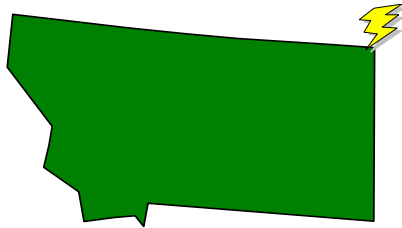


Sheridan County Conservation Notes

Ph. 406-765-1801

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Jeff Wivholm - Chairman
Rom Hedges - Vice Chairman
Bruce Jacobsen - Supervisor
Jon Bolstad - Supervisor
Tim Holte - Supervisor
Kent Nathe - Supervisor



NRCS
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Sharon McCoy - Soil Con Tech
Ryan W. Young - Soil Con Tech
Thelma Williams - SCCD Office Manager
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Conservation District

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Conservation Producer of the Year Announced

Eldon Krogstad is this year's pick for Conservation
Producer of the Year in Sheridan County.



This recognition of excellence by the Sheridan
County Conservation District was prompted by the
improvements made to the Krogstad's hog opera-
tion. (see related story below).

Hog Heaven

By Lisa Schmidt

Simple manure storage lagoon solves plenty of po-
tential pollution headaches for Plentywood pig
feeder.

Eldon Krogstad's problem just couldn't be dis-
cussed in polite company.

So he went to his local Natural Resources Conser-
vation Service (NRCS) field office for help.

Krogstad, who gets feeder pigs delivered every two
weeks and puts 175 pounds on them in 75 days, did
not have enough manure storage. Summertime
warm soils allowed Krogstad to spread the manure

on his wheat fields whenever his underground pits
filled, but during the winter he was forced to spread
manure on frozen ground. The potential runoff into
Malcolm Creek could turn into an environmental
nightmare.

Krogstad's hog operation sits about 20 miles southwest
of Plentywood, Mont., within rock-throwing distance
of Malcolm Creek. The water table is so high there that
test wells hold water at 10 to 27 feet below the surface.

Public outcry – plus an investigative report by *60 Min-
utes* a few years ago – about polluted streams and the
stench from large hog operations in more populated
areas such as Iowa and North Carolina made Krogstad
nervous. He did not want regulators breathing down
his neck.

“In other states, they have bigger operations, more
people and different terrain. With the wide open spaces
around here, most farmers solve the problem before it
arises. Why not stay ahead of it,” Krogstad said

And that's exactly what he did.

Instead of waiting for the Montana Department of En-
vironmental Quality (DEQ) to step in and regulate how
he managed his manure, Krogstad teamed with the
NRCS to install a manure holding lagoon. He used En-
vironmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds
to cost-share the \$10,630 project.

“By being proactive and working with us, Eldon dem-
onstrated initiative in his efforts to avoid any regula-
tory requirements by voluntarily addressing his is-
sues,” says Dave White, NRCS state conservationist
for Montana.

Changing Game Rules

The revised federal regulation distinguishes between
Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) and Concentrated
Eldon Krogstad and Ryan Young (NRCS Tech) in front of



the lagoon

Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) based on the number of animals fed and site characteristics. If an operation falls into the CAFO category, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which administers the Clean Water Act for Montana, evaluates whether it is a small, medium, or large CAFO.

AFOs are not regulated, but CAFOs are regulated as a point source under the Clean Water Act. Regulations for CAFOs vary with the size of the operation.

“An AFO is defined as an operation where animals are confined for 45 days or more in a 12-month period in an area where there is no grass or other vegetation during the normal growing season,” says Surber. “The total days do not need to be consecutive, and any number of animals, even one, can place an operation in this category.” AFOs that fall within the “small CAFO” range are only designated a CAFO if the permitting authority determines that the confinement area is a significant source of water pollution. Animal feeding operations that fall within the “medium” range numbers are only considered a CAFO if they (1) discharge manure or wastewater to surface water through a man-made ditch or pipe, or (2) surface waters originate outside but pass through the confinement area or come in direct contact with confined animals. Krogstad’s operation might have qualified as a medium-sized CAFO before he built his manure lagoon.

Under the revised rule, large CAFOs will have a “Duty to Apply” for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which in Montana is a MPDES permit through DEQ in Helena. The only exemption is to apply for and demonstrate to DEQ that there is “No Potential to Discharge.” More information can be found at the Environ-

mental Protection Agency's website on the [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System](#).

The NRCS is not a regulatory agency, so producers who might have a water quality problem can confide in agency personnel without fear of retribution.

“All NRCS client information is confidential,” White says. “In the 2002 Farm Bill, Congress specifically added language that enforces confidentiality of our field office records. In addition, NRCS in Montana has developed a working relationship with the DEQ whereby it recognizes our efforts and ability to solve most of the environmental problems on agricultural lands where the producer is proactively seeking assistance. DEQ recognizes and accepts NRCS recommendations and designs as appropriate for meeting state regulations,” White says.

Simple Solution

Krogstad worked with NRCS to develop a comprehensive nutrient management plan. These plans address nutrient management, land treatment, manure and wastewater storage and handling, and includes considerations for record keeping, feed management, and alternative use strategies.

All of the components Krogstad installed were part of his comprehensive nutrient management plan. Krogstad’s new lagoon holds more than 25,000 cubic feet of manure.

“Eldon needed twice his existing storage capacity. Our objective was to contain waste for 180 days,” says Monica Friedrich, district conservationist for the NRCS field office in Plentywood.

Lined with durable plastic, the lagoon has a 10- to 15- year life expectancy before Krogstad will have to reline it.

While Krogstad built the lagoon to prevent potential manure nutrient runoff, he has been concerned about the possibility of groundwater pollution too.

So he worked with the NRCS to begin monitoring groundwater in 1996. Six shallow wells are scattered across the land on which Krogstad spreads manure. None of them has tested positive for pollution.

“We will continue monitoring the manure nutrients that Eldon applies so we don’t exceed what is applied. We don’t want to have a runoff or a groundwater problem,” Friedrich says.

A Must-Have

Friedrich knew the implications for Krogstad if this lagoon project did not meet his objectives.

“This project has a regulatory aspect to it so we really needed to know what we were doing – not have him spend \$10,000 on something that doesn’t suit his needs,” she says.

Tim Solberg, soil conservation planner in the NRCS Plentywood field office, was assigned the task of working with NRCS engineers to develop a design that would work. He and the rest of the crew invested months of time on this project. Krogstad put a lot of thought into finding the right solution, too.

“Eldon is really smart so you better find out what the right answer is. He’s usually ahead of you and waiting for you to catch up,” says Friedrich.

All of that investment paid off. His lagoon allows Krogstad to stay in the hog business without enduring increasing environmental regulations. And he can put his manure to its highest use.

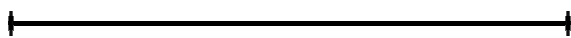
“Pig manure has literally turned this place around. When I bought it (in 1976), it wouldn’t raise diddly,” Krogstad says.

For More Information

Every livestock producer faces potential pollution problems if a stream or creek runs through the property. As Eldon Krogstad points out, “Why not stay ahead of it,” and take care of problems before they occur.

Your local NRCS office can help with technical and financial assistance.

For AFO and CAFO regulatory information, call Gene Surber, Montana State University Extension Service natural resources specialist at (406) 994-1971 or contact Montana DEQ at (406) 444-3080.



Big Muddy Under Study

Something unique is happening in Sheridan County this summer. The Sheridan County Conservation District has begun an elaborate study of the Big Muddy Creek in Sheridan County.

The major focus of the study is water quality and quantity. The study entails sampling and testing the creek at approximately 15 points. Water samples will be collected and between seven and ten different quality and quantity

parameters will be collected. According to Jon Reiten, Hydro geologist with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology in Billings, “We’re not really looking for anything in particular. At this point we just want to know what’s there, or what’s not there, during different times of the year.” Characteristics of the creek that will be examined include the amount of dissolved solids, amount of dissolved and available oxygen, salinity, conductivity, Ph, and temperature changes. Biological samples will be taken and the creek will be examined to see how well it supports wildlife and domestic animals.



The project is supported by several other agencies including the Montana Department of Natural Resources, the Roosevelt County Conservation District, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, and the Fort Peck Tribes, who are also sampling the portion of the creek that flows through the Fort Peck Reservation.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Sheridan County Conservation District office at 119 N. Jackson in Plentywood, or call 406-765-1801.



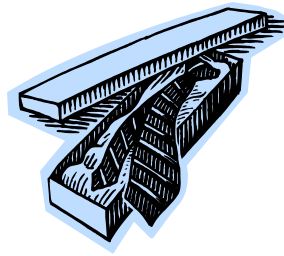
CONSERVATION DATES

JULY

- 4 4th of July
- 13 SCCD Board Meeting

AUGUST

- 10 SCCD Board Meeting



Visit Sheridan County Conservation District's web page at :
<http://sheridan.mt.nacdnet.org>

Our services and programs are provided without regard to race, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or religious affiliation.

NOTICE

NO PERSON MAY COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION ON ANY PROJECT FACILITIES OR APPROPRIATE WATER PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF THE PROJECT BY THE DISTRICT AND RECEIPT OF A RESERVED WATER USE AUTHORIZATION. THIS IS TO PROTECT THE POTENTIAL IRRIGATOR FROM INVESTING MONEY IN A SYSTEM FOR WHICH LEGAL USE OF THE WATER CAN NOT BE APPROVED AND THUS CAN NOT BE USED