

Irrigation water use declines from 2003

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The 2008 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey conducted every five years shows Nebraska irrigators used less water from wells and off farm sources in 2008 than in 2003, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Nebraska Field Office.

Average water use per acre declined to 0.8 acre-feet in 2008 compared to 1.1 in 2003 while average depth to water rose to 72 feet compared to 80 feet.

More farms in 2008 reported the use of sprinkler systems as the means of water delivery. Farms with sprinkler systems increased to 14,035, up 5% from 2003, while farms with gravity systems declined to 6,506, down 28% from five years earlier.

Energy expenditures to irrigate cropland from wells increased to \$42.89 per acre, up 40 percent from the survey in 2003.

The 2008 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey provides data that supplement the basic irrigation data collected from all farm and ranch operators in the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Irrigation data from this survey combined with 2007 census data provide one of the most complete and detailed profiles of irrigation in Nebraska and the United States.