

Harvest Season Begins In SW Missouri, Despite Rain

SPRINGFIELD, MO.

Drier weather is finally giving area farmers a chance to get in their fields according to Jay Chism University of Missouri Extension agronomy specialist in Barton County.

Barton County farmers began harvesting over 47,000 acres of wheat early last week. Wheat acres are down slightly from the previous two year when production was over 52,000 acres.

"The number of acres planted is lower, but yields are much better than they have been the previous two seasons," said Chism.

Farmers are reporting 40 to 60 bushels per acre season whereas less than 30 bushels per acre was the average in recent years.

Test weight has been lower this season due to the wet growing conditions according to Chism.

"Most farmers are still happy with current yield and price this season," said Chism.

The current price is running around \$6.65 per bushel. Some farmers may have contracted historical high prices near \$10 last fall.

Unfortunately, it is not all profit. Input costs have increased substantially over last season. Production cost per acre is estimated to be around \$325 per acre.

"When prices are high, production costs follow," said Chism. "We had wet growing conditions from planting until harvest. Wet conditions can cause harvesting problems, and reduce grain quality."

The wet environment has also added to disease pressure on this season's crop.

Wheat is not the only crop that is keeping farmers busy. Fescue seed is being swathed and combined for seed, while hay producers are also busy taking advantage of the dry weather.

"Soybeans are being planted and field work on corn continues," said Chism. "It's a busy time on farms. Hopefully the weather will continue to be favorable for all types of farming activities."

For more information about the wheat crop contact Chism at (417) 682-3579. △