

Zeorians delayed by rain

Wednesday, July 27

After spending nearly an entire month in Deerfield, Kan., Zeorian Harvesting has finally relocated. Don't get me wrong—we're quite fond of Deerfield—but in an occupation that normally requires moving every one to two weeks, being somewhere for one month is too long.

The way things have played out the past month go a little something like this: We finished cutting in Deerfield over the Fourth of July weekend. Because the wheat wasn't ready at our next stop in Limon, Colo., and there was no wheat left to be cut between the two locations, we took about a week to clean equipment, do minor maintenance work, etc.

After checking in with our farmers in Limon the following week, we learned that the wheat was still a week to 10 days away from being ripe. So, taking advantage of some down time, the crew (aka my parents and sisters) decided to take a little drive to the mountains and camp for a couple of days.

That brings us to last week, which is when we finally made the move from Deerfield to Limon. We arrived July 19 and went to work the next day. Unfortunately, rain had other plans for us and shut us down early. So we went to work the next day—and rain shut us down early. So we went to work the day after that—and rain shut us down early. You're probably starting to pick up on the pattern by now.

It's been a tough week in terms of the number of acres we've been able to cut. Between rain and high-moisture wheat, we've only been averaging around 100 acres a day, which is not a lot.

We will count our blessings though. Earlier this year, the Limon area was so dry we weren't sure that there was going to be anything to cut here at all. Thankfully, the land was shown some mercy and the rains came in time to save the crop.

(Thanks to my mom, Tracy, and sister, Taylor, for providing the photo.)

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Storm clouds loom overhead south of Limon.

Roland harvesters get back on track

Wednesday, July 27

By working some very long days, we were finally able to finish up in Chadron this past weekend. The wheat ended up yielding between 30 to 50 bushels per acre, with test weights around 57 to 61 pounds per bushel, and protein between 9 to 10 percent. Brandon, James, and I moved back home to Hemingford to join Dad and the rest of our family helping him. While we were gone, Dad and Mom were able to get a good start on much of our wheat, as well as some of our customer's wheat. Who would have guessed that one TR 98 combine would help us out so much?

Now that our crew is reunited and we can run the two CR 9070s and the TR 98 together we have been knocking out fields quickly. For the most part things have been going smoothly, but like always, harvest has a way of presenting challenges. There have been a few minor complications with the TR 98, but that's to be expected with the many hours it has on it. Yesterday the header drive chain broke on it and later in the day Dad and James changed out the fuel filter—it's been working much better ever since. In addition, now that we're running three combines, our wheat production is up a considerable amount and the trucks have had a hard time keeping up with us. We took out one of our older semis and grain trailers from "retirement" and have been using this rig when our other two semis get behind.

In addition, the Farmer's Coop Elevator in Hemingford receives a tremendous amount of wheat from the area. Box Butte County produces primarily wheat and majority

of it is hauled into the grain elevator in Hemingford. With an excessive amount of wheat being brought into the elevator it is certainly challenging to quickly and efficiently unload trucks in a timely fashion, especially during the "heat of harvest" when numerous loaded trucks are being sent to town constantly.

The nice thing about being home is all the wonderful help we receive from the rest of our family. My sister, Ashley, came home for the weekend to help run combine and my Uncle Carl and Aunt Lynda have been around much of the past week to help move vehicles, drive truck, run combine, pick up parts, get fuel or anything else that we need to keep us up and running. Also, my grandparents have been bringing out meals to us lately since we are all so busy keeping things going in the field. During home harvest it really does take the entire family to keep our business operating!

Monday, August 1

Harvest at home continues to be busy as we have been working very long hours to knock out acre after acre of wheat. Much of the wheat is already cut out in the Hemingford area but a small amount still remains. It is certainly the tail end of harvest but we continue to push to get us caught up. For the time being all three of our combines are split as we try to finish up all of our different jobs. It is stressful to have everyone scattered throughout the area, but we hope to have two of the combines reunite today so we can get back on track.

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(above) Home harvest at its finest!



Uncle Carl looks in the grain trailer as the combines harvest nearby.

(below) Brandon combines across the highway as we try to beat the rain.



Dad unloads on the grain cart as a storm looms overhead.



The word in town is that harvest is about 50 percent done in Box Butte County (this includes the town of Hemingford, city of Alliance and many acres of farmland).

Hoffman Harvesting is here, there and everywhere



Leon dumps on Johan, who mans the grain cart.



The combines work together to keep the grain cart from having to run around the field.

Monday, July 25

The rain couldn't have come on a better day because today is a special day—Oak turned 21! I had plans to cook a nice burger meal for Oak per his parents' request but told him I will make him a belated birthday supper. At least he can enjoy his birthday dessert! I made him a cream puff as we already had birthday cupcakes once this week for Andreas' birthday. All the guys reunited in Gettysburg to have a birthday bash for both Oak and Andreas.

Wednesday, July 27

Since we received rain, the guys were able to join us in Mobridge for some fun at the river. The guys enjoyed some water sports. They tubed and jet skied. Then we finally had a birthday supper for Oak, which of course included a big burger and all the fixings. The meal was made especially for us by Mom. Then we chit chatted by the pit and roasted marshmallows. It was a fun night.

We enjoyed the belated birthday bash for Andreas and Oak. Now that we have sufficiently celebrated their

birthdays, hopefully later today we'll be able to get back in the field. For the time being, everyone is doing some needed maintenance on our equipment and chores around the farm. Rain showers are forecasted again so we are once again wondering what the weather's going to do.

Sunday, July 31

For the past week, Hoffman Harvesting has been here, there, and everywhere. Working near home has both its perks and its quirks. The past week some of our guys have been working on the farm while others have either been cutting in Hoven or Gettysburg, S.D.

Today, we all moved back to Gettysburg. However, we are still split up. Two of our combines are cutting in one field while the other two are cutting with our farmer's combine. The wheat is looking good as it's ranging from 30 to 60 bushels per acre, but some farmers are disappointed. They thought the plentiful rains they received this spring and summer would bring amazingly high yields with them. What

they have brought instead is disease. Scab can be found in a lot of the winter wheat being cut in the Gettysburg area. This hasn't affected the protein, which is unbelievably high at 14.5 to 16. Test weights are around 48 to the upper 50s.

A trip to celebrate my birthday on the July 29 in Mobridge and my nephew Bryce's birthday on July 30 in Bowdle and Aberdeen proved that the spring wheat in the area is just not ready yet. The fall crops are looking good, though, as is the spring wheat.

Flood problems are still apparent. Part of Highway 12 east of Roscoe is closed due to flooding. More water is setting than is typically normal for the areas I traveled. Our trip from Midland to Gettysburg proved the same. In fact, several businesses are sand-bagged and many houses are under water. The clouds made the day all the more interesting. This is bittersweet because with pretty clouds come forecasts of rain. Will it rain tonight? Time will tell.

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Miseners cutting in South Dakota

Tuesday, July 26

It seems like just yesterday we left Elk City, Okla., ready to hit the road. When August rolls around it means the heat is nearing its end and the wheat harvest is wrapping up. There is still so much to do and get done, but moving north means the end of the line and summer for us.

When picking up our last load to head north we couldn't help but notice the fall crops in south central Kansas. Temperatures all over the country seem to be hitting record highs and you can only imagine what that can do to fall crops like corn and soybeans. The fall crops are really hurting.

Wednesday, July 27

Our last loads are in Gregory, S.D. Our move north is now complete with two combines, the tractor and grain cart, two semis and our travel trailers with a cargo trailer. We

didn't bring all of our combines north because the wheat acreage is down, so instead of the normal five we will only be running two.

This year has really been a yo-yo for many in agribusiness. You can always make plans, but in the back of your mind you know the plan is going to be changed 10 or more times before it's said and done. I guess you just learn to adapt and go with the flow.

The scenery is basically the same this trip to South Dakota as it was the first time with rivers overflowing and fall crops looking pretty good.

Thursday, July 28

We are cutting wheat in Gregory, S.D., after the long wait. It's been up and down as far as the consistency because it is still very close to being too wet. So far, everything we've tested is around 12 to 16 percent moisture,

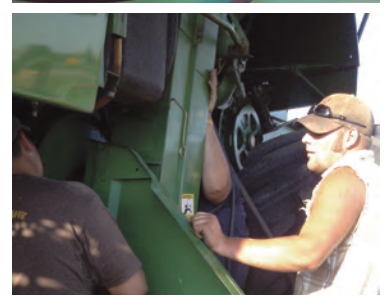
60-pound test weights, and 50 to 60 bushels per acre. I'd say it's looking pretty darn good.

We did have some difficulties.

The wheat is still a little green and it makes it a little tough going through the combine. When the sun sets and the wind stops blowing we have to shut down because of the dew point here. It has been really humid and relatively cool for this time of year. We hit 88 degrees and the humidity was around 50 percent. We didn't get much combining done because we ran into higher moisture wheat, and to be real honest it's not great cutting weather. We did see some combines running on dry wheat, and hope they got some done.

Hopefully we'll be cutting some more wheat by the time you read this. Until then, be safe and God bless!

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This pulley (top photo) went out and ripped the belt off with it. It took about an hour for Joel, Dan, and Thad to repair the broken pulley and belt and we were at it again.

Hot wind does the trick for American Quality Harvesting

Tuesday, July 26

Our crew finished harvesting near Goodland, Kan., on July 8. We then spent several days cleaning and loading the combines as well as equipping them with axle extensions and dual spacers for muddy conditions. The guys took a couple of days off while management ran errands to pick up parts and equipment, and meet with clients to secure fall acres to harvest (provided it rains in some areas).

The crew moved the first load of equipment up to Pierre, S.D., on July 20. After completing the 450-mile trip to Pierre with oversize loads and grain trailers, Kevin taxied the crew back to Goodland that same night. Everyone jumped up and at 'em early Thursday morning to make the second trip to Pierre and rolled in late that afternoon after fixing a blowout on the side of the highway. After unloading the equipment and getting the combines ready to go to the field, the crew set up the trailer houses and called it quits after traveling 1,400 miles in under 32 hours with a convoy of equipment.

The crew managed to get into the field on Friday just after

lunchtime. Scattered showers across the area the previous evening slowed most everyone down in the area early in the day, but we received just a sprinkle. The first obstacle we had to tackle was diverting the tractor-trailer rigs 20 miles to come into the field from the south side because the roads from the north were so badly washed out. Typically we harvest both winter wheat and spring wheat in the Dakotas, but due to the flooding this past spring, our farmers did not sow any spring wheat. Although these same fields had been green not long ago, the long, hot, windy days recently ripened the crop fast. Initial yields for the winter wheat were ranging from 35 to 55 bushels per acre while the moisture was running around 13 percent. The test weights were 58 to 64 pounds, and the protein was running about 11 to 14 percent.

Just as we had anticipated, the ground is soft in the low laying areas where the drainage is poor. The wheat in these areas was making 35 to 40 bushels per acre while the hills and higher elevated fields where the water ran off were making over 50. Once we finish harvesting all of our stops south and

west of Pierre we will move East of Pierre to finish our remaining wheat stop in South Dakota over the next 10 days.

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Encountering washed-out roads has become an almost daily occurrence for us after the floods in this area this past spring. These washouts, combined with narrow roads, make it tougher to move machinery between fields and haul the wheat from the field to the elevators.

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