

Costello: Harvest difficult despite rebuilding process

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Harvest this year would be challenging even if All Points Cooperative was 100% operational.

With a late harvest and truckloads of wet corn lining city streets near the elevator, grain division vice president Steve Costello knows the elevator can't dry it all.

"We'll probably be drying corn through March," he said. "No elevator has the capacity to keep up."

Costello predicted a long harvest because of field and crop conditions.

At this point, Costello said the quality of 2009 corn crop is questionable as "we're seeing a lot of mold."

Vice president of agronomy Mark Ballmer said there could be potential restrictions for feeding livestock moldy corn although corn sampled by All Points has tested well below the danger level.

Ballmer said 90% of the corn handled at All Points is shipped west to California and Idaho with the rest sold to the cattle-feeding industry.

"If it's dry, it goes so much better," Costello said, noting that some years, corn has been dry enough at harvest that All Points didn't need to use its dryers at all.

This year, with reconstruction only at 70% completion, the elevator doesn't have the capacity

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and speed to handle harvest as they usually do.

In the past, Costello said the elevator has handled 150,000 to 200,000 bushels of corn a day.

Today, he said 50,000 to 60,000 bushels of wet corn are processed through each day.

Once reconstruction is finished, Costello said they'll have six legs which is one more to move grain than what All Points had before the explosion.

Legs transport grain from dump pits to storage silos, to the dryer and back to storage until it's shipped.

One bright spot since grain-handling equipment was re-installed has been the cooperation of Union Pacific Railroad officials who have given the elevator extra time to load rail cars, he said.

Despite the rebuilding process, Costello said the elevator handled the most beans ever this harvest—six trains of 100 cars—compared to three trains in 2008.

“Then we thought we handled the biggest bean crop,” Costello said.

The elevator has also shipped out several cars of corn.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636