

Farmers still trying to get wheat harvested

Some seeking disaster declaration if crops fail

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County farmers, concerned about a misleading report in the Chieftain in late September, are trying to remain optimistic they'll have time to get the rest of their wheat and hay harvested.

"The wheat harvest in this county hasn't even started," farmer Erl McLaughlin said Friday, Oct. 4. "I know one person out there who's got 600 acres and hasn't cut one kernel of wheat. I've got 435 acres that haven't been cut. I've got another friend down near Wallowa who has 435 acres that also haven't been cut. I don't know hardly anyone who's done."

Trevor Collins, who has about 200 acres of dark northern spring wheat still growing up Elk Mountain Road east of Enterprise, had put off cutting wheat while he harvested a more valuable alfalfa crop near Baker City. But it's getting late for his wheat.

"We did get our hay up and then ran a sample of the wheat and then it snowed," Collins said. "The weather hasn't been very cooperative. I feel like the weather's fighting us. We really need about a week (of warm, dry weather). I don't want to be a pessimist, but we're waiting for the moisture to cut down."

Concerns over last



Erl McLaughlin looks over some of his uncut dark northern spring wheat in a field west of Enterprise as a light rain starts Friday, Oct. 4. He and other grain growers are concerned they won't get the dry weather they need to get their crops harvested before it sprouts in the field.



Photos by Bill Bradshaw

BELOW Dark northern spring wheat stands ready for harvest - if the weather will just dry out long enough for the combines to get rolling - in a field along Elk Mountain Road east of Enterprise farmed by Trevor Collins.

month's Chieftain story included if it would affect whether or not the county would be declared a disaster area because of crop failure. Typically, county commissioners request a disaster declaration from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Then, the USDA's Farm Service Agency helps affected producers recover from crop losses.

"Here's the real concern, I talked to the county commissioners (Friday, Oct. 4,) and I think they might be declaring this area a disaster area," McLaughlin said. "I asked a county commis-

sioner, 'Is that article that come out in the Chieftain, is that going to be a stumbling

'I'M A PRETTY POSITIVE PERSON, BUT THERE'S A SLIM-TO-NONE CHANCE IT'LL GET CUT — BECAUSE IT'S TOO WET.'

Erl McLaughlin

block?" He said he didn't think so, and I said if it is, let me know and we'll do something about it."

Still, McLaughlin isn't losing hope.

"I'm a pretty positive person, but there's a slim-to-none chance it'll get cut

— because it's too wet," he said.

Susan Roberts, chairwoman of the Wallowa County Commission, said the matter wasn't dis-

cussed at the board's meeting Monday, Oct. 7, because she didn't yet have enough information.

"But I'll continue to research the matter," she said.

Roberts said she's been getting information from Mike Hayward, of the Wallowa County Grain Growers, who said disaster declarations are more often tied to drought.

"It's a little bit of an uncharted territory," he said.

He's in the process of talking to producers but hasn't reached many so far.

"We're a little prema-

ture" in determining if there's a disaster in the making.

Hayward estimated there are still about 3,000 acres of wheat yet unharvested in the valley, along with "a couple thousand acres of hay ground."

He said some of the hay has been swathed and windrowed but is still too wet to bale.

"What's unknown is are they going to get a window of time to" cut the wheat and bale the hay.

He said the moisture content of most wheat is testing at 17 to 18% and it must get down to 12% to be able to store it.

"The problem is, if you try to store with higher moisture, it'll mold," Hayward said.

McLaughlin said his uncut wheat could end up as mere animal feed if it sprouts in the field. But even that has to be dry enough to store.

"To put things in perspective, I'm right on the edge of destroying 35 to 40 semi loads of grain because I don't think I'll ever get it cut," he said. "I may be wrong, and God's plan's perfect; He may provide the weather but right now I don't see it."

Though he's trying to remain optimistic, he doesn't anticipate the needed dry spell.

"I don't think that's going to happen," he said. "What's at stake is to not make a stumbling block at getting this area declared a disaster. It's got my neighbors up in arms over that."

McLaughlin was unable to provide contacts of those neighbors for comment.

He and Collins are trying to remain optimistic.

"I just try to be an optimist," Collins said. "Personally, I've never had it happen for winter set in so quick. But I'm not willing to give in to that yet."

Still, he's looking at it realistically.

"To be honest with you, we are getting into the danger zone," Collins said. "Usually, we've had really good luck getting that Indian summer."

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Mother _____
 - Meadow mowers
 - "_____ for the Road"
 - Monumental story
 - Iranian ruler, once
 - Pound
 - Hope
 - Detroit, e.g.
 - Lady from Eden
 - Honor with a medal
 - "Since You've _____ Gone"
 - Bottle-cap remover
 - Typewriter key
 - Guys
 - Tennis term
 - Spain's continent
 - Looking glass
 - Yawning
 - "The _____ Patrol"
 - Neither's companion
 - Bond
 - Tumbled
 - Proof
 - "Facts of Life" star
 - _____ and bear it
 - Days of _____
 - Prior to, to Byron
 - On the _____ (precisely)
 - Vile
 - Forest creature
 - Purchaser
 - Pats

- CLUES DOWN**
- Bawdy
 - Andy's kid
 - Compact _____
 - Repeat
 - Fugitive from prison
 - Bleach
 - Had a meal
 - Meek
 - Willow, e.g.
 - Signal hello
 - Indication of future events
 - Pranced
 - _____ Fox
 - Worked on copy
 - Pot or rose
 - July's follower: abbr.
 - Bathing-suit top
 - Large coffee pot
 - Pigeon's sound
 - Do wrong
 - October birthstone
 - Sailor
 - Amend
 - Long sandwiches
 - Release
 - British noble
 - Soup vegetable
 - Ogled
 - PBS science show
 - Nursery bed
 - Electric swimmers
 - Type of antelope

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541-398-2509

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Mid-week
Bible Study 7 p.m.

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web: gracelutheranenterprise.com

St. Katherine's Catholic Church

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301 E. Garfield Enterprise

Mass Schedule
Sundays:
St. Pius X, Wallowa - 8:00 am
St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise 10:30am
Saturdays:
St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise 5:30pm
Weekday:
St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise - 8:00am
(Monday - Thursday and First Friday)
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Worship Service
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Joseph United Methodist Church

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Pastor Cherie Dearth
Phone: 541-432-3102

Sunday Worship Service
10:00 am

JosephUMC.org

Summit Church

Gospel Centered Community
Service time: 10:30 am
Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise
541-426-2150

Pastor: David Pendleton

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www.summitchurchoregon.org

Enterprise Christian Church

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Worship at 9 a.m.
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Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

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