

Planted wheat acres down in Kansas

Wheat acres in Kansas will likely be lower than last year, possibly reaching 100-year lows in the state. Last year's 7.7 million planted acres were the third lowest in a century.

Abnormal weather patterns in October and November contributed to the decrease in acres planted. According to the Kansas Mesonet, there was record precipitation throughout the state in October and below average temperatures in November.

This has led to the state being essentially drought-free for the first time in years, but it also kept farmers out of the fields during fall harvest and wheat drilling time.

[USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reports](#) that for the week ending December 2, 2018, topsoil moisture supplies rated 0 percent very short, 4 short, 76 adequate, and 20 surplus. Subsoil moisture supplies rated 0 percent very short, 6 short, 83 adequate, and 11 surplus. The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) shows drought conditions in Kansas on November 27, 2018 of only 6.2% abnormally dry and 0.5% in moderate drought. None of the state is in severe drought or worse.

USDA/NASS also reports that fall harvest is mostly complete, with corn harvest at 96%, soybean harvest at 95% and grain sorghum harvest at 89%.

But, wheat should've been planted by the end of October in most areas of the state, and at that time, soybean harvest was only 63% complete and grain sorghum harvest was only 49% complete. This kept farmers from planting wheat behind soybeans in a common double-crop situation.

At the November 29 board meeting of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers and Kansas Wheat Commission, farmer board members reported on wheat planted acreage in their areas this fall.

In West Central/Southwest Kansas, Rick Horton, who farms in Wichita and Kearney Counties, reported that the moisture profile in the area is good. While wheat acreage overall might be up a little in the area, traditional fallow acres are still down about the same as last year.

Ron Suppes, who farms in Lane County, reported that acres are down a little in his area, but some farmers were still trying to drill wheat at the end of November. He said that there is still some grain sorghum left to cut and that most of the wheat is emerged.

In Northwest Kansas, Brian Linin, who farms in Sherman County, reported that acres are similar to the past, and the wheat looks really good. He shared that there is uncharacteristic moisture in the area and the snow is just a boost to that moisture. He did share a concern about the likelihood of Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus in the area.

Chris Tanner, who farms in Norton County, estimates that fall harvest is only 60% complete in the county. He said wheat acres are down, but early planted wheat looks nice. He said farmers were still drilling wheat in the area as of the end of November.

In North Central Kansas, Mike McClellan, who farms in Rooks County, estimates that wheat acres are down 1/3 from last year. He said that farmers weren't able to get many wheat acres in behind soybeans.

Mike Jordan, who farms in Mitchell County, agreed. He said most people would have had to stop harvesting fall crops to plant wheat, so he estimates acres will be down 25% in Mitchell County.

In Central Kansas, David Radenberg from Barton County reported that acres are also down in his area, and that grain sorghum harvest is not complete.

Doug Keesling, who farms in Rice County, agreed that acres are down in central Kansas, estimating a decrease of 5-15% from last year. He reported that most of the decrease came from acres that were to be planted behind soybeans, because farmers weren't able to get their beans harvested and wheat planted.

Justin Knopf, who farms in Saline County, estimates acres planted will be only 60-70% of last year, mostly because they didn't get planted behind soybeans.

Ken Wood, who farms in Dickenson County, estimates that acres are down 25-30%, stating that farmers gave up on planting wheat because of the poor weather conditions. All four central Kansas farmers reported that they are still finishing up soybean and grain sorghum harvest in the area.

In South Central Kansas, John Hildebrand, who farms in Stafford County, reported that the early planted wheat in the area doesn't look very good, and that late planted wheat is not yet emerged. He said wheat acres are down, and there is still grain sorghum left to cut.

Scott Van Allen, who farms in Sedgwick and Summer Counties, reported that early planted wheat in his area looks nice, and the late planted is only 1/2" tall. He said that there was no double crop wheat planted behind soybeans in his area, estimating that acres are down 5-10%. There are still soybeans and grain sorghum left to cut.

In Northeast Kansas, Jay Armstrong, who farms in Atchison County, reported that wheat looks good in his area and that acres are up a little over last year.

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that for the week ending December 2, 2018, winter wheat condition rated 3 percent very poor, 13 poor, 39 fair, 35 good, and 10 excellent. Winter wheat emerged was 89 percent.

K-State Research and Extension [reports that leaf rust is causing problems](#) for some wheat producers in Kansas this fall with reports of wide spread infections in volunteer

wheat and the early planted fields in western and central regions of the state. They also [report that the sudden, sharp drop in temperatures](#) across Kansas observed in the early part of November 2018 could have different consequences to the wheat crop, varying from no impact to some injury in particular fields. This injury could depend on the amount of snow on the surface and the amount of moisture in the soil, which serves as a buffer against cold temperatures.

With all the wheat crop has already endured, we are still a couple weeks away from the beginning of winter, and the condition of the 2019 wheat crop will continue to evolve until harvest next summer. While planted acres are down overall, at least the crop has the opportunity to begin its fragile life with adequate moisture.