

Southwest Family Farms

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Drought and Heat Lingers

The 2012 crop year started out looking extremely optimistic as we received 4" of rain before April 1. This rain provided much needed moisture for the corn crop being planted. Many thought it was the end of the current drought. Little did we know, that would be the last significant rainfall until August. The hot, dry weather pattern continued to dominate growing conditions throughout the summer, including two weeks of record breaking heat in June. We began harvesting our irrigated wheat on May 30 this year, which is the earliest any of us remember doing so. We typically begin harvesting dryland wheat around June 14 and irrigated wheat around June 21. The warm, dry winter and early spring pushed the wheat crop 2-3 weeks ahead of schedule. Things began to change a little in late August when we received 3-4" overnight. This moisture was too late for the summer crops, but it allowed us to drill our wheat into adequate moisture in October. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, parts of SW Kansas have seen over 100 consecutive weeks of drought and we currently fall in the category of Extreme Exceptional Drought.

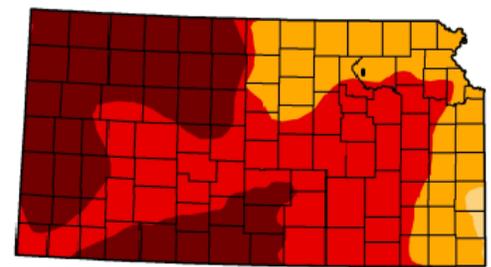
(www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu/)

This fall PBS aired Ken Burns' documentary on the Dust Bowl. The two part, four hour, documentary is an account of testimonials of the "Dirty Thirties." Many of the stories told came from farmers in SW Kansas and the surrounding area. The "Great Plow-Up" is often referred to as the nation's worst man-made, self-inflicted, environmental catastrophe. Favorable wheat prices in the 20s, a war in Europe, and unusual wet years led many sod busters and immigrant farmers to cultivate thousands of acres of virgin prairie soils in the now proclaimed nation's breadbasket. However, the 1930s brought severe drought where bare soils dried and blew away, wheat prices plummeted, and local populations dwindled due to poverty, sickness, and other hardships. During the decade long drought, roughly a quarter of a million people fled away from the Plains. In 1935 alone, approximately 850 million tons of top soil blew away in clouds of dust hundreds of feet high. Burns' documentary offers personal accounts to detail how truly tough conditions were and unfolds history as it was lived by survivors of the 30s.

The discovery of the Ogallala Aquifer, conservation programs, and the implementation of no-till have all played a role in preventing another Dust Bowl. While conditions the past 3-5 years are eerily reminiscent of those during the 30s, we are currently favored with strong commodity prices and crop insurance programs that are vital to the survivorship of many farm families.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Kansas
December 4, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Best Young Farmer Award!



We are proud to announce that Clint was a recipient of the “America’s Best Young Farmer Award.” The award, sponsored by DTN, *The Progressive Farmer* and John Deere, recognizes young farmers who have a proven record of excellence in their profession and of service in their communities. Farmers and ranchers under the age of 40 are eligible for this award. Clint was recognized for his accomplishments at the *Ag Summit* conference in Chicago in early December. There will also be an article featuring Clint in the February 2013 issue of *The Progressive Farmer*. We will be sure to have a link to the article on our website and Facebook page for you to view.

Clint has proven to be an early adopter of technology and has implemented his marketing skills in our family farm operation. He has guided the farm in establishing intense precision farming techniques including variable rate applications, no-till, and controlled traffic patterns. He has served on the Plains Equity Exchange board of directors for 4 years and is involved with many of his kids’ educational and sporting activities. Congratulations, Clint, on the outstanding award!



Stay up to date with current and historical weather data by visiting:

www.weatherlink.com/user/southwestff/ or download the free WeatherLink Mobile App. and search for *southwestff*. The weather station is located at our office and will keep track of high/low temps, wind, humidity, and rainfall for the day, month, and year.



www.southwestff.com



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Farm Videos available

www.youtube.com/southwestfamilyfarms

Family Farming

We hope you enjoy the pictures below. Hopefully they give you an idea how EVERYONE in the family chips in throughout the year.



Oops...



Fixing a Flat



Please!



Tea Party



Auto Steer



Bath



Tractor Pull



Tailgating



Dinner time



Nap time

Meditation

As a farmer and steward of God's soil
Over which he has given me the privilege to labor and toil
To work in the good earth—pleasure it can bring
I think my favorite season of the year is spring.
You see this is the time of year
When things really get in gear.
The soil smells so fresh and clean
Surely Mother Nature is on her throne as Queen.
It is the time of year to plant and prepare
And give your crops fertilizer and care.
If all conditions are ideal and right
A few months later a good harvest is in sight.
Through God's love and mercy I am sure
A bountiful harvest is going to mature.

The reward of all your labor and worry and the time is at hand
To get busy and harvest the crop off the land.
God really takes care and blesses us
Without nary a word or any fuss.
However, there are times I feel some amount of fear
That I may have forgotten to sew a seed of friendship to someone near.
Or maybe being in such a bother and fuss
We have forgotten or neglected a kind word to those so dear to us.

Have we forgotten to sew the seed
Of just a kind thought or small deed.
Do we neglect the sick and sorrowful
When things for us are going great and wonderful.
Sometimes we are so involved in the physical
We lose sight of things that are spiritual.
So as through life's pathways I trod,
I pray I never lose sight of God
That I may plant the seeds of love, understanding and care.
And through my life something of value I can share
How great it is to have God as my partner and friend
I hope to keep the faith, and have him as my Savior to the end.