

Trip Summary

The year we returned from Covid to in person scouting. We held the tour three weeks later than normal to allow more people a chance to get vaccinated and participate. Restrictions were just starting to come off across the country which limited attendance. We had 46 scouts in 24 cars that followed our six historical routes across the region. We had people from thirteen states this year. We started and ended in Manhattan, Kansas with overnight stops in Colby and Wichita. Our group was again diverse, representing the entire wheat value chain. We had growers, academia, seed companies, media, millers, grain companies and bakers. We were joined each night by representatives from Nebraska, Colorado and Oklahoma which provided crop information about those states. We also invite local producers, agronomists and grain handlers to offer special insight. We use yield formulas supplied by NASS/USDA. We change car assignments each day and put people with some expertise in each car for training. As I write this, I'm not sure yet how this years crop will be remembered. We were in and out of rain each day and the fields were muddy. Our formulas suggest much bigger yields than we have ever offered up. The central areas though Kansas are exceptionally thick and uniform. Only in the extreme W/SW areas did we see the drastic effects of dryness. The yield potential for Kansas is very good. This could be a huge yielding year if conditions stay favorable. The NASS estimate for Kansas based on conditions May 1 was for a crop of 331 million bushels and a yield of 48 Bu per acre. Our average guess from the 32 scouts was 365 million bushels suggesting a yield of 52 bu per acre would eventually get harvested. My personal guess was 400 million bushels suggesting a record yield per acre.

Other negatives – There is well founded concern over leaf rust becoming a yield limiting factor. Infections were found in many fields and weather conditions are favorable for its expansion. Fungicides can suppress the effects but field access is limited by wetness so far. Current conditions also suggest lower wheat protein content. Big crops tend to lower average protein in the grain as nitrogen becomes limiting.

Other positives – The crop is benefiting from good temperatures as it sets seed and best correlation to KS wheat yields is May rainfall. The wheat is very tall in the good areas suggesting very little stress has been on it so far this year.

As in all years, our tour took a snapshot in time as best we could. Environmental conditions over the next six weeks will determine this crop. All of our data is available on our website and open to review. In addition to the seven media representatives on the tour, I spoke to all other ag radio that requested it. We continue to have great participant feedback and we certainly bring value to the industry as evidenced by our attendance.

Respectfully submitted, Dave G Green Exec VP Wheat Quality Council.