

# Post Rock Extension District Column

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Crop Production Agent

## Planting wheat in dry conditions

It certainly seems that “Mother Nature” has shut the moisture off for north central Kansas! Even though fall harvest can continue, fields for wheat drilling are needing moisture. There is still plenty of time for drilling as the optimum planting time for wheat in northcentral Kansas is September 15 until October 20, so here are some options when drilling into dry conditions.

According to the most recent drought monitor map, most of our district is in the “moderate” drought category with not favorable precipitation in the near future.

The first option would be the “old school” saying of “**dusting in**” your wheat and your grain bins will bust! Simply plant at the normal seeding depth and the recommended planting dates. With this option, you are waiting for the moisture. According to studies at K-State Research and Extension, this may be the best option where soils are very dry. The seed will remain viable in the soil until it gets enough moisture for germination. According to the 10-day forecast, it predicts below-normal rainfall and higher than normal temperatures.

**Planting deeper than usual** can work also if the variety to be planted has a long coleoptile and there is good soil moisture within reach of the seed. The advantage of this option is that the crop should come up and make a stand during the optimum time in the fall. Even if you plant deep to get to moisture, and the coleoptile of the wheat variety is too short, it would germinate, but not emerge. If you would like to know the coleoptile length of your wheat varieties, just give me a call if you are unsure. Generally, it's best to plant no deeper than 3 inches with most varieties in Kansas.

Frequently, if a rainfall occurs, crusting or stand failure happens, so producers may decide to **wait until it has rained and soil moisture conditions are adequate before planting**. It is recommended to increase your seeding rate about 10% each day after the optimum planting date and use a starter fertilizer along with a seed treatment. K-State Research and Extension studies have shown to use a maximum seeding rate of 120 lbs./A or calculate the seeding rate in seeds per acre. Be cautious with in-furrow nitrogen as the salt in the fertilizer can make it more difficult for the seed or the plant to absorb water for germination. When applying fertilizer with the seed, nitrogen rates should be limited to no more than 20 lbs./A to avoid potential toxicity to the seedling.

If you have further questions on late planted wheat, contact me at any Post Rock Extension District office in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

*Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Sandra may be contacted at [swick@ksu.edu](mailto:swick@ksu.edu) or by calling Smith Center, 282-6823, Beloit 738-3597, Lincoln 524-4432, Mankato 378-3174, or Osborne 346-2521. Join us on Facebook at “Post Rock Extension” along with our weekly “Ag News Roundup” every Friday. To receive our weekly AG NEWS, call any of our offices in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center. Also remember our website is [www.postrock.ksu.edu](http://www.postrock.ksu.edu) and my twitter account is @PRDcrops.*