

Water Meters and Water Rights....

One of the stated objectives of the Kansas Water Plan is:

By 2015, all non-domestic points of diversion meeting predetermined criteria will be metered, gaged or otherwise measured under the authority of K.S.A. 82a-706c and K.S.A. 82a-1028(l). Criteria will include a minimal use requirement and priority area targeting.

Most non-domestic wells and pumpsites in Kansas are already required by order of the Chief Engineer to have water flowmeters. But there are still areas of the state where mandatory metering has not been implemented. If you happen to be in one of those areas and will be affected when your turn comes up, there are a few things you should be aware of.

First, it can be quite expensive to install a flowmeter. You must select a meter from the list of those certified by the Division of Water Resources (DWR). This meter must be installed in accordance with the guidelines set forth in regulation by the Chief Engineer. In order to meet the installation guidelines, significant plumbing modifications may be required.

Secondly, you must know the limits of your water right set forth in its terms and conditions. These can be challenging to fully understand so it is recommended that you contact your local DWR field office for a sit down consultation. If you have a tenant farming your land, make sure that tenant is fully aware of these terms and conditions. If they are violated, ultimately both the owner and tenant lose.

And last, look at the meter as a tool rather than a form of punishment. It is to everyone's benefit if accurate water use information is reported. Ownership of a water right is both a privilege and responsibility.

If you have questions, contact KFB Water Resources Specialist Kent Askren at 785-234-4535 or you local DWR field office staff.