## Group offers practical water management plans

Written by Elizabeth Barrett Friday, 09 August 2013 14:27 -



Water-saving strategies implemented on a large scale across the state could have a huge impact on management and availability of water.

Increasing awareness among agriculture producers about how to save water and energy while irrigating is a key component of the Nebraska Water Balance Alliance, according to NEWBA director Lorre McKeone

McKeone and others spoke at a water summit on July 30 at the Monsanto Learning Center.

About 90 producers, vendors, power company officials, bankers and others attended the event.

McKeone said NEWBA promotes practical water-saving solutions that also safeguard the economy.

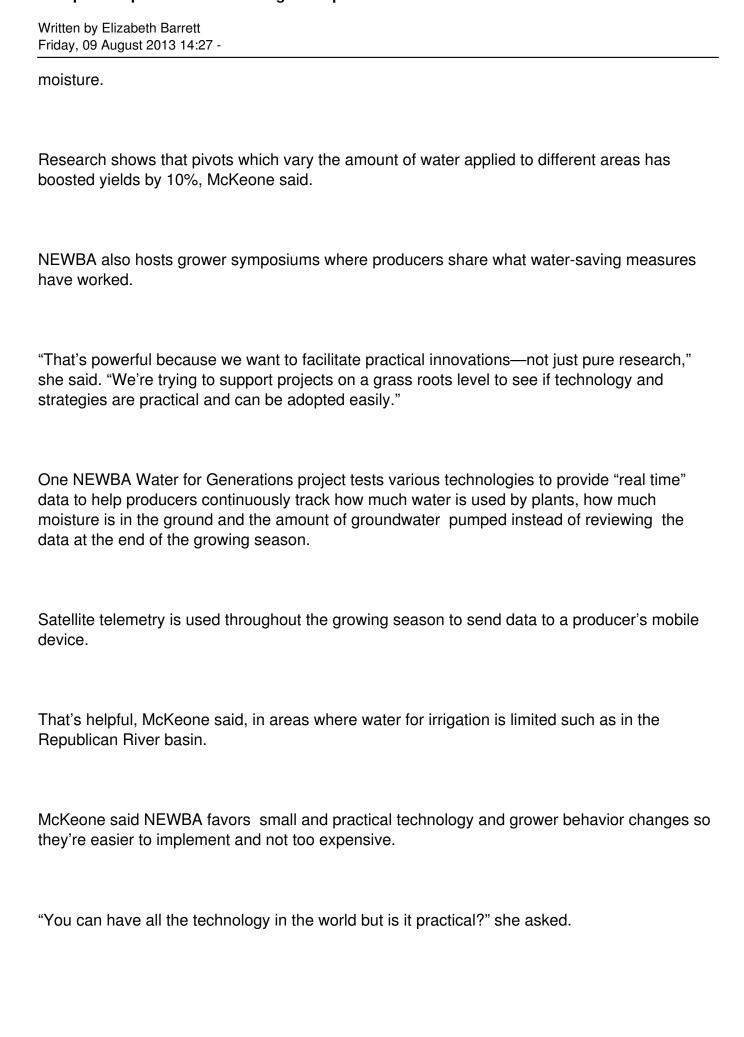
"We are so dependent on agriculture and also want sustainable water," she said.

One potential way to save water is through variable rate irrigation (VRI)on center pivot irrigation systems.

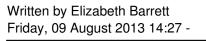
Until recently, McKeone said the only option farmers had with pivots was to apply water to fields at a flat rate regardless of soil type.

"Some areas don't get enough water and others get too much," she explained, noting that VRI technology makes it possible to apply less water with better results by slowing down the pivot over lighter, drier soils and speeding it up over heavier soils that don't require so much

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To get the word out about practical water-saving solutions, the water summit showcased a variety of strategies including biogenetics, tillage methods, real-time data collection and grower behavior studies.

In 2013, NEWBA projects will continue with growers across the state.

One project involves 11 producers (including Joe Wahlgren of Gothenburg) from Holdrege to Mitchell. Another includes 16 growers from central and eastern Nebraska.

McKeone said these projects bring together many different partners and interests to better manage water such as crop consultants, representatives fom power companies and natural resources districts and vendors.

All work together to come with good solutions for water scarcity, she said.

For more information about NEWBA, contact McKeone at 308-532-7246 or visit the website at www.nebraskawaterbalance.com.

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