

Farmers prepare to harvest damaged crops

By James Lillis
Staff Reporter

With the rains and cooler temperatures of the last few weeks signaling an end to the drought of 1988 and the coming of autumn, area farmers are beginning to harvest what's left of the fruit of their labor.

While the drought has damaged all crops to some degree, soybeans appear to be suffering the most. Harold Hummel, general manager

of Waverly's Farmers Cooperative Co., said that much of the soybeans he's seen are of low quality and yield.

"I've seen beans ranging from good to scruffy," Hummel said.

Bill Fahleson, who farms 1,100 acres of grain sorghum, soybeans and wheat in rural Waverly, said he agrees. He said he hasn't cut any beans yet, but that he expects his soybeans to be two to three times smaller than they would be in a

normal growing season.

Jerry Minchow farms 650 acres of soybeans, milo and wheat in rural Davy. He said that his beans had also taken a blow from the heat.

"Soybeans are not a hot weather crop," Minchow said.

Minchow said that since he knows that this year's crops are hurt badly, he hopes the rains of the last week will continue into early October, even though it would slow down the harvest.

"I'm just worried about having enough moisture for next year," Minchow said.

Harold Anderson and his son Ron farm just over 2,000 acres of wheat, beans and irrigated and dryland corn outside of Waverly. Harold Anderson said his beans were a disappointment but he also

hopes last week's rains will continue to help the immature beans develop a little more before he harvests them.

"A good rain is going to help full seeding," Anderson said.

But soybeans weren't the only crops to suffer, Anderson said. "Even our irrigated corn won't be 100 percent. Hot winds hurt our irrigation capabilities."

Fahleson said that while his milo did better than his beans, the milo has weak stocks.

"Six weeks ago I didn't think we'd get anything," Fahleson said. "What we did get was a gift."

Minchow said he expects his sorghum to be below average, too.

Even so, Hummel said that the milo he's seen did well, but there's

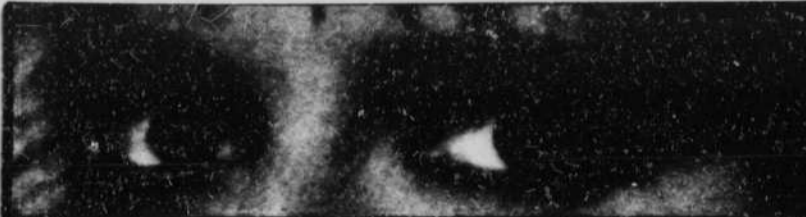
not enough of it harvested to determine whether it will yield as well as it looks. Hummel said that wheat harvested in June and July did well overall.

Fahleson, Anderson and Minchow agreed that the wheat harvested had high yields for the most part.

In a few weeks, the memories of this summer's drought will be replaced by worries for the next year. One of those concerns is already upon these area farmers' minds.

Hummel said these farmers will need "a lot more moisture than what we've got" this winter to make up for the lack of it on soil and subsoil this summer.

"We need a good cover of snow," Hummel said.



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Clockwise from top: Custom harvester Albert Rahn of Lincoln unloads milo from his combine north of Waverly. The drought of 1988 is producing soybean pods with only two developed beans. Charcoal rotted milo stalks, compared to normal stalks on the left, are causing farmers to hope the severe weather holds off until the crops are harvested. The rotted stalks are weak and will go down in severe weather making harvesting difficult, if not impossible.