

## Ross Mosteller

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Livestock & Natural Resources

### Geotextile Fabric

I was once told that an Extension agent will do about anything to find a reason to get out of the office on a Friday, especially if it is a nice day. Some choose “turfgrass management” sessions at the golf course, others field visits to producers or in my case last week a trip to Topeka to haul geotextile. Okay, so you might be asking what is geotextile and why are you hauling it?

Webster defines geotextile as: “*a strong synthetic fabric usually used in civil engineering construction projects, such as highway or dam building, that stabilizes loose soil and prevents erosion.*” This product can actually be the fabric (*yes, pun intended*) that weaves together the livestock and natural resources sides of my job responsibilities. If you are not familiar with this product, I’ll try to explain what I mean and how it can be utilized.

Livestock congregation areas around feed and water sources can lead to deep mud (*when it rains again!*) in places that it might not be feasible to invest in concrete. Utilizing this relatively inexpensive method of placing a layer of fabric down on a prepared soil bed, followed by rock or gravel, leads to a more stable and durable feeding pad, waterer apron or pond access - to name a few. If used in tandem with other practices that help to reduce runoff, pollutant loading and other less than favorable environmental effects from livestock production, you have the overlap of my job responsibilities.

Often the issue that arises for livestock producers is that you need a small amount of this product around a stock tank, feed bunk or similar project, but to get it at an affordable price, you have to purchase a roll of several hundred feet. My predecessor had become well known for her work in this area, with this product. Our Holton office has been a local go-to supplier of geotextile for many smaller projects, but I’ve not maintained inventory during the time of transition. I’m happy to report that demand has remained strong and we will continue to help meet this need, across Meadowlark District by keeping a roll of geotextile in our Holton office.

I’d be remiss to not address the fact that we are in the education business and not retail. This is not a primary function for Extension, but when coupled with education and technical advice, it becomes a logical service component for us. The “one stop shop” on education and information for many of these geotextile related projects can be referenced at: <https://www.kcare.k-state.edu/pubs/index.html> Some of the publications found here specifically mention geotextile fabric, others discuss operations where it could very easily be applied. One request that comes with purchasing and seeking advice on use of geotextile, would be that I might follow up with a request for photos and narrative of how you’ve utilized the product.

So, there you have it, my justification for being out of the office on a beautiful fall day. We are now well supplied with geotextile fabric and offer it for sale by the linear foot. The roll width is twelve and one-half feet wide so you must take that width, times the number of running feet you need. One benefit of dry weather is that it is a good time to work on some of these types of projects - especially on ponds. If you would like to learn more about the application of geotextile, please reach out to me directly or contact any of the Meadowlark District offices.