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The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of 2022

It's always enjoyable to sit back and reflect on the year when putting together the newsletter. Every year presents challenges, but those conquering those challenges provide a sense of accomplishment. Each year the weather constantly provides challenges for the agricultural industry and 2022 was no different. Heat and drought were once again the challenge this year.

In early to mid June parts of southwest Kansas received some much needed rain. This moisture was a huge reason why we were able to get our milo planted and emerged. However, the heat following the rain event was intense. Cattle in the surrounding feed yards struggled to adapt to the extremely high temperatures with days of no wind to cool them off. Thousands of head of cattle died due the extreme heat and humidity and the lack of wind. Cattle can typically acclimate to the warming summers and our typical windy days help keep them cool, but this heat wave was so sudden and intense that the cattle weren't able to adapt and keep cool. Water supplies were hard to maintain and even local fire departments were called out to help cool the cattle and provide extra water. While we don't personally raise or feed any cattle, it was heart breaking to see the care takers and cattlemen struggle through this period of intense heat.

Back to the farm...Last fall it was so extremely dry in Morton county that we weren't able to plant 80% of our expected acres. We couldn't hit moisture and our fear was the ground would blow behind the drills. We ended up chiseling all of those acres to create clods to keep the powdery soil from eroding with the wind storms. Fortunately soil loss was kept minimal and we received a rain in late May that allowed us to plant our milo into some moisture in early June. Our planting operation looked flawless and it looked like we would get an amazing stand of milo. However, as the milo was just about to poke through the soil an intense hail storm passed through Morton county. Some fields received up to 4" of rain in about 30 minutes. We had fields that had milo stands cut in half, meaning half of the seeds we planted were wiped out. The majority of the stand reduction was caused by the soil crusting. After the hard rain the temperatures soared into the low 100s. This caused the soil to "bake" or create a hard layer of crust. Some seeds had emerged in time but some seedlings were caught under the crust. We were torn on what to do. We could replant the field and hope for a better

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Stand, or we could keep the reduced stand and hope it would be enough to yield well. We decided to keep the reduced stands because of the drought we had experienced the prior fall and the continued drought that was being forecasted. The decision proved to be the right one. The fields with the worst stands ended up being some of the best milo, proving once again that farming takes tremendous faith. Times like this often make us think of Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding." What an important verse it is. We waited 9 months for a rain, planted, and it was more rain that was going to cause a potential replant. The rest of the summer was drier than normal but there were a few timely rains that kept the milo alive and we were able to harvest some very respectable yields given the year.

Our irrigated and dryland crops back in Seward county struggled to hang on. After being blessed with above average yields back to back in the two years prior we fell well below average this year. An interesting stat that shows how good things were in 2021 versus 2022 on our irrigated corn: our highest yielding field in 2022 was worse than our average yield in 2021. How quickly things can turn!

Looking forward to next year, we are optimistic that we will the La Nina pattern we are currently in fade away and hope to see more average rainfall. Once again in Morton county the fall was too dry to establish stands of wheat so blowing soil will be a concern again this winter. All of the farm work for the season has been completed thanks to a dry fall. We are busy maintaining and cleaning equipment to get it ready for another season. Everyone is looking forward to the Holidays and time together with family. We pray that this newsletter finds you and your family well and we want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year!



Hoping to see more rain and rainbows in 2023!!!



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Taking a Look Back

In March, one of our many kind landowners sent us an article she ran across while cleaning out a storage room. The article was written in 1979 by a local paper, The Southwest Daily Times. The article tells of how Kathryn had to make a decision whether to continue the farm after the passing of her husband, Gerald. Gerald Reiss passed away in 1978 of an undetermined illness. His wife, Kathryn, (known as Grandma Kat to many) was left with the decision whether she would continue to run the farm. Stan had only been back on the farm for three years after a short tenure of teaching at our local high school. Together they made the decision to continue the farm. The article writes about how Kathryn and Gerald were very close and how Kathryn would tag along with Gerald daily. So naturally she picked up on almost every aspect of the farm. Kat was usually found during harvest running the grain cart. She was actually the person that taught Clint and Brett. It was always a joke that Grandma Kat wouldn't let her grandkids run the grain cart themselves until they could beat her in arm wrestling. Back then it took a little more strength to operate equipment than it does with all of today's technology and "push of a button" features.

Grandma Kat has been more than a grandma to many. She's been a mentor, business partner, leader, and a pioneer. The sacrifices she has made have not come easy. Her courage and dedication and love of her family and farm are a huge part of where our family is now. Kat is still living on the farm and is still giving rides and shuffling people around. She also makes sure we have a steady supply of yummy treats in the shop kitchen. Below are some of the pictures from the article from 1979. The full article is framed and on display in the shop office if you want to take a look at it.



Kathryn and her Father-in-Law, Oscar, standing in a field of wheat.

Special thanks to Nancy Douglas for sharing this with us!

