

## **Middle Niobrara NRD Board Votes to Approve Modifications to Rules and Regulations; Approves Opening District for New Groundwater Irrigated Acres and Expanded Uses**

June 13, 2022

On Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup> the Board of Directors of the Middle Niobrara NRD (MNNRD) voted 6-0 to approve modifications to the Rules and Regulations of the MNNRD. Modifications covered the following topics: 1.) Updates to the glossary of terms. 2.) Changes to the current moratorium on new or expanded ground water irrigated acres. 3.) Removal of expired or irrelevant verbiage 4.) Modify groundwater transfer regulations. 5.) Changes to controls in the Groundwater Quality Management Zones 3 & 4. 6.) Statement of Intent for groundwater quantity controls. 7.) Addition of regulations regarding new certified irrigated acre development. 8.) Addition of regulations relating to chemigation. 9.) Changes to regulations for variance and staff authority. 10.) Modify rule enforcement provisions. A public hearing was held on the morning of June 13<sup>th</sup> to hear public testimony and comments on the new rule proposals. Three written testimonies were submitted for consideration and were read aloud during the hearing.

Two of the most substantial changes to the rules and regulations were changes to the current moratorium on new irrigated acres and water quality reporting requirements for landowners in Management Zones 3 & 4. New rules will allow for a yearly development of up to 3,000 new certified groundwater irrigated acres. Starting in 2022, applicants will have the month of August to submit applications to be ranked and reviewed by the staff and board of directors. The board of directors will have the discretion on a yearly basis to decide on how many irrigated acres to allow for potential development. Landowners owning or leasing certified irrigated acres in management zones 3 and 4 will now be required to turn in a water quality report to the District by April 15<sup>th</sup> for the previous year. This is a change from landowners only being required to turn in a water quality report if they applied fertilizer during the previous growing season.

New rule modifications will go into effect on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Full copies of the new rules and regulations, including rules for applying for new irrigated acres or expanded uses, will be available online at [www.mnnrd.org](http://www.mnnrd.org) and at the Valentine office 303 E HWY 20 Valentine, NE 69201. Any questions can be directed to staff at the MNNRD either by stopping at the office or calling the office at 402-376-3241.