

## NRCS gets additional funds to add the tract

***By Russ Pankonin***

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The Upper Republican Natural Resources District (URNRD) enrolled another 248 acres into its retirement program, thanks to additional funding received in Nebraska by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The NRCS just obligated \$1 million in funds in an irrigation retirement program ran in conjunction with the URNRD.

Fortunately, the state received an additional \$1.3 million in Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) funds that had been turned back by other states.

Some of this AWEP money was allocated to retiring another 248-acre tract in the URNRD.

Of the 248 certified acres in the tract, only 188 acres had been watered. AWEP funds can only be used on the 188 irrigated acres.

In an effort to bring the entire tract in, the URNRD board voted at their regular meeting last week in Imperial to make up the difference.

Assistant Manager Nate Jenkins said this amounted to \$40,600 in addition to the NRD payment based on the retirement formula.

As a result, the URNRD will obligate a total of \$162,492 to enter the tract into the retirement program. That lifts the NRD's total contribution to the program to \$1.91 million, versus \$1.75 originally allocated.

Manager Jasper Fanning said he believed it was worth enrolling the entire 248-acre tract, although only 188 acres were being irrigated presently.

He noted the NRD's cost per acre foot of benefit still remains about the same.

This tract will create a savings of 177 acre-feet of water.

Jenkins said this was the highest-ranked application that had not been previously accepted.

He said the well being retired is only .5 miles from the wet portion of the Frenchman Creek west of Champion.