

Two Saline County farmers place high in yield contest

By TIM UNRUH
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Hard work and Mother Nature help make the difference

Mark Pettijohn pulled his children out of school for a chance to meet Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback and to applaud their father's placings in the Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests.

Turns out the farmer near Solomon won two awards and \$300 in prize money Jan. 8 at the Topeka ExpoCenter.

Pettijohn placed second and third in the north-central Kansas district, behind Came Farms, also of Saline County, in the nonirrigated, no-till category. Came Farms received a \$300 prize for first place.

Afterward, Pettijohn decided to reward his youngsters by spending some of that money on them, so he took them shopping. Much to his surprise, "They didn't want anything," Pettijohn said, and left for home.

"I'm not makin' that up. We went home empty-handed. They said the mall was boring," Pettijohn said. "I guess the governor wore them out."

But, he said, Gareth, 14, Chloe, 12, and Lincoln, 11, "really enjoyed" the banquet. Leaving the mall early on Jan. 8 may have been more of a mature act by Pettijohn's children than one of boredom.

"We made it just in time for Chloe's school play audition, and to Lincoln's basketball practice," Pettijohn said. "I gave them a choice and they opted to skedaddle.

They may have been being responsive."

Good lookin' beans

The Came Farms entry was from a field in the northern part of Saline County. The confirmed yield was 74.67 bushels to the acre.

"They were good lookin' beans with plenty of moisture," said Bill Came. He farms with siblings Chad Came and Darcy Bradley, and their mother, Joyce Came. The family was happy with the yield from that five-acre plot in the field and for the yield on the entire soybean crop last fall.

"It was just luck I guess," Bill said. "Everything was just the way we plant every other field. We picked five acres out of the field and just cut it. We didn't do anything special."

Winning other awards

Pettijohn's runner-up yield was 71 bushels to the acre from a field along the Smoky Hill River about two miles south of Solomon, and his third-place entry yielded 64 from a nearby field that's in Dickinson County.

He also won first place in Dickinson County for a no-till dryland milo yield of 139.28 bushels to the acre in the National Sorghum Producers Yield and Management Contest. The Dickinson County aver-



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age in that category is 73.7 bushels to the acre. Those results were announced in late December. Pettijohn said he wasn't sure if he's due a money prize in that contest, but he did receive a framed award certificate.

Have to know fields

"I was surprised to have done so well," he said of both contests. The only change in 2013 was using a bit more fertilizer on the soybean fields.

"I think it's a matter of knowing your fields and knowing which part of the field to submit into the contest," Pettijohn said. "A lot of it is organization. It's a lot of hard work and a lot of long-term thinking. It's no secret that Mother Nature was half the deal."

The 24 winners in 11 categories in the soybean contest had verified yields averaging 75.61 bushels per acre, compared to the reported state average of 35 bushels per acre in 2013. While the contest winners' average increased by nearly 8 bushels an acre from 2012, the state average increased 13 bushels an acre.

Other area winners

Other top finishers from north-central and northwest Kansas were Brad Ohlde, Linn, who won the contest's north-central district, conventional-till, dryland category, with 69.5 bushels an acre. Ernie Schlatter, Lebanon, won the contest's northwest district, no-till dryland, with 51.55 bushels an



Photo by Kansas soybean

Kansas Soybean Association President Terry Reschke, Hiawatha, presents a plaque to Bill Came, Salina, for placing in the 2013 Kansas Soybean Yield Contest.



Kansas Soybean Association President Terry Reschke, Hiawatha, presents certificates to the Mark Pettijohn family, Salina, for placing in the 2013 Kansas Soybean Yield Contest.

acre. Bob Wietmann, Clay Center, took third place in the statewide no-till, irrigated contest with 64.06 bushels an acre.

For complete results, visit kansassoybeans.org.

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