

Kansas Wheat Harvest Report

This is Day 6 of the 2012 Kansas Wheat Harvest Reports, brought to you by the Kansas City Board of Trade, the Kansas Grain & Feed Association, the Kansas Wheat Commission and Kansas Association of Wheat Growers.

While farmers throughout Kansas welcomed the prospect of rain the evening of May 30, they were certainly wary of hail. As it turns out, several isolated hailstorms caused damage to wheat fields in northwest Kansas, according to Ellis County Extension Agent Stacy Campbell. Parched soils from Highway 83 east benefitted from rainfall totals ranging from one-quarter inch to 4-plus inches. For farmers west of that line however, the storm was just another missed opportunity in what has become a long drought.

The first big day of harvest in Stevens County occurred Wednesday, according to Jason Edwards, manager of United Prairie Ag in Hugoton. Farmers are facing a bleak harvest, with dryland wheat expected to yield about 20 bushels per acre. Still, that's about three times the yield of last year's crop, Edwards says. Test weights so far average 59 pounds per bushel.

Randy Ackerman, manager of the Meade Co-op Elevator and Supply in Meade, said the area received some light rain and hail, but that farmers resumed harvest Thursday afternoon. This harvest is poor, especially when considering how promising the crop looked six weeks ago. With 40% of the area harvest complete, just 300,000 bushels of wheat have been received. That's well off the long-term pace of 1.2 million bushels. This year's crop has yielded in the mid-20s. Quality is the lone bright spot of the 2012 harvest; test weight averages 61 pounds per bushel and protein averages 14.1.

Hillsboro farmer Paul Penner, who serves as 2nd Vice President of the National Association of Wheat Growers, says harvest was in full swing in his region until showers came Wednesday night. Penner was cutting wheat that yielded in the 50 bushel per acre range, with test weights around 62. Farmers in the area report even higher yields, and test weights vary from 57-60 pounds per bushel. Penner says the rain is welcome, as row crops were under duress from the dry weather.

Harvest was about two-third complete in the Anthony area on Wednesday before a thunderstorm dropped about an inch of much-needed rain, says Dan Cashier, manager of the Anthony Farmers Coop. Farmers are harvesting very good quality wheat, averaging 62 pounds per bushel and 11 protein. The elevator has taken in about 2.5 million bushels of wheat so far, with yields averaging well above 40 bushels per acre. Cashier reports some of the crop has suffered from light hail damage.

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