



Eastern Idaho: Higher Rainfall Dryland

Hard White Spring Wheat

Ben Eborn, Jon Hogge and Justin Hatch

Introduction to Costs & Returns Estimates

The University of Idaho Extension produces crop costs and returns estimates every other year. The overall goal of this project is to provide the Idaho agricultural industry with an unbiased and consistently calculated estimate of the cost of producing various crops and to track the change in production costs per acre and per unit over time.

The University of Idaho's costs and returns estimates are based on economic costs, not just accounting costs. All resources are valued at a market rate or "opportunity cost". Input prices are taken from the U of I's annual survey of agricultural supply companies. The selling price is a historical average, not a current year's price. Production practices are based on data from growers, crop consultants, and extension personnel throughout Idaho. Although production practices may be similar for individual farms, each farm has a unique set of resources with different levels of productivity, different production problems, and therefore different costs. Farm size, crop rotation, age and type of equipment, and the quality and intensity of management are all crucial factors that influence costs. The cost of production estimates show the typical or representative production costs by region based on documented production practices. These production costs are not area averages, rather they are based on model farms for four areas of the state.

University of Idaho costs and returns estimates can be used as a management tool to help producers in three ways:

1. **Templates.** Excel spreadsheets have been created by the University of Idaho to make enterprise budgeting and record keeping an easy task. You can start by substituting our costs and returns estimates with your own numbers. You can also enter them in the "Your Cost" column.
2. **Marketing.** Estimating production costs on a per acre or per unit basis can help you calculate your farm's break-even prices. Knowing your break-even price to cover operating costs and total costs can help with contract negotiations and selling on the open market.
3. **Benchmarks.** The University of Idaho costs and returns estimates are based on a typical or model farm and are calculated annually using consistent methodology. You can use these estimates as benchmarks by comparing your own total costs or specific cost categories to our estimates. This is a good way to find strengths and weaknesses in your production practices.

It's important to remember, just because your production costs are similar to our estimates, that isn't necessarily a good thing. Our model farms are also typically unprofitable! Average producers usually don't make an economic profit (which includes opportunity costs and non-cash costs such as depreciation). Being profitable requires fine-tuned management and a competitive advantage that the average producer doesn't have. (Being average is not okay in farming)



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Background and Assumptions

The University of Idaho's costs and returns estimates are based on economic costs, not accounting costs. All resources are valued at a market rate or "opportunity cost". Input prices are taken from the U of I's annual survey of agricultural supply companies. The selling price is a historical average, not a current year's price. The cost estimate shown here is representative of growing dryland spring wheat in the higher rainfall areas of eastern Idaho, typically greater than 15 inches annually. Production practices are based on data from farmers, crop consultants, and extension personnel in eastern Idaho. Production practices most closely represent those in Caribou, Fremont, Madison, and Bonneville counties. Although production practices may be similar for individual farms, each farm has a unique set of resources with different levels of productivity, different production problems, and therefore different costs. Farm size, crop rotation, age and type of equipment, and the quality and intensity of management are all crucial factors that influence production costs.

The Model Farm

The model farm for this costs and returns estimate is a 2,500-acre dryland farm following a typical continuous cropping rotation that includes spring barley and spring wheat. The rotation can vary by field and moisture availability. The assumed acreage for the enterprise budgets includes 1,000 acres planted to spring wheat and 1,500 acres planted to spring malting barley.

Production Practices

The field is disked in the fall just after the previous grain crop is harvested. The ground is also sprayed with glyphosate in the fall to control weeds and volunteer grain. Most fertilizer is custom applied in the spring and incorporated with a field cultivator

prior to planting. In April wheat is planted and a starter fertilizer is applied using an air-seeder drill. A two-way tank mix herbicide to control broadleaf weeds and wild oats is ground applied in late May or early June. No post-planting insecticides or fungicides are included because treatment is infrequent and unpredictable. Wheat is harvested by the farm operator in August and hauled to an elevator and sold. Storage costs are not included.

Machinery

Equipment used to produce spring grain is shown in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 lists the equipment and their hourly operating and ownership costs, while Table 5 lists the equipment and their annual ownership costs. Machinery ownership cost (capital recovery) is based on 75% of the replacement cost of a new piece of equipment, except for trucks. Field truck prices are for a used vehicle with a new bed.

Capital recovery combines depreciation and interest into a single value. Equipment capital recovery (depreciation and interest) is calculated as a cost per acre. This non-cash overhead is shown in the lower part of Table 1. It comes from the Budget Planner program and is automatically calculated using the information from Table 4 and takes into account the hours used and the number of acres for each piece of machinery. To keep machinery prices current between years in which a comprehensive survey is conducted, machinery prices are adjusted using USDA's Farm Machinery Prices Paid Index. Equipment prices are collected approximately every five years.

The University of Idaho uses the budget generator program *Budget Planner* from the University of California-Davis to produce the various tables shown in this publication. Machinery operating and ownership costs are calculated based on

engineering equations in this program. Machinery operating costs include fuel, lubricants and repairs.

Labor and Management

The cost of labor used in this study includes a base wage, plus a percentage to account for various payroll taxes (FICA, SUTA & FUTA), and workman’s compensation, as well as benefits such as paid vacation/personal leave days, health insurance and bonuses. Labor is classified by the type of work performed. Labor classifications, labor rates and payroll overhead are shown below.

Labor Values

Labor Class	Base Rate	Payroll Overhead	Effective Rate
General Farm Labor	\$14.00	15%	\$17.55
Truck Drivers	\$14.00	15%	\$17.55
Equipment Operators	\$18.00	25%	\$20.50

Based on the speed, width and overall field efficiency, *Budget Planner* calculates equipment operator labor hours for all field operations except those performed on a custom basis. Custom operations are listed separately. General farm labor accounts for extra field labor used during planting or harvest. A management fee based on approximately 5% of the total production costs is included. Prior to 2013, the basis of the 5% charge was expected revenue.

Capital, Land and Overhead Costs

Interest on operating capital is charged from the time an input is applied until harvest and is calculated at a nominal rate of 7.00 percent. Interest on intermediate term capital, primarily equipment, is calculated using a nominal rate of 6.75 percent. A general overhead charge, calculated at approximately 2.5 percent of operating expenses, is included to cover unallocated whole-farm costs such as office expenses, legal and accounting fees, cell phones, internet service and utilities. Irrigation power is not included as part of general farm utilities.

Land rent is based on a one-year cash lease for grain.

Budget Format

In addition to the Background and Assumption pages, this publication has six tables presenting a variety of cost and returns information.

Table 1 shows both expected revenue, based on a specified yield and price, and expenses. Expenses are broken into two main categories: operating and ownership. Operating expenses are those that typically vary with the level of production and involve inputs that are used in a single production cycle. Ownership expenses include a systematic cost recovery over the useful life for inputs used in the production process that have a useful life of more than one year. Machinery and land fall into this category. Operating inputs are organized by category. In addition to the cost per unit and cost per acre for each input, a total cost is given for each category. Table 1 also gives a total of all operating, ownership and total costs per acre, as well as these same categories on a yield basis (per bushel, cwt, ton, etc.).

Table 2 has most of the same cost information presented in Table 1, but the data is organized by operation for both pre-harvest and harvest costs. Operations can define a single activity, such as seed hauling, or multiple activities as in the case of tillage. The quantity of labor is shown for each operation. The cash costs per acre for labor, machinery costs, materials and custom are also specified. Cash overhead expenses are listed separately as are the non-cash overhead.

Table 3 is a monthly cash flow of expenses based on when the operation occurs and when inputs are applied. Field operations are classified as pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest.

Table 4 lists the equipment used to produce this crop and the costs per hour to operate this equipment. Total annual hours of use for the current crop and for all crops on the farm is also shown.

Table 5 lists the purchase price and salvage value of equipment used to produce this crop, as well as annual capital recovery and cash overhead expenses.

Table 6 provides a ranging analysis, sometimes referred to as a sensitivity analysis. It shows how the costs and returns per acre will vary as the yield and/or price ranges above and below the base values from Table 1.

Authors

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Disclaimer

The practices and chemicals specified in the publication are not recommendations. Always read and follow the directions printed on the pesticide label. Due to constantly changing pesticide laws and labels, some pesticides may have been cancelled or had certain uses prohibited. The use of trade names for various products simplifies presentation of this material and should not be considered an endorsement, nor is any criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

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TABLE 1. COSTS AND RETURNS PER ACRE TO PRODUCE HARD WHITE WHEAT

	Quantity/ Acre	Unit	Price or Cost/Unit	Value or Cost/Acre	Your Cost
GROSS RETURNS					
Hard White Wheat	50.00	bu	4.75	237.50	
TOTAL GROSS RETURNS	50.00	bu		237.50	
OPERATING COSTS					
Seed:					18.20
Wheat Seed: HWS	70.00	lb	0.26	18.20	
Fertilizer:					51.18
Dry Nitrogen - Pre-plant	84.00	lb	0.42	35.28	
Sulfur	15.00	lb	0.22	3.30	
Liquid Nitrogen	6.00	lb	0.50	3.00	
Liquid P2O5	20.00	lb	0.48	9.60	
Pesticides/Chemicals:					25.04
Roundup Power Max 4.5	16.00	fl oz	0.15	2.40	
Ammonium Sulfate	3.00	lb	0.70	2.10	
Bronate Advanced	1.20	pint	5.50	6.60	
Axial XL	16.40	fl oz	0.85	13.94	
Custom:					24.85
Custom Fertilize: 0 - 400 lbs	1.00	acre	7.35	7.35	
Custom Haul: wheat	50.00	bu	0.35	17.50	
Other:					12.00
Crop Insurance	1.00	acre	12.00	12.00	
Labor					23.04
Equipment Operator Labor	0.80	hrs	22.50	18.04	
General Farm Labor	0.28	hrs	17.55	5.00	
Machinery					30.12
Fuel-Gas	0.83	gal	3.15	2.62	
Fuel-Diesel	4.39	gal	2.90	12.73	
Fuel-Road Diesel	0.18	gal	3.40	0.62	
Lube				2.40	
Machinery Repair				11.75	
Interest on Operating Capital @ 7.00%				6.20	
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/ACRE				190.62	
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/BU				3.81	
NET RETURNS ABOVE OPERATING COSTS				46.88	

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TABLE 1. CONTINUED

	Quantity/ Acre	Unit	Price or Cost/Unit	Value or Cost/Acre	Your Cost
CASH OVERHEAD COSTS					
General Overhead				4.00	
Land Rent				55.00	
Management Fee				16.00	
Property Taxes				0.00	
Property Insurance				1.30	
Investment Repairs				0.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/ACRE				76.30	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/BU				1.53	
TOTAL CASH COSTS/ACRE				266.93	
TOTAL CASH COSTS/BU				5.34	
NET RETURNS ABOVE CASH COSTS				-29.43	
NON-CASH OVERHEAD COSTS (Capital Recovery)					
Equipment				49.36	
TOTAL NON-CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/ACRE				49.36	
TOTAL NON-CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/BU				0.99	
TOTAL COST/ACRE				316.29	
TOTAL COST/BU				6.33	
NET RETURNS ABOVE TOTAL COST				-79.29	

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TABLE 2. COSTS PER ACRE TO PRODUCE HARD WHITE WHEAT

Operation	Operation	Cash and Labor Costs per Acre					Total Cost	Your Cost
	Time (Hrs/A)	Labor Cost	Fuel	Lube & Repairs	Material Cost	Custom/Rent		
Preharvest:								
Tillage	0.12	5.32	5.48	2.86	0.00	0.00	13.66	
Ground Spray	0.04	1.74	0.83	0.50	4.50	0.00	7.57	
Crop Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	
Fertilizer Application	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	38.58	7.35	45.93	
Seed Hauling	0.01	0.27	0.11	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.47	
Plant	0.06	2.94	2.46	4.57	30.80	0.00	40.77	
Applying Herbicides	0.04	1.74	0.83	0.50	20.54	0.00	23.61	
Pickup Use	0.25	6.75	2.62	0.91	0.00	0.00	10.29	
Service Truck	0.06	1.62	0.51	0.19	0.00	0.00	2.32	
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS	0.57	20.38	12.84	9.63	106.42	7.35	156.63	
Harvest:								
Harvest	0.10	2.65	3.13	4.51	0.00	17.50	27.80	
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS	0.10	2.65	3.13	4.51	0.00	17.50	27.80	
Interest on Operating Capital at 7.00%							6.20	
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/ACRE	0.67	23.04	15.98	14.14	106.42	24.85	190.62	

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TABLE 2. CONTINUED

Operation	Operation	Cash and Labor Costs per Acre					Total Cost	Your Cost
	Time (Hrs/A)	Labor Cost	Fuel	Lube &Repairs	Material Cost	Custom/ Rent		
CASH OVERHEAD:								
General Overhead							4.00	
Land Rent							55.00	
Management Fee							16.00	
Property Taxes							0.00	
Property Insurance							1.30	
Investment Repairs							0.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/ACRE							76.30	
TOTAL CASH COSTS/ACRE							266.93	
NON-CASH OVERHEAD:								
		<u>Per Producing Acre</u>		<u>Annual Cost Capital Recovery</u>				
Equipment		454.72		49.36			49.36	
TOTAL NON-CASH OVERHEAD COSTS							49.36	
TOTAL COSTS/ACRE							316.29	

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TABLE 3. MONTHLY COSTS PER ACRE TO PRODUCE HARD WHITE WHEAT

	SEP 14	OCT 14	NOV 14	DEC 14	JAN 15	FEB 15	MAR 15	APR 15	MAY 15	JUN 15	JUL 15	AUG 15	SEP 15	Total
Preharvest:														
Tillage	8.59							5.07						13.66
Ground Spray		7.57												7.57
Crop Insurance								12.00						12.00
Fertilizer Application								45.93						45.93
Seed Hauling								0.47						0.47
Plant								40.77						40.77
Applying Herbicides									23.61					23.61
Pickup Use	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	10.29
Service Truck	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	2.32
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS	9.56	8.54	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	105.22	24.58	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	156.63
Harvest:														
Harvest													27.80	27.80
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	27.80	27.80
Interest on Operating Capital @7.00%	0.06	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.75	0.89	0.90	0.90	0.91	1.08	6.20
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/ACRE	9.62	8.65	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.10	1.10	105.97	25.47	1.87	1.87	1.88	29.84	190.62
CASH OVERHEAD														
General Overhead	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	4.00
Land Rent							55.00							55.00
Management Fee	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.23	16.00
Property Taxes														0.00
Property Insurance								1.30						1.30
Investment Repairs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD COSTS	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	56.54	2.84	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	76.30
TOTAL CASH COSTS/ACRE	11.15	10.19	2.62	2.62	2.63	2.64	57.64	108.81	27.01	3.40	3.41	3.42	31.38	266.93

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TABLE 4. HOURLY EQUIPMENT COSTS

Yr	Description	Hard White Wheat	Total	Cash Overhead			Operating		Total Oper.	Total Costs/Hr.
		Hours Used	Hours Used	Capital Recovery	Insur- ance	Taxes	Lube& Repairs	Fuel		
15	Truck 10-Wheeler	10	75	74.52	2.40	0.00	8.89	11.32	20.22	97.13
15	Service Truck	60	80	41.85	1.24	0.00	3.12	8.50	11.62	54.71
15	Sprayer - 50' 1,000 gallon Tank	73	185	15.37	0.33	0.00	8.82	0.00	8.82	24.52
15	Tandem Disk - 26'	75	200	30.59	0.70	0.00	12.83	0.00	12.83	44.12
15	F. Cultivator -36'	41	125	43.50	1.14	0.00	16.63	0.00	16.63	61.28
15	Tractor 300 HP WT	128	300	64.33	2.03	0.00	9.50	42.92	52.42	118.79
15	Tractor 145 HP - Used	80	200	30.16	0.95	0.00	4.61	20.76	25.37	56.48
15	Tractor 255 HP Rubber Track	67	200	92.81	3.05	0.00	7.97	36.48	44.45	140.31
15	Air Seeder Grain Drill 35'	61	165	121.50	2.70	0.00	65.91	0.00	65.91	190.12
15	Pickup 2 - 3/4 ton	100	800	8.74	0.16	0.00	3.65	10.49	14.14	23.04
15	Pickup 1 - 3/4 ton	150	800	8.74	0.16	0.00	3.65	10.49	14.14	23.04
15	SP Combine: 30' Dryland	108	300	133.27	3.12	0.00	41.75	29.00	70.75	207.14

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TABLE 5. WHOLE FARM ANNUAL EQUIPMENT, INVESTMENT, AND BUSINESS OVERHEAD COSTS

ANNUAL EQUIPMENT COSTS

Yr	Description	Price	Yrs Life	Salvage Value	Capital Recovery	Cash Overhead		Total
						Insur- ance	Taxes	
15	Truck 10-Wheeler	75,000.00	25	5,000.00	6,209.58	200.00	0.00	6,409.58
15	Service Truck	41,000.00	20	3,000.00	3,720.03	110.00	0.00	3,830.03
15	Sprayer - 50' 1,000 gallon Tank	22,000.00	8	4,967.30	3,160.15	67.42	0.00	3,227.57
15	Tandem Disk - 26'	53,200.00	10	9,407.96	6,798.18	156.52	0.00	6,954.70
15	F. Cultivator -36'	58,000.00	15	5,568.37	6,042.01	158.92	0.00	6,200.93
15	Tractor 300 HP WT	240,000.00	20	30,794.76	21,444.08	676.99	0.00	22,121.07
15	Tractor 145 HP - Used	75,000.00	20	9,623.36	6,701.28	211.56	0.00	6,912.83
15	Tractor 255 HP Rubber Track	250,000.00	25	21,141.94	20,625.28	677.85	0.00	21,303.13
15	Air Seeder Grain Drill 35'	165,000.00	9	32,970.43	22,275.28	494.93	0.00	22,770.20
15	Pickup 2 - 3/4 ton	42,000.00	5	13,750.00	7,771.98	139.38	0.00	7,911.36
15	Pickup 1 - 3/4 ton	42,000.00	5	13,750.00	7,771.98	139.38	0.00	7,911.36
15	SP Combine: 30' Dryland	350,000.00	10	66,020.78	44,422.68	1,040.05	0.00	45,462.73
TOTAL		1,413,200.00	-	215,994.91	156,942.51	4,072.99	0.00	161,015.49
90% of New Cost*		1,271,880.00	-	194,395.42	141,248.26	3,665.69	0.00	144,913.94

*Used to reflect a mix of new and used equipment

ANNUAL INVESTMENT COSTS

Description	Price	Yrs Life	Salvage Value	Capital Recovery	Cash Overhead			Total
					Insur- ance	Taxes	Repairs	
INVESTMENT								
TOTAL INVESTMENT	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

ANNUAL BUSINESS OVERHEAD COSTS

Description	Units/ Farm	Unit	Price/ Unit	Total Cost
General Overhead	1000	acre	4.00	4,000.00
Land Rent	1000	acre	55.00	55,000.00
Management Fee	1000	acre	16.00	16,000.00

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TABLE 6. RANGING ANALYSIS - HARD WHITE WHEAT

COSTS PER ACRE AND PER BU AT VARYING YIELDS TO PRODUCE HARD WHITE WHEAT

	YIELD(BU)						
	44.00	46.00	48.00	50.00	52.00	54.00	56.00
OPERATING COSTS/ACRE:							
Preharvest	156.63	156.63	156.63	156.63	156.63	156.63	156.63
Harvest	27.80	27.80	27.80	27.80	27.80	27.80	27.80
Interest on Operating Capital @ 7.00%	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/ACRE	190.62	190.62	190.62	190.62	190.62	190.62	190.62
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS/BU	4.33	4.14	3.97	3.81	3.67	3.53	3.40
CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/ACRE	76.30	76.30	76.30	76.30	76.30	76.30	76.30
TOTAL CASH COSTS/ACRE	266.93	266.93	266.93	266.93	266.93	266.93	266.93
TOTAL CASH COSTS/BU	6.07	5.80	5.56	5.34	5.13	4.94	4.77
NON-CASH OVERHEAD COSTS/ACRE	49.36	49.36	49.36	49.36	49.36	49.36	49.36
TOTAL COSTS/ACRE	316.29	316.29	316.29	316.29	316.29	316.29	316.29
TOTAL COSTS/BU	7.19	6.88	6.59	6.33	6.08	5.86	5.65

Net Return Per Acre Above Operating Costs For Hard White Wheat

PRICE (\$/bu)	YIELD (bu/acre)						
Hard White Wheat	44.00	46.00	48.00	50.00	52.00	54.00	56.00
5.00	29.38	39.38	49.38	59.38	69.38	79.38	89.38
5.25	40.38	50.88	61.38	71.88	82.38	92.88	103.38
5.50	51.38	62.38	73.38	84.38	95.38	106.38	117.38
5.75	62.38	73.88	85.38	96.88	108.38	119.88	131.38
6.00	73.38	85.38	97.38	109.38	121.38	133.38	145.38
6.25	84.38	96.88	109.38	121.88	134.38	146.88	159.38
6.50	95.38	108.38	121.38	134.38	147.38	160.38	173.38

Net Return Per Acre Above Cash Costs For Hard White Wheat

PRICE (\$/bu)	YIELD (bu/acre)						
Hard White Wheat	44.00	46.00	48.00	50.00	52.00	54.00	56.00
5.00	-46.93	-36.93	-26.93	-16.93	-6.93	3.07	13.07
5.25	-35.93	-25.43	-14.93	-4.43	6.07	16.57	27.07
5.50	-24.93	-13.93	-2.93	8.07	19.07	30.07	41.07
5.75	-13.93	-2.43	9.07	20.57	32.07	43.57	55.07
6.00	-2.93	9.07	21.07	33.07	45.07	57.07	69.07
6.25	8.07	20.57	33.07	45.57	58.07	70.57	83.07
6.50	19.07	32.07	45.07	58.07	71.07	84.07	97.07

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TABLE 6. RANGING ANALYSIS CONTINUED

Net Return Per Acre Above Total Costs For Hard White Wheat

PRICE (\$/bu)	YIELD (bu/acre)						
Hard White Wheat	44.00	46.00	48.00	50.00	52.00	54.00	56.00
5.00	-96.29	-86.29	-76.29	-66.29	-56.29	-46.29	-36.29
5.25	-85.29	-74.79	-64.29	-53.79	-43.29	-32.79	-22.29
5.50	-74.29	-63.29	-52.29	-41.29	-30.29	-19.29	-8.29
5.75	-63.29	-51.79	-40.29	-28.79	-17.29	-5.79	5.71
6.00	-52.29	-40.29	-28.29	-16.29	-4.29	7.71	19.71
6.25	-41.29	-28.79	-16.29	-3.79	8.71	21.21	33.71
6.50	-30.29	-17.29	-4.29	8.71	21.71	34.71	47.71