



Lyon County - O'Brien County - Osceola County - Sioux County

# CLIPPINGS

A Weekly Column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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**For Immediate Release**

## Gutters on the Ground

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Heavy rain that runs off a building often runs next to the foundation causing many problems, like a wet basement or livestock buildings where they push up on the slats. Maintaining a good gutter system is very time consuming and difficult especially on steel roofs. Warm sunny days in the winter melt the snow under the roof and it slides down and catches the gutter.

A good solution that I have recommended for homeowners, livestock building owners, and commercial buildings is to build the drainage system on the ground and use tile buried and sloping away to carry the runoff water. In the area next to the foundation, the soil is dug out to provide a 6-inch to 8-inch slope away from the building. Then a 4-to-6 mil. plastic film is placed over the soil and a 4- or 6-inch tile placed on top of the plastic at the toe of the slope. The tile is sloped towards a ditch or hooked up to a field tile. The plastic is then covered with course rock (1- to 3-inch diameter) to protect the plastic and prevent rodents from living next to the building.

Any leaves and debris that accumulate in this area are easily removed and the stones filter any big things from getting into the tile.

Once installed, the tile will convey the water away from the foundation. The plastic and rocks will prevent weeds from growing next to the building and discourage rodents. Ice and snow will not destroy it like they do gutters. Lastly, you do not need a ladder to build it, just a shovel.

