



## Least favorite stop

**Friday, August 6**

When asked what my favorite stop is, I wouldn't be able to choose because they all make harvest complete; however, when asked what my least favorite stop is it would have to be home. Not because I am not excited to reunite with family and friends or because I finally get to step into my house and have space or a real shower and toilet. (The list of benefits could go on, so I will stop at this point.) It is because the harvest life as you have known it collides with your at home life and things become hectic.

What have we been doing? Although too much to list, I can list some highlights and basics: Leon, Kaidence and I took a "repair" trip to north-central Iowa to get our dish I use for Internet fixed and stopped along the way in Sioux Falls, S.D., for camper parts; we celebrated Kaidence's first birthday once again to Leon's dismay so the entire family could be there; my husband and family surprised me with a party for the big 30 (yes, I joined the 3-0 club July 29); and I reorganized and repacked our camper because there are things you don't need that when you packed you thought you'd need but are just taking up space in your camper, and things you really do need for the next phase of harvest, such as warmer clothes. And harvest keeps going on around us.

We split up and were cutting in Hoven, Onaka and Gettysburg, S.D. Today the entire crew (minus two working on the farm) reunited in Gettysburg to harvest spring wheat. We will wrap



Wheat feeds into the auger.

up shortly and move back to our home base to begin spring wheat harvest in the Hoven, Bowdle and Eureka, S.D., areas. With the weather and green wheat we have encountered in South Dakota, we are getting nervous because we are getting behind. We have received word that our North Dakota jobs are getting ready, so hopefully the weather will be on our side so we can get caught up.

The spring wheat is looking good, as it averages around 60 bushels per acre. The elevators are not taking wheat over 13.5 percent moisture, so we have been dumping in bins. Farmers are also utilizing their bins because there are predictions that the wheat prices will go up as the year progresses.

**Saturday, August 7**

Every year in Sioux Falls, S.D., there is an event called the "Big Boys Toy Show." Yesterday, we kind of had a show of our own. For the first time this year I was able to take pictures of all the equipment lined up in the field thanks to our farmer, Mike Ahlmeier, and his sons Curt and Kevin, being photo nuts. Included in the photo is an extra truck, combine, and grain cart, which happen to be Ahlmeier's equipment. We have been cutting together, and I'd have to say five combines with two grain carts and a handful of trucks really get the job done quickly. Seeing all that equipment lined up is a pretty spectacular sight.

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## Cutting going well in Jordan, Mont.

Jenna Zeorian



**Thursday, August 5**

It's been a while since I've checked in, but harvest is going really well for us in Montana. Mom and Dad returned from Colorado with the combine and the rest of the equipment on Sunday and were able to get in the field that afternoon.

Since then, we've been able to cut every day and should be finished with our first job by the end of today. The wheat so far has been outstanding. As in, it's one of the best crops, if not the best, that we've ever cut here in Jordan. In an area where the wheat averages around 15 to 20 bushels per acre, we are seeing an average of 55 to 60 bushels per acre with spots making up to 100. The protein is 12 to 13 percent and the test weight has ranged from 59 pounds all the way up to almost 64 pounds. It's so great to see such a bumper crop here.

I've been enjoying the time here at our "second home" and catching up with old friends. My sisters and I even spent some time at the lake with friends and were invited to a big birthday party and family get-together by one of our adoptive families.

What's great about Jordan is that it's the kind of town and the kind of people where, even though it's been an entire

**Outstanding crop in Montana.**



year since we've been here, now that we're back, we're treated like we never left.

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## High moisture and sawfly

**Friday, August 6**

Slowly but surely we are cutting away here in Fort Benton, Mont., but we have run into a few issues—one that we have seen the entire summer and a new issue involving insects.

**All the machines cutting together.**



(Photo by Stephanie Skinner.)

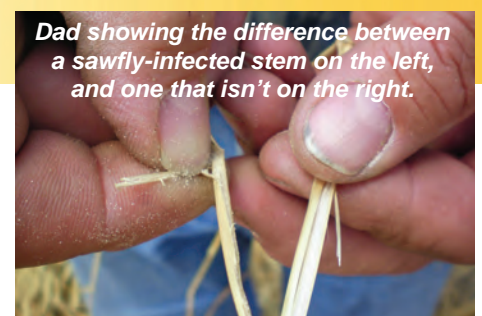
The first issue is higher moisture. We have been cutting every day; it's just a matter of how long we can cut and when we can start. It doesn't help that the days have been overcast and cool either. The past week has felt more like treading water than anything else, but we are getting some work done even if it isn't at the pace we were at earlier in the summer. It finally warmed up today and a ton of wheat dried out quickly.

The next issue we are having is one I kind of already talked about, sawfly. It's a problem that is very prevalent in north central Montana and can truly destroy a good crop. It is when a wasp-like insect lays a larva in the stem of the wheat during the growing stage. As the wheat matures, so does the larva, and by the time the wheat has fully matured the

stem is very brittle and even a small wind can knock it over. With the high winds in northern Montana, it can literally lay an entire field flat on the ground. When that happens, it is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to get the entire crop off the ground. The only way to effectively control sawfly is to swath the crop a week to 10 days before harvesting. There are some solid stem varieties of wheat that can help, but the little bugs still manage to infiltrate the stems. After it has been swathed, the harvesters then come in with pick-up headers and pick up the swath.

If it is a light crop, it is easy to pick up the swath. The wheat dries quickly and moisture isn't a problem. Obviously, the heavier the crop and more material, the longer it will take to dry out. We are cutting some heavy wheat, as it is averaging

**Dad showing the difference between a sawfly-infected stem on the left, and one that isn't on the right.**



55 to 60 bushels per acre. On top of everything else, we are hauling to the farmer's bins that are on the property, so it needs to be drier than what the elevator would take it at.

By the weekend we should be back to straight cutting, and we should finish this job up.

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