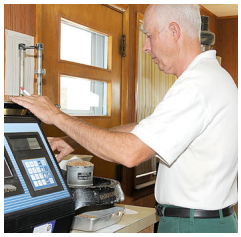
By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

Wheat harvest in Perkins County is underway—but way before the typical date when the event takes place across southwest Nebraska.

One year ago, it was quite the opposite. Harvest in 2011 was way behind schedule due to monstrous rains the first week in July—fields were too soggy. The first loads weren't brought into area elevators until July 11.

This year, farmers are begging for rain.



Carolyn McArtor was behind the wheel of a farm truck Friday, June 15, bringing in the first load cut the previous afternoon. The wheat brought in to Frenchman Valley Co-op was from ground belonging to Dorothy Keuten and Evelyn Gengenbach northwest of Grant which is farmed by Jerry McArtor.

It had a test weight of 57.8, moisture of 11.8, and according to grain clerk Larry Kuskie, very good protein of 13.10.

McArtor is hoping for a yield of 40-plus bushels.

"Considering the weather we've had, I feel really good about it," said McArtor. He said he has farmed the ground for many years for sisters-in-law Keuten and Gengenbach and explained how brother and sister Keuten married brother and sister Gengenbach.

Kuskie said it was too early to determine the trend for what yields in the county will be, but said on this year's crop, if the wheat turns out as good as it looked initially, most people would be pretty well satisfied.

An extremely dry spring has both farmers and crops stressed.

The delay in last year's harvest wasn't because the wheat wasn't ripe—a seven-inch rain the evening of July 8 kept combines out of the field. Then more rains came once harvest did get

underway.
Such is not the case this year. The region needs moisture badly.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture lowered crop condition ratings statewide because of the lack of moisture.