

Bootheel Irrigation Conference Has Double Focus: Wireless Sensor Monitoring And Aquifers

PORTAGEVILLE, MO.

The Bootheel Irrigation Conference & Tradeshow, which will take place Wednesday, December 9th in Portageville, MO, will focus on local aquifers and using wireless telemetry to make farming more profitable. "This has been a very different sort of irrigation year" said Dr. Joe Henggeler, organizer of the conference, "so we plan to celebrate it being over with a special steak luncheon and a group of excellent speakers at our annual irrigation conference."

Henggeler talked about the conference themes and said that "wireless technology is all around us from TV clickers to garage openers. This wireless technology has now been coupled with old fashion soil moisture monitoring sensors, like gypsum blocks and tensiometers, to automatically send messages to farmers of when to turn on the irrigation." The average Bootheel irrigator manages about 1,100 irrigated acres and they need all the help they can to get everything done in a day.

John Mascoe of VanCoe Agricultural Technologies in Indiana is one of the nation's leading experts in telemetry networks, having helped establish the two largest existing wireless irrigation networks in the US (in Washington state and in Georgia), and is one of the key speakers. Irrigators in Arkansas are already controlling irrigation pumping power plants and turning off pumps automatically based on the height of water in the rice levees. In fact, farmers can check all gages of an engine from a computer anywhere in the world. Dennis Carman, a retired NRCS scientist, is making all of this possible for a water district in Arkansas and will

share his results to the audience.

Another theme of the conference is the state of our aquifer and the water districts that help us manage it. Recent articles concerning future water flows of the Mississippi River have concerned many farmers, and Jim Vandike, Groundwater Section Chief for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources., will talk about future water projections for the Bootheel. Irrigators on the other side of the state are also concerned about water and have voluntarily installed water meters on their irrigation wells. Paul Crabtree, an irrigator from Liberal, MO, will talk about why they installed water meters and what they learned from it.

The Conference opens up at 730 AM with registration and coffee & donuts and a chance to visit the trade show. The first presentation starts at 8:30 AM. During the free time farmers will be able to visit with the exhibitors. A steak lunch will be provided, and adjournment will be at 2:30 PM. The Conference is FREE, but attendees must pre-register to get a ticket for the steak luncheon.

The Conference will be at the Rone Hall of the University of Missouri's Lee Farm near Portageville, MO. People interested in obtaining more information or pre-registering for it can do so at: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/irrigate/bh-conf/2009/index.htm>, or they can call Joe Henggeler at 573-379-5431.

Jim Vandike, Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Groundwater Section Chief, will speak on the current and future conditions of the Mississippi River aquifer as a source of irrigation water. Δ



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