



Wasps Are Popular Weapon  
In Protecting Crops • 4

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## Hard Harvest

### USDA: Drought Cut Corn Crop By 25%



Last summer's intense drought severely cut into corn yields both in the area and across the nation's breadbasket. This photo of a withered cornfield west of Yankton was taken on Aug. 1, 2012, just as corn would normally be tasseling and preparing for harvest.

P&D FILE PHOTO: KELLY HERTZ

## However, Corn Harvest Was Still 8th Largest Ever

BY DAVID PITT  
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — For farmers like Earl Williams, last year couldn't have started out better or ended much worse as a warm, sunny spring that let him plant early gave way to record heat and drought that devastated his corn.

Williams ended up with about two-thirds of the crop he expected, and a U.S. Department of Agriculture report released Friday showed most corn farmers didn't fare much better. The final report on the 2012 growing season showed farmers harvested 10.78 billion bushels of corn, less than three-fourths of what the agency predicted last spring.

While the report covers many other crops, much of the attention has been on corn, which is widely used as an ingredient in many foods, provides feed for livestock and is mixed with gasoline as ethanol. The crop also was the hardest hit by the drought that settled in just as the

plants were maturing.

Williams, 62, usually gets 150 to 160 bushels per acre on his 1,000-acre farm near Rockford in northern Illinois. Last year, he got about 100, and he's been looking at the sky ever since, hoping for heavy rain or snow to break the drought that still grips the region.

"I've yet to run into anyone around me that wasn't ready for 2013 to come," he said.

Yet things could have been worse. Because demand remained strong and corn prices remained high — above \$7 a bushel for much of the summer and fall — the 2012 crop was the most valuable ever produced, with a value of around \$85 billion, said Chad Hart, an agriculture economist with Iowa State University.

The harvest also was the eighth largest in U.S. history, a reflection of a big increase in recent years in the number of acres planted and crop technology that has

■ **"For us, winter's just not a time of year to make much progress with drought. Our next hope is a wetter spring."**

HARRY HILLAKER

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton County began holding a drug court this month that officials hope will help habitual criminals with substance abuse issues become sober and productive members of society. Among those involved with organizing the drug court are (from left to right) Lt. Todd Brandt of the Yankton Police Department; Luci Youngberg, a public defense attorney; Sharon Kraft, the drug court support specialist; Chuck Frieberg, the chief Yankton Court Services officer; and Alan Swartz, a court services officer. Not pictured are Magistrate Judge Tami Bern, Yankton County Deputy State's Attorney John Billings and Kristen Madson, a drug and alcohol counselor with Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health.

## Drug Court Offers A New Focus

### New Program Places The Emphasis On Rehabilitation

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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Regular observers of judicial proceedings would probably have been taken aback Wednesday when the sound of applause echoed around the large courtroom at the Yankton County Courthouse and Safety Center.

A somber atmosphere typically accompanies court proceedings. But this was not a typical court proceeding.

On Wednesday, Yankton County held the second session of its weekly drug court, an initiative local officials hope will reduce recidivism and help participants overcome drug addiction.

As evidenced by the applause, drug court has a more informal and supportive atmosphere than traditional court.

"I think it's been positive so far. I'm impressed with some of the responses that the clients have given us," said Lt. Todd Brandt with the Yankton Police Department. "I'm optimistic this will succeed."

A drug court team began training and planning for the January implementation in Yankton County last spring. Among its members are court services officers, a defense attorney, a prosecutor, a police officer, a treatment provider and a judge.

Yankton County is the fifth location in the state to administer alternative sentencing for drug or drunk driving offenses. Yankton County could add a driving under the

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## Stories On Missing Woman Topped P&D's 2012 Web Site

From P&D Staff Reports

What were *Press & Dakotan* readers looking at on our website during 2012?

Three of the most viewed stories revolved around the tragic case of a missing Lesterville woman. Rita Renee Kubal, 43, went missing March 30.

She was found April 2 in an abandoned garage on a farm between Tyndall and Scotland. No foul play was suspected in the case.

The three stories about Kubal's disappearance were viewed 11,192 times, 7,076 times and 6,479 times,

respectively, and came in first, third and fifth place among www.yankton.net's most-viewed pages.

In second place with 7,088 views was "YSD Superintendent: I'm 'Embarrassed' By Incident," which was about Joe Gertsema's arrest for driving under the influence in October. He eventually pleaded guilty to the charge.

In fourth place was "Voters Weigh In On YSD Opt-Out," which was about the February vote wherein Yankton School District voters said no to a two-year, \$1.4 million maximum opt-out proposal. It received 7,052 page views.



## Explanations Still Sought For Strange Lights West Of Yankton

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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The descriptions are different, but two witnesses said they saw something unusual in the skies around Yankton last week.

What they saw at 10:15 p.m. Jan. 3 remains a mystery to them.

Scott Snoozy lives along Rainbow Street in Riverside Acres and said he noticed what looked like police lights in the sky to the south of his location.

"Something fell off or fell behind it," he said. "When it disappeared to the south of me across the (Missouri River), I heard cows go nuts. Maybe it was a meteorite or satellite."

At approximately the same time, Julie Holst, who lives about eight miles northeast of Yankton, said she saw something strange, too.

"Our house sits up at a very high point on a ridge overlooking the James River, so we can see Yankton, Utica and Lesterville," she stated. "(My husband) Bill and I were watching the news when I saw this huge white flaming ball shooting directly down to the earth! I shouted and jumped up to look out the window because it was so big. It was careening downward towards the ground, but not so fast that I didn't get a 5-10-second look at it. From my view, it looked like it

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