

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.

Families gathered around grills and couches across the state on Sunday to celebrate Father's Day, but many farm families celebrated with a view from the combine cab. Harvest continued to progress quickly through Kansas with sizzling hot temperatures and dry winds blowing through the fields. Farmers are harvesting very quickly for fear that their crop may just turn into toast if kept in sight of the sun for much longer.

Todd Pauley, a Sedgwick County farmer, reported that his harvest lasted a little less than a week. Yields for Pauley ranged from 30-40 bushels per acre. He said that during the growing season, there was a difference of five to six inches of rain between his home in Garden Plain and his farm ten miles away.

"We definitely got less rain than normal, this year," said Pauley. "But we were fortunate that we had enough to keep us going."

Test weights averaged 60 pounds per bushel for Pauley, and he reported that there was minimal disease found in his area.

"Harvest went really fast this year," said Pauley. "We had no rain while we were cutting, so we were able to get it out of the field really quickly. I'm just glad to be done."

Derek Sawyer, a McPherson county farmer, reported that he is around 85 percent complete with #wheatharvest18. Sawyer said his first load was cut June 11, so his family's harvest should last just a little over one week. Even with a little rain that first night, Sawyer was able to resume cutting on Tuesday. His crew had to wait patiently on Wednesday since it was 'damp, dreary and not much could happen.'

Thursday meant go time for the Sawyers, and harvest has gone smoothly since. While Sawyer reported an average range of upper 30s to mid-40 bushels per acre, he has heard everything from six to 60 bushels per acre in the community.

"Yields have been all over the board," said Sawyer. "Those differences in yield rely heavily on spotty rains and farming practices. But I have been pleasantly surprised with our yields. I was expecting much worse."

Drought has been an issue weighing heavily on farmers' minds this year, and Sawyer has witnessed some unexpected effects in his own operation.

"We are cutting through regular mud holes that I don't ever remember harvesting in

the last 30 years," said Sawyer. "I don't even remember a crop ever growing in them. But this year there are good looking stands in a lot of them, so we are harvesting it. This dryness is just unprecedented in my memory."

While Sawyer doesn't have exact numbers, he does expect protein content to be well above average this year.

"We have huge piles of wheat from last year that I expect will be blended off pretty easily," Sawyer said.

Nicole Small, a Wilson County farmer, reported that her family is about halfway complete with harvest after an unexpected windstorm took its toll on property, crops and their time in the combine.

"We had a huge windstorm that knocked us out for about four days of cutting," Small said. "We heard neighbors say anything from 75-100 mile per hour in-line winds."

The wind blew an old grain bin about 50 yards away from its original location, brought down decades old pecan and hedge apple trees (which then landed on a fence and granted some of Small's cattle some temporary freedom) and even shredded some wheat stems to further complicate this year's harvest.

Small reported a range of 35-65 bushels per acre, with an average seeming to float in the upper 40s. She said that her area was about 4 inches of rain behind average.

"It's turned out to be a better harvest than I expected," said Small. "The wheat is really short, so I wasn't expecting hardly anything to be in the heads, but it's been surprising."

The 2018 Harvest Report is brought to you by the Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Association of Wheat Growers and the Kansas Grain and Feed Association. To follow along with harvest updates on Twitter, use [#wheatharvest18](#).