

By Tim Linscott

Managing Editor

Harvest took a little bit longer than usual because of unusual timing in moisture, according to Doug Anderson, Perkins County Extension Educator.

This year's harvest was one of the latest he's seen and portions of Deuel County had entire fields half a pivot un-picked, according to Anderson.

"Crops didn't dry down as quickly as we thought it would be. When we got moisture and it caused a bit of a delay, making it later than normal," Anderson said.

By December, 90 percent of the county had harvested, but in a normal year one to two percent of the county would still need to be harvested.

The year had been relatively dry but Anderson said the corn 'just didn't dry down.'

Within the county, grain was around 20 percent moisture, which is normally at 13-14 percent before it is taken out.

Cooler nights and frost during normal harvest season didn't allow grain to dry properly.

"Whatever you'd have dry during the day you'd gain back at night," Anderson said.

The southwest part of the county didn't dry out as much as other parts of the county, Anderson noted, but the county was pretty even all around in regard to moisture.

The long range forecast does not bode well for the region: severe drought conditions are possible.

"Everything at this point is a guess. When you are this far out, the pattern may change," Anderson said.

Nebraska typically gets 75 percent of its moisture in April through May, so those months will be critical in the overall moisture picture for the region.

Anderson feels that April will be a wet month for the region. For planting purposes, he thinks there won't be anything unusual and the moisture will come in spring.

Right now, Anderson is praying for more snow.

"I'd like to add some inches of moisture that will slowly melt and percolate down in the spring and snow makes grass," Anderson. "For range issues, you need grass."

He noted that while people are out scooping their walkways, the thought of more snow may not be a popular one, but Anderson feels the long-term affects are worth the inconvenience.

The recent snow will provide about a quarter inch of moisture.

"When this stuff melts it will go straight into the ground, which is good," Anderson said.

The area was depleted of moisture in 2012 and was able to catch up somewhat in 2013, however, no major gains were made.

"We're still below average and dry," Anderson said.

Prices from harvest were 'ok,' not 'great', but 'ok.'

"We were in the 'great' range, then we moved into the 'good' range and now we are in the 'o.k.' range," Anderson said.

He explained when corn was selling at \$7 per bushel it is 'great' and when prices are \$6 per bushel that is 'good.' Prices are right now at \$4 per bushel and 'o.k.'

Future forecasts for prices will still be 'o.k.' and hopes are it moves into the 'good' range this year.

"Nebraska is a small drop in the corn market. When you look on the whole scheme of things, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, that is where corn is made," Anderson said. "If things get tough in the 'I's'

you know there is a chance for price movement. If our corn isn't as robust from a drought, it doesn't affect the price that much because we don't have billions of bushels like some of those states do."