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"Preserving Our Past While Working On Our Future"

# Rothsay Regional Report

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## Farmers Are Making Good Progress In Their Fields

Area farmers, with some good weather now behind them, are shifting into high gear as they put their 2021 crop into the ground.

This year started out looking like a very early spring. But that promise was not fulfilled as the weather started out warm and then cooled off. That cool down was accompanied by rain and even snow.

There were a few farmers that went out and did a little tillage in late March just to say they had been in their fields that early. Just establishing braggin' rights at the cafe coffee table, you know.

There were a very few more who actually put some wheat in the ground nearly a month ago in the Rollag and Comstock areas while we had a warm spell going in early April. That early wheat seed has done little more than lay there as the ground cooled and warmed.

There are a few signs that the early wheat has germinated and is coming up but the stand should look better as long as it has been in the ground. Wheat is tough, but can it take a month in the ground? Will it really take off now with some mild temperatures and sunshine?

Easter week, the first week of April, showed us some gorgeous weather. After a winter that was virtually snow free, the temperatures shot up in early April to the middle 70s on a couple of days. Several days were well into the 60s. Those few days quickly got rid of the few remaining snowbanks in sheltered areas. The sunshine also warmed the black soil that had been exposed all winter.

But that early warmup came sooner than Federal Crop Insurance would cover most crops. Not very many farmers got too excited about getting into their fields much before mid-April.

They knew that as fast as it had warmed up it could cool off even faster. And that's exactly what it did do. The middle three weeks of April brought some very cool temperatures. There were a number of days when the temperatures did not get above the freezing mark. Most days during the middle of the month saw overnight lows in the 30s with daytime highs in the 40s. There were several mornings that started out in the teens and could not climb out of the 20s during the day.



It doesn't take long to seed a crop when the equipment is this big. This field was being seeded the last few days of April under nearly ideal conditions. There has been no big rush by farmers to get their crops planted into cold ground. There are some wheat fields in the

The good news during those mid-April weeks is that we finally got some moisture. Depending upon where you were, we got anywhere from one to three inches of rain scattered over several days. There was less as you moved north and west. There was more than that as you moved south and east, down towards Rothsay, Breckenridge and over into the lakes country. The gray days that followed the rains produced scattered flurries of snow but it never amounted to much short term accumulation.

As the final week of April dawned, we got one incredibly beautiful day on Thursday, April 22. That day brought us near 70-degree temperatures and moderate winds after a week of gradual warmup. But the false spring again did not live up to its promises and it was back into the 40s for the last weekend of April. The cold temps were accompanied by cold winds and even more snow flurries.

With the cool temperatures came a little more rain. It was not a lot, less than a half inch, but it stretched out over the weekend and into the last week of April. We have seen a gradual warmup again since then. This past week gave us mostly sunny skies with highs in the 50s and 60s with an occasional run up past 70

degrees. The first two days of May made a run at 80 degrees with lots of sunshine. Those conditions put nearly every farmer in the region out into their fields.

In an ideal year, if there is such a thing, farmers would like to be in their fields by mid-April. As popular as that idea is, it rarely materializes. More years than not, the first major seeding of the new crop year takes place somewhere shortly after May 1. That's when the wheat, sugarbeets and corn go in the ground.

The majority of this year's early crops will be in the ground before May 10, nearly perfect timing. Nobody gets very excited about planting soybeans until somewhere around Memorial Day. Beans don't handle frost well.

That May 1 date was quite close for everyone getting back into their fields. It might have been a few days earlier than that on some fields and out into May on other ground.

The problem, and the reason most farmers have been holding off on spring planting, has been the cool soil temperatures. No farmer is very eager to have seeds going in the ground before soil temperatures are right. Seeds planted in cold ground tend to germinate not at all or at different rates making for uneven stands of the plants in the field. That

Rollag, Comstock and Rothsay area that have been planted for nearly a month. Other fields have not had a wheel turn yet and have not had any tillage at all done. Those farmers are patiently waiting for soil temperatures to rise.

leads to different maturity levels, wet and dry grain in the same field at harvest.

It's still early and with the field conditions this year, it's not going to take very long to get the remaining crop into the ground. The soil right

now should be in ideal condition for most spring field work.

There had been virtually no rain since last August until we got that shot of moisture in mid and late April. That followed an open winter with virtually no snow. There were

no wet spots to farm around this spring.

Those conditions would normally be kind of scary but not this year. The summer of 2020 brought nearly ideal rains, about once a week with an inch or two falling at a time. The absence of rain for the past nine months would normally point to very dry soil conditions. Except for last year's sugarbeet ground, that's not really the case this year. We have been too wet for several years and we needed a little break from the moisture.

The lack of snow cover over the winter was of little concern to anyone. Most all of that moisture would have run off during the spring thaw anyway.

Even after the recent light rain showers we have experienced, the surface of the fields looks dry from the roadside and perhaps even a little dusty. But that's not really the case. A pass over the ground with tillage equipment reveals decent moisture just below the soil surface. It's almost perfect planting conditions right now. With today's big equipment, a lot of acres can be tilled and seeded in a single day.

Farmers this spring are looking

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They are detested by just about everyone who has had anything to do with them, especially farmers bouncing across rough CRP land or clogging a sickle mower with dirt. Pocket gophers are digging like crazy and have had a whole month head start this year to raise mounds of fresh dirt. Their fresh earthen mounds can be seen in freshly seeded fields or in stands of alfalfa, their favorite. Pocket gophers and trawls keep young farm boys and girls busy this time of year collecting the bounty on the little rodents.

## Beauty And The Beast Production Put On By Students



Cast members of the Beauty and the Beast production are, left to right, top row - Allison Phillips, Claire Metzger, Andrea Phillips, Josh Honer, Ethan Bennett, Katie Reber, Madison Tillman, Zachary Christ, Wylie Brenden, Abby Honer;

Front Row - Karen Phillips, Miranda Marquardt, Siri Klossner, Wesley Phillips, Mason Heidecker, William Phillips, Sam Heidecker, Lauren Reber, McKenzie Tillman, Grace Carlsrud, Isabelle Larson, Emerson Nelson and Heather Reber.

**By: Abby Honer**  
This year the Rothsay High School performed Beauty and the Beast by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, Tim Rice, and Linda Woolverton.

Playing two leading roles this year was senior Ethan Bennett. He took on the roles of Gaston and The Beast. Sophomore Katie Reber played Belle, sophomore Madison Tillman played Lumiere, freshman Zachary Christ played Cogsworth, eighth grader Josh Honer played Lefou, eighth grader Claire Metzger played Mrs. Potts. Eighth grader Andrea Phillips played Chip, eighth

grader Allison Phillips played Babette, sophomore Wylie Brenden played Maurice, freshman Miranda Marquardt played Monsieur D'Arque, junior Abby Honer played the Wardrobe.

Townpeople, Silly Girls, Guards, Silverware, and Condiments were played by Siri Klossner, Lauren Reber, McKenzie Tillman, Mason Heidecker, Wesley Phillips, William Phillips, and Sam Heidecker. The stage crew included Isabelle Larson, Grace Carlsrud, Emerson Nelson, and Mia Rivers.

Heather Reber and Karen Phillips were co-directors of the musical this year. Mrs. Phillips also played piano

for the production.

When asked about the musical this year Heather Reber said, "This year's musical cast was given a tough challenge of putting Beauty and the Beast together in just four weeks. I couldn't be prouder of the work this group of students did in that time frame. Not only did they get the work done, they did it really well!"

Ethan Bennett played the roles of both the Beast and Gaston and did phenomenal. Ethan was our only senior this year and will be greatly missed, as he has been a strong participant in the musicals throughout his high school career.

Alongside Ethan were several students who brought a lot of talent to make the show so remarkable. I enjoyed watching this group develop each and every rehearsal, making the final performances spectacular. I look forward to working with them in the upcoming years!"

The Ag Construction Class and John Reber helped construct set pieces for the musical. On Thursday, April 15 the musical was performed for the school but only Juniors and Seniors were allowed into the gym to watch, the rest of the school watched over zoom.

On April 16 and April 18 they put on two more performances for

the public with limited seating and it was also live-streamed on YouTube.

Ethan Bennett commented on his last performance for high school, "I was very happy this year having The Beauty and the Beast as my final high school musical. I loved working with everyone and am very thankful for Mrs. Reber and Mrs. Phillips putting everything together as well as dedicating their time to all that they did for the performance."

The cast was required to wear masks and social distance as best

they could backstage. This year because the basketball seasons went longer than usual they cast was only given four weeks to prepare compared to the usual six or seven weeks.

Despite the limited time the production went very well. Katie Reber said, "It was my first time being the lead and I really enjoyed it. I felt like this was one of our best plays we have ever put on, and we did it in such a short amount of time. It was a wonderful thing to be a part of."



Josh Honer, back left, played the role of Gaston's best friend, Lefou. Playing Gaston, red shirt and the role of the Beast was Ethan Bennett. Katie Reber played the part of Belle.