



## Irrigation means billions of dollars to Nebraska economy

***By Russ Pankonin***  
***The Imperial Republican***

People in southwest Nebraska already know the value irrigation plays in the economy, especially during periods of drought like 2012.

A statewide study released Tuesday showed the economic impact of irrigation during last year's drought totalled nearly \$11 billion.

The Nebraska Farm Bureau commissioned the study to identify the role that irrigation played in the drought year of 2012.

The study was conducted by Decision Innovation Solutions, a research firm located in Des Moines, Iowa.

The study showed that irrigation boosted Nebraska's economy by \$11 billion in the drought year of 2012.

As part of the \$11 billion impact, Nebraska would have lost \$5.5 billion in value-added product income and another \$3.3 billion in lost labor income.

In terms of jobs, Nebraska would have had 31,221 fewer jobs without irrigation.

Economic impact estimates were calculated comparing Nebraska's economic activity with and without farmers' and ranchers' ability to irrigate in 2012.

Rollover of dollars

Spencer Parkinson with Decision Innovation Solutions said they looked at the yield impact during the drought years of 2002 and 2003 to help build a foundation for the 2012 study.

He said they looked at the difference in yields between dryland and irrigated crops. A reduction in yield loss directly impacts the rollover of dollars in a local economy, he added.

Parkinson said the study shows how Nebraska's ag economy is so interconnected, not just in outstate Nebraska but in Lincoln and Omaha, too.

Nebraska Farm Bureau President Steve Nelson said irrigation is a major driver of the economy and job creation in Nebraska.

"We knew irrigation was important to our farm and ranch members, but the study shows the benefits of water for irrigation stretch well beyond the farm gate," Nelson said.



~~...the value of irrigation is big in drought years (2016)~~