

2012 TEEA Winner Agriculture Category: North Plains Groundwater Conservation District, Dumas

Narrator:

In the wide open plains of the Texas Panhandle, Harold Grall found his calling.

Harold Grall speaking in car:

I think God just wanted me to be a farmer, so he led me down that path.

Narrator:

But this land typically only gets 8 inches of rain during the growing season.

Harold Grall, Moore County Director, North Plains Groundwater Conservation District:

Basically we're growing corn almost in a desert. So we've had to change our farming practices.

Narrator:

The pressure's grown because the region relies on the Ogallala Aquifer, and levels are dropping.

Steve Walthour voiceover when walking into office:

We have to come up with ways to stretch that water use.

Narrator:

Steve Walthour runs the groundwater conservation district charged with helping to manage the aquifer. In 2009, the District announced the ambitious goal of producing 200 bushels of corn per acre, on just 12 inches of irrigation.

**Steve Walthour, General Manager, North Plains
Groundwater Conservation District:**

We had three board members—who are farmers—put up their own acres and risk their own acreage to do this program.

Narrator:

Two of those board members were Harold Graw and fellow board member Danny Krienke.

Onscreen video with voiceover of Danny Kreinke:

There was a little shower or a little rain there.

Narrator:

Moisture probes in their fields feed information into a computer program, which helps them irrigate with precision.

**Danny Kreinke, Chair, Ag Committee, North Plains
Groundwater Conservation District:**

We grew 192 bushel so, the bottom line income was there.

Harold Grall:

And because we had some pretty good success that first year, it has really caught fire.

Narrator:

This year, nearly 20 Panhandle farmers will join the effort. And the project's attracting national attention.

Steve Walthour:

The USDA thinks that what we are doing is applicable to the U.S., not just in Texas.

Narrator:

It all started because three farmers were willing to take a risk, with the hope it might help preserve a way of life.