**By Jasper Fanning**

**Manager, Upper Republican NRD**

Hot, dry weather in recent weeks has prompted water-related questions from some irrigators in the Upper Republican Natural Resources District (URNRD).

In case other farmers in the area have similar questions, I'd like to address some of them.

One common question has been whether the URNRD has recently changed its rules regarding unused allocation from previous years, commonly called "carry-forward."

The answer to this question is straight forward—no new limits have been imposed on either how much carry-forward can be accumulated, or how much carry-forward can be used.

The only changes to carry-forward approved by the NRD earlier this year pertain to pooling contracts.

Under the new pooling rules, a tract must have a positive remaining allocation for the five-year allocation period to be included in a new pooling contract.

The primary intent of this change is to encourage better water management by discouraging producers from "borrowing" water from upcoming allocation periods once they run out of allocation in a current allocation period.

This change was publicized in area newspapers shortly after being proposed and well before being voted upon by the NRD board. The same will be true of any future rules changes considered by the NRD.

Another common question has been the allocation itself. The current calendar year is the last year of the URNRD's five-year allocation period. The allocation over this five-year period is 65 inches, or 13 inches a year.

In coming months, the URNRD board will discuss and establish an allocation for the five-year period that will begin in 2013.

Because the board will be discussing this issue, it is impossible at this point to predict what the allocation will be. However, I believe it is safe to assume there will not be a severe reduction in the allocation.

Finally, there have been questions about whether the drought will soon require special regulations to be implemented in the district in order to fulfill obligations to help the state maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact.

The "trigger" for possible, special regulations in the Rapid Response Area of the URNRD is a designation by the state called a "Compact Call Year." It is not expected that next year will be a Compact Call Year; we will know for certain later this year.

If indeed the state does determine that next year will be a Compact Call Year, the NRD's new stream flow augmentation project near Rock Creek in Dundy County will be utilized.

Increasing stream flows through use of the augmentation pipeline would lessen, or could possibly negate, allocation reductions in the Rapid Response Area. However, this depends on the extent of the shortfall projected by the state.

This plan is expressed in the NRD's current rules and regulations:

"For the wells within the Rapid Response Area the allocation during a Compact Call Year shall be set at the maximum allowable that would not cause the district's depletions to stream flow to exceed the district's allowable groundwater depletions after taking into consideration other actions and controls that the District would implement," such as augmentation.

I hope I have provided some clarity to what I know can be a complicated issue. People with additional questions can contact our office at (308)882-5173.