

## NEWS COLUMN

Jeff Lounsbury, Extension Educator/Livestock

June 14, 2011

### **Anyone Ready For a Good Old Fashioned Dry Spell?**

Don't get me wrong, I'm not asking for a drought as I have lived through a couple of those and they are way worse than being too wet. In a drought there is nothing. Ag production comes to a screeching halt and fire danger indexes become way too much of a daily hazard. I know an individual who has been predicting drought for the last 5 years and I hate to break it to him but I think he missed it again.

To say the last two years have been excessively wet is a HUGE understatement. I do not have a fancy \$25 rain gauge or a computer generated weather station. However, being closely tied to agriculture I do happen to have a free, seed corn dealer rain gauge that is located in the middle of the yard well away from trees and buildings. I religiously document the rainfall amounts and since June 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 I have dumped 79.4 inches of rain out of this gauge. This is just rain folks! No snow fall totals added to this at all. The creepy part of this total is that over 70% of this rain came in June and July of 2009, October of 2009, June and July of 2010 and September of 2010. (57 inches) Coupled with these high rain totals has been the overbearing lack of sunshine. Most of us like sunshine and after 2 or 3 days of clouds it's time for the sun. Since June of 2009 we have had more than our share of cloudy days. October of 2009 and April of 2011 were prize winning cloudy months as we only saw the sun in each of those months 17% of the time.

As a child of the 1970's I grew up with summers when rain was short, prayed for, celebrated and cherished. Certainly I have seen some wet years. 1982, 1983, 1993, and 1995 easily come to mind however I have never seen it this wet for this long. I mean really, I never remember a spring prior to this one where no field work of significance was completed in April. According to my calculations there were only about 6 ½ suitable days for fieldwork in May as I write this (June 14) we have only had maybe 11 days to accomplish quality field work all spring. Of course, my rain gauge has not been idol lately. Since April 15<sup>th</sup> I have dumped out 11 inches!

As a very wise person I know once told me "What goes around comes around." No doubt the weather will change but I would definitely be in favor of more moderation. I guess the weather will do what it does, that is the reality and since reality is all that counts that's what I'm forced to go with!

You know it's Too Wet When:

- Those that are 30 and younger think a 4 week dry spell is a drought.
- The Vermillion River comes out of its banks 7 times in a 14 month period. (March 2010-April 2011)
- Corn cannot be planted at Wall South Dakota in the month of May.
- Trees turn brown because their water-logged roots are drowning.
- Replanted acres get drowned out.
- Complete fields of small grain get washed away by flash flooding.
- The mighty Missouri once again shows its wild side from North Dakota all the way to St. Louis.
- You cannot dig a fence post in because the water pressure pushes it back up.
- You see four, 100 year floods in one 16 month period.
- Hay lays in the windrow for more than 3 weeks.
- Acres of farm ground are only successfully planted and harvested 1 out of 4 years.
- Roads wash out more than one time in a 4 month period.
- Canadian geese nest in prime tillable farm ground.
- Sump pumps run every month of the year.
- You cannot dig a trench for a water line because the sides cave in.
- You get 35 inches of rain between May 1, and Labor Day.