

Ag Progress Examines Methods, Benefits Of Irrigation



At the main water inlet to an irrigation demonstration site, Dr. Albert Jarrett shows visitors the special pressure reducer (which takes the line pressure from 40 pounds per square inch to 10 pounds) and small screen filter from the water supply at Ag Progress Days.

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fically if you're using water from a stream, or from a pond, you should be thinking about a sand filtration system," he said.

An irrigation line can stretch from 100 to 600 feet, according to Jarrett. But if a farmer wants to extend the line beyond 600 feet, there can be severe pressure variations in the line. Growers must be careful to consider slope, water pressure availability, crop type and variety, and equipment used.

Don't think about

"Irrigation is a topic we really don't think about in Pennsylvania a great deal," said Jarrett. "Years like 1988 and 1991, all of a sudden, people say, 'Ah, I wish I'd . . .'" and, all of a sudden, 'I don't know anything about it.' Some years it's important, and other years it's not as important."

Strawberries, turf, brambles, orchards, and vegetable crops benefit from irrigation during a growing season. (Forty percent of all irrigation is on golf courses in Pennsylvania.) During the height of the growing season, plants need an average of two-tenths of an inch of rain a week. So irrigation is a good supplemental source of water.

Those interested in more information about an irrigation system for their farm should talk to their local extension agent.



For those who want to draw water from a pond, stream, or other surface supply of water, a sand filter such as this one (40 gallon per minute capacity) for about \$400 is necessary. The filter, according to Jarrett, keeps dirt and other contaminants from clogging the emitters from a drip irrigation system.

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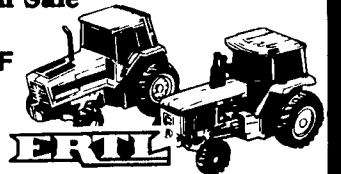
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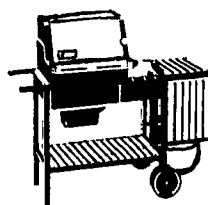
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