



By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Wheat harvest in Perkins County is behind schedule due to rain and some farmers won't have a crop at all due to hail.

A week or so ago, producers thought maybe harvest would begin by the 10th. Heavy rains, hail, wind on July 8th detoured that thinking.

It has been an unusual spring all the way around, and the latest reports from the USDA concur that strange weather patterns have had an effect on this year's wheat crop.

According to the USDA's report the last week in June, conditions remained variable due to rains and below normal temperatures which slowed crop development across the state.

Wheat conditions during that time period rated 1 percent very poor, 14 percent poor, 29 percent fair, 46 percent good and 10 percent excellent. This is below last year's 71 percent good to excellent.

Areas in the Panhandle were predicted to have begun harvest around July 10th.

Disease, while a relatively minor issue, has remained across portions of the state. Stripe rust, tan spot and aphids were reported but are proving to be treatable.

Hail damage has ranged from minimal to complete destruction in select fields, especially in areas of Chase County. Regions in Lincoln County and Perkins County have also been hurt

According to a June 9, 2011 USDA news release, Nebraska's 2011 winter wheat crop is forecast at 59.4 million bushels, up 5 percent from the May 1 forecast but down 7 percent from last year's crop.

Average yield is predicted at 44 bushels per acre, up two bushels from last month, one bushel per acre from last year and 3.4 bushels above the 10-year average.

Acreage to be harvested for grain is estimated at 1.35 million acres, down 140,000 acres or 9 percent from last year. This estimate would be 90 percent of the planted acres, compared with 93 percent last year and 94 percent for the 10-year average.