



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Area wheat shows promise

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

If present conditions persist, this year's wheat crop could be the best in some time.

Thomas County farmers Herb Mattson and Randy Regier both said the crop is doing well — so far. "The wheat is looking good," Mattson said. "If we dodge another freeze, get some rain and no wind, this could be the best in 10 years."

He said growing conditions now are ideal. Winter snow and spring rains have helped the wheat develop. Cooler weather has also been a boon.

"You couldn't ask for better," he said.

Mattson has dryland and irrigated wheat north of Colby.

He said the freeze Easter weekend seems to have inflicted little damage.

"I'm certain there's freeze damage, but it's too early to tell," Mattson said. Farmers in other parts of the state have reported damage to wheat because of the freeze.

Wet conditions over the past few months have also helped restore soil moisture.

Regier started planting corn this week and probed a couple of fields Wednesday. Moisture was found five to six feet down in the soil.

And it has been good for his dryland and irrigated corn.

"Both, at this point look, in very good condition," he said.

Regier has 1,000 dryland wheat acres in southern Thomas County and one 120-acre irrigated circle.

He said it is too early to speculate what harvest yields might be, but he is happy with how the crop is growing now.

"It looks better than we've had in quite a while," Regier said.

Wheat rust could be a concern, but again, he said it is too early to tell.

He also noted the spring moisture will go a long way in helping restore soil moisture for fall crops. It will also help prolong the wait to start irrigating.

Nate Reid, manager at Rexford Grain Company in Rexford, said the wheat in that area is in good shape.

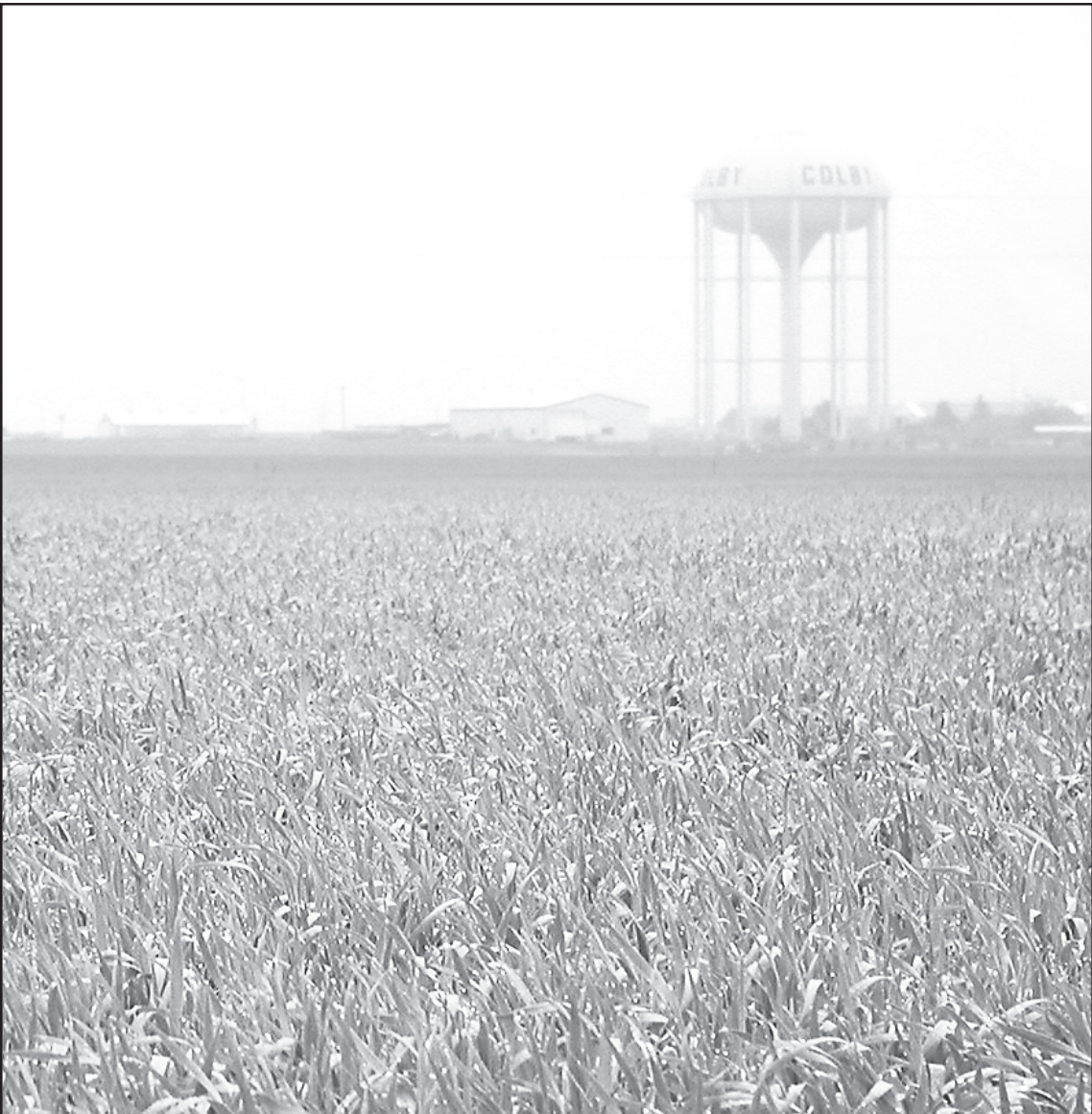
"It's coming along fine," he said.

Some freeze damage is possible, but not evident yet because the wheat is slightly behind on its growth schedule.

"There is potential for a good crop," Reid said. "The soil moisture is tremendous."

With good soil moisture and high corn prices because of demand, he said it is possible 15 to 20 percent more corn could be planted. Some milo acreage could be converted to corn.

Brian Olson, area agronomist with the Northwest Research-Ex-



Wheat grows tall in a field near Colby today. Thomas County farmers have reported their wheat is in good condition so far. Winter snow and a wet spring have contributed to the wheat condition, as well as helped build back up subsoil moisture.

tension Center in Colby, said northwest Kansas wheat is faring better than in central Kansas. Wheat there suffered freeze damaged Easter weekend.

Freeze damage is evident in Ellis County, and near WaKeeney and Quinter.

"I think we're in great condition," he said. "The wheat looks good."

However, Olson said anything can happen between now and harvest. "Things can always happen," he said. "As it stands right now we are in good condition."

TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

## Trip around the world provides pages for book

By Patty Decker  
Free Press Editor

For one Colby man, a lifelong dream of going around the world is memorialized in his new published book, "Lucille and the XXX Road — Around the World Man and Motorcycle."

Jim Oliver, owner of Oliver and Associates/Financial and Insurance Services in Colby, chronicles his adventure before, and after, a world trip that lasted from May through July 2004.

He wrote about the perils of traveling more than 15,500 miles through 13 countries with long stretches of icy roads, snow, jagged rock, mud and worse.

Even though he writes about his motorcycle experiences, Oliver said there is still something in the book for everyone.

"The story has references to God and why planning certain aspects of life is important and then making it happen. My personal goal was going around the world by age 60," he said.

At times, Oliver, 63, said he wasn't sure if he would meet his goal or not, but he describes much of that in his book.

Even before the trip, Oliver said he had encouragement from friends who not only wanted to see him make the world tour, but also write a book about his experiences.

"The story highlights every detail of the trip to include how I prepared my mind and body for this trip of a lifetime," he said.

"I also talk about overcoming many hurdles and disappointments."

Readers will meet Igor and Company, friends forever; learn about a bad decision and robbery; mud, ruts, rock, potholes and jockies, and how



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

extreme fatigue set in at times.

"I took up motorcycling in my teen years and ultimately motorcycled through 49 states, Canada, and Mexico before embarking on this 60-day trip around the world."

In addition to fulfilling his dream to go around the world by age 60, Oliver also talks about his riding partner, Dennis O'Neil of Golden, Colo.

Together, Oliver writes about how the two of them spent 26 days crossing Russia, sleeping in the wild, and surviving on Borscht soup and coffee.

"We were told by Russian locals that we were the first two motorcyclists to cross the infamous, 1,300

mile long, Amur section of Siberia without using the train," he said.

Oliver said it took nearly two years to plan the trip and how lucky he was to have such an understanding wife.

"Molly (his wife) has always been so supportive," Oliver said.

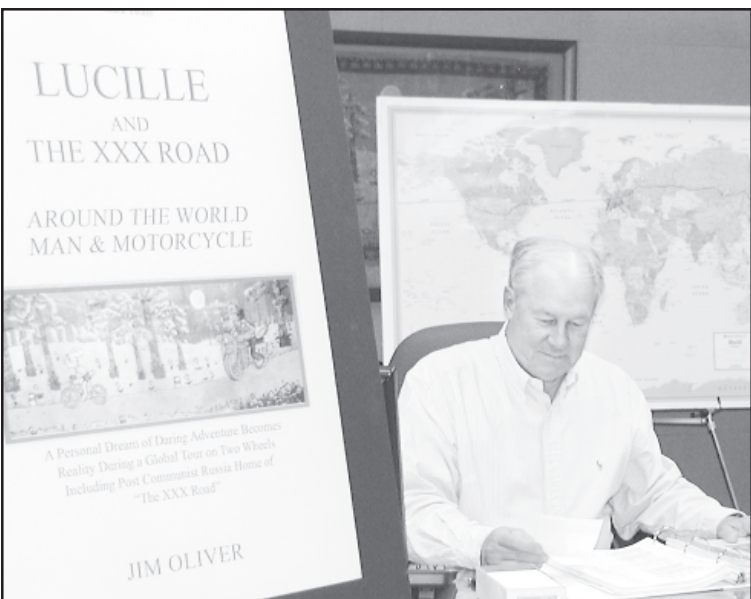
"The biggest issue she struggled with was safety and the 'what ifs' but eventually agreed to the idea."

As for the name, Lucille, Oliver explained motorcyclists name their bikes, and his BMW is in honor of Molly's mother, Lucille.

Anyone interested in buying a copy of the book can call (800) 288-4677 or go to: [www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com) and click on bookstore.

### Ride of a lifetime

**LEFT:** Jim Oliver of Colby stands next to Lucille, his BMW motorcycle. Together the two made a 60-day trip around the world. **BELOW:** Oliver prepared for a speech about his book, Lucille and the XXX Road.



## Legislators finish budget, adjourn, spending worrisome

TOPEKA (AP) — Some legislators doubt the state can sustain the spending outlined in the \$12.5 billion budget they have approved, even for just two more years.

The budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 increases aid to public schools, provides \$50 million to help fix crumbling higher education buildings, boosts spending on social services and gives pay raises and bonuses to state employees. It allows the state to expand its prison

system and even contains money to keep the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame from closing.

But some spending will be financed from the state's cash reserves, which the treasury keeps on hand as a cushion against bad economic times. Those reserves are expected to top \$844 million by July 1, but a year later, according to projections, they would drop by more than 60 percent to less than \$318 million.

The same forecast, by legislators' research staff, projected the state will face a budget shortfall when lawmakers convene in 2009. The most persistent warnings came from conservative Republicans like Sen. Tim Huelskamp, who said Wednesday the projections are "stunning."

"Eventually, you have to pay for what you spend," said Huelskamp, R-Fowler, who voted against the last spending bill. "We're looking

at these huge red figures in '09 and '10 and on out, unless we pass a major tax increase."

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, acknowledged the potential problem, saying, "We didn't undig the hole."

But legislators have seen similar projections before — including last year, when lawmakers committed to big increases in aid to schools — only to have a healthy economy supply sufficient revenue. Also, the

projections don't include any revenues from four casinos and slot machines at dog and horse tracks authorized this year.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius was more optimistic about the future during a post-adjournment news conference. She noted the state's unemployment rate in March was 4.3 percent, the lowest for that month since 2001, before the terrorist attacks that deepened an economic slump.

## Author: What's in the cup counts

By John Van Nostrand  
Free Press Publisher

Should a cup of tea spill Saturday at Heartland Christian School's spring tea, it will match the theme of the guest speaker's speech — tea.

Danae Dobson, daughter of Focus on the Family founder Dr. James Dobson, will speak at 2 p.m. at the school at 1995 W. Fourth St. in Colby. The title of her speech "Don't Bump My Cup," is a parable that relates to Biblical scripture.

"In First Samuel, it states man looks at the outward appearance and God looks at the heart," Danae said via telephone from her Southern California home. "Man looks at the cup and God looks at the content. That occurs when we spill over."

Dobson said various events cause people's proverbial cups to spill: financial problems, physical ailments and other life crisis.

"We don't always understand what kind of people we are until this occurs," she said. "We can't always help what we feel, but we choose what to do about them during bumps in life."

The Biblical references become even more literal for Dobson. In Matthew 23 Jesus Christ makes references to having clean cups.

"One point is that there is hardly a day we don't get bumped in some way either with hurt feelings, an offense or an embarrassment," she said.

Some of those bumps in life have been the focus of Dobson's book "Let's Talk." Released in 2003, the book is targeted toward girls 11 to 17 years old and how to handle spiritual and relational issues, dating, body image, parents and siblings, and growing in the Christian faith.

"Today's girls face issues every generation faces with body image and self confidence," she said. "But there are new areas of difficulty of no absolute truth, post modernism and that affects even Christian kids."

Dobson said her brother has heard comments from today's teenagers about abortion rights to the Bible's authority.

"That opens the door to anything and any weird, humanistic philosophy."

Dobson is not alone either. Dobson has talked with editors of Brio magazine, a branch of Focus on the Family. Those editors told Dobson they are receiving letters from youth asking why it is a sin to be homosexual, why can't everybody be accepted and questions about other religions.

"Some issues are more prevalent than in generations past," she said. "It's harder to be a teenager, harder than when I was a teen."

She declined to say how old she is.

Dobson said her publisher, Tyndale Books, called "Let's Active" a success. About 84,000 copies sold.

"It sold a lot more than I thought. I was expecting 25,000 to 30,000," she said. Tyndale has encouraged Dobson to write a sequel to "Let's Talk."

Dobson has already begun research for the book titled "Let's



Dobson