

“What it Was, Was Wheat!”

Dan Weathington, Executive Director of NC Small Grain Growers Association

As I reflect on the Wheat Crop of 2016-17, I am reminded of the story Andy Griffin told about the first football game he saw as a young man and it resembled nothing he had ever witnessed before. From the referees dressed in prison uniforms to a bunch of men running up and down the field kicking and throwing a leather pumpkin object trying to keep it away from each other with the crowd going wild as young ladies in short dresses and tennis shoes did flips while the players were running up and down the field.

We started off the year not knowing how much wheat was going to be planted because last years' crop offered three strikes against us lower acres, lower yields and finally lower prices. It appears that we planted around 450,000 acres plus this year. We had hessian fly, some rust, powdery mildew, some scab, and we had the third 100-year freeze in the last 11 years. I visited what we thought was the hardest hit area of the State in Union County. Dr. Angela Post, myself, Allen Baucom, Randy Cox, Andrew Baucom, The Medlins and others looked at many fields seeing heavy freeze damage in many fields. Much to our amazement the weather in March and April made the secondary tillers develop like we have never seen. As harvest time came the combines started telling the story of how plants can recovery in the worst of conditions. Even though some fields had lower than desired test weight we have had some pretty respectable yields in the hardest hit areas with the cold. In other areas of the State we have had some above average yield with some growers breaking the 100-bushel mark in the yield contest. I really believe that we will average statewide between 65-70 bushels per acre. If we could get the price up just a little we may come out fair this year. I know there is a lot of interest in milling wheat. There have been several samples across the state sent to millers for falling number rating. I don't think there are the yields and quality of wheat in the large wheat growing states that they normally produce, according to our monthly meeting with my colleagues in the other states. When you sell try to competitively sell your crop.

Last Saturday, June 10, I celebrated 50 years working publicly in Agriculture. Our prices and acres will come back, they have in the years I have been working. The problem is input costs were lower in 1967 compared to our present input such as a bushel of corn seed was \$18, 5-10-15 Fertilizer was \$38/ton, wheat seed was about \$7. Corn was selling at the elevator at \$3.75 and wheat was \$4.00 not far from what we are receiving today. Most people with a crystal ball in the grain industry comment it may be 18 months before we see much of an uptrend in grain prices..... we were selling wheat for \$8.00 three years ago.....prices will come back.

NCSGGA Upcoming Events

June 20th - 22nd / 9:00a - 3:00p
NC FFA State Convention
Convention Center Raleigh, NC

July 12th / 8:30am - 3:00pm
Research & Education Mtg.
NCSGGA Office

3822 Bland Road
Raleigh, NC

July 27th
Northeast Ag Expo Field Day
R&R Farms
106 Riddick Grove Rd.
Belvidere, NC 27919

August 1st / 10:00am – 12:00pm
Touch a Tractor Event
4020 Market At North Hills St.
Raleigh, NC 27609

August 2nd, 2017
Blacklands Farm Managers Tour
Green Valley Farms
7014 NC-94
Columbia, NC 27925

August 10th - 11th
NCSGGA Board Meeting
Sheraton Imperial Hotel
Durham, NC

*Note***If you know of someone that does not have access to a computer/internet and would like to receive printed hard copies of the Wheat Beat please have them call Nikki Johnson at 919-809-8657 to setup a mailing delivery address. *****