

Harvest quality, volume uncertain

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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First All Points corn train ships out last week

The first train loaded with year's corn from All Points Cooperative rumbled out of Gothenburg last week, about two weeks earlier than usual.

All Points Cooperative grain buyer Steve Costello said the irrigated corn and soybeans the elevator has bought so far appears better than expected although some dryland corn has "been all over the board."

Despite the unrelenting drought, some still showed 25% moisture last week, he said.

It's a different story for dryland beans and corn. Costello described those crops as "not great" because of lack of rain that has settled over the country's midsection.

Extremes seen in quality

Wade Geiken, grain manager at Nebraska Salt & Grain Co., agreed, noting Monday that the quality of the small amount of yellow corn the company has bought so far has been extreme.

"Some is quality and some is not," he said. "It's a field by field thing."

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Yield and quality is dependent on whether or not the corn pollinated during extreme heat or a cool snap. The latter Geiken described as better weather to fill out ears.

“It also depends on the amount of irrigation available,” he said.

Geiken said NSG is about at the halfway point in receiving popcorn, most of which has been quality except for what came from a few fields damaged by hail.

Popcorn harvest started two weeks early because the crop seemed to dry quicker, he said, but yellow corn is about on time for NSG.

Bushel prices up, down

Prices for both corn and beans were higher on Sept. 26 when the first 100-car train was loaded. Cash corn sold at \$7.29 a bushel and soybeans at \$15.50.

On Tuesday, prices had risen to \$7.42 a bushel for corn. Soybeans dropped to \$14.98.

Costello said fewer rail cars have been ordered because the 2012 crop is expected to be smaller.

“There are a lot of questions right now because we don’t know what the volume is going to be,” he said.

What’s known are historic amounts.

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Costello pointed to days during previous harvests when the elevator handled up to 350,000 bushels of beans in a day.

Geiken remembers a day when NSG took in up to 150,000 bushels of white and yellow corn.

All Points ships almost exclusively by rail while NSG primarily uses trucks.

Some rail service at NSG is by single-car units while All Points loads 100-car trains.

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