



Southwest Family Farms

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Wild Weather Year

Mother Nature is once again the headline this year. Weather is the driving force and always the headline in production agriculture. Temperature, wind, and precipitation influence how and when we complete fieldwork. We had some of the most extreme conditions this year, and none of us will ever forget the weather in 2015.

The year started off quiet and dry, but things changed in May. Several big rains caused minor flooding, and a large tornado passed to the east, missing our farm by only a couple of miles. We continued to receive ample rain throughout the summer, which made growing conditions great for the corn, soybeans, and milo. The corn and soybeans did not require any irrigation until late June. However, the weather pattern dried up in August, which reduced the yield potential on our dryland milo. Luckily, we were able to catch a few rains in late September, which allowed us to drill wheat into adequate moisture and establish a good stand. We picked our corn crop in two weeks without stopping and then moved on to soybeans. Corn and soybean yields were outstanding this year as they benefitted nicely from the summer rainfall.

The weather once again became extreme in November. Milo harvest was progressing nicely, but we had several fields that were too wet to cut. The late fields needed a hard freeze to dry the grain down, but it never got cold enough until mid November. We were finally able to continue milo harvest on Monday, November 16. That evening, a large tornado touched down just west of Kismet, leveling an entire hog farm and farmstead. Fortunately, nobody was injured in the storm as the tornado continued on for several miles. The tornado scattered debris everywhere and flipped two of our center pivots over. We were able to go back to Morton County and finish up harvest a few days after the storm, and when we came back, all of the debris had been removed from our fields. There were as many as 150 people who volunteered to clean up. Because of their generosity, we were able to finish harvest the night before Thanksgiving. We are so grateful for our local community and the support they showed in helping neighbors. Nothing is better than small town pride and spirit.

Tornado Damage

Grain bins and leg destroyed by Kismet on the Massoni Farm



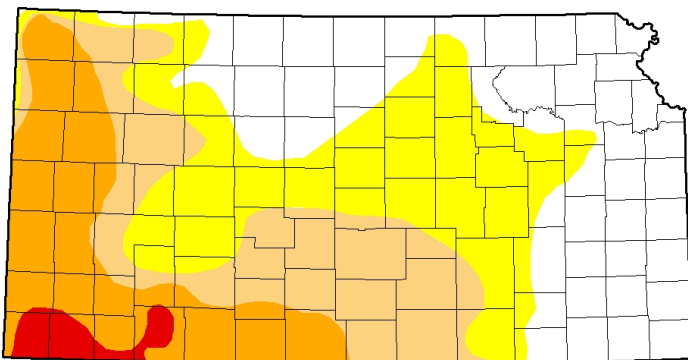
Sprinkler flipped and wrapped with debris



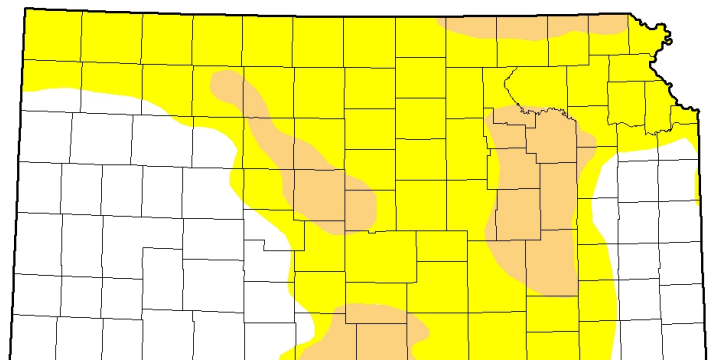
The picture to the left was taken from the farm, looking east. The tornado was 3.5 miles away and a half mile wide when this picture was taken. The white on the ground is hail. We received 1.5" of rain and a blanket of hail in 15 minutes.

A Little Rain Makes a Big Difference

November 2014 Drought Monitor
Severe Drought



November 2015 Drought Monitor
No Drought Present



Drones

Drones have attracted a lot of attention in agriculture lately. They are fun toys, shoot cool videos, and take neat pictures. However, they are capable of much more than that. Drones are battery powered, mini helicopters that often have a camera that is able to take HD videos or photos. Some sophisticated drones can be deployed with Near Infrared (NIR) cameras that provide farmers with a birds eye image of growing crop conditions. When the images or videos of the drone's flight are analyzed, stress spots can be identified in fields. Sometimes these stress spots, or trouble spots, can be detected from the aerial image before the trained eye can detect the problem from the ground.

It's impossible for a farmer or an agronomist to walk every square foot of a field or farm. Drones allow us to view the entire field and then pinpoint a few areas that might require a little more 'ground truthing' investigation. This past year, an aerial image allowed us to discover a Nitrogen fertilizer skip several weeks before it became visible from the ground.

As technology advances, drones will become more practical and common in the ag industry. These tools will help us be more proactive in making agronomic decisions on our farm.



A drone flies over a field of wheat in April



The darker green strips in this aerial image show the benefit of additional nitrogen.

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Farm Videos Available

www.youtube.com/southwestfamilyfarms

What's Going On At Southwest Family Farms



By The Numbers

65,000-bushels of corn harvested in one day by one combine

1,372-man hours required to harvest our corn crop

282-meals delivered to the field for fall harvest

16-Royals playoff games listened to on the radio

400-Bushels of wheat in one combine bin full

16,800-loaves of white bread produced from one combine bin

\$42,000-value of the bread produced from bin full sold at retail

\$0.10- the farmer's share on a loaf of bread @ \$4.50 wheat

