

Southwest Family Farms

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New Farm Shop Complete

Southwest Family Farms is excited to announce that our new farm shop is finished. The final touches were completed earlier this year. The new shop has proven to be a wonderful addition to our operation. Our family and employees have enjoyed the ability to work on multiple pieces of equipment at the same time in the same building. Our equipment continues to grow in size, and many items simply could not fit into our old shop. Previously, our main shop was a 35 year old 48'x60' shed with 30' sliding doors. The new shop measures 80'x125' and has two 60' hydraulic doors. The wide doors swing outward and up using two hydraulic cylinders, which allows us to move the largest equipment in with room to spare.

This summer the temperature reached 105 degrees and the well insulated shop kept the inside at 80 degrees. Couple that with the "Big Ass Fans®" and we had some happy employees! The 14 foot fans put out enough air throughout the shop to move paper and empty pop cans! Needless to say, our productivity is much greater than before. Last summer, we rebuilt two Shelbourne stripper headers outside and had to start work early to stay out of the extreme afternoon heat. The fans in the new shop keep the air moving and keep us cool and content. Our employees have especially appreciated finally having a restroom on site, along with a full kitchen and break room. We are truly blessed to have this new facility and to share it with our employees and business partners.



Popcorn Farming

We are always trying something new on the farm. New equipment, new seed, new farming practices, new technology...the list is never ending. This year's new thing has not been profitable by any means, but it sure has been tasty! We planted a small plot of popcorn and could not have been happier with the crop. Popcorn has long been a family favorite snack, so we wanted to try growing our own. The popcorn seed that we plant looks identical to the kernel you pop in the microwave. The plant produces 1-2 ears that are smaller in size than field corn or sweet corn.

We hand picked the popcorn this fall when the ground was too wet for the combines to travel. We took the ears to the farm and ran them through an antique hand crank corn sheller. The sheller was given to Brett as a Christmas gift last year. We cleaned and sorted the corn before running it through the sheller and used compressed air to clean it as the kernels came off the cob. Check out our Facebook page to see a video of the the sheller in action (www.facebook.com/southwestfamilyfarms).

Currently there are no plans to expand our popcorn acreage. We are discussing the idea of growing a little more and possibly using the popcorn to help various groups with fundraisers. If we do expand our acreage, we might have to upgrade the corn sheller to one with a motor.



New Addition



On November 7, 2014 Brett and Sarah became proud parents of their third child, Leah Jane Reiss. Leah's big sisters, Katelyn (5) and Addison (3), are extremely happy to have another sister.

Terrible, Dry Spring

This Spring we battled some of the worst conditions we can remember. In Morton County, where we have no-tilled for years, we were forced to chisel almost every acre of our wheat stubble to keep the soil from blowing away. Winds blew so hard that the previous year's crop residue was cut off at the ground. Once the residue blew off, the winds started to cut away at our top soil. At first, we chiseled the ground every other pass, but the winds sustained and forced us to work entire fields. The chisel points go deep into the soil to bring moisture and clods to the surface to stop the dry dirt from blowing away. Prior to May 1, little to no rain fell, but luckily we received a rain in the middle of May. We worked the ground again to smooth it out and planted milo. As we finished planting, another rain fell, which was just enough moisture to get the milo up to cover the soil. Throughout the summer, we received a couple timely rains that allowed the milo crop to survive. However, due to the on-going drought, yields were limited. The wheat crop was very poor due to the lack of winter and spring moisture, but the irrigated crops benefited when the weather pattern turned cooler and wetter this summer. In Seward county, we recorded 13.89 inches of moisture this year. Most, if not all, of this precipitation came after May 15. Some forecasts continue to show that an El Nino pattern could form, which could possibly bring more rain to our area. The year started off miserable, but we are so thankful for the rain we received.



Chiseling no-till wheat stubble in Morton County

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Farm Videos available

www.youtube.com/southwestfamilyfarms

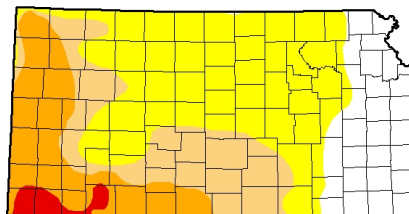
What's Going On At Southwest Family Farms

U.S. Drought Monitor Kansas

December 2, 2014
(Released Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	18.56	81.44	38.58	19.34	2.25	0.00
Last Week <i>11/25/2014</i>	29.10	70.90	38.58	19.34	2.25	0.00
3 Months Ago <i>9/2/2014</i>	5.91	94.09	72.09	18.36	5.46	0.00
Start of Calendar Year <i>1/5/2013</i>	4.71	95.29	46.92	33.89	5.58	0.00
Start of Water Year <i>9/26/2014</i>	18.51	81.49	46.13	19.50	2.37	0.00
One Year Ago <i>12/2/13</i>	12.48	87.52	40.68	31.58	3.16	0.00



Intensity

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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