

In The Field With Kansas Wheat

Volume II, Issue 5

Kansas Wheat Commission and Kansas Association of Wheat Growers

September 28, 2011, Manhattan, KS

IF RAIN MAKES GRAIN ...

For many Kansas farmers, it seems a gamble to sow winter wheat this fall, given the lack of rainfall and ground moisture and very little hope for drought-breaking rain on the horizon.

As of September 20, just the northern tier of counties in Kansas is free from drought; the remainder of the state ranges in drought condition from abnormally dry to exceptional in the south central and southwest regions. In isolated cases within those regions, measurable precipitation has not fallen in more than a year.

According to Kansas Ag Statistics, for the week ending September 25, twenty percent of the Kansas winter wheat crop had been planted, the same as last year but behind the 5-year average of 23 percent. Four percent of the crop had emerged, compared to 3 percent last year and 6 percent for the 5-year average.

Art Barnaby, Extension risk management specialist at Kansas State University, says wheat farmers have the benefit of an excellent safety net through today's crop insurance programs.

"A winter wheat strike price of over \$8 will provide a higher minimum revenue guarantee for 2012. Given the dry conditions in the Great Plains, this is a great time to have the higher crop insurance projected price," says Barnaby, who advocates a revenue coverage policy in favor of yield only coverage. "As the price falls, the deductible in revenue protection shrinks, especially when the projected price is high."

Barnaby says the alternative to planting wheat this fall is to take the prevented planting provision, which could have a lower indemnity. "That's because the strike price in the revenue insurance products could actually increase," he says. "If we have a wheat production problem, you would have to think the price of wheat could go higher."

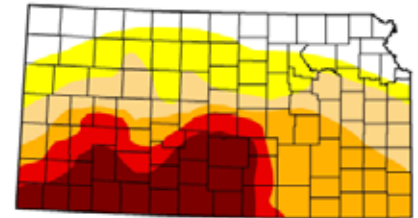
A potential negative to planting wheat into dry conditions is that if the crop fails, the low yield gets built into the 2013 Acreage Production History (APH), Barnaby warns.

Farmers planting wheat into dry conditions need to take some precautions, suggests Jim Shroyer, Extension **1**

U.S. Drought Monitor Kansas

September 20, 2011
 Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	16.39	83.61	64.95	47.87	27.24	17.63
Last Week (09-13/2011 map)	19.89	80.11	63.29	49.90	32.26	17.63
3 Months Ago (06/21/2011 map)	27.96	72.04	50.70	33.48	13.75	1.95
Start of Calendar Year (12/28/2010 map)	17.82	82.18	43.85	3.48	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/26/2010 map)	83.23	16.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (09-14/2010 map)	97.58	2.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



Intensity:



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, September 22, 2011
 Michael Brewer, National Climatic Data Center/NOAA

agronomist at Kansas State University. For one, do not skimp on seeding rate.

“If planting wheat where it is dry, increase the seeding rate so it is typical of what would be planted later in the fall to compensate for any lack of tillering,” he says. The same holds true if planting wheat into failed row crops or later than normal.

As bleak as it looks right now for many farmers, planting conditions can change quickly. “We can go from too dry to too wet in just a few days,” Shroyer explains. “And, we still have 45 days to plant wheat this fall.”

According to K-State research, about 10.2 inches of evapotranspiration is required to get the first bushel of wheat established; and each inch of moisture thereafter produces about 6 bushels of wheat. Throughout Kansas, most fields have at least a little subsoil moisture; it takes just a little bit of surface moisture to get the wheat crop established.

“The old adage is, ‘dust it in and you bust the bin,’” Shroyer says. “I don’t quite feel that is accurate, but moisture at planting is not as important as moisture in the winter. That’s what’s really important.”

FARMER REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Stafford County (SC Kansas)- “We received 3/4 inch of rain last weekend. We started planting wheat on Monday, September 19. We are currently planting in moisture, but we will soon have to dust it in on the top.”



Stafford County



Stafford County

Finney County (SW Kansas) - “We had .5 inch on very dry ground. It is very marginal here. Expect spotty stands unless we get more rain.”

Thomas County (NW Kansas) - “As far as conditions go, we are marginal in the Colby area. It seems like starting in August, moisture either was to the west (Brewster), to the east (Grainfield) or north (Atwood). A pocket of southern dryness has pushed up into our area. Fallow ground that has been planted has had pretty good emergence, but anyone wanting to follow dryland corn will need some October moisture to get it up.”

Marion County (C Kansas) - “Planting conditions are good, thanks to the recent rain.”

Scott County (WC Kansas) - “Wheat drilling went into high gear this past week in Scott County. All who received rain are drilling. The top soil is good for getting the wheat up, but little to no profile for continued growing condition.”



Scott County

Hamilton County (SW Kansas) - "Things in Hamilton County look pretty good South of Syracuse. Still very dry in some spots, but we will be able to get wheat up. Northwest looks good; northeast good to Kearny County then very dry in most spots. Had .75 rain about 2 weeks ago which is our saving grace."

Wallace County (WC Kansas) - "We just finished planting wheat this last Saturday. Conditions were great! Our early planted wheat is just coming up, it is already as big as our wheat was this last spring coming out of dormancy. Right now I am very optimistic about next years crop."



Wallace County

Lane County (WC Kansas) - The conditions are very similar to last year except over all in my area there is not as much sub-soil moisture as last year. Surface moisture varies from adequate to not enough to provide good planting conditions. Unless it starts raining we are heading to a production problem as great as last year.

Barton County (C Kansas) - "Real Dry! We are dusting it in with hope of a gentle rain in a week or so."

LINKS OF INTEREST

2011 Crop Quality

For the latest status on the 2011 HRW harvest and crop quality data, visit: www.plainsgrains.org

55-Year Kansas Wheat Study Examines Yield Effects of Precipitation, Temperature and Timing Out West

GARDEN CITY, Kan. – Kansas State University scientists may be giving wheat growers reason to watch the weather more than they did before in October – and, for that matter, in May and June.

Read the rest of the story here: http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/News/story/wheat_study091311.aspx

Wheat Research Reinforces that Yields can be Partially Recovered When Planting Late

COLBY, Kan. – Ongoing wheat research at Kansas State University reinforces the idea that even when planting wheat later than the optimal date for any given area, yields can be recovered somewhat, but not completely, by bumping up seeding rates and ensuring the crop receives adequate moisture.

Read the rest of the story here: http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/News/story/wheat_research091211.aspx

For an impressive animation that shows the progress and expansion of the drought over the past year, click here: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/prelim/drought/pdiimage.html>

Failed crops may free more Kan. acres for wheat

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 By Roxana Hegeman Associated Press Writer

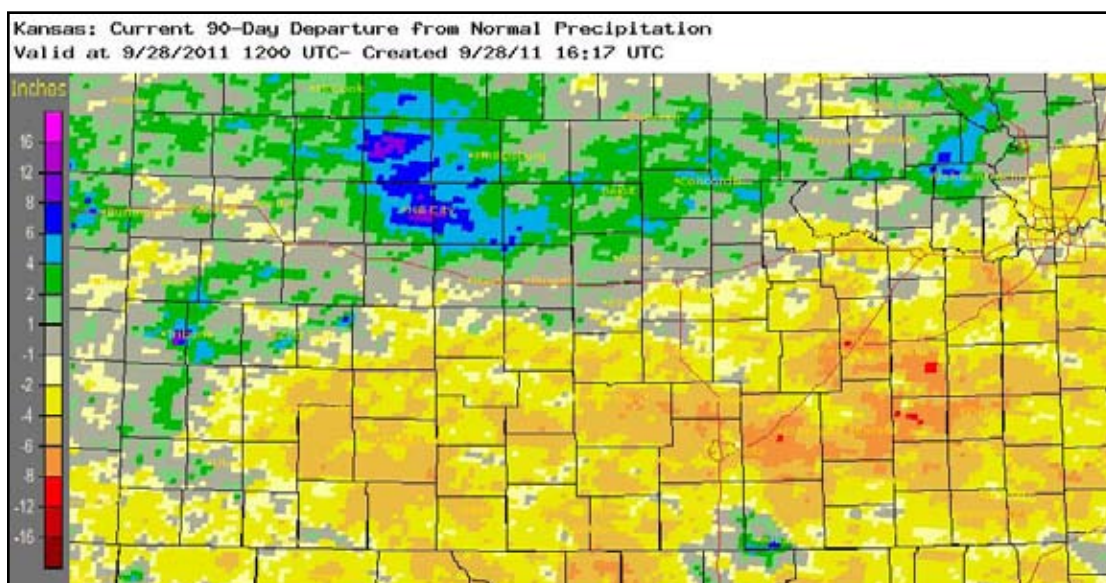
WICHITA - Kansas farmers have begun preparing their fields to plant winter wheat, amid concern that the long drought has left the ground too dry to get the 2012 crop off to a good start this fall.

http://www.ksagland.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5983:failed-crops-may-free-more-kan-acres-for-wheat-&catid=35:state-ag-news&Itemid=84

Extreme Heat and Dryness at Dodge City (updated 9/12/11)

Like much of western and south central Kansas, the extreme drought continued as the meteorological summer ended at Dodge City. In addition, extreme heat experienced during the summer did not let up. It's definitely been a record setting year at many locations, including Dodge City.

http://www.crh.noaa.gov/news/display_cmsstory.php?wfo=ddc&storyid=72570&source=0



Source: National Weather Service