly email messages, contact him at [rnc@ranchmanagement.com](mailto:rnc@ranchmanagement.com) and ask to be added to the ProfitTips list.

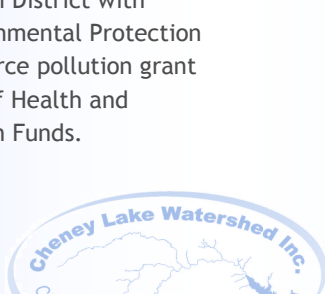
## Cover Crop Demonstrations

Be on the lookout for several cover crop demonstration projects in the watershed this year. Participants were recruited to try out some cover crop mixes for a variety of uses in no-till farming systems. Over the next few months we will host short, informal farm tours to visit each of the demos and talk with the farm operators. If you want to join us at any of the locations, contact the landowner or the Watershed office to make sure you are notified.

- Pat Elpers (forage soybeans, cowpeas, 2 varieties of millet) - west of Cheney Reservoir
- Allan Grilliot (sudan, millet, mung beans, cowpeas for summer grazing) - west of Castleton
- Mark Elpers (rye, radishes, turnips mix between wheat and a spring row crop) - Mt. Vernon area
- Jared Oatney (sun hemp, cowpeas, sudan, radish mix into expired CRP before planting soybeans) - south of Partridge

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All Reno County Conservation District programs and services are provided to anyone regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, ancestry, age or physical or mental handicap.

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**Our Mission:**  
To provide water quality education and funding for cost effective clean water projects that improve the North Fork Ninnescah Watershed which feeds Cheney Lake.

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