

CWF FARMER PROFILE: Bob Greenwood & Judy Stevens

Dickinson County Lower Smoky Hill Watershed

By **Connie Pantle**

Carlton, Kansas—Bob Greenwood says there is history on his farm near Carlton in Dickinson County. Bob said the Chisholm Trail is believed to run along the ridge through his farm. According to Bob, the cattle drank from Holland Creek as they neared the feedyards of Abilene just to the north. And then there is Bob's own personal history on the farm. After all, he's been farming here all his life. "I've been doing it forever," he said. "I grew up here."

Bob and his partner, Judy Stevens, are making changes on the farm to maintain it for future generations. Bob said they want to leave the land in better condition than it was when he began farming and ranching.

As a step in making those changes, the couple completed the River Friendly Farm Project (RFFP) environmental self-assessment through the Kansas Rural Center. Bob said he thought about completing the notebook and "decided that's not a bad idea."

Judy said the most important thing they learned from the notebook was the "interconnectedness of everything". She said they realized actions, earlier believed to be insignificant, have an impact on water quality.

After completing the notebook, one of the first items the couple addressed was the household septic system. "We *had* to do something with the septic system," Judy said. The former system consisted of a straight pipe running to a dry ravine behind the house. To manage this



Bob Greenwood with one of the ponds that he fenced, reducing erosion and contamination caused by the cattle herd. Bob used CWFP cost-share funds to fence two ponds and two sections of Holland Creek, as well as install a household lagoon.
Photo by Connie Pantle

Water Quality Concerns:

- Household septic system
- Stream bank erosion and pollution
- Pond degradation
- Poor water quality
- Cropland erosion

Best Management Practices Implemented:

- Constructed a new lagoon for household waste system
- Implemented rotational grazing system
- Excluded cattle from Holland Creek, installed low-water crossing for cattle to drink
- Implemented no-till practices; planted additional forages to reduce tillage and improve soil quality
- Fenced pond, providing access ramps for cattle to drink

pressing water quality issue, they constructed a new household lagoon using Clean Water Farm Project (CWFP) cost-share and a non-point source (NPS) grant through the State Conservation Commission.

After completing the RFFP, Bob and Judy saw the benefit of rotationally grazing their 45 cow/calf pairs. The couple divided the pasture into smaller paddocks and every few days rotate the cattle into the next paddock. Using this method requires adequate water sources in all paddocks. To protect the existing water sources, Bob decided to fence a pond and a portion of West Holland Creek behind the homestead also using CWFP cost-share. Eliminating the cattle from the pond and creek help stabilize the bank and reduce the erosion they saw.

Seeing the results, the couple decided to fence another pond and more of the creek, therefore they applied for additional cost-share in 2006. “We had clear water in the first pond we fenced,” Bob said, “as well as a decrease in deterioration of the bank and pond in general.”

The cattle still needed water sources in those pastures, so he installed a rocked, limited-access drinking point on one side of the pond. This allows the cattle to drink from the pond without lingering in the water and contaminating it. On the creek, he installed low-water crossings using rock. This eliminates the cattle from wandering upstream muddying up the water as they go, Bob said.

To increase the farm’s productivity without compromising water quality, Bob likes experimenting with crops and grasses including triticale, spring peas, sudan grass and turnips.

For the last two years, Bob planted about 45 acres of corn and allowed the cattle to graze it while it is still standing. He uses a flash grazing method where he moves the electric fence to a new patch every few days. He said this method forces the cattle to utilize the corn residue, and not just eat the ears off all the stalks. “I move the hot wires and I have my feeding done for two or three days!” he said.

Bob said they finish all their calves and about two-thirds are marketed as “all natural” through Good Natured Family Farms, Bronson, Kansas,



Bob Greenwood simply moves an electrical wire gate in order to rotate the herd to a new paddock in the pasture.

Photo by Connie Pantle



Bob Greenwood inspects the electrical fence he used to exclude his cattle from Holland Creek. The cattle use the low water crossing in the lower left to drink.

Photo by Connie Pantle

which markets local foods from small family farms to Kansas City area supermarkets. The remaining one-third of the beef is direct marketed to individuals. The couple said the freezer beef is sold to families from Wilson to Kansas City and from Clay Center to Wichita and everywhere in between.

With a deeply-seeded history of their farm, Bob and Judy are proud of the accomplishments they’ve made. “We’re gaining on it,” Bob said. “Keeping the water clean is a good start.”