



**By Russ Pankonin**

***The Imperial Republican***

Every day, fewer and fewer corn fields remain standing as this year's harvest moves into the final days.

Many farmers have already completed their harvest. Ryan Schultz, grain manager at Frenchman Valley Coop, estimated the harvest between 90-95 percent complete.

He said the most standing corn appears to be in the west part of the county closer to the state line.

Some farmers have been waiting for the corn to dry down some. Schultz said a lot of corn is still coming in around the 18 percent moisture range.

Farmers didn't get much cooperation on that front Monday or Tuesday from Mother Nature. Monday morning, a hard frost covered the crop. On Tuesday morning, the crop was covered with a light skiff of snow that fell sometime Monday night. Those conditions kept the corn from drying down much.

Local farmer Chad Yaw agreed, saying they didn't make much progress those two days, waiting for the corn to dry out.

Forecasted temperatures in the high 50s through Saturday, with little chance of precipitation, will help speed harvest towards completion.

Schultz said moisture content on corn coming in now is averaging about 16.6 percent.

### **Varying yields**

Drought conditions prevailed throughout much of the summer, stressing this year's crop.

Yields proved to be directly related to whether the crop got some additional moisture in the form of rain during key periods of growth.

While there's been some 250-bushel-per-acre corn reported, this year's crop won't match up with last year's exceptional yields.

Farmers said fields that caught some timely rains fared better yield-wise than those that didn't, despite irrigation.

This year's drought conditions took a heavy toll on the dryland crop, showing just how vital groundwater irrigation is to the region.

Schultz said they anticipate taking in less corn this year, compared to last year.

The drought conditions reduced yields compared to last year, he said. Another factor was that more high-moisture corn was harvested this year.

Last year, high winds and snow knocked down a lot of standing corn. As a result, more farmers opted to get the corn out earlier at high moisture levels between 25-30 percent.

The cash price for corn got a bump this week from a crop report indicating corn supplies to be lower than expected. Cash price Wednesday stood in the \$4.25 range.

Schultz said there hasn't been much selling of this year's crop thus far.

He said most of the corn they're moving now is going to ethanol plants in Madrid and Trenton.

### **Popcorn harvest in final stage**

Seth Kunnemann with AK Acres said popcorn harvest is all but complete for their customers. Earlier this summer, Kunnemann said it looked like another blockbuster year for yields. But that changed as the summer progressed.

He said this year's yields will still be slightly above average.

He said the popcorn hasn't dried down as much as they'd like. He said a lot of the crop has come in between 15-16 percent moisture. Around 14 percent is the most ideal, he noted.

As a result, he said they're having to dry down the popcorn.

He said that's a longer process for popcorn because they use low heat to keep from damaging the kernel.