Sugar content and tonnage are running ahead of last year's crop

Sugarbeet harvest is now near enough to completion that comparative figures can be released, Bill L. Phillips, senior vice president of operations for The Great Western Sugar Company, announced.

Harvest is expected to be virtually completed by November 1, he said, and except for isolated instances, tons-per-acre and average sugar content are running well ahead of last year's figures.

"Because of the excellent crop being brought in by our growers, and current sugar prices, this could be an outstanding year for beet producers and the Company," Phillips said.

In the northeast Colorado and Kansas area, approximately 77% of the beets have been harvested. Average yield per acre at 18 tons, and average sugar content at slightly over 16%, are both comparable to 1971 results. However, over-all district averages do not adequately reflect the excellent crop being harvested near Holyoke, Wray and other eastern Colorado areas because they include figures from the Goodland, Kan., area where extensive hail damage earlier in the season reduced yields.

In Nebraska, more than 90% of what appears to be the best sugarbeet crop ever produced in western Nebraska has now been brought in to the piling grounds and factories. Average yield per acre to date is 19.7 tons, more than a ton per acre better than last year's 18.5 average. Sugar content is averaging a little over 16.5%, up slightly from 1971. Total expected tonnage is estimated to be 1,315,000 this year, up substantially from last year's 1,120,000. In addition to the excellent crop, increased acreage has boosted the total figure.

"This has been an exceptionally clean harvest," Phillips commented, "and we want the growers to know how much we appreciate their efforts in making our processing job easier by delivering beets free from weeds, clods and other foreign materials."

Merle Riggs, agricultural manager at Ovid, estimates that 42,000 tons of beets were still in the ground in the area from Sedgwick to Lexington, Nebr., at the time of Monday's freeze. Approximately 88% of the crop had been harvested. Plans are being made to pick up all beets delivered after Monday as soon as possible. No delays, other than those caused by frozen ground and mechanical problems, are anticipated.

Riggs commented that this year's tonnage is exceptionally good and the sugar content is equally pleasing.