

Day 5, Kansas Wheat Harvest Report

This is day 5 of the Kansas Wheat Harvest Reports, brought to you by the Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Association of Wheat Growers and the Kansas Grain and Feed Association.

It's a race against storm fronts for many Kansas farmers who can take advantage of dry fields and mature wheat before the rain, and potential hail, falls.

Nicole Small, a farmer near Neodesha, reported that her harvest crew has cut their last acre.

"Since we had fewer acres of wheat it was a quick harvest for us this year," said Small. "We started up last Saturday and wrapped up on Wednesday."

Even though the area had a dry winter, most of the wheat saw good growing conditions throughout the spring. While some of Small's counterparts to the southeast had issues with fighting muddy fields, the Smalls saw smooth harvesting conditions during their sprint to the finish line.

"Usually in southeast Kansas our humidity is too high to cut past 9 or 10 pm," said Small. "But I was cutting at midnight and could have gone longer; that's how dry it was."

Small reported that yields were 'higher than expected, especially after all it's been through.' Some standout varieties for her area were Ruby Lee and Gallagher, and all of their wheat had test weights over 60 pounds per bushel.

Amy Theis, manager of the Nickerson branch of Central Prairie Co-op, said that her location started receiving grain on Monday, but it hasn't been the rush that they normally see. So far test weights have been 'very good' with a range of 60-64 pounds per bushel and good kernel characteristics.

Theis reported that there was some freeze damage in the area, something that Theis attributed to variety choice and maturity during those April freezes, and a small area had severe hail damage. Farmers in the Nickerson area will be tuned into their local radio stations Thursday evening as the area is right in the path of oncoming storms.

Further west, Levi Benjamin, manager of the Offerle Coop Grain & Supply Co. location in Bucklin, said that they received their first load of wheat on Sunday, but harvest in their area hasn't fully ramped up quite yet.

So far his location has received about 20,000 bushels of wheat, and test weights have averaged about 61 pounds per bushel. However, Bucklin was affected by an issue looming over much of western Kansas.

"We had about 2,000-3,000 acres wiped out by Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus," said Benjamin. "It was definitely a problem for a lot of farmers out here."

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