

Education/Conservation Committee Meeting – July 23, 2019

David Stratta – Chair

Bill Harris

Mark Carrabba

The Education/Conservation Committee met to discuss the possibility of providing grant funding for groundwater well pivot irrigators who have installed or will install available technology for remote control of the pivot system(s). Large quantities of water can be wasted when pivot systems get stuck in the field or a rainfall event occurs when the producer cannot get to the field to shut the system off. The remote technology provides the producer real-time information on the status of the system(s) and allows the system to be turned off or on from a cell phone.

The cost of a typical remote system is \$1,700 for the equipment and \$300 annually for cellular connection to each installed system. The committee agreed that the District should incentive the installation of the remote device on groundwater well pivots not currently equipped. They also agreed that the many systems which have been installed over the past three years should also be recognized for the water conservation which has occurred.

It is estimated about 60 installed units exist in Brazos and Robertson counties. Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that each currently installed system should receive compensation of \$300 for each installed unit totaling an estimated \$18,000. The remuneration would occur over three budget cycles (2020, 2021, 2022) equally divided over the three years. Payment would happen on a first come-first served basis.

The committee felt that the District should provide grant funds for new installations at a level of 50% of the total cost of a typical unit/annual cellular connection up to \$1,000/unit. Funding of \$5,000 would be requested for fiscal year 2020.

Committee recommendations for budgeting purposes:

- \$6,000 for each of the three upcoming budget cycles (2020, 2021, 2022) for compensation of currently installed systems paid on a first come-first served basis
- \$5,000 for the 2020 budget for installation of new remote technology systems

It is the recommendation by the General Manager to accept the proposal by the Education/Conservation Committee to budget grant funds for both existing groundwater well remote access/control technology and new control systems during the suggested budget cycles.