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Harvested Wheat is Looking Good

The winter wheat harvested by Kansas farmers has been above average in quality and quantity, easing early fears sparked by low protein in winter wheat cut in Texas and Oklahoma.

Wheat must be at least 12 percent protein to be good for bread, said Justin Gilpin, CEO for the industry trade group Kansas Wheat. That's also the preferred amount for wheat sold to customers such as Nigeria, Mexico and Japan.

Kansas wheat has been averaging about 12 percent protein, Gilpin said.

In southern states like Texas and Oklahoma — where the nation's winter wheat harvest begins — protein levels had been averaging about 11 percent, with a lot of 10 percent protein wheat, he said.

"The market is encouraged that Kansas came in with better than last year's protein," Gilpin said. "I know the market was on edge because the Texas and Oklahoma crop early on looked to be coming in at a low protein."

Meanwhile, the hot, dry and windy weather that returned last week sped up the wheat harvest. By Sunday, south-central Kansas was 88 percent complete and the state as a whole was 55 percent, according to the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service.

With a favorable weather forecast for Kansas for the next four to five days, farmers should make a lot of progress winding the harvest down this week, Gilpin said.

The wheat left in the field was mostly in good or better shape, KASS reported, and 84 percent had reached maturity.

The yield, or amount harvested per acre, and quality of wheat cut so far promises an above average crop across most of the state, Gilpin said.

Western Kansas had favorable growing conditions and moisture in fall and early spring that put the crop in pretty good shape. South-central Kansas had some dryness in early spring that stressed crops in that area.

North-central Kansas had some good-looking crops — until damaging hail storms hit just before harvest earlier this month. Crops in Republic, Jewell and Cloud counties were severely hurt, Gilpin said.

Test weights in Kansas wheat have been coming in at or better than 60 pounds per bushel, the benchmark for the top quality wheat that makes for good flour, he said.

Among other major Kansas crops:

* Corn condition declined slightly this past week. It was rated as 11 percent excellent, 60 percent good, 23 percent fair, 5 percent poor and 1 percent very poor.

* Grain sorghum condition was rated as 5 percent excellent, 69 percent good, 24 percent fair and 2 percent poor.

* Soybeans were rated as 9 percent excellent, 60 percent good, 26 percent fair, 4 percent poor and 1 percent very poor.

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