

## Wet weather makes for slow start to area wheat harvest

Written by Chris Lee

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□□ The familiar summer sight of combines could be seen just across the road from Holyoke Cemetery Tuesday, July 6 as wheat harvest was kicked off. Randy Helgoth and another combine were seen cutting away at wheat. The field received some attention as vehicles slowly drove by to see some of the first wheat in the area get cut. □□ —Enterprise photo

Wheat harvest was set to begin right around the 4th of July holiday, but Mother Nature opened her doors and let rain fall throughout Phillips County off and on over the next week.

Combines could be seen in a couple of fields last Tuesday, July 6 as a few brave farmers decided to give it a go. However that night just over a half inch of rain fell again putting a halt on things. It continued to rain throughout the week keeping farmers at bay and in their shops waiting for things to dry out.

Just as things seemed to dry out, more rain would fall from the skies. But as of Tuesday, July 13, Grainland Co-op grain merchandiser Steve Young and Steve Bahnsen of Paoli Farmers Co-op Elevator said harvest was around 25-30 percent complete in the area.

Warmer temperatures dropped the moisture in the wheat to around 10.5-11 percent, according to Young, and farmers jumped at the chance to get into the fields. Test weights have been right around 60 pounds per bushel, according to Young. Bahnsen reported similar test weights and moisture at the Paoli location.

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Weather permitting, Young and Bahnsen estimate things will be nearly wrapped up around the end of next week.

Bahnsen said they have seen lower protein, but that comes with the good growing conditions seen in the area.