

# WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

JANUARY | 2019

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READY FOR THE  
2019 LEGISLATIVE  
SEASON**



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# WHEAT LIFE

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ASSOCIATION OF  
WHEAT GROWERS**

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# President's Perspective



## A load of legislative happenings

By Jeffrey Shawver

After more than a year of work on both the part of the agricultural industry and Congress, the 2018 Farm Bill passed the House and Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law by the president. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) applauds the members of our federal delegation for their support of this vital piece of legislation. Thank you Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. Thank you also to our representatives, Suzan DelBene, Rick Larsen, Jaime Herrera Beutler, Dan Newhouse, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Derek Kilmer, Pramila Jayapal, Dave Reichert, Adam Smith and Denny Heck. Your work and support on behalf of our members is very much appreciated.

I'm both relieved and excited that we've finally got some certainty and guidance in farming country. Over the past year, the officers and staff of WAWG have made multiple trips to Washington, D.C., to visit with members of Congress and the ag committees working on the farm bill to discuss the wheat industry's issues. I believe all of our hard work paid off, and our voices were heard. The farm bill includes legislation that we, along with our national organization, advocated for, including a change in what data the Farm Service Agency uses to determine program payments, as well as the chance to re-elect one's program choice. To read about some of the highlights of the 2018 Farm Bill, see page 12.

One of the main reasons WAWG was able to advocate so much in D.C. was because of our members. Membership dues provide a large part of the funding for our travels, as well as funding for our educational programs and outreach efforts. If you aren't a member of WAWG, your copy of this month's *Wheat Life* probably came with an extra cover touting the benefits of membership. Please consider joining. Your support, both in money and time, makes us more effective in advocating for you.

It wasn't just the folks in D.C. that were active last month. Legislators in Olympia also made some news. Gov. Inslee released his proposed budget, which includes establishing a stakeholder process to discuss removal of the lower Snake River dams to aid in orca recovery efforts. The governor also proposed a number of climate change policies—not a carbon tax—to phase out coal power and fossil fuels in the state. WAWG will be watching both of these efforts closely and advocating for our industry and farmers' livelihoods.

Speaking of advocating in Olympia, at the end of this month is our annual Olympia Days trip. This event was the first thing I participated in when I started my journey to becoming WAWG president. I went over as part of the Franklin County group six or seven years ago. I remember being a little nervous because I didn't know what to expect when speaking to our elected officials. After a few meetings, however, I realized they are just like you and I. They are most interested in protecting their constituents and helping them prosper and enjoy life. It was nice telling my story about how I got into farming and why I enjoy what I'm doing. Please consider joining us this year. Give the WAWG office a call at (509) 659-0610 to get the details.

I hope you all had a very merry holiday season and got to enjoy the company of family and friends. Now it's time to buckle down and go about the work of making sure our industry has the chance to grow and prosper in the coming year. ■

**Cover photo:** It's full steam ahead, legislatively speaking, for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. Learn about the legislative issues the association will be tackling this year on page 28. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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# WAWG MEMBERSHIP FORM

## Please check level of membership

- ☐ Student \$75
 ☐ Family \$200 (up to 2 members)
 ☐ Grower \$125
 ☐ Partnership \$500 (up to 5 partners)
 ☐ Landlord \$125
 ☐ Convention \$600
 ☐ Industry Associate \$150
 ☐ Lifetime \$2,500

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Farm or Business

Address

City

State Zip

Phone Fax

Email

County Affiliation (if none, write state)

### Circle all that apply:

☐ Producer
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Or call 877-740-2666 and use your credit card to enroll by phone.

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<b>Producer/Landowners (Voting Membership)</b>						
<b>Grower or Landlord \$125</b>	X	X	X			X
<b>Family \$200</b> (2 family members)	X	X	X			X
<b>Partnership \$500</b> (1-5 family members)	X	X	X	X		X
<b>Convention \$600</b> (2 individuals)	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Lifetime \$2,500</b> (1 individual)	X	X	X	X		X
<b>Non-Voting Membership</b>						
<b>Student \$75</b>	X	X	X			
<b>Industry Associate \$150</b>	X	X	X			

## WAWG's current top priorities are:

- ✓ Preserving the Snake River dams.
- ✓ Maintaining a safe and sound transportation system that includes rail, river and roads.
- ✓ Establishing favorable trade agreements.
- ✓ Fighting mandatory carbon emission regulations.
- ✓ Fighting unreasonable notification and reporting requirements for pesticide applications.

**If these issues are important to your operation, become a member today and help us educate our legislators and advocate for agriculture. We are making sure the wheat industry's voice is heard.**

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- Greensheet ALERTS • WAWG updates
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## WSU wheat breeder stops by county meetings

### Walla Walla County

The annual meeting of the Walla Walla wheat growers group last month started off with a presentation by Washington State University (WSU) winter wheat breeder Arron Carter. In his presentation, Carter talked about the effort to breed resistance to preharvest sprout and late maturity alpha-amylase, the two main causes of low falling numbers. He also talked about the different technologies that breeders are currently using, such as doubled haploid production and trait preselection. Besides low falling numbers, varieties are being bred for resistance to snow mold, stripe rust and Hessian fly, among others.

Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), talked about the current world wheat picture, the stocks-to-use ratio and World Trade Organization issues the U.S. is having with China. In marketing, the Pacific Asia region and Latin America are two areas the WGC is focusing their marketing efforts on.

Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), covered state and federal legislative priorities, including a possible state transportation funding package, removal of the lower Snake River dams to help orca recovery efforts, the farm bill and problems Eastern Washington farmers are having with incomplete National Agricultural Statistics Service data that is impacting farm program payments.

## Call for Olympia Days

\*\*\*\*Volunteers needed for county representation at Olympia Days\*\*\*\*

WAWG is looking for volunteers to attend Olympia Days Jan. 29-31, 2019. We will be making a large number of appointments with various legislators from both sides of the aisle and agencies, and we need county representation to make our meetings effective with clear messaging. Talking points are provided, and all meetings have at least two grower members and/or staff.

Please RSVP to Michelle ([michelle@wawg.org](mailto:michelle@wawg.org)) as soon as possible so that we can get a head count for the event.

### Agenda

**Jan. 29** - Arrive in Olympia and attend dinner at Mercato's Ristorante beginning at 5:30 p.m. for a briefing with our lobbyist, Diana Carlen.

**Jan. 30** - Hill visits all day. A reception with legislators will be held this evening at Anthony's Home Port Restaurant.

**Jan. 31** - Hill visits until noon. Travel home. ■

With tax season fast approaching, the final presentation, by Cade Weber and Jared King of Leffel, Otis & Warwick, focused on changes in the tax code and tax strategies farmers can take to reduce their corporate taxes.

### Whitman County

Carter, the WSU winter wheat breeder, was also a guest at last month's Whitman County meeting, where he answered questions and talked about Hessian fly in winter wheat. He said recent screening showed that the area's popular varieties are susceptible, and though the damage may be no more than a bushel or two per acre, having better resistance would reduce pressure on spring grains. He also talked about new winter varieties in the pipeline.

Growers also discussed weed pressure in fields caused by trucks transporting uncovered loads of straw. At November's Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, the county group purchased a Yeti Cooler to help support the Washington Wheat Foundation. They then donated the cooler to the Whitman County WSU Extension team.

In county business, letters will be going out to growers who are not members of WAWG to encourage them to get active and join. Ben Barstow has stepped down as county president, to be replaced by Randy Suess. Pete Wigen will continue as secretary/treasurer. The next Whitman County wheat growers meeting will be on Jan. 7. ■

## Second round of MFP payments announced; sign-up deadline approaching

At the direction of the president, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has launched the second and final round of trade mitigation payments aimed

at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities will now be eligible to receive Market Facilitation Program (MFP) payments for the second half of their 2018 production.

In anticipation of this announcement, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) met with senior officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and sent a letter to USDA reminding them of the ongoing damaging impacts that these tariffs have had on wheat growers and noting that a second round of assistance to producers is justified.

"NAWG continues to emphasize to both the USDA and OMB that the ongoing trade war with China has continued to harm wheat farmers, which is evident with there having been no sales to China since March," said Jimmie Musick, NAWG president and Sentinel, Okla., wheat farmer. "These retaliatory tariffs are not only harming growers through loss of sales, but are also placing pressure on wheat prices. Growers want new export markets and trade deals so that this sort of assistance isn't necessary." ▶



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In the letter, NAWG pointed out that wheat growers have lost around \$323 million in total sales to China. Additionally, wheat sales to Mexico have declined by 569,000 metric tons compared to the previous year, despite Mexico increasing overall wheat imports. This is an estimated loss of \$178 million and caused by Mexico's decision to source wheat imports from alternative markets amid uncertainty of trade agreements and unknown repercussions from Section 232 tariffs.

"We appreciate the administration's recognition that farmers have suffered economic damages resulting from tariff retaliation through MFP assistance," Musick said.

**The next WAWG board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 15, beginning at 10 a.m. in the Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash.**

Secretary Perdue announced in July that USDA would act to aid farmers in response to trade damage from unjustified retaliation. The

president directed Sec. Perdue to craft a short-term relief strategy to help protect agricultural producers while the administration worked on free, fair and reciprocal trade deals to open more markets to help American farmers compete globally. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has been administering MFP to provide the first payments to almond, corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, fresh sweet cherry and wheat producers since September 2018 for the first 50 percent of their 2018 production.

Producers need only sign up once for MFP to be eligible for the first and second payments. The MFP sign-up period runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at [farmers.gov/mfp](http://farmers.gov/mfp). Producers must complete an application by Jan. 15, 2019, but have until May 1, 2019, to certify their 2018 production.

For farmers who have already applied, completed harvest and certified their 2018 production, a second payment will be issued on the remaining 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for the specific commodity:

Corn .....	\$.01/bu
Dairy (milk).....	\$.12/cwt
Fresh Sweet Cherries .....	\$.16/lb
Pork .....	\$8/head
Soybeans .....	\$1.65/bu
Sorghum.....	\$.86/bu
Wheat .....	\$.14/bu

To apply, producers must certify to their total 2018 production for all farms. Supporting production records are

not required but can be provided. Supporting, verifiable records will be required for any producer later selected for spot check. A 2018 acreage report for the crop must be on file or the applicant must submit a "late-filed" report and pay a fee to process it. Evidence of the crop must still be present for a late-filed report.

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities;
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs; and
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds.

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015 and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations. ■

## Scholarship program accepting applications

America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, is again offering more than \$500,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and college students in rural communities who are looking to continue their education in an ag-related field of study and become the next generation of ag leaders.

Students can apply for a \$1,500 scholarship now through Feb. 6, 2019, and farmers will have the opportunity to endorse student applications through Feb. 13.

Students applying for a scholarship must be under the age of 23; be a high school senior or a full-time college student; have at least a 2.5 GPA; be pursuing or intending to pursue an ag-related degree in an eligible field of study; have two farmer endorsements; and meet any and all other program eligibility requirements as provided on the National FFA website at [ffa.org/participate/grants-and-scholarships/local-engagement-programs-scholarships/](http://ffa.org/participate/grants-and-scholarships/local-engagement-programs-scholarships/). ■

## How are we doing?

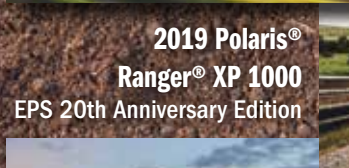
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# POLICY MATTERS

## Passing state budgets is top task of 2019 Legislative Session

By Diana Carlen  
WAWG Lobbyist

On Jan. 14, 2019, the Washington State Legislature will be back in session in Olympia for a “long” session that is scheduled to last 105 days. One of the primary tasks of legislators during a long session is to pass the state’s biennial budgets: operating, capital and transportation.

Democrats will control the agenda in Olympia after significantly increasing their margins in the November election. Democrats will control the Senate 28-21 and the House by 57-41.

On Dec. 13, 2018, the governor released his proposed operating, capital and transportation budgets for the 2019-2021 biennium beginning July 1, 2019. The governor’s proposed budget is a starting point in budget negotiations. The Senate and House will consider the governor’s budget and propose their own respective budgets during the legislative session and ultimately negotiate a final budget before the Legislature adjourns. The governor proposed a \$56.4 billion budget for 2019-2021, which is a 21 percent increase in spending from the current budget of \$44.6 billion. The increased spending in his budget proposal would pay for education, mental health, higher teacher and state employee salaries and environmental protections, including \$1.1 billion in spending to help save the threatened Southern Resident orca population.

To pay for the investments laid out in his budget, the governor proposes using a portion of the state’s budget reserves in combination with revenue from one new tax and changes to two current state taxes:

- A new capital gains tax on the sale of stocks, bonds and other assets. The state would apply a 9 percent tax to capital gains earnings above \$25,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for joint filers, starting in the second year of the biennium. Exemptions are provided for retirement accounts, homes, farms and forestry.
- Increasing the state business and occupation tax on services from 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent, which would generate about \$2.6 billion in the next biennium. This would apply to services provided by accountants, architects, attorneys, consultants and real estate agents.
- Changing the state’s real estate excise tax to help the state pay for court-ordered removal of fish passage



barriers. Currently, the state tax on all property sales is 1.28 percent, regardless of the sale price. Under the new graduated approach, the rate on lower-valued properties (under \$250,000) would be 0.75 percent, while the rate would be 2 percent for property sales over \$1 million and 2.5 percent for sales over \$5 million. The graduated rate would increase state real estate excise tax collections by about \$400 million in the next biennium.

Some key policy priorities laid out by the governor and Democrats that the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) will be following closely include protecting the lower Snake River dams and monitoring climate change policies proposed by the governor and key House Democrats. See more about these issues that WAWG will be monitoring on page 28.

Key priorities that WAWG will be supporting during the upcoming legislative session include:



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- **Pesticide safety.** Access to pesticides is essential to keeping Washington agriculture productive and globally competitive, and proper training is essential for keeping workers and neighbors safe during pesticide use. A recent legislative pesticide task force found that the Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) pesticide applicator safety training is effective, popular and underfunded to meet the existing demand. WAWG supports investing an additional \$1 million in funding for WSDA Pesticide Safety Training to help keep workers and communities safe and farms productive.
- **Completing the Washington State University (WSU) Global Animal Health Facility.** The WSU Pullman campus has already received partial funding last biennium for the Global Animal Health facility in the capital budget, but an additional \$36.4 million is needed to finish the project and maintain the only diagnostic lab in the state. WAWG supports completing this capital investment and appreciates that the governor's proposed budget includes this investment.
- **Enhancing short-line rail infrastructure.** Short-line railroads are an important part of how many Washington farmers get their products to market and are an essential piece of infrastructure for rural communities around the state. WAWG supports additional funding to rehabilitate and expand Washington's short-line rail system.
- **Soil Health Initiative.** Healthy soil is a foundational part of sustainable, productive agriculture across Washington. WAWG supports additional funding for the Soil Health Initiative to marshal long-term research, improved data and best management practices.

WAWG will be participating in their annual Olympia Days on Jan. 30-31 to educate members about the issues of importance to the agricultural community and looks forward to the opportunity to engage with the governor and legislators. ■

## Wheat growers, allies see farm bill through finish line

After more than a year of meeting with legislators and advocating for Washington farmers, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) was gratified to see Congress act quickly in a bipartisan manner to pass the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, otherwise known as the 2018 Farm Bill, last month. The bill was signed into law by President Trump right before Christmas.

"The passage of the 2018 Farm Bill brings certainty to our growers by providing a strong safety net through commodity programs and keeping crop insurance stable and affordable. It also restores funding of the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Access Program (MAP) that are critical to maintaining our overseas markets," said Jeffrey Shawver, WAWG president and a farmer from Connell, Wash. "Throughout this process, we had strong support from every member of Washington state's federal delegation, and we want to thank our senators and representatives for their engagement with our industry. We truly appreciate their understanding of the importance of the wheat industry to our state's economy."

All members of Washington state's federal delegation voted for the legislation.

The leadership and staff of WAWG made multiple trips to Washington, D.C., last year to make sure the wheat industry had a voice at the table. The final version of the farm bill included several of WAWG's top priorities that they advocated for, including giving growers the option to reselect farm programs throughout the life of the farm bill; allowing the Farm Service Agency to use Risk Management Agency data when available to help determine farm program payments; increasing the Conservation Reserve Program acreage cap to 27 million; increased funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program; and research funding for alternative methods of adjusting for quality losses.

"This legislation is a win for agriculture," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. "Our wheat farmers need the support provided by the farm bill to continue supplying the country and the world with the safest, most affordable food available, especially when they are dealing with uncertainty around trade and low commodity prices. We look forward to working with Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement this bill."

WAWG worked closely with the National Association of Wheat Growers to work with members of Congress and both the Senate and House ag committees to educate them on issues facing the wheat industry.

"The staff at the National Association of Wheat Growers worked tirelessly to represent our growers and provide feedback to Congress and the state organizations as the 2018 Farm Bill was being written. The wheat industry's leadership at the national level has never been stronger," Hennings concluded. Other important provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill include:

### Title 1-Commodities

- Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)-County, ARC-Individual and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) are reauthorized. ►





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- Farmers will have a re-election opportunity, on farm-by-farm and crop-by-crop basis, for the 2019 crop year, as well as a yearly election beginning in 2021.
- Any farm that was planted entirely to grass or pasture between Jan. 1, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2017, will be ineligible for farm program payments during the five-year period of the farm bill. This ineligibility applies to cropland that was idle or fallow during that period. Base acres and payment yields will be maintained on those farms.
- Owners of a farm will have a one-time opportunity to update PLC yields on a commodity-by-commodity basis on the farm for which the election is made (there are limitations on the yield update).
- A reference price provision enables both the ARC and PLC reference prices to increase if market prices improve.
- For counties in which a Risk Management Agency (RMA) crop insurance product is available, the RMA yield should be used when determining ARC program payments; if RMA data is not available, then the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has flexibility in determining other sources of data or can use the yield history of representative farms in the state, region or crop reporting district.
- The physical location of a farm will be used to determine which ARC county rate applies to that farm.
- USDA is required to publish separate irrigated and nonirrigated yields in each county.
- Counties that meet certain size requirements may be split into no more than two administrative units; this provision is limited to 25 counties nationwide.
- The bill maintains a hard cap of \$125,000 per individual and expands the definition of family members to include first cousins, nieces and nephews.
- The Adjusted Gross Income threshold for farm program eligibility is maintained at \$900,000.

## Title 2-Conservation

- The CRP acreage cap will gradually increase to 27 million acres.
- Continuous CRP and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sign-ups are limited to 8 million acres in FY19 increasing to 8.6 million acres in FY22.
- There are increased payments for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) high priority practices (determined by states), and the program is funded at \$1.75 billion in FY19 with funding increasing each year through FY2023.

- Current Conservation Stewardship Program contract holders that would be eligible to renew in FY2019 will be allowed to renew under the old program.

## Title 3-Trade

- MAP and FMD, along with Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) and Emerging Markets Program (EMP), were put under one umbrella program called the Priority Trade Promotion, Development and Assistance program. This new program has annual mandatory funding set at \$255 million. MAP is to receive no less than \$200 million annually, and FMD is to receive no less than \$34.5 million. A Priority Trade Fund will receive \$3.5 million per year, and the ag secretary will be given discretion to allocate among the programs.

## Title 7-Research

- The U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative received an increase in authorization from \$10 million to \$15 million. In addition, the bill specifies a limitation on indirect costs by any recipient of a program grant to be capped at 10 percent.

## Title 11- Crop insurance

- Cover crop termination will not affect the insurability of a subsequently planted insurable crop if the cover crop is terminated in accordance with parameters set in the bill.
- In a county in which summer fallow is an insurable practice, a cover crop in that county terminated in accordance with parameters set in the bill shall be considered as summer fallow for the purpose of insurance.
- Producers may establish a single enterprise unit by combining enterprise units in one or more other counties or all basic units and all optional units in one or more other counties.
- The Corporation shall carry out research and development regarding the establishment of alternative methods of adjusting for quality losses, including a method that does not impact the actual production history of a producer and/or a method that provides that, in circumstances in which a producer has suffered a quality loss to the insured crop of the producer that is insufficient to trigger an indemnity payment, the producer may elect to exclude that quality loss from the actual production history of the producer.

The farm bill also legalized the production of hemp. It did not include cuts to food stamps or impose work requirements on older workers or parents with young children. ■

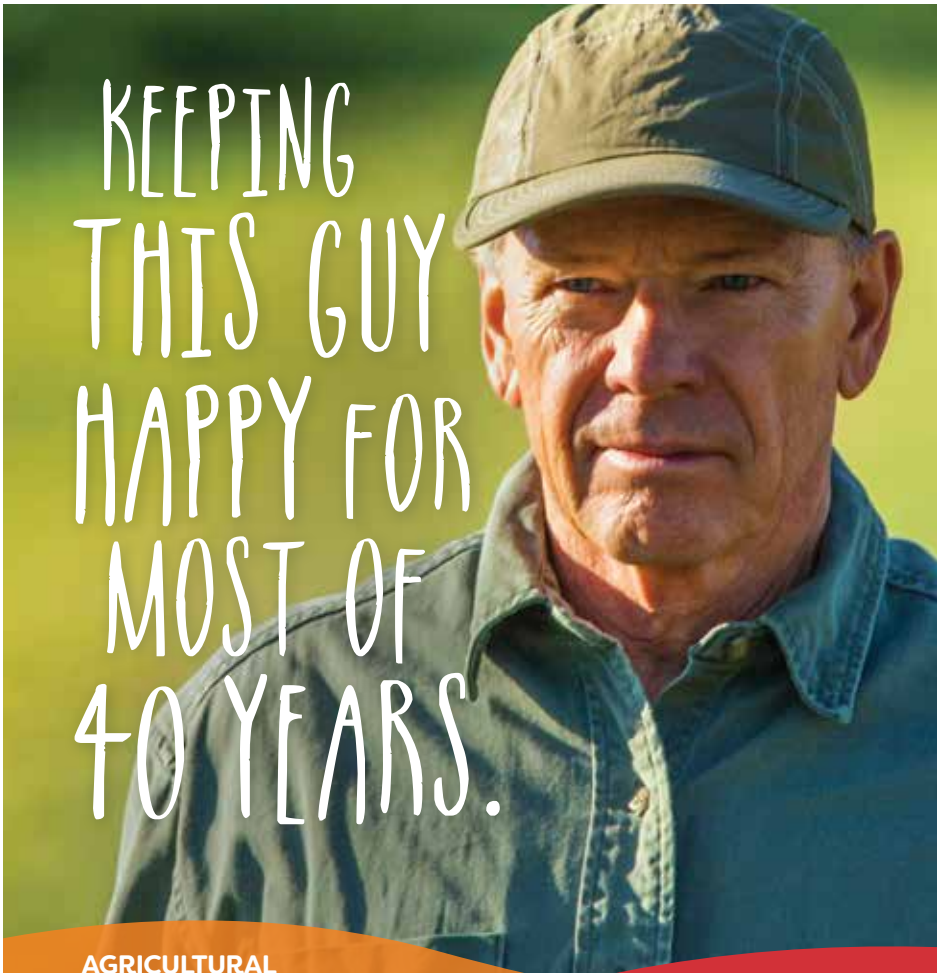
# Proposal provides clearer definition of WOTUS

Last month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers released a new proposed Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule which redefines the difference between federally protected waterways and state protected waterways.

"For the first time, we are clearly defining the difference between federally protected waterways and state protected waterways. Our simpler and clearer definition will help landowners understand whether a project on their property will require a federal permit or not, without spending thousands of dollars on engineering and legal professionals," said EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler in a press release.

Under the agencies' proposal, traditional navigable waters, tributaries to those waters, certain ditches, certain lakes and ponds, impoundments of jurisdictional waters and wetlands adjacent to jurisdictional waters would be federally regulated. It also details what are not "waters of the United States," such as features that only contain water during or in response to rainfall; groundwater; many ditches, including most roadside or farm ditches; prior converted cropland; stormwater control features; and waste treatment systems.

The agencies believe the proposed definition identifies waters that should be subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act while respecting the role of states and tribes in managing their own land and water resources. The proposal gives states and tribes more flexibility in determining how best to manage their land and water resources while protecting the nation's navigable waters. The agencies will take comment on the proposal for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register. ■



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## NWF ANNOUNCES NATIONAL WINNERS FOR 2018 WHEAT YIELD CONTEST

The National Wheat Foundation's (NWF) National Wheat Yield Contest offers growers the opportunity to compete with farmers from across the U.S. and improve their production practices through new and innovative techniques. In November, NWF announced the national winners for the 2018 National Wheat Yield Contest.

"A special congratulations to Phillip Gross for being the high yield winner for the third year in a row," stated Foundation Board President Wayne Hurst. "Phillip's entry topped the 200 bushels per acre level for the first time ever in the contest. It's great to see growers who have entered and won in previous years continue to take part in the contest. We also welcomed several new applicants this year, many of whom won."

The contest recognizes winners in two primary competition categories: winter wheat and spring wheat, and two subcategories: dryland and irrigated.

"NWF would like to thank each grower for enrolling in the National Wheat Yield Contest and thank our sponsors for helping to make the contest available to wheat growers in the U.S. We received a record-breaking 318 total entries this year and hope that this number will continue to grow," Hurst said.

The national winners attending the 2019 Commodity Classic will be recognized during a reception celebrating the contest and its winners. Official rules and entry details for the 2019 contest are available at [yieldcontest.wheatfoundation.org](http://yieldcontest.wheatfoundation.org). ■

### This year's national winners per category\*

#### High Yield Winner:

Phillip Gross from Adams County, Wash. Winter wheat, irrigated, 202.53 bushels per acre with LCS.

#### Spring Wheat Winners (Irrigated)

Rank and name	County	State	Seed Brand	Final Yield**
1 Larry Carroll	Morrow	OR	WestBred	158.9300
2 Keith Gross	Adams	WA	WestBred	172.5600
3 Terry Wilcox	Madison	ID	WestBred	193.3800
4 Monte Leidenix	Burleigh	ND	WestBred	97.0700
5 Alex Bishop	Becker	MN	WestBred	85.5300

#### Spring Wheat Winners (Dryland)

1 Jon Wert	Hettinger	ND	LCS	103.9800
2 Orin Knutson	Marshall	MN	WestBred	104.7900
3 Trevor Stout	Latah	ID	WestBred	123.2600
4 Brian Schafer	Hayes	NE	WestBred	67.9500
5 Jason Beechinor	Walla Walla	WA	WestBred	115.7500

#### Winter Wheat Winners (Irrigated)

1 Ken Horton	Kearny	KS	WestBred	111.28
2 Jerry Cooksey	Adams	CO	Plains Gold	134.90
3 Lawrence Pedro	Umatilla	OR	WestBred	194.41
4 Brock Terrell	Sheridan	NE	WestBred	106.72
5 David Gross	Spokane	WA	WestBred	154.51

#### Winter Wheat Winners (Dryland)

1 R & K Farms	Pine Bluffs	WY	AgriPro	124.46
2 Jesse Green	Lincoln	OK	WestBred	112.69
3 Rick Horton	Leota	KS	Plains Gold	91.09
4 Brian Cochrane	Franklin	WA	WSU	100.20
5 Randy Bokma	Fergus	MT	WestBred	123.59

The sponsors for the 2018 National Yield Contest are AgriMaxx, Ardent Mills, BASF, Croplan/Winfield, Indigo Ag, Grain Craft, John Deere, LCS, Mennel Milling, Miller Milling, Syngenta and WestBred.

\*Winners are selected by the percentage increase their yield exceeds the most recent five-year Olympic county average as determined by USDA.

\*\*Final yield in bushels/acre

### Calendar:

Washington Wheat  
Foundation Meeting  
**Feb. 25, 2019,**  
beginning at 1 p.m. at  
the Wheat Foundation  
Building in Ritzville,  
Wash.

### Reminders:

- Remember the Foundation in your charitable giving. Go to [wawheat.org](http://wawheat.org) to find out more about ways that you can support your industry.

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## What's on the calendar for 2019

By Trista Crossley

Since 2009, hundreds of Eastern Washington growers have had the opportunity to further their business knowledge of all things agriculture, thanks to the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO). For its 10th birthday, this year's program is returning to its roots, with seminars focusing on ag policy, marketing and weather.

"We've been able to continue this effort thanks to sponsors who see the value in continued education and who support programs like this," said Lori Williams, outreach coordinator for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). "We selected this year's topics based on feedback from growers, who are always looking for more information on how to successfully market their crop and wondering what the growing season's weather will be."

Also returning will be the ever-popular wheat college, which tries to incorporate both seminars and hands-on demonstrations. Scheduled for early June in Dayton, Wash., this educational effort will focus on the latest agronomic research being done in the Pacific Northwest in dryland crop production. Details for Wheat College are still being nailed down, but will be made available as the date draws closer.

Williams encouraged growers to watch for information on possible additional workshops once the 2018 Farm Bill has been rolled out. In the past, WAWG has used the AMMO program to provide education to growers on commodity support programs. If there are major changes included in the farm bill, that information would likely be dispersed with help from the grower education program.

This year, AMMO is also helping to sponsor the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, Feb. 5-7, 2019, in Spokane, Wash. The forum is held in conjunction with the Spokane Ag Expo. AMMO was also a sponsor of Washington State University's (WSU) Wheat Academy, which was held last month in Pullman, Wash.

"By partnering with other organizations, like WSU and the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, we are able to broaden AMMO's outreach to all producers, not just wheat farmers," Williams said. "This year's farm forum features a very strong lineup of educational sessions and speakers, and it mirrors AMMO's mission, which is to provide quality grower education."

For more information on the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, visit their website at [agshow.org](http://agshow.org). ►

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The traditional AMMO workshops are free to WAWG members. Non-WAWG members pay \$25 per session. Lunch is included. More information on the AMMO classes is available at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/). Preregister at least three days in advance by calling the office at (877) 740-2666 or print out and mail registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/). The AMMO program is funded through industry sponsors and the Washington Grain Commission.

Here's a closer look at the 2019 schedule of AMMO workshops:

- **Ag Policy Outlook**, presented by Clinton Griffiths, and **Working with the New Normal of Natural Weather and Climate**, presented by James Garriss, Feb. 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Airport in Spokane, Wash. Clinton Griffiths is the news anchor of AgDay TV, America's longest-running, nationally syndicated daily agricultural news program. With two decades of experience in the television and news business, Clinton brings an honest perspective of today's media landscape and the future of agriculture. The morning session will discuss the current ag policy landscape as well as what lies ahead for the future of agriculture. The afternoon portion of the session will feature James Garriss who will discuss the new normal in weather and climate. Climate events thousands of miles away can hit the global economy. James will examine the factors shaping your weather—past, present and future.
- **Market Outlook and the Four Rules of Understanding Market Behavior**, presented by Darin Newsom, Feb. 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Airport in Spokane, Wash. Darin Newsom, formerly with DTN, has 30 years experience analyzing commodity markets. This session will analyze the long-term market signals used to indicate where markets may be going, and how the various sectors all influence one another. This session will look at cash, futures and basis as all three play a key role in determining what may happen long term. Participants will also learn four simple rules to help understand market behavior.
- **Variety Options to Meet Today's Challenges**, Feb. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Washington Wheat Foundation Annex in Ritzville, Wash. Protein management, rust resistance, pest management and more. Today's challenges are real. Join agronomy experts including Ryan Higginbotham of HighLine Grain and other experts to discuss current wheat varieties available, and how they perform in certain areas.
- **Wheat College**. Tentatively scheduled for June 6 in Dayton, Wash. AMMO is excited to continue the popular Wheat College as part of our 2019 line-up! This year's event will offer a mix of indoor and outdoor presentations, providing interactive demonstrations to share information on the latest agronomic research being conducted in the Pacific Northwest. Wheat College will also offer localized presentations from WestBred and Washington State University Extension. Pesticide credits will be offered. Registration reminders will be mailed prior to the event. ■


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In addition to being a sponsor of WSU's Wheat Academy, AMMO is a Bronze sponsor of the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, to be held February 5-7 in conjunction with the Spokane Ag Expo. Seminar info can be found at [www.agshow.org](http://www.agshow.org)

## 2019 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

### **FEB 13 AG POLICY AND WEATHER OUTLOOK**

*Speakers:* Clinton Griffiths and James Garriss

*Location:* Holiday Inn Airport

1616 South Windsor Drive, Spokane, WA

### **FEB 19 MARKET OUTLOOK AND THE FOUR RULES OF UNDERSTANDING MARKET BEHAVIOR**

*Speaker:* Darin Newsom

*Location:* Holiday Inn Airport

1616 South Windsor Drive, Spokane, WA

### **FEB 28 VARIETY OPTIONS TO MEET TODAY'S CHALLENGES**

*Speaker:* Ryan Higginbotham

*Location:* Washington Wheat Foundation

109 East 1st Avenue, Ritzville, WA

### **JUNE 6 WHEAT COLLEGE**

*Speakers:* Live presentations from WestBred & WSU Extension

*Location:* Columbia County Fairgrounds, Dayton, WA

*Time:* 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

*All sessions (except Wheat College)  
start at 10 am and end around 2 pm.  
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members, \$25 for non WAWG members.*

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# Dowsing for water

State agency balances developing new supplies for thirsty fish, farmers, families | By Trista Crossley

Water is never far from the surface when you talk about the Columbia River Basin, and one state program is doing what it can to make sure there's enough to meet users' needs now and well into the future.

Established in 2006 as part of the process to solve the Columbia River water rights gridlock in the 1980s and 90s, the Office of Columbia River (OCR), part of the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), is primarily tasked with the development of water supplies in the Columbia River Basin that benefits both in-stream users (ecosystem, fish) and out-of-stream users (irrigators, industry, municipalities) through storage, conservation and voluntary regional water management agreements.

OCR has six main directives:

- Secure alternatives to groundwater for agricultural users in the Odessa Subarea;
- Find sources of water for pending water-right applications;
- Develop water sources for new municipal, domestic, industrial and irrigation needs;
- Issue water supply and demand reports;
- Find a new, uninterrupted supply of water for those whose rights are curtailed on the mainstem of the Columbia River when minimum flows are forecast to be unmet; and
- Make water available for in-stream benefits when needed most.

The program was initially funded with a \$200 million bond. Just under half of that money has been spent on the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project (OGWRP), which aims to replace deep well irrigation systems in the Odessa Subarea with surface water from the Columbia River. OCR has funded the construction of several siphons and the completion of the East Low Canal, which will deliver Columbia River water to the individual irrigation distribution systems. OCR is working with local irrigation districts and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), which is the federal agency that manages the Columbia Basin Project, which OGWRP is a part of.

"We've created an additional 413,000 acre feet of water throughout eastern and central Washington. That water supply, in large part, is to help out groundwater replace-

ment in the Odessa Subarea," said Tom Tebb, director of the OCR. "We've been making great progress, but there's much more to do. More importantly, we have to work with Reclamation and landowners to develop those distribution lines to get water on the farms. That's the tricky part. It's going to saddle people with more debt. They'll be going from a flexible system as to how and where they can move water to a federal system that is pretty regulated because they (the feds) have to manage water in a consistent manner across 15 western states. That transition is challenging, both financially as well as mentally, but it has to happen."

Another project OCR is working on is the six-year-old Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Plan. Tebb said the OCR has been working with state and federal agencies, irrigators, the Yakima Nation and other stakeholders to develop a plan to solve decades of water conflicts and address chronic water supply issues, drought resiliency, climate change, fish passage, ecosystem restoration, economic vitality and growing communities. Like OGWRP, the Yakima project is being done in partnership with Reclamation.

"The state's interest (in the Yakima River Basin) is both economical and ecological," he explained. "We want to improve where we live and keep the agricultural community solid, but we want fish in the rivers and the waters clean."

OCR has at least two more large projects on their radar. The first is Icicle Creek, a major tributary to the Wenatchee River in Chelan County. The Icicle Creek watershed is part of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and the Wenatchee National Forest. Several lakes within the wilderness area are used to supply water for domestic uses, agricultural irrigation and fish habitat, among others. Tebb said that watershed improvements have been locked up in litigation for decades.

"There's infrastructure there that is pretty old that we could modernize and make more efficient," he said. "Those water supplies were established in late 1920s or early 30s. Since then, the irrigation district has managed those in the way they always have, using very primitive equipment. They hike up there and have to turn a valve the size of ship's steering wheel to raise the gate."

In addition, Tebb said there have been storm events, wildfire, erosion and some degradation of the dam structure. Because of that, the district has stored less water than



Tom Tebb, director of the Office of Columbia River, as he was preparing to inspect a new siphon installed as part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

the water right allowed for. Part of the controversy is whether or not the irrigation district lost the water right since it hasn't been able to maintain the facilities and whether or not the reservoir will be rebuilt to its historic level or the level it's been operating at for the last two decades. The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Icicle Creek integrated water resource strategy is in its final stages.

Although the Columbia River Basin is OCR's first priority, Tebb said his office isn't necessarily limited to that region. In fact, they have been asked to help develop an integrated water resource plan for the Walla Walla River Basin. A pilot program has been looking at the watershed since 2008 and is set to finish up this year, but Tebb said he is hoping to have it extended for another two years. In the end, any project in the Walla Walla River Basin could include communities in Oregon.

"We look across the landscape and figure out what works best for the people living there, the environment and how to sustain the agriculture that we have in place now. An integrated water resource plan is an attempt to connect all of those things," he said. OCR also manages three large working aquifer storage systems in Yakima, Kennewick and White Salmon, and the office is exploring other aquifer storage opportunities.

For the upcoming legislative session, Tebb has submitted a \$300 million bond request to the governor's office to fund the OCR for the next six bienniums. He has also submitted a 2019/21 capital budget request that would fund the Yakima River integrated plan at \$42 million, and another \$40 million would be earmarked for OCR projects in process with approximately \$15 million earmarked for OGWRP.

Tebb has been director of OCR since June 2015. He has been with Ecology for 27 years.

"I'm lucky and privileged to be doing this work," he said.

### **What kind of yearly operating budget and staff does the OCR have?**

Not enough! We have a total of 15 people and an operating budget of about \$1.5 to \$2 million. We cover all of central and Eastern Washington. We are a small team. We didn't take any additional resources when we took on the Yakima Basin integration plan. Now we are being asked to step into the Walla Walla project to help that process evolve.

That's what's special about this office. We have the opportunity to say where do we want to be, and how do we get there? Give us a process we can all agree to that gives us a road map, a plan, and I'll help try to fund some of that work.

### **The Columbia River is a multistate, multinational resource. How does a state program balance international and federal partners and priorities?**

I do that as director through my director (Ecology Director Maia Bellon), but I've also been given the opportunity to work with other state directors, the Northwest Power Planning Council, the Washington State Department of Agriculture,



the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Commerce. There is a nucleus of state agency interests that participate on a state team chaired by the governor's office. I provided water rights information and information on water supply issues for Columbia River System Operations EIS processes. We also work with the U.S. State Department through the governor's office on the Columbia River Treaty and participate with various irrigation associations as well as county commissioner organizations to try to make sure we are hearing across all lines. We work very hard on communication. We also have contacts in the British Columbia government; the state of Washington and British Columbia have always been and will continue to be good partners and neighbors.

### How does OCR balance the needs of in-stream users (fish) with out-of-stream users (industry, farming) in what can often be a contentious fight?

We are given a formula within the statute, RCW 90:90. With any new water supply, one third has to go to in-stream purposes. If you want my help, something has to be in it for the environment. Not just for the project, but programmatically. The project may only be for a water supply, irrigation, habitat, flood plain or an outright water right acquisition. We try to stick with a balance across the big picture, not necessarily for each project.

### The OCR website talks about water being "developed." What does that mean?

The idea is to take the water we have, reconstitute it the way we are allowed to under Washington law and repackage it in a way that makes it available to the next highest beneficial use. In some cases, that's for farms and some cases for fish.

We look at it as an opportunity as opposed to a problem. That process is the art of development.

There's no new water out there. We are looking for opportunities to reinvent systems, better plumbing, a smarter distribution system that is less costly. Water conservation measures all of those things to figure out if we can accomplish the original purposes and then take any additional water supply and do something with it. There are great efficiencies that can be gained by looking at turn-of-the-century infrastructure and modernizing it.

### Some climate models show Eastern Washington getting dryer or experiencing more prolonged droughts. Is the OCR preparing for that and how?

We are. The Yakima Basin integrated plan partnered with the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group to help us understand some climatic models from most severe to least amount of impact. If we take the middle of



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those predications, it all says we are going to get warmer and have more rain than snow. We have to capture that in a reservoir or underground. We have to retime that water that was once a snow pack or snow pillow. In the past, we've had the luxury of nature releasing it over the summer and keeping streams cool. We aren't going to have that in the future. We are going to run out of water in those places that don't have adequate storage. We have to figure out how to do that without harming ecological functions. The best way is to modernize structures where we have them. We have also looked at climate impacts in the Icicle Creek watershed. We'll do the same thing with the Walla Walla plan in the Blue Mountains. It's absolutely a fundamental ingredient in developing these integrated water resource plans for the future.

### How does the Columbia River Treaty impact the OCR? Are you involved with the negotiations?

We've mostly, at my level, engaged with other state agency directors. We are providing information and data around water supply and ecology in-stream flow needs.

### What are some of the biggest issues you think OCR will have to address in the future?

I noted that we spent the last of original \$200 million bond in the 2017/19 budget. Being able to plan beyond a biennial cycle for water projects and strategies is critical to the office's success, which is why we've requested new bonding authority. It doesn't mean we'll get the money. We'll have to develop a project list and have it vetted by stakeholders and ultimately approved by the state Legislature. But that give us a horizon and money we can point to to get matching funds or opportunities to really make those state dollars stretch and go further.

We are making great momentum. We aren't as big as California, but we are up there in terms of planning for our future. I'm very proud of that. ■

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# What WAWG's working on for growers



## HANDICAPPING ASSOCIATION'S 2019 FEDERAL, STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

It may be a new year, but many of the issues on the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) legislative agenda aren't.

The WAWG leadership team is gearing up for what looks to be a busy legislative season. The midterm elections saw a large number of freshman lawmakers elected to the state legislature, many of whom may be unfamiliar with agricultural issues. During the association's annual Olympia Days trip—Jan. 29-31—wheat growers will be meeting with as many of them as possible to educate them about the wheat industry, talk about the issues Washington agriculture is facing and to answer their questions.

The 2019 Washington State Legislative Session is a budget session, scheduled for 105 days. Although the legislature has made significant inroads in meeting their education funding requirements as set forth in the 2012 McCleary court case, there are still some funding issues regarding teacher contracts that will need to be resolved. In addition, a recent court case ruled that the state will need to modify state-owned culverts in order to help migrating salmon. That effort is estimated to cost in the hundreds of millions. There are also mental health funding issues the state will have to address. These funding issues could mean that ag tax preferences will come under scrutiny as legislators begin working on a budget. For a preview of the 2019 state legislative session, see page 10.

WAWG will also be looking to address many issues at the federal level, working in tandem with the National Association of Wheat Growers. The passage of the 2018 Farm Bill in December was a cause for celebration

throughout the agricultural world, but there is still work to do educating farmers on changes to commodity programs and making sure crop insurance remains viable for farmers. Read more about the farm bill on page 12.

The lack of trade agreements with some of our major customers, such as Japan, as well as retaliatory trade tariffs, continue to be a major source of concern in wheat country. WAWG's leadership team will be traveling to Washington, D.C., in February for NAWG's annual winter conference, where they will take part in committee meetings and will meet with our federal delegation. A few weeks later, they'll be headed to Florida to take part in NAWG's annual meeting at Commodity Classic to discuss policy and plan for the year ahead.

"While we applaud the swift action taken by Congress to pass the farm bill, there remains a lot of uncertainty in farm country," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "We are still dealing with low commodity prices. We are still waiting for the government to resolve the various trade issues impacting our markets, and we are still fighting to protect our farmers from burdensome regulations, such as a carbon tax or unnecessarily restrictive pesticide application requirements."

Here's a closer look at some of the state and federal issues WAWG will be dealing with in the coming months.

**PROTECTING THE LOWER SNAKE RIVER DAMS.** In March 2018, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed an executive order establishing a taskforce to develop recommendations for orca recovery and future sustainability. Those final recommendations were released in November 2018 and included a recommendation to



establish a stakeholder process to discuss potential breaching or removal of the lower Snake River dams to increase salmon stocks.

In December, Gov. Inslee's proposed \$1.1 billion budget includes \$750,000 for the Southern Resident task force to establish a stakeholder process to discuss the associated economic and social impacts—as well as mitigation costs—of the potential breaching or removal of the lower Snake River dams. WAWG is opposed to the removal of the dams, as they are a vital part of the transportation of goods up and down the Columbia-Snake River System and will be actively involved in any discussions involving breaching dams to protect the orcas. WAWG will also be



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educating policymakers about the importance of the dams to agriculture and the economy. Approximately 60 percent of Washington wheat moves down the river system to Portland. The river system provides one of the most efficient and cleanest forms of transportation available to inland Pacific Northwest farmers.

At a U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources oversight hearing on the dams in September, WAWG Past President Marci Green testified on the importance of the lower Snake River dams, saying, “Without a navigable river system, barging would not be an option. Farmers would have to substitute rail transportation or trucks to get their wheat to port, which would be more expensive and less efficient. Having three different transportation options also keeps transportation costs more competitive and reasonable...The price farmers ultimately pocket after factoring in all their expenses makes the ultimate difference whether they can stay in business.”

**CLIMATE POLICIES.** In the recent midterm elections, Washington voters struck down Initiative 1631, a carbon fee that would have charged large carbon emitters a pollution fee of \$15 per metric ton of carbon beginning in 2020. WAWG was opposed to the fee, believing it would raise fuel and fertilizer costs for growers. This is the second time voters have rejected any sort of tax or fee on carbon emissions. While Gov. Inslee has stated he won’t attempt to directly tax carbon emissions during this legislative session, he has proposed a number of climate change policies that skirt around the issue, including phasing out coal power and fossil fuels in Washington state, making the state’s power grid more energy efficient and promoting electrical vehicles.

With commodity prices low and input costs creeping higher, farmers are already struggling to stay in business. Any sort of carbon emission fee could increase farmers’ fertilizer and fuel costs, which could have disastrous results on already thin margins. Farmers work hard to limit erosion of the soil—both by water and by air—and strive to keep their carbon footprint as small as possible. WAWG believes agriculture sequesters more carbon than the industry releases, and any sort of tax on carbon emissions should take that fact into account. The agricultural industry

will be closely monitoring the 2019 Legislative Session for any renewed attempts by lawmakers to impose any sort of tax on carbon emissions.

**PESTICIDE APPLICATION REGULATIONS.** In the 2018 Washington State Legislative Session, a bill was introduced that would have required four days’ advance notification prior to any pesticide application, as well as onerous reporting requirements. That bill was revised, instead establishing a pesticide application safety workgroup to study the issue and develop recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide applications. The workgroup had not released its report as of press time, but it is rumored it will contain recommendations to expand applicator training and establish a new pesticide application safety panel to recommend policy options and investigate exposure cases.

“We believe the vast majority of pesticide applications are done in a safe manner. We are opposed to any regulations that put additional, onerous notification and reporting burdens on farmers who rely on these chemicals to combat pest and diseases that could destroy a crop,” said Hennings. “We hope legislators see the value in providing funding for additional applicator training as we believe

that is the best, most cost-effective way to reduce the already small number of pesticide drift incidents in agriculture.”

**TRADE TARIFFS.** The U.S. agricultural industry continues to reel under retaliatory trade tariffs, especially in regards to trade with China, which was the fifth-largest importer of Washington wheat in 2017. So far this marketing year, China hasn’t purchased any soft white wheat from the U.S. compared to approximately 275,000 metric tons purchased last year. While there is some progress being made between the U.S. and China, WAWG urges the Trump Administration to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

**TRADE AGREEMENTS.** When the U.S. pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, the 11 remaining countries continued moving forward with the trade pact. This month, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) goes into effect, resulting in reduced import tariffs for our competitor’s wheat, especially in one of the Pacific Northwest wheat industry’s most important trading

“...There remains a lot of uncertainty in farm country. We are still dealing with low commodity prices. We are still waiting for the government to resolve the various trade issues impacting our markets, and we are still fighting to protect our farmers from burdensome regulations, such as a carbon tax or unnecessarily restrictive pesticide application requirements.”

—Michelle Hennings  
WAWG Executive Director



partners, Japan. Under the terms of the CPTPP, Japanese flour millers will eventually pay \$85 per metric ton of wheat for Australian and Canadian wheat compared to \$150 per metric ton for U.S. wheat. This situation could eventually cost the U.S. wheat industry \$500 million per year as these markets could stop buying our wheat. Recent news that the Trump Administration and the Japanese government are taking formal steps towards trade negotiations was welcomed in the wheat world.

Another important trade agreement that the wheat industry is closely monitoring is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaces the North American Free Trade Agreement. While the three countries have officially signed the USMCA, it must still be ratified by Congress.

"With more than 90 percent of our wheat being exported, having favorable trade agreements in place is vital in protecting our markets," said Jeffrey Shawver, WAWG president. "We have spent many years and millions of dollars to establish these markets, and if these countries turn to other suppliers, it could be very difficult for us to regain their business." ■



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3	Andrew Barkis	R-Lacey
4	J.T. Wilcox	R-McKenna
5	Marcus Riccelli	D-Spokane
6	Timm Ormsby	D-Spokane
7	Matt Shea	R-Spokane Valley
8	Bob McCaslin	R-Spokane Valley
9	Bill Ramos	D-Issaquah*
10	Lisa Callan	D-Issaquah*
11	Mike Volz	R-Spokane
12	Jenny Graham	R-Spokane*
13	Jacquelin Maycumber	R-Republic
14	Joel Kretz	R-Wauconda
15	Brad Klippert	R-Kennewick
16	Matt Boehnke	R-Kennewick*
17	Mary Dye	R-Pomeroy
18	Joe Schmick	R-Colfax
19	Norma Smith	R-Clinton
20	Dave Paul	D-Oak Harbor*
21	Zack Hudgins	D-Tukwila
22	Steve Bergquist	D-Renton
23	Keith Goehner	R-Dryden*
24	Mike Steele	R-Chelan
25	Tom Dent	R-Moses Lake
26	Matt Manweller	R-Ellensburg
27	Chris Corry	R-Yakima*
28	Gina Mosbrucker	R-Goldendale
29	Bruce Chandler	R-Zillah
30	Jeremie Dufault	R-Selah*
31	William Jenkin	R-Prosser
32	Skyler Rude	R-Walla Walla*
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34	Paul Harris	R-Vancouver
35	Brandon Vick	R-Battle Ground
36	Larry Hoff	R-Vancouver*
37	Jim Walsh	R-Aberdeen
38	Brian E. Blake	D-Longview
39	Richard DeBolt	R-Chehalis
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43	Laurie Dolan	D-Olympia
44	Beth Doglio	D-Olympia
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## What the 2019 State Legislature is going to look like:

State House of Representatives

57(D)

41(R)

State Senate

28(D)

21(R)

For the 2019 Legislative Session, legislators will be dealing with issues that include finding more funding for teacher contracts and mental health issues and passing capital, operating, transportation budgets.

## WAWG's 2019

state priorities include:

- Protecting the lower Snake River dams

## State Senators

1	Guy Palumbo	D-Maltby	26	Emily Randall	D-Bremerton*
2	Randi Becker	R-Eatonville	27	Jeannie Darnelle	D-Tacoma
3	Andy Billig	D-Spokane	28	Steve O'Ban	R-Tacoma
4	Mike Padden	R-Spokane Valley	29	Steve Conway	D-South Tacoma
5	Mark Mullet	D-Issaquah	30	Claire Wilson	D-Federal Way*
6	Jeff Holy	R-Spokane*	31	Phil Fortunato	R-Auburn
7	Shelly Short	R-Addy	32	Jesse Salomon	D-Shoreline*
8	Sharon R. Brown	R-Kennewick	33	Karen Keiser	D-Kent
9	Mark Schoesler	R-Ritzville	34	Joe Nguyen	D-West Seattle*
10	Barbara Bailey	R-Oak Harbor	35	Tim Sheldon	D-Potlatch
11	Bob Hasegawa	D-Seattle	36	Reuven Carlyle	D-Seattle
12	Brad Hawkins	R-E Wenatchee	37	Rebecca Saldaña	D-Seattle
13	Judy Wamick	R-Moses Lake	38	John McCoy	D-Marysville
14	Curtis King	R-Yakima	39	Keith L. Wagoner	R-Sedro-Woolley
15	Jim Honeyford	R-Sunnyside	40	Kevin Ranker	D-Orcas Island
16	Maureen Walsh	R-Walla Walla	41	Lisa Wellman	R-Mercer Island
17	Lynda Wilson	R-Vancouver	42	Doug Erickson	R-Ferndale
18	Ann Rivers	R-Vancouver	43	Jamie Pedersen	D-Seattle
19	Dean Takko	D-Longview	44	Steve Hobbs	D-Lake Stevens
20	John E. Braun	R-Chehalis	45	Manka Dhingra	D-Redmond
21	Marko Lias	D-Mukilteo	46	David Frockt	D-Seattle
22	Sam Hunt	D-Olympia	47	Mona Das	D-Covington*
23	Christine Rolles	D-Kitsap County	48	Patty Kuderer	D-Seattle
24	Kevin Van De Wege	D-Sequm	49	Annette Cleveland	D-Vancouver
25	Hans Zeiger	R-Puyallup			

\*Freshman Senator



In 2017, Washington farmers harvested 2.1 million acres of wheat (both winter and spring), which produced

25	Kelly Chambers	R-Puyallup*
	Chris Gildon	R-Puyallup*
26	Jesse Young	R-Gig Harbor
	Michelle Calder	R-Port Orchard
27	Laurie Jinks	D-Tacoma
	Jake Fey	D-Tacoma
28	Mari Leavitt	D-University Place*
	Christine Kilduff	D-University Place
29	Melanie Morgan	D-Parkland*
	Steve Kirby	D-Tacoma
30	Mike Pellicciotti	D-Federal Way
	Kristine Reeves	D-Federal Way
31	Drew Stokesbury	R-Auburn
	Morgan Irwin	R-Enumclaw
32	Cindy Ryu	D-Seattle
	Lauren Davis	D-Shoreline*
33	Tina Orwall	D-Normandy Park
	Mia Su-Ling Gregerson	D-SeaTac
34	Eileen L. Cody	D-Seattle
	Joe Fitzgibbon	D-Burien
35	Dan Griffey	R-Allyn
	Drew C. MacEwen	R-Union
36	Noel Frame	D-Seattle
	Gael Tarleton	D-Ballard
37	Sharon Tomiko Santos	D-Seattle
	Eric Pettigrew	D-Seattle
38	June Robinson	D-Everett
	Mike Sells	D-Everett
39	Robert Sutherland	R-Granite Falls*
	Carolyn Eslick	R-Sultan
40	Debra Lekanoff	D-Bow*
	Jeff Morris	D-Anacortes
41	Tana Senn	D-Mercer Island
	My-Linh Thai	D-Bellevue*
42	Luanne Van Werven	R-Lynden
	Sharon Shewmake	D-Bellingham*
43	Nicole Macri	D-Seattle
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\*Freshman Representative

- Fighting mandatory carbon regulations
- Establishing favorable trade agreements

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<b>Rick Larsen (D)</b> <i>District 2 - Whatcom, San Juan, Skagit, Island, Snohomish counties</i> 2113 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-2605	<b>Pramila Jayapal (D)</b> <i>District 7 - Snohomish, King counties</i> 319 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-3106	<b>Maria Cantwell (D)</b> 511 Hart SOB Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-3441
<b>Jaime Herrera Beutler (R)</b> <i>District 3 - Pacific, Lewis, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat counties</i> 1107 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-3536	<b>Kim Schrier (D)</b> <i>District 8 - Chelan, Kittitas, Pierce counties</i> No Washington, D.C., contact information available as of press time.	
<b>Dan Newhouse (R)</b> <i>District 4 - Okanogan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, Franklin, Benton, Yakima counties</i> 1318 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5816	<b>Adam Smith (D)</b> <i>District 9 - Pierce, King, Thurston counties</i> 2264 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-8901	
<b>Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R)</b> <i>District 5 - Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Spokane, Whitman, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, Asotin counties</i>	<b>Denny Heck (D)</b> <i>District 10 - Pierce, Thurston, Shelton counties</i> 2452 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-9740	

### U.S. Senators

<b>235(D)</b>	<b>199(R)</b>
U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
<b>45(D)</b>	<b>53(R)</b>
U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate

2(1)

### What the 2019 Congress is going to look like:

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington is the #3 exporter of food and ag products in the U.S., and in 2017, the state exported \$15 billion worth. About 2/3 of all Washington ag exports are destined for Asia. Canada, Japan, China/Hong Kong, the Korean Republic and Mexico were the top five markets for Washington ag exports in 2017.

## Palouse country artist/author continues to make art

### Catching up with Nona Hengen

By Kevin Gaffney

"I will study and prepare myself, and someday my chance will come."

Nona Hengen was living by those words of Abraham Lincoln long before she found them immortalized on a fireplace plaque at Indiana University, where she earned her Ph.D. in education.

Long-time readers of *Wheat Life* will remember a decade of published art and prose by Hengen in this magazine. Following a fall open-house event at her legacy barn gallery at her farm in Spangle, Wash., it seemed an opportune time to rendezvous with Hengen.

While not keeping as busy a schedule as she has in the past with well over 100 lectures and speaking engagements under her belt, she still paints on a daily basis.

"I sometimes feel if I don't continue to paint regularly, I'll lose what skills I still have left," Hengen said. She is very modest about her talents, but most fans of her work would argue that she is a very gifted artist.

Comfortably ensconced in her 100+ year-old home on a quarter-section of homestead farm land, Hengen continues to paint what she loves: animals, nature, farm scenes and equipment, old barns and historical events. Her love for animals is evident not only in her works, but by her fondness for her two cats, Henry and Harvey, and her faithful dog, Ruby.

She has recently been working on refreshing some of the paintings from a set of 11 paintings depicting the 1858 U.S. Army-Indian war in Washington territory. The incredible realism of the paintings derives from research of the original diaries of participants in that conflict. Several of her paintings were recently used by the Spokane Indian Tribe as part of a YouTube video about their history.

Hengen is still producing illustrations for Leanin' Tree, a greeting card company. She has had art published in *National Geographic* and is working on a potential piece for *Wild West* magazine.

"I don't have a book in my head presently," noted Hengen. She has authored more than a dozen books,



Using state funds, renovations on the Hengen Heritage Barn were completed in 2014. The exact date of construction of the barn is unknown, but it was sometime in the latter 1800s.





A peek inside the Hengen Barn art gallery at an open house event held in October 2018. Dozens of paintings are on display in the barn, part of which is still used to house a brood of chickens.

including “Gateway To The Palouse,” “Max Leo, An Uncommon Cat” and “Now Choose Life,” among others.

Although Hengen was interested in art from an early age, her early career was based in education, specifically using television as an educational tool. After graduating from Spangle High School, Hengen earned her bachelor’s degree in education from Fort Wright College of the Holy Names in Spokane, Wash.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Kahlottus, Wash. She then moved to Moses Lake, Wash., and taught at the sixth-grade level for two years before moving to Roosevelt Elementary on Spokane’s south hill. About this time, the Russians launched Sputnik, which caused an uproar in American education.

“It was incumbent upon us to catch up with the Russians,” remembered Hengen. “Revolutionary transformations in teaching methodology were needed.

“One of the imperatives was to more effectively teach science. After much discussion, it was determined that German was the language of science, and science was the key to unlocking space. It followed logically to use the new medium of television to teach more effectively.

“Knowing several German phrases my grandmother

had taught me and having taken basic German in college was enough to get me selected to teach German to the sixth graders in my school,” Hengen explained. “Along with the use of teaching a foreign language on television, educators were becoming excited about the unique potential of the medium across a broad spectrum of the curriculum.”

After becoming one of the pioneers in televising German lessons into classrooms, Hengen took her new assignment seriously.

“I had noticed that district supervisors had visited our school several times,” recalled Hengen. “Then, at the end of my first year at Roosevelt Elementary, my principal announced to me that I was now the German television instructor for all sixth graders in the Spokane School District.

“I was a little surprised, because I was not fluent in German by any means. It was a true challenge, especially since they decided that school for the entire district had to start 15 minutes earlier to air the television lessons each day.

“It was important not only to teach, but to make it interesting for the students. I devised lessons that took advan-

tage of the medium of TV, using motion and skits."

Hengen would use everyday items and activities as props in her segments. She had one skit where she was going to learn to snow ski. After her associate gave her a nudge, the lesson then cut to footage of a skier tumbling head over heels down the side of a mountain slope. It ended with a shot of Hengen laying on the ground looking dazed and asking what just happened. That lesson was quite popular with her students.

"I also taught the students about German classical music composers. A friend of mine and I worked for months memorizing several piano pieces that we would perform live in the studio for filming.

"I remember one particular segment, we played pieces by Schubert and Beethoven that we had worked long and hard to master," Hengen said. "Then about two weeks later, they called me up and asked us to come in and do it over again. Someone had taped a wrestling match over our piano lesson. That was frustrating."

Hengen studied one summer in Berlin on a Fulbright Scholarship during this time frame. It was shortly after the Berlin Wall had been erected as part of the "Iron Curtain." The American students were ordered to go nowhere near the wall.

Hengen was successful enough in her television instruction that she was offered the job of establishing KSPS, Spokane's public television station, an offer she declined.

Hengen earned her master's degree in history from the University of Colorado and decided to pursue a doctorate at Indiana University.

"It was between Brigham Young and Indiana," noted Hengen. "I decided on the Hoosier state, and went off to Bloomington. When I went in to meet with one of the professors, I found that he was on sabbatical. Amazingly, another man saw me looking around and asked if he could help.

"It happened that he was the head of the department, and when he heard about my four years of experience



One of Hengen's "slice of life" paintings from years past when horse rides were enjoyed through fields of grain along telephone pole corridors that have long since been removed. Photo courtesy of Nona Hengen

with educational television instruction, he immediately placed me in the Instructional Systems Technology department. Formerly known as the audio-visual department, it was abbreviated to the acronym IST.

"I look upon that as not a coincidence, but a 'Godcidence,' where our lives are guided by our Heavenly Father. Looking back on my life, there have been several of them."

Hengen was the only female in the department with about 16 men. This was not the last time that she found herself in the position of being an outlier because of her gender. In three years, she had completed her Ph.D. in education. This degree required study in a foreign language. In her case, it was German.

Indiana University's IST degree program was ranked at the time among the top four institutions in the country by the Council

on Higher Education. The degree qualified Hengen for careers in business or education using IST.

"With my doctorate in hand, I was trained for employment in various disciplines, including math, science, geology and others," said Hengen. "Before I had found permanent employment, an opportunity came up to teach at the University of Virginia for one summer term.

"When I arrived there, the faculty was shocked. They did not expect a woman. It was an all-male school at the time, and I was the only female professor."

Hengen recalled the shocked looks the first time she walked into a classroom of 40 men. She won their confidence and had a challenging and interesting summer. Following a year teaching at Southern Oregon College in Ashland, Ore., an opportunity came up at Western Washington University in Bellingham.

"I was brought in to organize their television and audio-visual department. Unfortunately, when I arrived, the department was in total disarray and required drastic steps to establish operational efficiency."

Hengen found an odd mix of old and new equipment that was not compatible. On top of that, the staff was incapable of working as a cohesive unit. Equipment had



been purchased from several different vendors, mostly at bargain prices. It was necessary to start from scratch just to set up proper sound systems for the television studio.

After major reshuffling of people and equipment, communication and order was established in the IST department.

"It was the most stressful position I ever held," said Hengen. "By the time I left four years later, the department was in good shape, but I had worked myself into a condition of cardiac arrhythmia. It was time to take a step back and come home to Spangle."

Once back home on the farm, it wasn't long before her mother fell ill.

"One thing my mother was insistent upon was building me an art studio here. I was using our converted chicken house and argued that was fine. She was resolute on the matter, so we designed and built a spacious studio. She was so pleased to see it completed.

"I had hoped for years together with my mother. Sadly, that was not to be, but I treasure the time we did have together after I came home."

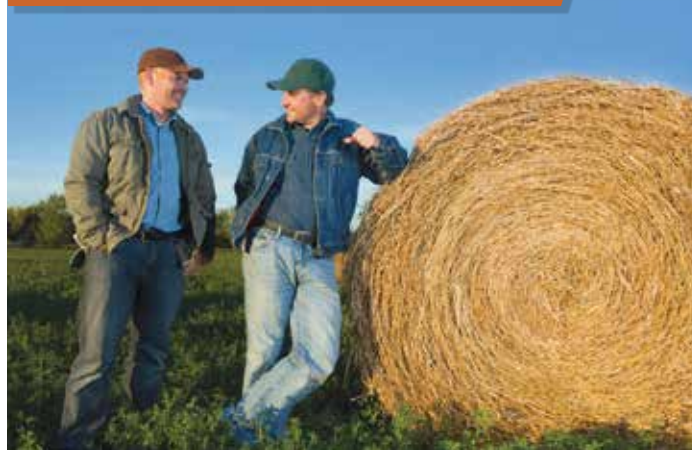
Admirers of Hengen's work will be happy to hear that

she has no plans to quit painting. It simply seems to have become part of who she is. Hengen has a print show of 20 paintings for exhibit at the Whitman County Library in Colfax, Wash., through January.

Hengen's original paintings are available from Hengen directly. You can reach her at nonahengen@me.com.

High quality giclée prints of Hengen's paintings are available from the Wenaha Gallery in Dayton, Wash. Find them online at wenaha.com. ■

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*Bruce Nelson, Whitman County Farmer*

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# CHAIRMAN

## WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



Who is your most important business partner? Is it your banker, your accountant or your agronomist? For me, it's simple. My brother and I would not have had the opportunity to farm if it weren't for our landlords.

About 40 percent of the land farmed in the U.S.—or more than 350 million acres—is owned by landlords. By count, the number of landlords whose income is being fully or partially supported by wheat grown in Washington far exceeds the number of farmers who actually work the land. It's not unusual for a farm operation to work with numerous landlords.

I had the opportunity to visit with several landlords while attending the 2018 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention at the Airport Sheraton Hotel in Portland in November. The convention rotates among the three Northwest states, and it was Oregon's turn to host (next year, Spokane!). Regardless of where convention is held, there is always a small, but loyal contingent of landlords who show up to network, attend break-out sessions and share their interest in wheat farming among themselves and with the farmers they meet. It would be great if there were more landlords who availed themselves of the opportunity for education and camaraderie that's part of a shared interest in the land, wheat and history.

There are many types of landlords. Some have retired and have leased their farms out. Others have never farmed, but have a deep appreciation for the land. I should also mention that there are institutional landlords, such as the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and insurance companies. While there is no legacy of appreciation from the institutional landlords, they do appreciate the economic stability that farmland brings to their portfolios.

I was visiting with a gentleman the other day, talking succession plans for the farm—when the time comes. He mentioned he was going to pass his farmland on to a certain group of family members because they had the “ag gene.” He explained that this group would honor his wishes that the land remain in the family. When you think about it, it makes a lot of sense. Many of us have observed families who have passed their land to beneficiaries who have never shown an interest in the farm and subsequently sell it.

A quick aside: If you're in this sort of predicament, Washington State University's (WSU) Land Legacy Council, of which I am a member, can help. The council accepts farmland to be used to generate revenue for WSU programs upon the death of the beneficiary. Landlords

close to making a transition might want to check it out as a way to ensure their land remains in a single unit that helps finance research for future Washington wheat farmers.

Land is a long-term investment. It isn't like owning stock in a company that's rocketing in value, but the annualized return of farm ground can be pretty much counted on year in and year out. It's why insurance companies and institutional investors love buying agricultural ground. It's also why the wise landlord holds onto it.

There are different ways to deal with ag land when it comes to landlords and tenants. The Midwest is partial to cash rent, but in Eastern Washington, farmers and landlords tend to favor a crop share lease arrangement. I understand why some landlords prefer cash rent because their income is consistent each year, and they don't have to worry about sharing costs or marketing their crop. Not to mention, crop share leases vary depending on what is standard for an area.

But in my opinion, crop sharing forces landlords to think about the farm more deeply. I often get calls from our landlords wondering about the cost of inputs and why they have changed since last year. The crop share arrangement also rewards landlords when the farm does well and spreads the burden when it does poorly.

I know there are farmers who would just as soon keep an arms-length relationship with their landlords. Not me. I'm grateful for the relationships my brother and I share with our landlords. It is great to keep them involved in farming issues because we need everyone—landlords, farmers and agribusinesses—to step up and speak up when our industry is challenged. The more personally informed they are about issues, the more impact they can have.

Like active farmers, landlords pay assessments on the grain they sell and as a result, help fund the research, marketing and educational programs the Commission conducts. We are all in this together, and it will take all of us to ensure that wheat farming continues for future generations of farmers—and landlords.

I encourage landlords to get involved in the industry that is important to their bottom line. Think about attending the Tri-State Grain Convention at the Grand Hotel in Spokane next November. Find out what's happening politically, economically and agronomically on the farm. Meet others who share your heritage and who love to talk about our favorite crop. I hope to see you there! ■

# REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

## Quiet, but passionate about wheat

**Eddie Johnson**, who served on both the Washington Wheat Commission and again after it brought barley under its auspices on the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), has died. Glen Squires, CEO of the WGC, said Johnson kept a low profile, but worked diligently behind the scenes. "Eddie was a quiet man, but when it came to issues he felt strongly about, he could be quite outspoken," Squires said, remembering his particular interest and expertise in research at Washington State University during his 2015 to 2017 stint on the board. Tom Mick, who served as CEO during Johnson's first iteration as a commissioner between 1983 to 1991, said Johnson was one of the most dedicated board members he had the pleasure of working with. "He spent many days away from his farm representing the agricultural industry," Mick said. Hal Johnson, Eddie's cousin and a former member of the WGC, said as important as his work on the grain commission was, Johnson was also active on the Lincoln County Conservation Commission as a supervisor for 38 years. He also served on the Washington Association of Conservation Districts board of directors. "Farming was more than a job for Eddie, it was his passion, especially when it came to regulations," his cousin said. Johnson, who was 73, died Dec. 4. He is survived by a son, Leonard, and a daughter, Ann Marie. Johnson's wife, Suzette, preceded him in death in 2016. ■



## Curiouser and Curiouser

The waiting is over. But instead of Syngenta releasing hybrid wheat in 2019, the company announced it is scaling back late-stage development in North America. The company professed its continued commitment to hybrid wheat, "which we believe will deliver benefits to growers in increased yield—consistently, year-on-year—as with hybrid barley." There is a commercial hybrid barley currently sold in Europe. In a letter to stakeholders, Carlos Iglesias, head of North American Cereals for Syngenta, said the company's European program is most advanced, and commercial hybrid varieties will be brought out there "in the next few years." As for hybrid varieties in the U.S., "we will continue to invest in R & D for a competitive varietal portfolio, in addition to our work in early-stage hybrid wheat." Meanwhile, a job description from BASF is making the rounds. It reveals the company is looking for someone to lead the development, seed production and registration of wheat hybrids for European markets. ■

## For the record

Yes, falling numbers (FN) caused by late maturity alpha-amylase (LMA) was a problem in the 2018 crop, but it wasn't nearly as bad as 2016. The 2016 crop experienced multiple temperature fluctuations during the grain filling phase in the spring—in addition to rain at harvest—causing severely low falling numbers and steep discounts. In 2018, there were fewer LMA-type temperature swings and no harvest rain. This meant instead of falling numbers as low as 100 seconds (2016), most 2018 low FN numbers were between 280 to 299 seconds (the time it takes for a plunger to fall through a slurry of ground wheat and water). These higher numbers made it easier for elevator companies to blend off low falling numbers wheat with wheat that wasn't impacted, eliminating or sharply decreasing discounts on farmers. Comparing the last three years of falling numbers tests conducted by the Washington State Department of Agriculture grain inspection service is revealing of the rise and fall of the problem. In 2016, the inspection service conducted 18,994 FN tests. In 2017, 3,357 tests were conducted, and in 2018, there were 10,882 tests. Camille Steber, the Agriculture Research Service scientist who has been leading the falling numbers effort in the Pacific Northwest, said LMA screening has been added to preharvest sprouting screens within Washington State University's and the ARS's breeding programs. "We are working to identify LMA and preharvest sprouting resistance genes in Northwest wheat lines in order to make it easier to select for resistance to low FN. We are also working to develop faster alternatives to the falling number test that could make it easier to prevent loss of value when low FN grain is inadvertently mixed with high FN grain," she said, adding that variety choice remains the key to preventing low FN problems. Based on variety trial analysis, some varieties with persistent low FN problems include Bruehl, Jasper, Xerpha, SY-Ovation, UI-Magic and others. Some varieties that had higher FN in 2018 included WB1376CLP, LCS-Hulk, UI-Castle and ARS-Crescent. Producers can look at FN test results from the WSU variety trials at [steberlab.org/project7599data.php](http://steberlab.org/project7599data.php). The same website also includes FN versus yield plots across locations to help producers balance yield potential against FN in making planting decisions. ■



# Glyphosate: A love story

It's been six months since the sale of Monsanto to German-based Bayer closed, and a recent full page ad in the *Wall Street Journal* made it clear the company does not plan to back off on its support for glyphosate, the weed killer better known as Roundup. Written by the company's head of agricultural affairs and sustainability, Jesus Madrazo, the open letter said visits to his grandfather's farm in Mexico "shaped how I view agriculture and are the same values that inform Bayer's commitment to delivering better solutions for farmers and more choice for consumers." An example of that commitment, he said, is the combination of glyphosate with glyphosate-tolerant crops, which he said promotes environmentally friendly practices, "such as the reduction of fuel use on sprayer passes over the field and the adoption of conservation tillage methods which reduce the need for plowing the soil," not to mention glyphosate-based herbicides "result in a substantial reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a reduction equivalent to taking 11.8 million cars off the road in 2015 alone." In something of an understatement, Madrazo continued that there has recently been "increased media attention on the safety of glyphosate-based products." These products are among "the most rigorously studied products of their kind" over the last 40 years and are safe for use as labeled. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the European Food Safety Authorities, European Chemicals Agency, German BfR and Australian, Canadian and Japanese regulatory authorities as well as the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues, agree glyphosate is not cancer causing. "Indeed, glyphosate is currently approved for use in more than 160 countries," Madrazo said. Like the company it purchased for \$63 billion, Bayer has a history of fighting back against litigation, including the \$289 million a jury awarded to a groundskeeper (later reduced to \$78 million) who claimed his cancer was caused by glyphosate. Bayer is appealing that verdict. Although Monsanto developed Roundup Ready wheat cultivars, the company shuttered the project in 2003 due to, among other things, ambivalence among farmers about the technology. Since then, there have been four instances where small amounts of Roundup Ready wheat were found growing in fields in the U.S. and Canada. Reacting to the Canadian find, the Keystone Agriculture Producers' advisory council recently approved a resolution which would ban glyphosate research there. The resolution by the major Canadian farming group warned that the introduction of glyphosate-resistant wheat would "create a backlash from major trade partners that could heavily reduce the price of all wheat in Canada." ■

## 60 years of achievement!

At the 2018 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention in Portland, Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Director Derek Sandison (left) presented Washington Grain Commission Chairman Gary Bailey with a citation celebrating the organization's 60 years of service to the wheat industry. In a letter that accompanied the citation, the ag director noted that as concerns over the weather, pests, crop disease, conservation, marketability and politics rise, "It is important to match those issues with equal force through research, marketing and education." Sandison went on to applaud the industry and its partners "for their dedication to ensure farming continues to be sustainable in our region." Bailey said he was humbled by the commemoration of the commission's history. "Our relationship with the WSDA has never been stronger, and we trust that with the leadership of people like Director Sandison, the industry will be even stronger in 40 years when we notch 100 years of service," he said. ■



## A need for speed

A public hearing before the U.S. International Trade Commission found leaders of industries, organizations and associations expressing their opinions on the recently announced bilateral negotiations for a U.S.-Japan trade agreement. Although wheat growers are particularly interested in the outcome of the negotiations, autoworkers, animal welfare organizations, almond growers, cattlemen, pork producers, software and telecommunication officials, as well as the U.S. fashion Industry Association and the American Chemistry Council, all testified during the one-day session. Among the nearly 40 individuals speaking was U.S. Wheat Associates President Vince Peterson. He reminded the U.S. Trade Representative that the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) threatens to slash U.S. wheat sales into the crucial Japanese market once it enters into force Dec. 31, 2018. The CPTPP will grant Canada and Australia a preferential tariff on their wheat. "U.S. Wheat Associates has had an office in Tokyo for more than 60 years. We have invested countless hours and millions of hard-earned farmer dollars and federal export market development program funds building this market. During that time, the Japanese milling industry has become an indispensable partner of U.S. wheat farmers," he said, adding all that's at risk unless a U.S.-Japan agreement quickly ends the Canadian/Australian preference. ■

## Making 60 count

WGC leverages anniversary with outreach to overseas customers

By Scott A. Yates

A year and a half ago, during a staff meeting at the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), I happened to mention the organization was approaching its 60th anniversary. I was thinking of the date for a story about the history of the organization (which I wrote for the April 2018 edition of *Wheat Life*) and had no idea my comment would generate an effort that would span much of the globe.

WGC CEO Glen Squires was way ahead of me. That night, he went home and talked to his wife, Charlotte, about the upcoming anniversary. Although westerners think of 50, 75 and 100 years as the benchmarks by which individuals or organization are measured, as someone who has traveled extensively throughout the Pacific Rim, Squires understood the number “60” is considered a major milestone in the cultures of many of our customers.

But he was stymied about how best to use the WGC anniversary as a way to engage with customers. Charlotte, perhaps remembering all those birthday cakes she baked for a family of four sons and a daughter,



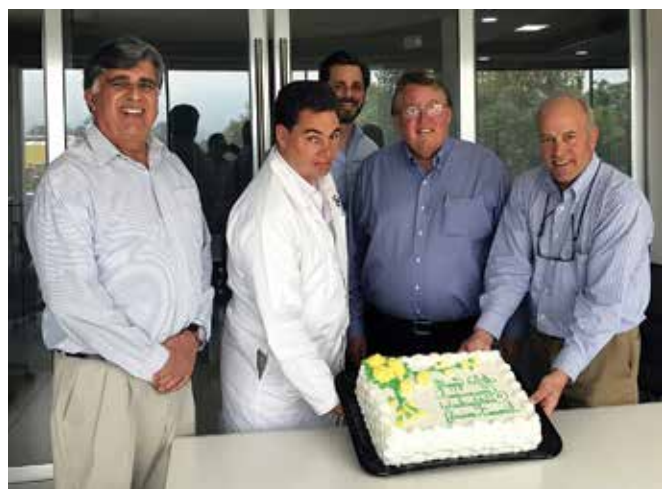
Customers who baked cakes to celebrate the Washington Grain Commission's 60th anniversary didn't go away empty handed. Promotional material including canvas prints of a wheat scene with the tagline, “Celebrating 60 Years of Quality Wheat,” and the WGC logo, were distributed to participating mills and bakeries at ceremonies like this one in the Philippines, which featured personnel from the grain commission and U.S. Wheat Associates.

thought the answer was obvious. “How do you celebrate an anniversary?” she asked her husband. “You have cake.”

And what class of wheat makes the very best cakes? That's right, the flagship class of the Pacific Northwest, soft white. That's how the WGC wound up leveraging its 60th year anniversary to create good will and conversation with customers. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Shortly after that initial staff meeting, Squires began pulling together executives to put in place the prerequisites for the WGC's celebration. But what exactly were we celebrating? Mary Palmer Sullivan, who developed promotional materials for customers, said the most important detail was not the organization's longevity per se, “but rather what that longevity has allowed us to do.” Or as the tagline on pictures and paperweights she created put it, “Celebrating 60 years of quality wheat.”

All of us in Washington might have thought the anniversary celebration was a good idea, but without the support of U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) it would have been very difficult—and expensive—for the idea to



A growing region for Pacific Northwest wheat imports, Latin America got in the birthday cake act with personnel from a Guatemalan mill joining U.S. Wheat Associates and Washington Grain Commission staff in welcoming the organization to its sexagenarian decade.



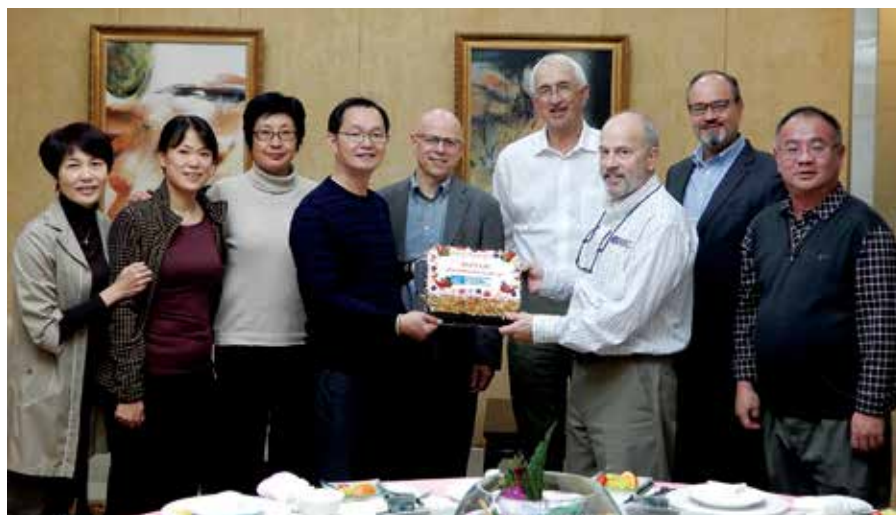
gain traction. Luckily, the anniversary effort got a shot in the arm when Mark Fowler, the new vice president for overseas operations at USW, asked if he could join the WGC on its travels.

"When Mark asked if he could join with us, my response was, 'No, we're joining with you,'" Squires said, explaining that Fowler's introduction to the customers in various countries and the WGC's anniversary celebration dovetailed into a one-two punch of wheat quality messaging, not to mention goodwill.

"They were so excited by our presence and that we cared about them and the products they're making," Squires said of the bakers and millers he met along the way.

As the new boy on the block, Fowler particularly liked the WGC's anniversary effort "because it was a great way to engage with customers in another format in a very positive way."

To get as much bang for the buck as possible, anniversary celebrations were scheduled as part of ongoing trade servicing activities and divided among staff and commissioners. Squires may have attended more celebrations than anyone. He and WGC Commissioner Damon



In China, the Sino-American Baking School and staff from U.S. Wheat Associates and the Washington Grain Commission celebrated the 60th anniversary with a cake made from Pacific Northwest soft white wheat.

Filan were at the Sino-American Baking School in China. He and WGC Chairman Gary Bailey were similarly together in Thailand, Taiwan and at the Korean Baking School. Korea had the most elaborate celebration effort not just in terms of the number of cakes, but with a set of rules and a time limit for decorating.

Joe Bippert and Damon Filan were in Latin America and attended activities in Chile, Colombia and Guatemala. Bippert said the number 60 carries less symbolism there, but that the anniversary celebrations gave soft white another opportunity to break through the noise of the market, opening the door for new development.

Sullivan and Commissioner Ty Jessup attended WGC 60th anniversary celebrations in Indonesia and the Philippines as part of the procurement seminars held there. At the latter, the milling industry baked the cakes, there were no rules, and the creativity showed. Sullivan said one of the Filipino participants had so much fun she wished the WGC would make it an every year affair. "Let's celebrate your 61st anniversary," she said. ■



South Korea had the most extensive anniversary celebration with more than two dozen celebratory cakes baked by students at the Korean Baking School, which were then judged by a panel made up of the Washington Grain Commission and U.S. Wheat Associates staff.





# Headed downriver

## ANNUAL PORTLAND TOUR TAKES STAKEHOLDERS ALONG PART OF WHEAT'S PATH TO MARKET

Eastern Washington farmers and landlords, along with staff from both state and federal government agriculture-oriented organizations, attended the Washington Grain Commission (WGC)-sponsored Pacific Northwest Export Tour and Wheat Quality Workshop Nov. 27-29. The annual event, which is underwritten by the WGC, not only gives farmers a chance to follow their wheat after it leaves the field, it adds another opportunity for commission staff to build stronger ties with the industry.

The bus trip to Portland has pickups in Spokane, Ritzville, Connell and Pasco. A tour of the Bonneville Dam and Locks led off the event on the first day. The second day started with a tour of the Marsee Baking bakery where participants got a first-hand look at the products their wheat creates. Next, the group visited Columbia Grain International's export terminal where they received market updates about exports and were further educated by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grain inspectors about what they look for in cargoes going overseas.

The group spent the remainder of the afternoon at

the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) where participants learned about market logistics from a representative of Pacificor LLC. U.S. Wheat Associates staff also briefed the group on overseas markets, and WMC technicians gave demonstrations on product quality testing. The evening wrapped up with a demonstration of traditional noodle making and an authentic Chinese dinner at the Mandarin House restaurant.

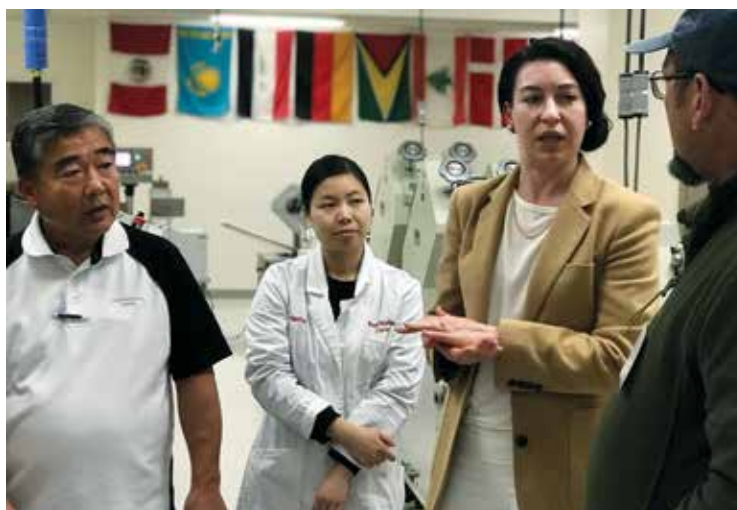
On the last morning, pilots from the Columbia River Bar Pilots and the Columbia River Pilots explained their role moving ships within the Columbia River System. This was followed by staff from the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association providing an overview of the significance of maintaining the river system and the importance of federal funding.

The tour then visited Shaver Transportation where everyone was able to take a short cruise down the Willamette River on one of the company's tugs. On the return bus trip to Eastern Washington, a stop for lunch and a brewery tour at the Full Sail Brewery in Hood River completed the program.



The Washington Grain Commission thanks everyone for making the annual tour a success, including: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service; Marsee Baking; Columbia Grain Export Terminal; Pacifcor LLC; U.S. Wheat Associates; the Wheat Marketing Center; Columbia River Bar Pilots; Columbia River Pilots; Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Shaver Transportation; Mandarin House; and Full Sail Brewery.

Next year's tour dates have been set! If you are interested in going on the tour, which is scheduled for Dec. 3-5, 2019, sign up by calling the Washington Grain Commission at (509) 456-2481. Space is limited! ■



# Weed resistance: It could be worse

By Ian Burke

Is there anything new for defeating herbicide resistance? That depends on your perspective, your willpower and most definitely your wallet.

From a weed science perspective, herbicide resistance is the outward expression of a broken tool, but one of quite a few tools that we use to manage weeds in general. We find tools to manage weeds and integrate them to produce a more sustainable system overall. It just happens that herbicides are a very inexpensive and efficient tool. Replacing an inexpensive and efficient tool with another new tool is a very difficult challenge.

Another new herbicide, by itself, is not a way to defeat resistance—it simply forestalls the reckoning. The Aussies call it “hitting the wall”—when you hit the wall, selective herbicides are no longer effective, and the cropping system as practiced can continue no further.

As dire as that sounds, we have a relatively resilient cropping system. Winter wheat, if kept relatively weed free early in the growing season, is very competitive. If moisture is good and cultural practices are optimized, the wheat might appear weedy but yield might be only moderately reduced.

There are also “new” rotational crops like canola



and peas suitable for every rainfall zone and cropping system. Our cultural weed management tools have never been more diverse. Crop rotation isn't a new idea, but certainly many wheat-fallow systems are newly able to rotate.

Occasionally (rarely) all the right things happen. In the case of herbicides, a number of new products appeared on the market just as there was an increased adoption of reduced tillage practices in high rainfall zones in Eastern Washington. The new herbicides, combined with reduced tillage, significantly reduced and, in a few cases, eradicated wild oat populations in the early 2000s.

More often, we see successive series of new herbicide technologies introduced in such a way that each is obsolete just as the new one comes to market. Or worse, there is no additional cultural input deployed. Downy brome management fits that description—first Maverick (or Outrider), then Olympus, Osprey, Powerflex and Beyond were introduced over an eight-year period. There are areas in Columbia and Walla Walla counties where downy brome is resistant to all five herbicides!

Weeds have an assigned value—the cost of herbicides. But in the absence of a herbicide to manage them, what is the value of weeds? Instead of managing them, perhaps eradication (as happened with wild oat) should be the goal for many of our troublesome weeds.

Australian farmers have implemented a zero tolerance strategy for weeds by making harvest weed seed management an integral part of their management scheme. They are wind-rowing and burning, collecting all their



Direct baling is one way to help control weed seed during harvest.





Resistant Italian ryegrass.



Herbicide-tolerance Mayweed.



Jointed goatgrass in winter wheat.

chaff and burning or using direct bale systems. They don't let their weeds go to seed!

With weed infestations at such low levels, critical decisions can be made in the knowledge that the weeds won't be a problem. For example, in a dry fall (like ours this year), an Aussie grower with low weed pressure probably wouldn't worry if the pre-emergence herbicides had been activated—if they even bothered to use them. Such a decision and lack of stress is only possible when weed populations are so low as to be insignificant. It's a paradigm change in perspective among farmers that results in the elimination of weeds as a significant pest.

There are a number of effective tools that can be deployed to eradicate troublesome populations. Hand weeding, although very expensive, is an effective tool for troublesome weeds like cereal ryegrass, jointed goatgrass and even downy brome and Italian ryegrass. Farmers have found that hand weeding often yields a return on investment over time compared to less effective herbicide systems—control is complete where applied.

The next obvious technological revolution will be to employ robots in place of humans for hand weeding. Such tools are on the horizon and should fundamentally change weed management. Instead of tolerating the survivors of a herbicide application, those survivors might be completely removed autonomously. Or simply controlled by the robots themselves.

Harvest weed seed control, either by direct bailing or using a Harrington Seed Destructor, could be added to the system to reduce seed deposition. We are also discovering that we can stimulate seed germination with plant growth regulators.

The process will be a test of willpower—a single failure can reset the seed bank, and our weed seed is very persistent, often requiring years of complete control for there to be an apparent reduction in germination. The eradication of weed populations through depletion of the weed seed bank can, however, fundamentally change the cost to manage weeds over time and represent a significant investment in the future of our wheat production system.

I would argue what's needed in the "new" department is a change of perspective about how we value weeds—not a new tool to manage them. ■

# WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

## Wheat situation is begging for a rally



By Mike Krueger

The world wheat situation and price structure continues to baffle fundamental analysts.

Supplies among the major wheat exporting countries, including Russia, will be much lower than last year. When you factor in high quality, higher protein wheat, things look even tighter. But the market has continued to trade in a very narrow 20 to 30 cent range for much of the last two to three months. March wheat futures did finally trade above some technical resistance in the middle of December as the Chicago March wheat contract chart shows (see Chart 1).

So why can't wheat rally? There are several reasons, including:

- Russia has continued an aggressive export pace longer than most analysts believed would happen. There have been signs the government is making it tougher to get phytosanitary certificates for wheat exports, but this hasn't been enough to stem the pace of sales. Russia continued to make sales to Egypt the first half of December, but prices have been slowly moving higher.
- The U.S. wheat export sales pace started to accelerate in December,

Chart 1: Chicago March wheat contracts



but is still running well below the weekly level needed to meet the original wheat export goal.

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reduced the U.S. wheat export forecast by 25 million bushels. Most of that reduction came in hard red winter wheat.

It was a small surprise that the USDA cut the wheat export forecast in their December estimates. They seldom make many adjustments in December because it's usually a "dead" month for numbers. Most analysts, including the USDA, have talked for months that U.S. wheat exports would likely be more weighted in the last half of the marketing year because Russia was so aggressive early.

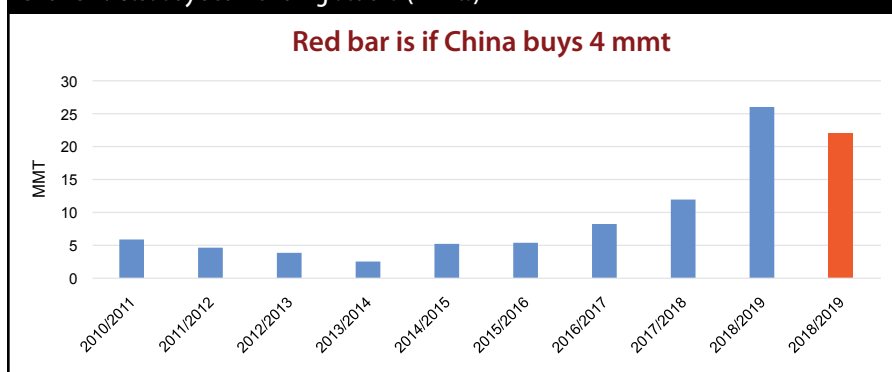
The good news across the markets is that the U.S. and China did agree to a 90-day truce in their trade negotiations. President Trump and President Xi had a positive meeting following the G20 meeting in Argentina the last day of November. Details of the truce are still fuzzy. President Trump said China will be buying a lot of soybeans, corn and wheat in the months ahead, but details were scant. China did start buying soybeans, with the USDA reporting 1.1 million metric tons were purchased on Dec. 13. More sales announcements were expected to





**Table 1: U.S. wheat ending supplies by class**  
(million bushels, USDA)

	2017-18	2018-19
Hard Red Winter .....	581	426
Hard Red Spring .....	191	260
Soft Red Winter .....	205	169
White.....	87	50
Durum.....	35	44
All Wheat.....	1,099	974

**Chart 2: U.S. soybean ending stocks (mmts)**

follow quickly. Wheat and corn sales to China were also reportedly in the mix, but none had been announced as of mid-December.

There are a few unusual things happening in wheat futures markets. The most notable is that Chicago wheat futures have been trading at a 30 to 40 cent premium to KC wheat futures for the past couple of months. That is exactly the opposite of how that spread typically trades. Chicago futures supposedly represent soft red winter wheat while KC is hard red winter wheat. Soft wheat seldom carries a premium to the hard wheats. It's even more interesting when you consider the funds have been short a sizable amount of Chicago wheat for a long time. Chicago wheat futures could trade at an even greater premium to KC wheat if and when the funds have a reason to get out of their short positions.

Table 1 shows U.S. wheat ending supplies by class from the December USDA supply and demand report compared to the previous marketing year.

Note the rather significant drop in white wheat ending supplies. This could tighten further because Australia's drought reduced exportable supplies. U.S. wheat ending supplies will be smaller than last year, but not small enough to generate a big rally without a quick increase in export sales.

There is one additional issue with U.S. wheat that no one is talking about much yet. The wet and late row-crop

harvest resulted in fewer winter wheat acres getting planted than expected. This was the case for both soft red winter wheat and hard red winter wheat. Early last fall, some analysts were expecting a 5 to 10 percent increase in winter wheat acres. It now appears there might be no increase, and there maybe even be a very slight decline. The USDA will release their winter wheat planting estimate on Jan. 11, 2019.

USDA reports released on Jan. 11 will be important. In addition to winter wheat acreage estimates, the "final" U.S. corn, soybean and sunflower production estimates

for 2018 will be released. Most analysts are expecting very small reductions in the corn and soybean yield estimates, including production estimates. The USDA will also release their quarterly stocks numbers on Jan. 11. All of these "numbers" will be incorporated into the USDA's revised WASDE (supply and demand) estimates. It will be a busy day.

In the meantime, the soybean crop in Brazil got planted earlier than normal and is in basically very good condition.

Some analysts are already predicting another record soybean crop in Brazil. January and early February weather will determine final yields.

Argentina has struggled with too much rain during the wheat harvest and the soybean planting season. The wet harvest could lead to some quality problems that, in turn, result in a smaller wheat export number.

Winter wheat across Western Europe and the Black Sea was planted in drier-than-desirable conditions as the summer drought lingered on. There is very cold weather in the forecast for the Black Sea region in late December. It is too early to be concerned about winter wheat crops around the northern hemisphere, but early crop conditions are not as good as they've been the previous several years.

Finally, the return of China as a buyer of U.S. soybeans is not bullish. U.S. soybean ending supplies will be very large even if China continues to buy U.S. soybeans. Chart 2 shows the latest USDA forecast for U.S. soybean ending supplies without China and with China buying 4 million metric tons (150 million bushels). ■

**Mike Krueger** is president and founder of The Money Farm, a grain advisory service located in Fargo, N.D. A licensed commodity broker, Krueger is a past director of the Minneapolis Grain Exchange and a senior analyst for World Perspectives, a Washington, D.C., agricultural consulting group.



# In your own words...

Social media is one way for farmers to tell their story

By KayDee Gilkey

When I speak to a college class, I begin with three simple questions. I ask which students were raised on a farm or a ranch, and then ask the same question about their parents as well as their grandparents. As you may well guess, only several students raise their hand as being raised on a farm or ranch. Additional hands are raised when asked about their parents' background and by the time we get to grandparents, usually about half of the class has their hands raised. That shouldn't be a big surprise, I suppose. You've heard the statistics—less than 2 percent of our country is actively involved in agriculture, while the other 98 percent are further removed from the farm than ever before.

## Why tell your story?

Although most consumers are multiple generations removed from the farm, many have an interest in learning more. Where do they find information about your industry, and how wheat is grown?

Generational differences may play a role in the increased trend for transparency and the pursuit of ag production knowledge. Millennials want to know where and how their food was grown. They are actively seeking answers about food production. Unfortunately, in addition to their peers, they often turn to dubious sources like Dr. Oz, the Food Babe (a social media personality) or general internet searches.

Transparency has been important for millennials as they seek ag production information. However, for Generation Z (age 22 and younger), transparency is a must for gaining their trust. Did you know that statistics state by 2020, Generation Z will make up 40 percent of our consumers? If you haven't yet begun to share your farming story, don't worry, it will continue to be important to current and future consumers.

In fact, by not actively telling your story, some might interpret the lack of sharing information as possibly having something to hide. I'd state that—for a large majority of farmers and ranchers—that would be an incorrect perception. Rather, I believe it is a lack of time, motivation or perhaps not considering sharing your story as a high priority that causes the lack of action on the part of many farmers and ranchers.

## Who should tell your story?

Would you prefer consumers find their information from farmers and ag producers like you or from those anti-agriculture "experts" who actively seek to tell their own perspective and distortions of agriculture? Hopefully that was an easy, "Of course, I'd rather they'd get their information from farmers like me."

I believe each of us have a responsibility to share our personal ag story. However, even beginning with one person per operation would be a step in the right direction. Who in your family's business is a natural storyteller and/or enjoys engaging in conversation with strangers? If a name comes quickly to mind, that person might be the natural for the title and role of chief communicator for your farm's story.

That doesn't leave you off the hook, however. Each of us shares our own different perspectives and passions in our own communication style. An active Washington ag advocate once told me she has no trouble engaging in conversation with most anyone about her family's farming story. She said that although her husband is more reserved, once he begins sharing his ag story, people listen closely.

## How to tell your story

The manner or method you choose to share your story is up to you, just pick one: face-to-face conversations, beginning a blog, posting images and stories about your farm on social media platforms, speaking in a classroom, seeking out traditional media opportunities.

So how do those consumers seeking ag knowledge find farmers like you? Are you currently using social media to tell your story and engage consumers in conversation about how their food is grown? Do you intentionally seek opportunities to share your story?

There are the traditional media channels like newspapers, television and radio, as well as the many different social media options. Whether traditional or digital media, sharing your ag story in this way allows you to interact with large numbers of people at a time.

If you prefer face-to-face conversations, you can always visit with people in the grocery store, airports, church or along the sidelines of your kids' or grandkids' sports.

Do you currently have a Facebook page? If you aren't yet



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actively telling your ag story, that might be a good place to start. Share a photo and a brief explanation of a daily activity on the farm.

Do you enjoy taking photos? Instagram might be your channel of choice. Twitter can be a fast-paced, quick and concise conversation on most any topic. Or is Snapchat videos your thing?

## What is your story?

Maybe asking what your story is seems a bit odd, but knowing what topics you're interested in sharing with people can help to narrow your focus. Is your passion conservation, the newest technology, transitioning to the next generation? We all know it is easier to speak to those topics which interest us the most, so that's a great place to start.

Do you have other nonag hobbies or interests that might allow you to connect with others? Do you ride a Harley or snowmobile? Connecting with people on the common ground of mutual hobbies is a great place to begin the conversation.

## When to tell your story

There is no time like the present. Begin today. Dip your toe into a social media stream and try it out. Don't feel like you have to select more than one channel. The world is waiting to hear your story. The power in your story is its personal and is different than those out there already advocating and that makes it incredibly authentic.

If it was only about the science, statistics and facts, we would have already won the perception battle. It is your personal experiences and knowledge that makes your story unique. Your personal story is powerful enough to change the minds and sometimes the hearts of those with which you share. ■

## Some social media accounts to follow:

**Nuttygrass (@nuttygrass).** Brenda Frketich is a nut and grass farming gal from Oregon who loves a great adventure and a good laugh! She is an active blogger at nuttygrass.com and is active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**Big Sky Farm Her (@bigskyfarmher).** Michelle Erickson-Jones farms alongside her husband and father while raising two little boys. She serves on the board of the Montana Grain Growers Association. Her goal is to provide a link between farmers and consumers—providing a glimpse into their day-to-day lives and breaking down U.S. policy that impacts farmers nationwide (specifically farm and trade policy). Erickson-Jones has a personal blog at bigskyfarmher.com and is active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**Blessed Farmgirl.** Alison Viebrock Steveson, an Eastern Washington resident, is a fourth generation dryland wheat farmer who farms with her husband, a fifth generation wheat farmer. Steveson is active on Facebook.

**Farm Babe (@IowaFarmBabe).** Iowan Michelle Miller was once a big city girl who moved to rural Iowa for love. There, she learned that her original thoughts of modern agriculture were very inaccurate and now enjoys debunking myths and spreading facts about REAL farms from REAL farmers. Miller is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, and she has a website at thefarmbabe.com.

**The Farmer's Daughter (@TheFarmersDaughterUSA).** Amanda Zaluckyj's goal is to promote U.S. farmers. She is a proud daughter (and sister!) of conventional farmers in southwest Michigan, as well as a practicing attorney. For 26 years, her family ran and supplied a roadside market selling their own fresh fruits and vegetables. They now farm corn and soybeans. Zaluckyj's blog is at thefarmersdaughterusa.com/blog. She is also active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

**Highheels&fields (@lesleyraekelly).** Lesley Kelly is a wife, boy mom, entrepreneur, marketer, brander, sunset lover, wannabe wine enthusiast and picture taker in Regina, Saskatchewan. Her family also farms in the heart of the prairies on a medium-sized grain farm. Her hope is by telling her farm story, she can help bridge the gap between those involved and not involved in agriculture. Kelly's website and blog is at highheelsandcanolafields.com. She is also active on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

**This Farm Wife (@thisfarmwife).** Meredith Bernard is a southern-rooted wife, mama, writer, photographer and professional gate holder who strongly believes in the power of stories. She is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

**Rachel Peabody (@rachpea87).** Rachel Peabody is a communicator, wife and twin mom from Illinois. She is active on Twitter.

**The OG Devil's Advocate (@MGigger).** Michelle is a small fruit grower in Oregon. Besides farming, she is a science teacher. She is active on Twitter and Facebook and has a Tumblr blog at devilsadvocate.tumblr.com.

**The Farmer's Wifey (@TheFarmersWifey).** Krista Stauffer didn't grow up on a farm, but that didn't stop her from falling in love with a dairy farmer. This mother of four works side by side with her husband on their family dairy farm in Washington. Her personal blog is at thefarmerswifey.com. She is also active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. ■





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## AgForestry program welcomes Class 41

The selection of the Leadership Class 41 for the AgForestry Leadership Program has been announced.

AgForestry is proud to welcome Justin Becker, Northwest Farm Credit Services, Olympia; Ben Cochrane, Cochrane Sons Farms, Kahlottus; Caitlyn Evans, Jeffers, Danielson, Sonn & Aylward, Wenatchee; Glynis Gordon, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Vancouver; Daniel Gore, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, Prosser; Craig Gyselinck, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, East Wenatchee; Ashley Hatfield, Lamb Weston, Pasco; Joshua Heinick, Columbia Fruit Packers, East Wenatchee; Margaret Homerding, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Olympia; Kai Itameri, Garrison Creek Cellars, Walla Walla; Kaerlek Janislampi, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Lacey; Jenny Knoth, Green Crow, Olympia; Justin Lanman, Taylor Shellfish, Shelton; Kelly Lawrence, USDA Forest Service, Naches; Brock Leonard, Sunheaven Farms LLC, Prosser; Heidi Morris, Agrofresh, Prosser; Courtney Naumann, Anchor QEA, Seattle; Wes Tracy, Weyerhaeuser Company, Aberdeen; Hailey Wertenberger, Sage Fruit Company, Wapato; Emmett Wild, Skagit Conservation District, Stanwood; and Will Wiles, Col Solare, Pasco.

AgForestry is a leadership development program for emerging leaders in agriculture, forestry and natural resources. Over 18 months, class members will attend 11 educational seminars throughout Washington state on topics pertinent to leadership in natural resources, a one-week seminar in Washington, D.C., and two weeks in a selected foreign country. AgForestry cultivates the next generation of leaders to be a voice for natural resources. ■

## Even if leased, landlords have responsibility for CRP

By Trista Crossley

Taking marginal land out of production is the basic premise of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), but for landlords with tenants, that doesn't mean they can just enroll and forget about that acreage.

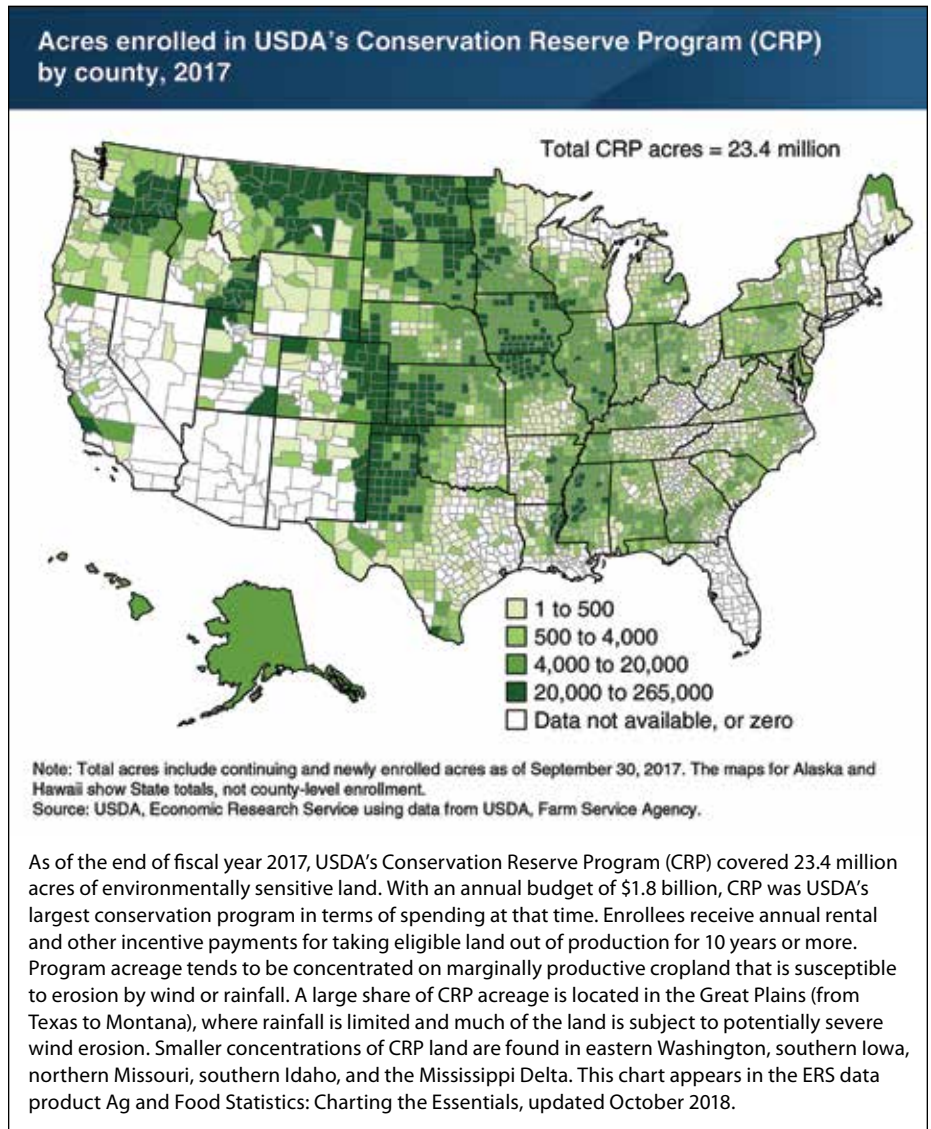
"It's important that they (landlords) understand that a CRP contract has a joint and several liability clause. Everybody on that contract with a share greater than zero is liable for everything on the contract," warned Rod Hamilton, farm programs chief for the Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

In other words, if the FSA finds a CRP contract is out of compliance, anybody who has received a share of the payment is responsible for penalties and refunding payments.

Hamilton said that while some CRP contracts are only held by the landlord, especially in cases where very little maintenance is required, most contracts are held jointly between a landlord and tenant, with the tenant responsible for taking care of the land in return for a share of the rental payment.

"The landlord may say their tenant is responsible. The tenant probably is, but once the contract violation has occurred, everybody will be included on the steps we take," he explained.

CRP was started in 1985, and according to FSA's website, has become the largest private-lands conservation program in the U.S. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers and landlords agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from production and instead plant species that will help improve water



quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Most contracts run 10 to 15 years in length, and the land must be maintained at a basic level. According to Hamilton, in most cases, that means keeping weeds under control and keeping livestock off the acreage. Most contracts also include a midcontract management clause that requires contract holders to make sure the plant stand is healthy and do some replanting if it isn't.

FSA holds two types of CRP sign-ups. In a continuous sign-up, environmentally sensitive land that qualifies for specific conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted as long as the requirements are met and the program's enrollment cap hasn't been met. The other type of sign-up is the general sign-up. These sign-ups don't occur on any fixed schedule and are announced ahead of time by the secretary of agriculture.



This is a competitive bid process where offers from across the country are ranked against each other. The amount of money available for CRP contracts is set by the farm bill. The 2014 Farm Bill allocated approximately 6 percent of its budget, or about \$57 billion, for conservation programs—including CRP—and set the CRP enrollment cap at 24 million acres. In the 2018 Farm Bill, the CRP acreage cap will gradually increase to 27 million acres by FY2023.

For landlords who are considering enrolling leased land into CRP, they should be aware that tenants who are farming that land are automatically given the right to be included on the contract and are entitled to a share of the rental payment.

For people who inherit leased farmland, finding out they have an active CRP contract can be a bit of a shock. Hamilton advised those people to first talk to the tenant to find out what the deal was between the tenant and the original landowner.

"They (owners) need to be familiar with what's going on with contracts. What are the contract requirements? What is the contract period? The majority (of landowners) rely on the tenant, and that's usually who we reach out to when we need something. But owners need to understand

they have obligations under the contract. They have to step up," he said. Landowners can always call their local FSA office for help.

For more information on CRP, visit [fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/index](https://fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/index) ■

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# THE BOTTOM LINE

## Building a solid credit score

By Dr. Alex White  
*Virginia Tech Dairy Science*

Most people know that they have a credit score, but very few understand what a credit score is, why it is important, or how to improve it. Let's take a shot at demystifying these things.

### What is a credit score?

A credit score measures your creditworthiness to potential creditors. Personal credit scores tend to use a scale of 300-850 while business credit scores usually use a 0-100 scale. A higher credit score indicates that you are more likely to repay your debts on time. A lower score is an indicator that you are more likely to have trouble repaying your debts. Most lenders like to see your personal credit score above 700 or your business credit score above 70.

### How does it impact your life?

Strong credit scores make it easier to qualify for new credit, and they may help you obtain lower interest

rates. Solid credit scores also lead to lower premiums on your auto and home-owner's insurance policies.

### What determines your credit score?

The main factors that determine your credit score (personal and business) include:

- Your payment history. This has the biggest impact on your credit score. Your score will be lowered if you are 30 or more days late on any loan payment or bill (including utility bills and medical bills) that is reported to a credit bureau. Don't worry if you are less than 30 days late on a payment—that probably won't be reported. Keep in mind, however, reported late payments will remain on your credit history for up to seven years.
- Credit utilization ratio. This ratio is the amount of debt you have outstanding in relation to your total credit limit. The lower the ratio, the higher your credit score. Keep this ratio under 30 percent.
- Length of relationship with a creditor. The more years you have an account with a creditor, the higher your credit score.
- The number of types of credit you currently have. The more types of credit you have, the higher your credit score...to a point. The credit bureaus want to see you have a combination of two to three credit cards, a home mortgage, auto loans, student loans and/or home equity loans.
- Adverse public records. Occurrences of bankruptcy, tax liens or being turned over to a collections agency will lower your credit score. In general, bad things stay on your credit history for seven years.
- The number of inquiries to your credit history. Allowing others to check your credit history will lower your credit score. You will NOT hurt your credit score if you check your own credit history.

### How to improve your score

It will take time and patience to improve your credit score—it won't improve dramatically overnight. It will probably take six to 12 months to see a significant improvement. Here are some tips on how to improve your credit scores (personal and business):

- Pay all of your bills and loan payments on time. This will have the biggest impact on your credit score over time!
- If you don't have a credit card, think about opening one. Use it for normal monthly expenses and pay the balance in full each month.
- Keep your average credit utilization ratio under 30 percent. Use your credit cards for normal purchases (groceries, gas, gifts), but pay the balances in full each month. If you have a significant outstanding balance on your credit cards, stop using them now and find ways to pay them down as quickly as possible. If you have a relatively low credit limit on your credit cards, you might ask your credit card company to increase your limit to help you stay under 30 percent.

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- Eliminate unneeded credit cards. Keep two or three credit cards that you use the most or that have the longest relationship with the creditor. Cancel your other cards, but be prepared. Canceling some of your credit cards may initially lower your credit score, but it should rebound within three to six months.
- Do NOT continuously open and close credit cards to take advantage of low interest rates or balance transfers. Choose the two or three best cards for you and stick with them.
- Limit the amount of inquiries into your credit history. When you are shopping around for the best deal on cars or credit cards, do it within a short time frame. Your credit score should be impacted less if you can limit your inquiries to a two-week period versus a two-month period.

Take some time during the holiday season to look at

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your credit practices. The new year will be a great time to implement changes to improve your credit score. Happy holidays to all! ■

**Dr. Alex White** has taught a variety of college courses for the past 25 years. He has served as an extension agent and an extension specialist (personal/farm financial management). In 2012, he began working full time in financial management and farm/business consulting. He has worked with individuals and small business owners throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

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# Your wheat life...



Call back to early summer when the fields were full of growing wheat. Photo by Resa Cox.



Matt Schroeder gets help during the 2018 harvest from his daughter, Mattie (3 ½), in Wilbur. Photo by Allison Schroeder.



The second week of wheat harvest at Walker Farms in the Horse Heaven Hills. Photo by Susan Walker.

**Send us photos of your wheat life!**

Email pictures to [editor@wawg.org](mailto:editor@wawg.org). Please include location of picture, names of all people appearing in the picture and ages of all children.





Kaylee Swift (5) with her grandpa, Chet Swift, during her family's 2018 harvest in Lamont. Photo by Stacey Swift.



A harvest selfie in Pine City. From left are Sandy Martin, Larry Miller and Sheri Miller. Photo by Sandy Martin.



In Dayton, the Mead cousins (from left), Owen (6), Chase (5), Hailey (3), Gwen (2) and Weston (4), celebrate our independence by singing happy birthday America! Photo by Julia Mead.



# HAPPENINGS

All dates and times are subject to change.  
Please verify event before heading out.

## JANUARY 2019

### 8-9 2019 CROPPING SYSTEMS

**CONFERENCE.** Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Wash. Registration and more info at [directseed.org/events/annual-conference/](http://directseed.org/events/annual-conference/)

**15 WAWG BOARD MEETING.** Meeting starts at 10 a.m. at Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash. (509) 659-0610, [wawg.org](http://wawg.org)

**16-17 2019 NORTHWEST HAY EXPO.** Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash. For more information visit [wa-hay.org/convention](http://wa-hay.org/convention)

**18-27 LAKE CHELAN WINTERFEST.** An event for the whole family! Winterfest is two weekends of ice sculptures, music, wine tasting, ale tasting, kids activities, polar bear splash, beach bonfire, fireworks and more! Chelan, Wash. [lakechelan.com/winterfest/](http://lakechelan.com/winterfest/)

**18-19 CASCADIA GRAINS CONFERENCE.** Connecting growers, processors, brokers, investors and policymakers across the grain value chain. Olympia, Wash. Registration required. [cascadiagrains.com](http://cascadiagrains.com)

**19 WINTERFEST.** Experience the fun and excitement of winter games in Deer Park! A community celebration with events for the whole family. Deer Park, Wash. [deerparkchamber.com](http://deerparkchamber.com)

**19-20 BAVARIAN ICE FEST.** Snow sculptures, games and fireworks. Leavenworth, Wash. [leavenworth.org](http://leavenworth.org)

**22 MANAGEMENT MATTERS FOR SOIL HEALTH.** One-day workshop covering management insights on cropping systems and earthworms, nutrient cycling and management, organic matter and organic amendments. It also will feature a panel of local growers discussing how they manage for soil health on their farms. Workshop begins at 7:45 a.m. at Banyans on the Ridge-Pavillion

in Pullman, Wash. [extension.wsu.edu/farmers-network/education/workshops/management-matters-for-soil-health/](http://extension.wsu.edu/farmers-network/education/workshops/management-matters-for-soil-health/)

## FEBRUARY 2019

**5-7 SPOKANE AG EXPO.** The largest farm machinery show in the Inland Northwest. More than 250 agriculture suppliers and service companies all under one roof. Held at the Spokane Convention Center in Spokane, Wash. [greaterspokane.org/ag-expo/](http://greaterspokane.org/ag-expo/)

**7 WAWG BOARD MEETING.** Meeting starts at 10 a.m. at Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash. (509) 659-0610, [wawg.org](http://wawg.org)

**13 AG POLICY OUTLOOK AND WORKING WITH THE NEW NORMAL OF NATURAL WEATHER AND CLIMATE.** AMMO workshop presented by Clinton Griffiths and James Garriss. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Airport in Spokane, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister at least 3 days in advance by calling (877) 740-2666 or print out and mail registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/)

**19 MARKET OUTLOOK AND THE FOUR RULES OF UNDERSTANDING MARKET BEHAVIOR.** AMMO workshop presented by Darin Newsom. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Airport in Spokane, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister at least 3 days in advance by calling (877) 740-2666 or print out registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/)

**20-21. WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION RESEARCH REVIEW.** Pullman, Wash. For more information and to RSVP, contact Mary Palmer Sullivan at (509) 456-2481 or email her at [mary@wagrain.org](mailto:mary@wagrain.org)

**21 SOIL ACIDITY AMELIORATION.** One-day workshop about using soil amendments to increase soil pH and improving soil and plant health. Presented by WSU Extension and the Farmer's

Network. Workshop begins at 7:45 a.m. at Banyans on the Ridge-Pavillion in Pullman, Wash. [extension.wsu.edu/farmers-network/education/workshops/soil-acidity-amelioration/](http://extension.wsu.edu/farmers-network/education/workshops/soil-acidity-amelioration/)

**28 VARIETY OPTIONS TO MEET TODAY'S CHALLENGES.** AMMO workshop presented by Ryan Higginbotham. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Washington Wheat Foundation Annex in Ritzville, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister at 3 days in advance by calling (877) 740-2666 or mail registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/)

## MARCH 2019

**3 SAUSAGE FEED.** All you can eat from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Menu includes homemade sausage, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, green beans, roll, applesauce, pie and beverage. There is also a beer garden for people to enjoy. Uniontown Community Center, Uniontown, Wash. [uniontownwa.org/events/](http://uniontownwa.org/events/)

**8-10 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW.** Features 300 professional artists and crafters from across the U.S. Spokane Fair and Expo Center, Spokane, Wash. [custershows.com](http://custershows.com)

**12 WAWG BOARD MEETING.** Meeting starts at 10 a.m. at Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash. (509) 659-0610, [wawg.org](http://wawg.org)

**22-24 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW.** Features 150 professional artists and crafters from across the U.S. TRAC Center, Pasco, Wash. [custershows.com](http://custershows.com) ■

## Submissions

Listings must be received by the 10th of each month for the next month's *Wheat Life*. Email listings to [editor@wawg.org](mailto:editor@wawg.org). Include date, time and location, plus contact info and a short description.

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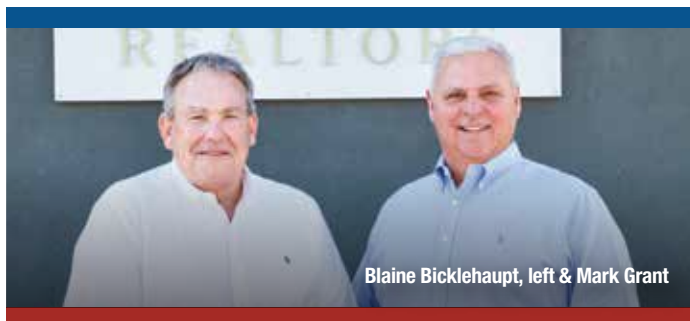
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