

Trip Summary

The year we returned to a real crop tour. No masks and no line of cars following each other. The only thing we kept from the Covid tour was the date. We held the tour three weeks later than normal again this year. We had big attendance and the new scouts learn so much more. We had 83 scouts in 21 cars that followed our six historical routes across the region. We had people from twenty four states and three counties. 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 year's crop will be remembered. Fields are wet with adequate moisture in the central corridor but not muddy. As we moved west the fields were much dryer and plants were stressed from the drought. Our formulas suggest much lower yields than we offered up last year. Our first two days of scouting averaged around 20 bushels per acre less than the same routes last year. The central areas through Kansas are more normal this year with yields around 40-60 bpa. Only in the extreme Western areas did we see the drastic effects of dryness. Wheat fields in those areas range from 0-30 averaging maybe 25. The yield potential for Kansas is average to below. Unlike last year I don't think the crop has huge upside potential. The NASS estimate for Kansas based on conditions May 1 was for a crop of 271 million bushels and a yield of 39 Bu per acre. Our average guess from the 46 scouts was 261 million bushels suggesting a yield of 38 bu per acre would eventually get harvested. My personal guess was 292,400,000 bushels suggesting(hoping) better rainfall in the next three weeks.

Other negatives – Seeing lots of white heads suggesting extreme measures taken by the plants to limit seed development. The hot weather is making the wheat race toward harvest. May not be much time to wait on rain.

Other positives – The crop has far less diseases and insects compared to normal years. With yield lower and stress this year, expect protein to be much higher

As in all years, our tour took a snapshot in time as best we could. Environmental conditions over the next five 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.