

## Scott's crew celebrates holiday and good wheat



The tractor floats peacefully beside the combine as the machine processes the grain.



Jesse and Justin check to make sure the grain trailer's third axle lift valve is working properly.

### Tuesday, July 5

Happy Independence Day to all. After making a trip with some of our equipment up to Goodland, we discovered we'd have a few days until the crop there was ready to be harvested. The crew stopped back through our home shop at Kiowa with their second load of equipment and spent a couple of days doing some odds and ends around the farm and enjoying a little less enduring work.

Saturday, the crew continued up to Goodland and managed to start harvesting that evening. The moisture was just under 14 percent on our first field test. The guys were all anxious to climb in the seats and get their machines fired up after almost a week without any harvesting. We found out that good-looking wheat in this area was indeed good wheat. Initial yields in the area are running around 60 bushels per acre, and areas of the field are well past 60. That kind of wheat makes everyone smile.

The same night we began cutting a storm blew in and dropped almost an inch of rain on our fields. We did not want to rut up the field, so we decided to wait until Monday to try again. That meant another day off during the holiday weekend and the guys managed to find a few fireworks to occupy their time. It was also nice to have a "sit-down" meal somewhere other than the wheat field.

Monday we were able to get back to the field and are going as hard as we can because as we all know a thunderstorm can roll in quickly and hail an entire crop out. Clients are generally not concerned with combine color, but want to avoid "the white combine," referring to a hailstorm that takes out a wheat crop. The weatherman is predicting storms for Wednesday and Thursday of this week, so we'll continue to work as quickly as possible and hope the forecast stays clear. You always feel a sense of responsibility to get the crop out in time, but there seems to be more obligation when high crop yields are at stake.

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Travis monitors the grain going into the truck as he finishes loading it.



The guys load up the corn concaves and secure miscellaneous items on the front of the second grain cart trailer.

## Rain puts Hoffman Harvesting behind schedule

### Wednesday, July 6

After a two-day break, Hoffman Harvesting found ourselves back in the field in Colby, Kan. It was another triple-digit day and we were happy to enjoy it in the field. The yields were in the 70s, which had our truckers and grain cart operator running all day. The test weights were in the 60s and the moisture was around 11 percent. According to the Gem elevator moisture hasn't been an issue thus far. The test weights they have been seeing are ranging from the upper 50s to 60s. The Gem elevator said harvest started a week ago and was slow the past two days due to rains the area received. I tried to get a handle on the protein but they don't have a machine to test it. I often get asked about protein from northerners—they can be docked on their grain tickets if their protein is low—but it isn't as important where we cut in the south and often goes untested.

Our equipment made the move to Kanorado, Kan., a small town right on the Colorado border. To our surprise, we were able to get started cutting this afternoon. Whether the wheat was ready was questionable especially since not many combines were running in the area as we made our move.

Harvest is just commencing in the Kanorado/Goodland area. The Goodland elevator was planning to stay open a little later tonight for the first time. However our parade was rained on tonight—literally. Around 10 p.m. the drops fell when we had only 10 acres left in our first field. I have a feeling we'll be taking advantage of our tractor tomorrow as the ground to the field was soft prior to the rainfall.

The wheat looks good. Test weights are 58 to 59. Yields are ranging from the high 50s to 95 bushels per acre. The wheat is just barely ready and is running a little tough. Some of the wheat came up only this spring so things are a bit of a touch and go here—meaning one field is green while another is

ready to cut. Tonight we are still sleeping in Colby. Our campers will make the move to our new home in Goodland tomorrow.

### Sunday, July 10

Happy Birthday, Kaidence!

Today our daughter turns 2—whether it's the terrible 2s or the terrific 2s we have yet to find out. After a long debate on what to give her for her birthday, we thought there couldn't be a better gift for this young harvester than her own tractor. It comes with a trailer but we'll keep it unattached until she knows better than to run into everything—including "the guys."

Yesterday we had a cookout with "the guys" because we thought they might be able to cut today. We finished cleaning up and got ready to settle in for the day then the tornado alarm went off in town. We could see the funnels forming to the south of our campground. It all happened so quick that everyone camping in our campground—including us—ran out of their campers in confusion. We got in our cars and our convoy rushed to the shelter once again. On our way, the rain dumped on us. So did pea-sized hail for a short while. Enough rain fell so quickly that the roads in downtown Goodland started to flood. The tornado was called off just as we arrived to our destination.

I am still glad we celebrated as our field didn't receive as much rain as in town. They are finally able to cut tonight! We are excited because our next stop is getting ready. Two days of rain has certainly put us behind schedule.

To celebrate her July 10 birthday, Kaidence and I went to the water park in Colby with Vicky, Cody, Nathan and Kaitlyn Hoerner of Hoerner Harvesting while Leon and the crew had to stay home and cut.

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Wheat is pretty even to toddlers!



The guys humor me for Kaidence's party and don all the party favors.



More dust and hills in this beautiful wheat field.



A fire in our farmer's field was quickly put out by the fire department.

## Misener team moves north

Wednesday, July 6

I'd like to introduce you to my inspiration, Dave and Kathy Richenberger from Andale, Kan., our customers for the past 10 years.

This year harvest was bittersweet for Dave and his family because they have decided it's time to retire. Dave is 78 years old and I think he deserves every bit that retirement has to offer.

Dave has been farming the land around Andale for 57 years. He started out as a young man farming with his father, but when the land they had was not enough to support him and his father he branched out on his own and started to rent ground. Dave has been farming the same ground he started with 50 years ago; some of that land he was able to purchase. Dave did business in the days when all you needed for an agreement was a simple handshake and a man's word.

When farmers gain ground the next to come is farm upgrades. Dave remembers when he got a new 60 cultivator and said, "I couldn't believe how I could cultivate 40 acres an hour, it sure was a step up from 42 acres a day."

Prior to the upgrade Dave had an International W6 tractor and he plowed with a moldboard plow. "I was lucky if I started out early in the morning and plowed all day, to plow 42 acres of land," he said.

I asked Dave what the biggest change for him has been since he started farming and he said, "cabs." I suppose that would be a great improvement from working in the dirt, dust and heat all day. Dave also had to mention that hydraulics on

machinery make the work easier as well.

I did ask Dave if he was sad to be retiring and he said it was really kind of bittersweet. "I'm glad to be done with all the stress that it has, but sad because I want to keep doing it for the kids. I want them to become interested in farming so I can pass the tradition on to them."

For farmers, harvesters and anybody in agriculture it's more than just a job—it's a way of life.

Monday, July 11

These past two weeks have been anything but ordinary for the Misener crew. As I told you in a previous post, Mom, Dan and I took a trip north to Gregory, S.D. We brought one combine, two grain trailers and the cargo trailer with us while David, Verena and the guys headed home to Elk City, Okla., to take care of some odds and ends.

After parking our loads we left to take a look around the Gregory area to see what the wheat looked like in the surrounding area. We've found that there is not near the amount of acres of wheat planted this year. The extreme wet conditions this year prevented farmers from planting their fields.

On a good note, the wheat that is planted looks great. We drove northwest of Gregory to the Missouri River.

We spent the night in Gregory, then headed back home to Elk City, Oklahoma to help David, Joel and Thad do some odds and ends. I'm still amazed to see the differences within 600 miles.

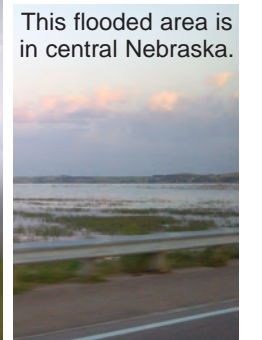
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Kathy holds Alexander, and Dave holds Elizabeth and Sara.



(Left) Here's a close-up of the wheat in Gregory. My estimate is the wheat head is around 4 inches, not including the beard.



This flooded area is in central Nebraska.



This is an awesome landscape picture if I may so say myself.



The Roland family on our rain day (from left to right): me, Ashley, Mom, Dad, and Brandon.



Here's the crew minus my parents in front of one of the CRs (from left to right): James, Kurt, Brandon and Jason, and Ashley and I sit in the tire.



In this photo from 1997 (from left to right) are: Brandon, Grandpa, my cousin Andy, Ashley, me and James. Grandpa Bob has always taken the time to teach us about old equipment and share many stories with us.

## Roland Harvesting stays busy

Tuesday, July 5

Roland Harvesting has been staying extremely busy. The wheat finally ripened up enough for us to continue harvesting around Plainville and the nearby town of Zurich. The grain elevator, Midland Marketing Coop, in Zurich was very helpful as they worked with us to unload the grain quickly and efficiently so that we could continue cutting. They were also cooperative when it came to those truckloads of wheat that were a little on the wet side.

We finished up in the Plainville area Wednesday afternoon and loaded up everything in 110-degree weather. Working around all the equipment in blistering weather was certainly not enjoyable but we got 'er done. The short journey to Hoxie, Kan., went well, especially considering the high temperatures, which increase the chance of blowing tires.

Many magnificent wheat fields are scattered around Hoxie. However, not everyone in the area was so lucky since many fields south of town were pummeled by hail earlier this summer. To our luck all of the fields we are harvesting avoided such devastation. In comparison to the southern states, this area of Kansas received much more rain than most of Oklahoma and Texas. The wheat has been yielding about 60 to 70 bushels per acre, with most test weights between 60 to 64 pounds per bushel. We've had some very successful days of cutting and have many fields knocked out already.

It rained Saturday night and we were not able to cut at all on Sunday since the fields were quite muddy and the grain was still too wet to harvest anyway. We went to the field to cut a sample and spent the rest of the day enjoying our family time. We bought fireworks and had our own personal show Sunday evening. I know the entire crew was extremely happy to have the rest of the family here and we certainly enjoyed their company.

On the Fourth of July we got back into the fields and had a very productive day by getting many acres of high-yielding

wheat cut. Although we all wished we could have spent the day out boating or fishing at the lake, we all understand that this is our job. As many individuals working in agriculture can relate, we do not work the typical time frame of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, with holidays off. Instead we work each and every day whenever possible. As custom harvesters, our main concern is to get the current farmer's wheat harvested and put it into the bin safely and efficiently. It is days like this that remind us that farmers and harvesters are certainly the backbone of America. Last night we did luck out and on our way back to Colby we caught the tail end of their big fireworks show.

Saturday, July 9

The entire state of Kansas is officially marked off of our list now. Hoxie ended up being a very satisfactory stop for the Roland crew. Most of the fields averaged around 75 bushels per acre as we got into some outstanding wheat the last 3 or 4 days. One of the final fields we cut yielded 92 bushels per acre—and that was dryland wheat! Needless to say our farmer was ecstatic and we were happy to be keeping busy in such a beautiful field.

We loaded up all the machinery and headed to Imperial, Neb., on Thursday afternoon. Being born and raised in Nebraska, Brandon and I always look forward to moving back into our beloved state. This past week Imperial has been experiencing some horrendous storms, many with heavy rains and destructive hail, unfortunately. The wheat appears to be ripe but the moisture is still too high to begin harvesting and most of the fields are muddy, many of them with standing water in them. We have high hopes of getting started later today or tomorrow, although it ultimately depends on what the weather does. We'll go out and take a sample later this afternoon to get a better idea of where the moisture is ranging.

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