Agweather Connection

http://agweather.mesonet.org/

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Harvesting hope

By John Dobberstein, Tulsa World

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Observers believe Oklahoma's wheat harvest could top 164 million bushels this year, bringing a potential $2 billion economic impact when multiplier effects are added.

Southwestern Oklahoma, in particular, was blasted by last year's drought, which cast a pall on the wheat and cotton harvests. Farm towns like Kingfisher, Altus and Frederick were left reeling. Oklahoma harvested only 71 million bushels of wheat in 2006. The five-year average is 131 million.

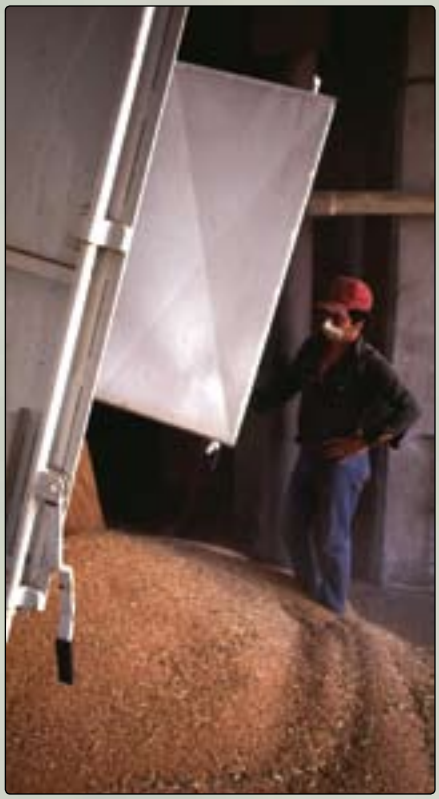
"That whole area needs a good wheat crop," said Tim Bartram, executive director of the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association, speaking on his cell phone after touring fields in western Oklahoma.

"It's more than just the farmer," he said. "It's the grain-handling infrastructure that needs it. The community needs it. The money turns around multiple times."

With little or no rain falling from October 2005 through last May, they were forced to plant their crops in dry soil with the drought's worst damage still to come during the summer. The story is reversed this year. Oklahoma is several inches above normal in rainfall. Lake Altus, a crucial source of irrigation water in southwestern Oklahoma, is 5 feet above the year-ago level.

Bartram believes the wheat crop will be big this year, despite concerns about disease. He's heard guesses from 140 million to 200 million bushels.

"I think there's some awful good wheat out there. If the price could go right, it might be the highest-value crop ever in the state to wheat producers. It would help a lot of people." ▪



Weather and work

By Laura K. Martin

Weather can potentially devastate the wheat crop. Too much rain, too little rain, thunderstorms, hail and tornadoes can all impact wheat and harvest. By monitoring the weather, farmers can know what weather is headed their way and can plan their harvest accordingly.

Oklahoma's farmers can utilize several tools on the free Agweather site at http://agweather.mesonet.org/.

The Agweather Web site features data from the Oklahoma Mesonet, a state-wide weather network supported by OSU and OU.

To help you get started, step-by-step directions are listed below. If you have any questions or need more information, call (405) 325-3126 or send e-mail to laura.k.mckay@okstate.edu or albert.sutherland@okstate.edu. ▪

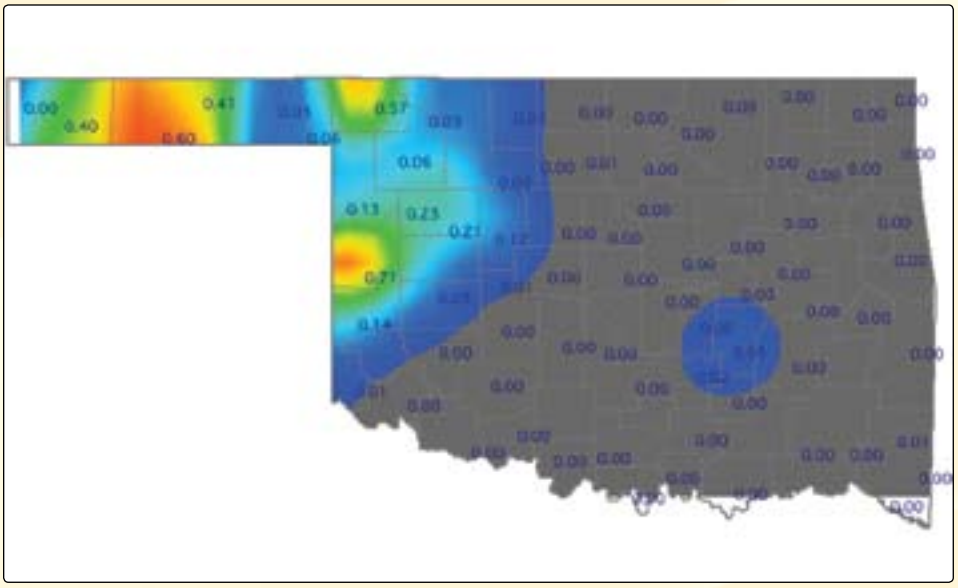
Free download

Start at http://agweather.mesonet.org/. Be sure to download the WxScope Plugin. It's safe and free, and allows you to view all of the resources that Agweather offers.

If your Internet connection is slow, we can send you a free CD that will allow you to download the WxScope Plugin more quickly. Call (405) 325-3126 to request a CD.

Click here for the Windows software.

Click here for the Macintosh software.



24-hour rainfall

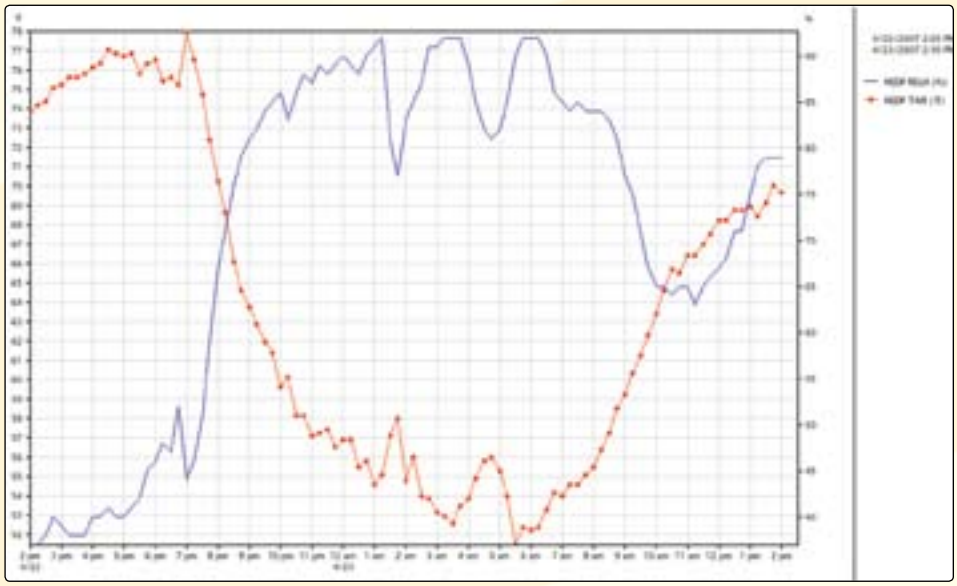
From the home page located at http://agweather.mesonet.org/, select the "Weather" icon. Then choose "Current Weather," then "Rainfall" and finally choose "24-hour Rainfall Accumulation."

You can also look at 1-hr, 3-hr, 6-hr, 12-hr, 48-hr and 72-hr rainfall accumulations. These rainfall totals can give you an idea of how wet your fields are.

Relative humidity and temperature

From the Agweather home page at http://agweather.mesonet.org/, pick the "Livestock" button. Then select "Swine," and finally choose "Air Temp and RELH Graph."

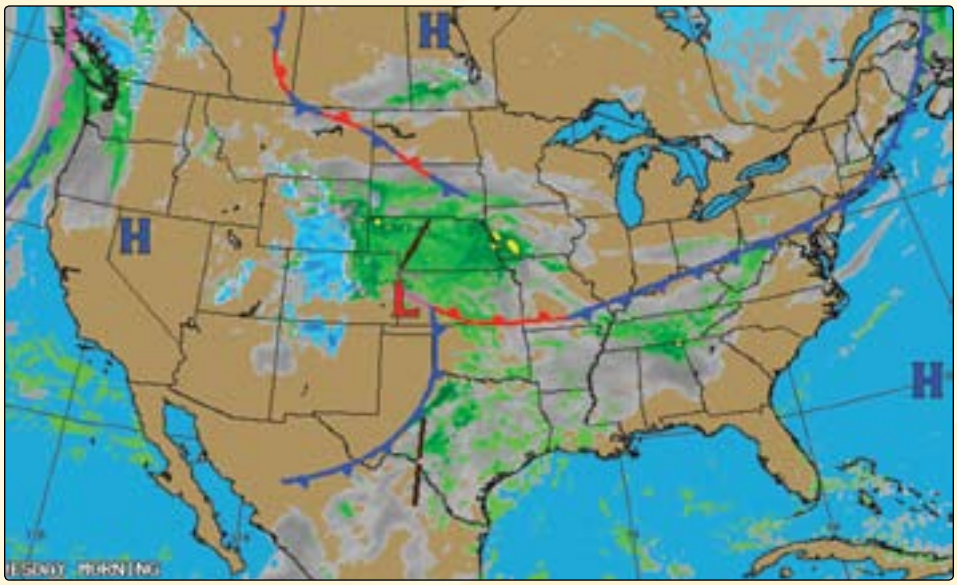
You will have to select the Mesonet tower closest to your location by clicking on a dot or using the "Station" drop-down menu. You also need to select your time frame from the "Show" drop-down menu. The data can be graphed for 6, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96 and 120 hours.



Forecast map

From the Agweather home page at http://agweather.mesonet.org/, pick the "Weather" button. Then select "Forecasts" and then "Short-range Forecasts." Click on either the "12-hour Forecast" or the "24-hour Forecast."

Then, click on the gray "U.S." button, which is second from the top. Scroll down about halfway until you see "U.S. Weather Maps" on the left-hand side. You can look at "Today's Forecast" or "Tomorrow's Forecast."

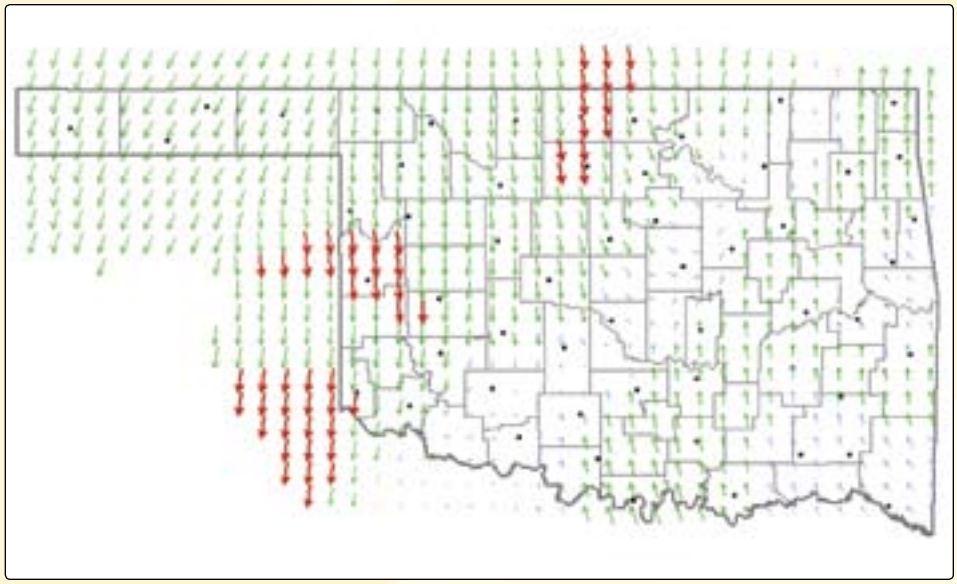


Wind speed and direction

From the Agweather home page at http://agweather.mesonet.org/, pick the "Weather" button. Then select "Current Weather," then "Wind," and "Wind Vectors."

If you click on the blue arrow in the legend (on the right-hand side of the page), you can see what the different colored arrows mean.

A little blue arrow is 10 mph or less. A medium green arrow is 10 to 20 mph. A big red arrow is 20 mph or greater.



DRY times

By Albert Sutherland, CPH, CCA

As the amber heads of wheat mature, growers anxiously await the sound of a roaring combine engine. Every year has its challenges, but the 2006-2007 wheat crop has been an exceptional roller coaster.

Growers started out the planting season worrying about enough water, but had their fears calmed by good fall and winter rainfall. They were brought up short with an Easter weekend freeze followed by the scare of rampant disease from a humid, wet May.

When harvest time finally arrives, growers will be pushing hard to get the 2007 wheat crop in the bin. Growers and elevator managers closely monitor grain moisture. A balance must be struck between bringing a crop in too wet or too dry. For storage, the preferred grain moisture is 12 percent or less.

A clear, warm day with low humidity is ideal for drying or harvest. According to Roger Gribble, OSU Area Agronomist, an ideal drying day would be one with an air temperature close to 95°F, an afternoon humidity near 30 percent and a 10- to 15-mile per hour wind. On an ideal drying day, Gribble typically sees grain moisture drop 1.5 to 2 percent.

Of the three weather parameters, humidity has the most effect on grain drying and harvest. Often, combines will be parked in the morning due to a higher humidity and rolling strong as the humidity drops in the afternoon.

The Agweather Web site offers several products to monitor relative humidity, temperature and wind. For more information, call (405) 325-3126 or e-mail albert.sutherland@okstate.edu. ▪

Agweather
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Agweather is a product of the Oklahoma Mesonet.
http://agweather.mesonet.org/

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