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Tiling For Dollars

Farmers Taking Advantage Of Opportunities With Subsurface Drainage

BY DEREK BARTOS

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With more opportunities than ever for southeastern South Dakota farmers to use tile drainage in their fields, many producers are taking advantage of such systems.

The subsurface water drainage practice has recently become more popular due to advances in equipment and design, as well as changes in Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) regulations to allow more systems to be installed.

"They've been waiting to do it for 20 years, and they've finally got the NRCS in position where they're working with the farmer to try and get some of it done," said James Mettler of Mettler Implement in Menno.

In a tile drainage system, perforated pipes are installed beneath the surface of the field, allowing excess, or "free," water to be drained from the soil, according to Kurt Reitsma, Precision Agriculture Field Specialist for the SDSU Extension in Sioux Falls. The water is then deposited into nearby water points or filter strips.

"Think of soil like a sponge. If you put a sponge in a bucket of water and then lift that sponge out of that bucket, there will be water that will drain out without squeezing it," he said. "Tile will allow that free water to move out of the soil profile, but the soil will retain water in the pore spaces so that the plants can use it. There's now a proportion of air and water in that soil that is more conducive to plant growth and less stressful to that plant."

Reitsma said tile drainage has many benefits that can increase crop yields, such as decreasing seedling disease, increasing root depth, increasing nutrient availability, decreasing salt and sodium stress, and increasing soil quality.

While the goal is to only remove excess water from the fields, there are cases where con-



ABOVE: This equipment is poised to start a tiling project in a cornfield east of Utica Friday. Many farmers are turning to tiling to drain the waters from their fields more quickly and efficiently, thus maximizing yields. **RIGHT:** Jason Kokes of Kokes Ag Service in Tabor shows the onboard computer in his tractor that assist him in a tiling project. The computer gauges the depth that the pipe should be placed and monitors the contours of the land. It also has GPS capabilities.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D



Drainage Ordinance To Take Effect June 1

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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As the installation of drainage tile on farmland has become more commonplace in recent years, Yankton County officials saw the need to address where all that water would be going.

After all, if a landowner decided to install tile to his fence line and then let the resulting drainage be the neighbor's problem, it's easy to imagine disputes occurring.

With that in mind, the Yankton County Commission had a task force formulate a drainage ordinance to address tiling. That ordinance was given final approval in March and will go into effect June 1. The decision to delay implementation



Garrity

modity prices rising, it is becoming more profitable to spend that \$200-\$500 an acre to put in tile than in the past. The value of property started getting too high to not let it be used to its full potential.

Improved technology has also made tiling more feasible, he noted.

"We felt we should be proactive," Gar-

rrity said. "More and more people were coming in and wanting to do tiling. The biggest thing we wanted to watch for was the where it was going."

Some county commissions in the state have found the issue overwhelming and have chosen to let matters be settled in circuit court. However, Garrity said other counties, such as Brookings and Minnehaha, have been progressive and created drainage commissions that can largely settle any questions before they reach the county commission.

Similarly, the Yankton County ordinance created a nine-member drainage commission appointed by the County Commission. Applications are currently

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Survey:

Rural Economy Remains Strong

By The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The economy remains strong in rural areas of 10 Midwest and Western states because of the health of agricultural businesses there, according to a new survey of banks serving rural areas.

The overall economic index included in the monthly Rural Main-street survey rose to 58.5 in May from April's already healthy 57.1. Any score above 50 on the index, which ranges from 1 to 100, suggests growth in the months ahead.

The survey covers parts of Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming, focusing on 200 rural communities with an average population of 1,300.

Jeff Bonnett, president of Havana National Bank in Havana, Ill., said farmers appear to be off to a good start this spring with early planting and great early growing conditions.

"Our bank is encouraged with the ag environment at this time," Bonnett said.

But Creighton University economist Ernie Goss said even though the May numbers are positive, he believes the region's economic growth will slow in the months ahead as the global economy weakens and crop prices decline.

The farmland index declined to 64.6 in May from April's 69.4, but it remains well above 50, suggesting that prices for farmland will keep increasing.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City said recently that farmland in its territory, which includes several of the states in the Rural Main-street report, jumped more than 25 percent in the first quarter.

The farm equipment sales index increased to 65.1 from April's 62.4 sug-

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INSIDE TODAY



Protesters Break
Away From Rally • **11**

CORRECTIONS

In Friday's story concerning the 2012 Captain and Belle, the incorrect dates for this year's festival were listed. The 2012 Riverboat Days will be held Aug. 17-19.

Also, Friday's Captain and Belle photo of Dave and Diane Spencer should have been credited to Photography by Jerry of Yankton. We apologize for the oversights.

Married YHS Seniors Ready For New Life With Husbands

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE

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While most high school graduates will work to adjust to life after high school, two seniors have already started adjusting to married life.

Senior Hailey Haas has been married to Zackary Haas since April 5 while senior Briana Epp has been married to Nathan Epp since March 13.

Haas and Epp both said life after graduation will be a big adjustment.

Haas will move to North Carolina to be with her husband, who is currently enlisted in the United States Army.

"Once I get there, in July, I won't have anything to do until my classes start in August," Haas said.

She will be attending Methodist University, near Fort Bragg, and will be studying biology with a concentration on Health Occupations and pre-med.

Haas said the most difficult part of married life

has been not being able to see her husband every day.

"Instead of thinking, 'What do I want to do with my friends?' the first thing I think about is 'When will I be able to talk to him?'" Haas said. "He gets up at 4:30 in the morning, which is 3:30 in the morning my time, and goes to work. That makes things a little bit hard."

Epp and her husband will be attending North Central University in Minneapolis, Minn. in the fall. She said going to college as a married person, as opposed to being single, will be a different experience.

"If you go single, you live in a dorm with a whole bunch of other people," Epp said. "I'm going to be living with my spouse and I won't get the same connection I would have if I had stayed in the dorms. It's not bad, but it's different."

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton High School seniors Briana Epp, left, and Hailey Haas, right, married their husbands earlier this year. Epp and Haas will graduate at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Summit Activities Center, and they are looking forward to adjusting to life after graduation. Both will attend college this fall.

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