

Finally finished in Floydada, Texas



Sage Sammons

Friday, June 25

After battling weather and other issues, we finally finished cutting in Floydada, Texas. A total of 16 days was spent in central Texas, but we were able to get a lot done. The last day (yesterday) was by far the toughest because of all the moving we had to do. We only had 160 acres left to cut, but it took us most of the day because we had to move the combines a total of 30 miles. But we got it done and loaded the combines last night before we moved today.

As for today, we moved 180 miles to Dumas, Texas, and made pretty good time. I once again drove the Peterbilt, but I had a passenger. Sierra is finally feeling better and decided to take a ride in her favorite vehicle, even if she didn't get to drive this time. (She has a goal

of one day owning her own "pretty pink Peterbilt.") She was excited but got a little nervous when we reached a two-mile, downhill, 10-percent grade. That was my first time hauling a load down a hill like that, so I had to use everything I learned in truck driving school and some tips Dad taught me. All in all, everyone made it down the hill and up the other side safely.

Other than that coulee the trip was pretty uneventful,

which is good. No major breakdowns, the trucks didn't overheat, and other than a few people getting misdirected and having to turn around, everyone stayed together.

We got to our campsite a little bit outside of town but are not likely to cut tomorrow. The wheat is ready and all, but they received rain yesterday. We are looking at a possible rain day tomorrow, but hopefully we can get something cut. If everything can be cut, we will only be here a few days. This is by far our smallest job on the run because most of the farmers in the area have their own combines, so will be looking for work soon. Our next stop is Colorado and is at least two weeks away. We will have to go on the hunt for some acres, but that is just another challenge that custom harvesters face every year.

Sage Sammons can be reached at sage@allaboardharvest.com.

Photo by Sage Sammons.

Wrapping up in Pratt, Kan.; heading to Scott City



Jada Bulgin



Above: Hoffman Harvesting combining in Scott City. Photos by Jada Bulgin.

Saturday, June 26

Hoffman Harvesting wrapped up in Pratt, Kan., Tuesday night. On Wednesday, the crew washed and loaded equipment while Kaidence, Malin and I went to get the new washer and dryer for our crew trailer in Wichita. Our old one broke down when we were in Kiowa. It was repaired but the next time someone used the washer, the motor blew. Everyone was stuck doing laundry at the laundromat until the new one came in.

The harvest in Pratt went a lot quicker than anticipated and our job in Colby, Kan., isn't going to be ready until around the 4th of July, so we were stuck looking for work. To our excitement, we found work in Scott City and had plans to move on Thursday. That morning we woke up to find that Hans and Gabriel were sick with the flu! It sounds like the one some of us had earlier this summer. I cannot believe how many people have been sick on our crew this year.

Since we needed to be in Scott City by noon to keep the job, everyone except the sick guys, Callum and me headed out. I was stuck trying to play nurse. I got Hans and Gabriel a room at the Days Inn and stocked it up with all the things they needed to get better—medicine, water, sports drinks, chicken noodle soup and bananas. Meanwhile, Callum was back at the campground getting the campers loaded. A truck pulling trailers and a truck loaded with a combine were left behind for the sick guys

to drive when they got better. We felt bad leaving them but knew they were in the best place they could be—also away from the rest of the group so they didn't get sick. Also, Callum and I had to leave so everyone else had a place to sleep for the night. We left Pratt at around noon and got to Scott City in time to unload the campers, get supper and head out to the field.

Yesterday, Hans and Gabriel felt a little better and headed up to Scott City. Gabriel is feeling better today, but Hans is still on the mend. We have been a little short-handed with crops averaging around 70 to 80 bushels per acre, Callum installing the new washer and dryer yesterday and the other two being sick. What can you do but make it work, right? Despite being too quick, the Pratt, Kan., area farmers cannot be disappointed with the wonderful crop they had this year.

Monday, June 28

Hoffman Harvesting had some time between jobs, so we moved from Pratt, Kan. to Scott City, Kan., where we picked up a harvest job. We wrapped up two days ago, but Internet problems kept me from being able to post. Technology is a wonderful thing isn't it? I am still working on the problem, but thanks to borrowed Internet I am able to post.

(Continued on Page 9-B)



Above: Break downs happen. Johan and Callum work on replacing our new washer and dryer in the crew trailer. The motor burnt out in the old one. Below: Three of our combines opening up a field in Scott City.



Sponsored by:

HIGH PLAINS/MIDWEST AG
JOURNAL™



Wrapping up in Pratt, Kan.; heading to Scott City continued . . .

Don't get too close or you'll get chaffed. The spreader spreads straw.



Photo by Jada Bulgin.

(Continued from Page 8-B)

The farmers in Scott City have grins from ear to ear, as the wheat is ranging from 70 to 80 bushels per acre. The test weights ranged from 60 to 63. Needless to say, the crop was beautiful.

There are several harvesters in town. In fact, the campground is packed! I have been visiting with Sugden Harvesting, Schemper Harvesting, Blunk Harvesting, Thurman Harvesting and Candy, Kaydence and Lily of Haldeen Harvesting.

When we started cutting south of town other harvesters (north of town) were unable to cut because of wet wheat. They are still diligently working to get their wheat cut while we are working on finding more work. Anyone need a harvester? In the meantime, we helped a harvest friend out with trucks, as the high yield in the field and long lines at the elevator were putting them behind. Our next job is in Colby, Kan., but the wheat is not ready to be cut. So it looks like we might get a little bit of a break here. We hope we'll find another job soon.

Jada can be reached at jada@allaboardharvest.com.

Finishing up in Hooker



Jenna Zeorian



Photos by Jenna Zeorian.



Mom helping Dad load the combine after finishing harvest in Hooker, Okla.

Tuesday, June 22

We had another big day of cutting around Hooker. We started the day by cleaning up the fields that were started last week. Since the ground has dried since then, we can go back and cut the wheat that was left because of the mud. Later in the day we moved to new fields, which are averaging as well as the fields yesterday—around 55 bushels per acre and 60 to 61 pounds.

Well, I made a few new friends today.

First was the air conditioner repairman. This is only the third summer we've had this trailer house, and unfortunately, the air conditioner has never worked correctly. We are lucky enough to have two airs, one on each end of the trailer, but one is always broken (even after multiple repairs). And with temperatures in at least the high 90s every day, plus heat from cooking, the poor air that does work has a hard time keeping up. So we gladly welcomed the repairman today, who got both airs working. For now.

This afternoon, we had a knock on our door from a traveling couple who is staying overnight at our campground. Since we are the only "campers" here, they came to us to ask who owns the park, rates, etc. I stepped outside to visit with them and asked where they were from (Arizona), where they are headed (Tulsa) and so on. I then mentioned that my family and I are here in Hooker custom harvesting wheat. The wife's face immediately lit up and she said, "You're the girl who was in Country Woman!" (A writer

from Country Woman contacted me last fall after seeing the All Aboard blog and wrote a story about our family in the June/July issue.) I laughed and said I am. It was a very strange feeling to have someone recognize me, but we all got a pretty big kick out of it and even took a picture together.

Later this afternoon, we were visited by another traveling couple—but this visit was planned. Dave and Rose are from New York state and have been following the All Aboard blog since last summer. Last summer, they spent some time traveling the country and had hoped to meet up with us to see harvest in action, but it never worked out. This summer, though, they were on the road again and able to make it happen. They had supper with us in the field, took a ride in the combine, rode to the elevator in the semi and were nearly eaten alive by mosquitoes. Minus the mosquitoes, it was a great evening and we are so happy they visited!

On another note, the wheat we are cutting now is, in Dad's words, "marvelous." The fields are beautiful, it's making about 55 bushels per acre, and the weight is around 61.5 pounds. Since we're working with another harvester who's running two combines and a cart, we're really covering some ground, too. Dad said he hauled more wheat today than he can ever remember. And that's pretty crazy because he's been doing this for quite some time.

Just for fun, I made Taylor and Callie count the mosquito bites on my arms and legs when we got home from the field. The

total was 57. I know, I know—that's what I get for wearing shorts.

Friday, June 25

Our second stop for the summer is complete; we are done cutting in Hooker. This past week, we were blessed with good cutting weather and good wheat, and our time here seemed to fly by. I can't stress enough how beautiful the crop was—I think anyone, even if not connected to agriculture, could have appreciated the golden fields.

My family is thankful for working with such good people while we were here, too. This was the first time we worked for/with the Adams (Circle A Harvesting) and things couldn't have gone better. And they share our family's same goofy sense of humor, which is nice! It's good not to take yourself too seriously.

Today, we're taking care of a few odds and ends (like, Dad is currently putting new tires on the trailer house, after we almost lost one on the last move) and getting ready to head north. Tomorrow, we'll make the short trip (100 miles) to our next stop in Deerfield, Kan.

On a very serious note, my and my family's thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of the victims of the elevator collapse in Russell, Kan. The tragedy has really been weighing heavy on my mind, considering the two young men were close to my age, just doing their summer job. Too often we take life for granted and forget how everything can change in a single moment. Don't forget to tell the people you love that

you love them—every day. God bless.

Sunday, June 27

This morning when I first woke up, I had absolutely no idea where I was. I really and truly had to run through a list in my head. Texas? No. Oklahoma? No. On the road? No. Finally I remembered—I'm in Kansas now.

On Saturday morning, Dad and I got on the road at about 7 a.m., and made the first trip from Hooker to Deerfield, Kan. It's about a 100-mile trip, so it only took us a couple of hours. In Deerfield, we unloaded the combine, refueled, drove to the campground to make sure we had a place for our trailer, then turned around and headed back to Hooker.

In Hooker, we got the second load of stuff ready to go, then actually ended up waiting around for a while since the air conditioner in the Peterbilt was being worked on. We hit the road early evening and arrived in Deerfield at dusk...which also happened to be about the exact same time that a small storm rolled in. This meant hooking up the trailer house in the wind and rain before it got too dark—which meant everyone was really thrilled (not).

Because of the rain last night, we didn't start cutting until around lunchtime today. The crop here is amazing this year—the field we cut today was 65 bushels per acre, 12-percent moisture and had a 62-pound test weight.

Jenna Zeorian can be reached at jenna@allaboardharvest.com.

CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS



Follow us on the All Aboard Harvest tour
Blog: www.allaboardharvest.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/allaboardharvest
Twitter: www.twitter.com/allaboardtour
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/allaboardtour
High Plains Journal: www.hpj.com