

## Weather not cooperating with Roland crew

It was too muddy in this field for the service truck to even make it to the combine to put fuel in it.



### Wednesday, July 13

It seems to be the general consensus among a number of harvest crews scattered between the Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado borders that the weather does not want to cooperate with us for the time being. Imperial, our current stop, has seen many rounds of rain during the last eight days. Last night the area received over an inch of rain along with heavy winds and horrendous thunder and lightning. The puddles around town and out in the fields are beginning to turn into small lakes. Having personally endured many years of drought at home and on the road, we don't want to curse the rain by any means. However, the rain is certainly slowing us down and beginning to wear on our spirits.

Late yesterday afternoon, we did catch a bit of a break as it finally dried out enough for us to begin harvesting for a while. Our crew is currently split up since we are working for a few different customers in the area. With one combine, Brandon is working with one of our farmer's who is running his own combine. The rest of the crew is working about 20 miles away for a different farmer. We were able to get about two truckloads of wheat cut before the rain let loose. Brandon also had a fairly successful day, cutting out about 140 acres before the rain hit his field.

Today has been very overcast and cooler out so it seems as if we're just going to have to wait it out another day. The forecast is calling for a chance of rain tonight and tomorrow but it looks like sunny

skies for a few days after that. Hopefully, the weather will begin to cooperate with us and all the other crews out there waiting for the wheat to dry down. An unknown author once said, "You must up with the rain if you want to enjoy the rainbow."

### Thursday, July 14

Before we head out to the field today I wanted to share some positive affirmations with everyone. My hope for the day is that our field is completely dry with no mud, the sample comes back at 13 percent moisture and our combines are kicking up wheat dust before noon. As much as I wish my optimistic thinking would make this come true, we all know that's not how this business works. In fact, there is much about harvesting that is out of our power. Nonetheless, I'm persisting with my happy thoughts since that's one thing I can control.

The fields did look much drier yesterday and if the humidity would burn off with some sun rays shining through the clouds, I think we would be in good shape. With any luck we will be back to working our 12-plus-hour days. You know you're a true harvester when you're yearning for those long days where you come in from the field and you're almost too exhausted to take a shower before you "hit the hay." Let's hope today is one of those days for us!

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The puddle in the middle of Brandon's field grew into a "mini lake" overnight.



## Miseners stay busy in Elk City

### Tuesday, July 12

The Misener crew is back in Elk City, Okla., repairing an all-crop head for one of our customers—we're stripping it down to the nuts and bolts, literally. I'm so grateful to have the resources and knowledge to do these tasks. I suppose I can thank my brother Dan for that. He always says there are no such things as stupid questions and he really is an open book. I still have no idea where he has stored all of this knowledge. He literally knows a combine inside and out—any farm equipment really. He can take a serial number (from an old John Deere tractor) and tell you how many were made and what kind of options you could have put on.

He has such a passion for his

job, because to Dan it's not just a job—it's a way of life.

### Friday, July 15

Is that rain?

I was watering our trees and plants in Elk City, Okla., at our home and something very strange happened to me. I started to get wet and my first thought was using the water hose in my hand to defeat the person who dared get out that second hose just to douse me. I quickly turned around and I saw nobody. Then I looked up to see a partially cloudy, windy day with a few heavy clouds—but nothing like an Oklahoma thunderstorm. What I was experiencing was a light shower that stuck around just long enough to wet the ground and move on. However, we did have

lightning that night.

Most of you in the northern part of the country may think this isn't as big a deal as I'm making it out to be, but let me tell you that it is definitely a big deal. That little shower renews our hope that rain will come, and it seems to tide us over for now. We're still praying for rain because by no means is this drought over, but we're very thankful for even a few drops of precipitation.

For the Misener family this year has been interesting. We experienced drought in the southern states where there was no wheat, to central Nebraska and the north where rivers are overflowing and wheat seems to be drowning in places. I think most harvesters are

in this same predicament. We're trying to gather up as much work as we can where there is wheat because we're all going to be back to where we were at the start of harvest—with no wheat—only for the opposite reason.

As I write this update we're still in Elk City and hoping to leave this weekend and make a stop in Andale, Kan., to pick up some of our loads on the way back north to Gregory. A harvester's life is always unpredictable, just like the weather. I suppose you just learn to go with the flow of things and trust in the good Lord. We keep looking ahead and pray that things go smoothly.

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As you can see, this wheat is grass green—but it looks promising!

## Jenna spends time with Zeorian team

### Tuesday, July 12

Last time I posted, I was spending the Fourth of July weekend in Deerfield, Kan., with my family. I was able to spend that Friday and Saturday in the field before we finished cutting the last of the wheat at that stop on Saturday night. On Sunday, we basically just hung out and hid from from 115-degree heat.

On Monday (the Fourth), we were invited to celebrate the holiday in Colby, Kan., with our friends the Rathes, who, as I've mentioned before, are following the harvest as part of the New Holland Harvest Support team.

The Rathes hosted quite a gathering that night at the Colby campground, inviting other New Holland employ-

ees and other harvesters, too. I was surrounded by good food and good people—and it was a good time! It was much different than most other Fourth's, as we're usually in the field, not hanging out and relaxing. Weird.

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First on my list after arriving in Colby: Find Jada at the campground. It was so great to see her, and that little Kaidence is such a cutie!



Here's a group shot from our Fourth of July picnic.

## Hoffman Harvesting moves into Colorado

**Wednesday, July 13**

I am afraid to say something to have the same effect as last time. I will type quietly even though I know it's misting out so I can't jinx us—we cut today!

We didn't get a full day in but progress is progress. Moisture is definitely an issue in Kanorado, Kan. Yield is not. The field we were cutting was ranging from 70 to 90 bushels per acre. Protein is 12 and test weights are 58 to 60.

If you see harvesters on the road or parked in campgrounds, you will often see wide, silver campers. Most of these Spartan trailers were built in the 50s. The reason harvesters love them is that they are built to last, have tons of storage and room for full-sized appliances and a full bath. Not only are they very functional, they are also very well insulated.

If you check out campgrounds you will see they have more and more truck trail-



Here is a our Spartan trailer where the crew lives and I do most of the cooking. We love it and think the blemishes just add character.

ers parked in camping spots. These are what I refer to as the "next generation trailers." They have the reputation of being roomy and well built and also better insulated than any camper on the market today. Harvesters also enjoy the extra space (they typically are longer than any camper on the market) and the ability to customize their own space because they are building their own.

**Friday, July 15**

Yesterday, Hoffman Harvesting packed up a portion of our crew and headed to Limon, Colo. We didn't just say goodbye to Goodland and Kansas, we also said goodbye to four of our crew members. Roly and Andreas will continue to cut seed wheat in Goodland with our farmer, while Callum and Adam will finish up what is left to cut in Kanorado.

If the rain quits and the sun shines, Callum and Adam will be able to quickly finish up what is left of our Kanorado job and join us in Genoa. Roly and Andreas have quite awhile to go before they reunite with us. We all have been missing them as they have been split from us since we got to Goodland.

The wheat is looking good in Genoa—what little we cut of it. Yield was ranging from 35 to 40 bushels per acre while moisture was barely where it needed to be for the elevator's requirement of 13.5 percent. We have yet to dump a load, so we have only just begun here in Limon. We were only able to start cutting at supper time and were rained out not even an hour later.

The only good thing about the rain clouds, which loomed above us the entire time we cut, was the nice background they

provided. As you enter Colorado, the welcome sign says, "Welcome to colorful Colorado." We've seen a lot of colors the Colorado sky offers already and look forward to hopefully cutting later today.

**Sunday, July 17**

For the first time in a long time it feels like we are back into the swing of things. We actually cut without getting interrupted by rain or green wheat yesterday and today.

It turns out Andreas and Roly were getting along better than I thought. This morning they were able to move to Kanorado to help Adam and Callum finish up. Then later today they all moved the rest of our equipment to Colorado. We are happy to all be back in the field together.

**Monday, July 18**

Today, Hoffman Harvesting had another day that ran quite smoothly. Not only have we enjoyed being back in the field together, the wheat is also looking good. Protein is 12 to 14 while the yield is in the 30s. Test weights are anywhere from 58 to 67.

For the first time this summer, South Dakota has been withstanding weather that has gotten up to the triple digits. The hot weather has done a great job of turning the wheat. We received word that our next job in Gettysburg, S.D., will be ready around the 22nd. While the area recently received golf ball-sized hail, our farmer was lucky to avoid hail in most of his fields.

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Libby, the Froeses' family dog, hangs out in the living room of their trailer.



Custom harvesters Larry and Beverly Froese travel in this custom truck trailer, which has two levels.



Colorful Colorado makes the view of our field look like art.

## Scott's crew harvests a bin bustin' crop in Goodland

**Tuesday, July 12**

Weather is rarely predictable. However, many people in north-west Kansas could have probably told you it was going to rain this last week. The sky has been filled with clouds and a storm has been rolling through this area every evening for the last 10 days. We managed to finish our job in Goodland on Friday before another storm arrived. That seems to be a common theme for us this year, as we've finished three stops just prior to major storms. The wheat made 60 to 85 bushels per acre and tested 60 to 64 pounds per bushel. These yields put a smile on the face of all involved with getting the crop out of the field, and into the bin.

It's frustrating that the weather has so much control over our business and decision making, but when wheat is dry enough to be harvested we can't let anything stop us from getting the crop out—including wet ground conditions. We invest thousands of dollars in our combines to equip them so we can run in seemingly impossible conditions and each day we have to wait brings another chance of a storm that can damage or destroy a crop.

Being farmers ourselves, we understand the importance of getting the crop out quickly. Even a light rain will cause a decrease in the crop's test weight and hurt the farmer's bottom line. Sometimes there just isn't anything you can do about losing a crop, but at the end of the day—we'll always know we did the best we could and if we couldn't get the crop out, then no one could have.

We'll begin moving some of our equipment up to South Dakota later this week and begin polishing truck wheels and waxing the paint off the trucks to stay busy until we find some dry wheat to cut.

**Thursday, July 14**

Although American Quality bought manufactured trailers for years, we eventually had to produce our own unit to accommodate our needs and gain the quality and durability not seen in the trailer industry these days. We also found that our previous trailers were so large that it was a stressful job for a one-ton pickup to tow them across the country. A poor used semi-truck market and increasing pickup prices helped us make a decision to build our own trailer. During the harvest run of 2008, we developed a sketch on a nap-

kin and then purchased the steel needed to build the 12,000-pound frame that winter. In 2009, we refined our napkin blueprint and invested in the wood, siding, and interior components to build the box of the trailer.

We built it in our spare time. We were building combine trailers, header trailers, spraying crops, farming, cutting wheat, putting equipment together, and running trucks over the road throughout the process. Our trailer is 10 feet wide and spans nearly 60 feet long. It has four slide-outs on hydraulic cylinders and they open the living room up to 18 feet on the inside providing 960 square feet of livable space. The floor is 1 1/4 inch thick plywood while the slide-outs are construct-

ed of square tubing with 3/4-inch plywood floors. Two-by-fours form the wall studs and 52 two-by-eight rafters tie it all together in the ceiling. The enormous size and feat of producing such a ship had people all over the Midwest talking about the project and stopping by the shop to check out the progress during its production. Now complete, the unit turns heads in every town we pass through. It would cost well over \$150,000 to have a manufacturer build this unit, but good luck finding someone to attempt such a project for that price. Our trailer makes living on the road eight months of the year just a little easier.

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To feed a small army, we must keep a lot of food on hand. We reinforced the slide-out to withstand the weight of the refrigerator and freezer.



A view of the kitchen area.



The ice maker might just be the best feature of our trailer.



Randy, Kevin, Justin, Garrett, Dalton, Jesse, and Travis pose for a quick picture while sporting their new AAWH Crew shirts.

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