

Farmer asks commissioners to clarify regulations

By Tom Betz
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An Edson area farmer has found himself in a disagreement with the Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group Sherman County is part of, and asked the commissioners on Friday to see what could be done to solve the problem.

Ron Schilling, farmer who lives northeast of Edson said he had a problem with his home sewer system several months ago on a weekend, and that was the beginning of this problem.

Schilling said he could not get a local plumber or septic system person to come out when he had the problem and had to call a guy from Colby. He said when the guy arrived

and found out Schilling had a cess pool he had to call a lady in Colby to get permission to pump it out.

Schilling said the man pumped it out, but said it was not full. Schilling said he found out the problem was in the line coming from the house and got it cleaned out to get the system working.

He said Shirley Weber, program director for the Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group sent him a letter saying he has to put in a new septic system by the end of the year.

Schilling said he did some investigating and found out Sherman County joined this program in 1993 that covers 16 counties in the northwest. He said the idea is to

have old cess pool system replaced when they fail or when the property is sold.

Schilling said he tried to explain to Weber that the system had not failed, but she insisted he had to replace it and sent another letter.

He said under the 1984 legislation his system is grandfathered as long as it does not fail and as long as he does not sell the property.

"I am not selling my property," he said, "and do not have a failed system."

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said Schilling had come to see her and Selby had called Weber, who has an office in Colby, and was told Weber has an opinion from the attorney general, but was unable to

give Selby the citation.

Selby said she called an attorney in Topeka with the state water office, and he agreed it appeared there was not a problem because the system had not failed. Selby said he sent her a letter saying that as well, but then apparently Weber had called the same attorney and he sent a second letter saying based on her information he was not as certain the system did not need to be replaced.

Schilling said he was appealing to the Sherman County commissioners because as one of the counties in the program the commissioners are her boss, and he feels she is working by intimidation. He said he does not feel he is wrong on this, but is concerned if she is doing this to some of

the others in Sherman County.

He said his sons are facing having to replace their cess pool systems because one bought a place and the other one has a failed system.

Selby said Sherman County joined with other counties in 1993 to regionally administer this program.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said she went to a meeting about this program last year, and the legislature was looking to cut all the money. If that had happened we would have had to have the county health department handle this. They got the money restored because they were able to prove the number of things they have fixed.

Schilling said he did not want to

get the lady in trouble, but felt he was right to question whether he had to put in a new septic system when his did not fail.

"I wanted to bring this to your attention," Schilling said. "I felt you needed to know what was happening."

Strnad said she felt the commissioners ought to ask Weber to come to the next meeting and see if they can find a solution or at least clear up what is going on.

Selby said she had not even gotten into the fees the program calls for including an up front fee of \$300 to the group and then another \$300 to have the system inspected, plus the cost of the new system estimated at \$7,500 to \$10,000.

Fair show brings out best in young horse people



The fair horse show was delayed on Friday because of a wet arena, but in the afternoon things got going and Ashley Anderson (left) was waiting her turn with her horse, and Garrett Nemechek (above) was ready to take his horse into the arena to be judged.

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