

By Russ Pankonin

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This year's wheat harvest on dryland is winding to a close with the focus shifting to irrigated wheat.

Ryan Schultz, grain manager at Frenchman Valley Coop in Imperial, said Wednesday the dryland wheat harvest is all but complete.

With spotty rain this spring, dryland wheat yields weren't the 50-70 bushel-per-acre yields seen for the last several years.

Dryland yields all depended on the rain, Schultz said, but for the most part, he is hearing a lot of reports of between 20-30 bushels per acre.

Despite the low yields, Schultz said the overall quality and test weight has been good this harvest.

In addition, protein levels in the 14 percent range are common, he said. At that level, farmers can also get a premium for the protein content.

Typically, when the wheat plant gets stressed due to drought conditions, protein content increases.

Focus on irrigated wheat

With the dryland harvest complete, the focus has shifted to harvesting irrigated fields.

The irrigated wheat usually matures at a slower pace than dryland.

Schultz said they are already receiving irrigated wheat in both white and hard red winter varieties. Quality of the irrigated crop has been excellent so far, he said.

He said the variations in the irrigated wheat will depend on just how much water a farmer decided to put on.

Schultz said some farmers cut back on watering their wheat to make water available for their corn and soybean crops.