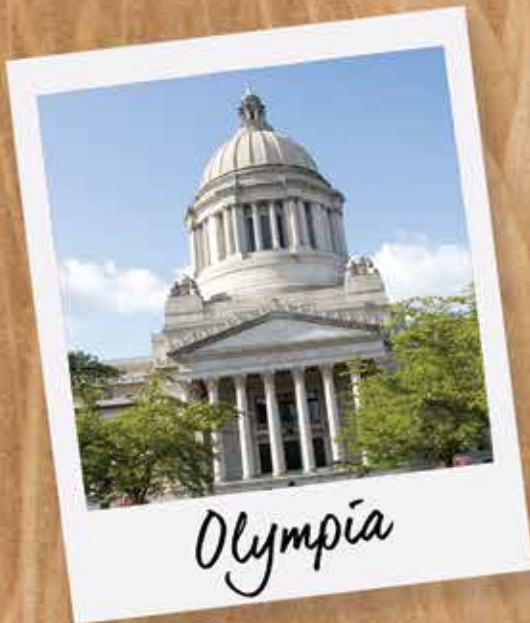


WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

JANUARY | 2020

ADVOCACY



**WAWG takes
fight to protect
wheat growers
from coast to
coast**

Unpacked



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general sign-up

WGC commissioner recounts Asian trip

The war against wheat diseases

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President's Perspective



You are cordially invited to attend

By Ryan Poe

In a less than two weeks, the 2020 Washington State Legislative Session will begin, and the advocacy principle of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' mission statement will kick into high gear with our annual Olympia Days trip. During this visit, a group of wheat farmers will attempt to meet with as many legislators and agencies as possible in two days to talk about the issues impacting wheat growers. I'm not going to go into all those issues; you can read about them on pages 12 and 20. Instead, I want to talk about who's going with us.

A quick look at Washington state's legislative district map tells most of the story. Eastern Washington makes up about a quarter of the state's 47 districts. The majority are on the west side of the state, and I've heard talk that with the next census, Seattle could get another legislative district. People today seem to lean heavily on social media or television for information on key issues—especially when it comes to agriculture and food—and much of that information is flat out wrong. It's up to us to show them the real facts and put faces on the people whose livelihoods can and are impacted by the issues they are debating.

In order to meet with all those legislators, we need bodies. We'll have multiple appointments happening at the same time over those two days, and if we don't have enough people to fill those meetings, we lose an opportunity to share our viewpoint or correct a wrong perception. We especially need volunteers from the west side of the state. Legislators always want to hear from people in their own districts, and in fact, many times it's easier to get an appointment if we can tell a legislator that one of their constituents will be there. This is a perfect opportunity for landlords, many of whom live on the west side, to participate, even if it's only for part of a day or a single meeting. A grower or landlord can speak to how legislation affects them personally, and how it impacts their family and their operation; I think that kind of testimony holds a lot of weight.

A couple of years ago, a west-side legislator introduced legislation that would have required extremely restrictive pesticide reporting regulations. I think the idea came from an earnest (although misguided) desire to protect the public, but because this legislator didn't really understand how farmers use pesticides, the legislation was far more harmful than she might have intended it to be. Thanks to testimony from farmers and pesticide applicators who were able to explain why the legislation would be so restrictive, we were able to compromise and end up with something that was beneficial to just about everybody.

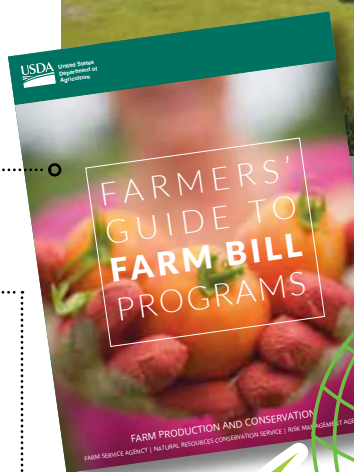
I know the thought of meeting with a legislator or the director of an agency to discuss an issue that you might not fully understand can be intimidating. Don't worry. The group gets together the night before our first day of meetings to decide who's going to which appointments and to review our priorities. Our lobbyist and the staff of WAWG will be there to answer any questions. If you feel stronger on one topic, such as pesticides or how a specific tax could hurt your operation, then talk on that subject and let someone else speak on other topics you are less confident with. There will be other growers and staff with you to help you along.

If you are interested in taking part in Olympia Days Jan. 20-22, please join us. You can contact our office at (509) 659-0610 with any questions. I hope to see you there. ■

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WAWG MEMBERSHIP FORM

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$200 (up to 2 members) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grower \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership \$500 (up to 5 partners) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Convention \$600 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry Associate \$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$2,500 |

Name _____

Farm or Business _____

Address _____

City _____

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Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

County Affiliation (if none, write state) _____

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

WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

If these issues are important to your operation, become a member today and help us educate our legislators and advocate for agriculture.
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Dams draft report released; public asked to comment

A draft report on the impacts of breaching the lower Snake River dams, which was commissioned by the Governor's Office last year, has been released and is open for public comment.

The report can be accessed at lsrdstakeholderprocess.org. Directions for submitting comments, either electronically or by mail, are included on the website. Public comments will be accepted through Jan. 24. There will also be three public workshops on the draft report:

- Jan. 7 in Clarkston, Wash.;
- Jan. 9 in Vancouver, Wash.; and
- Jan. 13 in the Tri-Cities.

The public can also complete an online questionnaire (available at lsrdstakeholderprocess.org).

The report states that three themes emerged from interviews:

- There are significantly different views of the impacts from breaching the dams on salmon, orca, agriculture, transportation and economics. More information is needed to create opportunities for greater understanding.
- Energy, transportation, agriculture, salmon and orca are complex issues and decisions about the lower Snake River dams need to consider the broader systems and context for each. Each issue is dynamic, future changes may provide more options as well as more challenges.
- People across the diversity of in-



Volunteers needed for county representation at Olympia Days

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is looking for volunteers to attend Olympia Days Jan. 20-22, 2020. We will be making a large number of appointments with various legislators and will need county representation to make our meetings effective. Talking points are provided, and all meetings have at least two growers and/or staff in them.

Please RSVP to Lori Williams at lori@wawg.org as soon as possible so that we can get a head count for the event. If you have any questions, please contact the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610.

Growers should plan to arrive on Monday, Jan. 20, in time for a 5:30 p.m. dinner and briefing with WAWG's lobbyist, Diana Carlen. We will be assigning growers to legislative meetings and reviewing our priorities. The next day, Jan. 21, will be visits with legislators and agencies, with a legislative reception in the evening. Growers will have legislative meetings through noon of the next day, Jan. 22, before traveling home. ■

terests expressed the desire to have more informed and respectful conversations. Given that issues around the lower Snake River dams have long been in litigation, the ability for shared learning, collaborative problem-solving and a new dialogue has so far been limited. Many of those interviewed are hopeful about the significant benefits a collaborative dialogue could offer

The report does not make any recommendations on whether or not the dams should be breached, but summarizes the views of those that were interviewed. The report also states that Washington Gov. Jay Inslee will use the report to "... inform his perspective on the LSRD (lower Snake River dams) and determine if

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and how to participate in ongoing federal environmental evaluations of the Columbia and Snake River system.”

According to the draft, the final report will be based on four sources of information: review of relevant reports and studies; interviews with stakeholders, jurisdictions and organizations that would be affected by a decision about the dams; an open online public survey; and public review and comment on the draft report.

“In the final report, as in this draft, the emphasis will be on understanding and summarizing what people think and the context for those ideas; the Governor will consider the diversity of perspectives when he makes his decisions,” the draft report states.

Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, urged growers and industry stakeholders to submit comments on the draft report.

“We believe this study was an unnecessary duplication of the ongoing federal environmental impact statement process and that the \$750,000 appropriated for the study would have been better used elsewhere. The decision on whether or not to breach the lower Snake River dams will be made at the federal level, not at the state level,” Hennings said. “We are appreciative that the study consultants reached out to stakeholders on the east side of the state, because it is that population that will have to shoulder the impacts if the dams are breached. With all the research and technology that is currently available, there is no reason the dams can’t be part of a healthy, whole ecosystem that supports salmon and the needs of the public.”

The lower Snake River dams are essential to navigation and transportation of wheat and other cargo from Eastern Washington, eastern Oregon and Idaho. Approximately 60 percent of wheat grown in Eastern Washington is shipped to export markets via the Columbia-Snake River System. Agricultural products from as far away as the Midwest are shipped to export terminals in Portland and Vancouver through the river system, and it is the top wheat export gateway in the U.S., and the third largest grain export gateway in the world.

Barging is a cheaper, more efficient and cleaner way to move wheat to the Columbia River seaports. A typical four-barge tow that travels down the Snake River hauls as much wheat as 1.4 unit trains and as much as 530 semi-trucks. Barges also use far less fuel per ton of cargo moved than either trains or trucks. Keeping barging available also provides important competition to the rail and trucking industries. If growers didn’t have the option to use barging, rail rates and trucking rates would likely go up since they would no longer have to compete with barging.

Besides the impacts to the Inland Pacific Northwest’s

2018 Farm Bill workshops scheduled

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers will be partnering with Washington State University to hold grower education workshops on changes to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs in multiple Eastern Washington locations this month. The Farm Service Agency is currently accepting offers for the CRP general sign-up and program elections for either ARC or PLC for 2019 and 2020 crop years, but growers need to understand what changes in these programs were implemented by the 2018 Farm Bill, and how those changes could impact growers’ operations.

For more information on the workshops, see the ad on page 11 for more information. Growers can also contact the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610 or email lori@wawg.org. ■

transportation system, breaching the lower Snake River dams would also negatively impact the region’s ability to produce emissions-free power through hydropower. The loss of reliable clean power production and increased carbon from transportation emissions will be taking the state’s response to lessening greenhouse gases in the wrong direction. ■

Whitman County growers look ahead to legislative session

The upcoming state legislative session was on farmers’ minds at the December meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers.

Randy Suess, county president, said growers discussed lawmakers’ use of title-only bills, which are a means for lawmakers to introduce a bill with no text that can be amended later. The state constitution requires that bills must be introduced at least 10 days before the end of the legislative session unless a two-thirds vote is cast as an override. This loophole allows lawmakers to bypass those requirements. In the 2019 Legislative Session, lawmakers filed about two dozen title-only bills. One of those bills was later used to impose a tax on out-of-state banks. A lawsuit on behalf of the Washington Bankers Association has been filed to challenge the legality of title-only bills. Suess said that growers are concerned about the use of title-only bills, especially when it comes to any sort of taxation. ►

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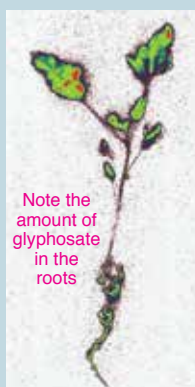
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Growers also discussed news that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has proposed a \$5 tax on insurance policies to help fund wildfire prevention. While details of the proposal are unclear, Suess said if the tax is applied per vehicle, farmers could be hit unfairly because they tend to have multiple vehicles for farm work. Growers were happy to hear the news that container shipping is opening back up in Portland on a limited basis.

"We don't sell a lot of wheat that way, but every so often, we did," Suess explained. "It will definitely help our pea and lentil growers."

Washington State University (WSU) spring wheat breeder Mike Pumphrey updated growers on what he's been working on. He's got a Hessian fly-resistant club wheat, as well as a two-gene Clearfield resistant hard red wheat, in the pipeline, among others.

Pumphrey also touched on herbicide resistance, saying he's worried that the effectiveness of the Clearfield system is limited. Suess said herbicide resistance is a big concern with growers, and he's planning to have WSU Extension weed scientist Drew Lyon at the growers' Jan. 6 meeting for further discussion on the topic. ■

Growers applaud USMCA passage

U.S. wheat growers are very pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives has passed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). This past year, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and U.S. Wheat Associates have forcefully spoken out on their behalf about the need for the USMCA.

"Agriculture desperately needed a win for economic recovery and passing the USMCA was that win," said NAWG president and Lavon, Tex., farmer Ben Scholz. "NAWG applauds those members of Congress for their support and hard work to advance this critical trade deal one step closer to the finish line. We encourage the Senate to follow its lead and pass this deal early in the new year."

"Mexico's flour millers import more U.S. wheat than any other country, and they have been very anxious about the outcome of this trade agreement," said USW chairman and Paulding, Ohio, farmer Doug Goyings. "At the end of a conference with those millers last June, we agreed to work together to get USMCA implemented. Our colleagues at NAWG have enthusiastically joined that effort on Capitol Hill, and we thank them for their support." ■



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13

JANUARY

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511 Park Street

14

JANUARY

Walla Walla, WA (9 a.m. - noon)

Marcus Whitman Hotel
6 West Rose Street

16

JANUARY

Colfax, WA (9 a.m. - noon)

Sherman McGregor Training Facility
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For more information:

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or Email: lori@wawg.org

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POLICY MATTERS

What's coming down the pike for 2020 Legislative Session

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

On Jan. 13, 2020, the Washington State Legislature will convene in Olympia for a 60-day "short session." The main task of legislators will be to pass supplemental budgets for the operating, transportation and capital budgets. The supplemental budgets are generally minor adjustments to the biennial budgets (passed in the 2019 "long session") based on updated spending and revenue information.

Democrats continue to control the agenda in both the House and Senate. However, one major change will be the election of a new speaker of the House. After the 2019 session, long-time Speaker Frank Chopp (D-Seattle) stepped down as House Speaker, but continues to serve in the House as the Speaker Emeritus. The House Democratic Caucus chose Rep. Laurie Jinkins (D-Tacoma) as his replacement. Speaker-Elect Jinkins will be formally elected and sworn in as Speaker on the first day of session and will be the first female speaker in state history.

The session is scheduled to end on March 12, 2020, and while the legislature is expected to adjourn on time, much of the conversation is likely to be dominated by discussions of the impact of Initiative 976 on the transportation budget. I-976 was passed by voters in November and limits car tabs to \$30, reduces or eliminates authorization for local governments and regional transit authorities (like Sound Transit) to add fees to car tabs and reduces a number of other vehicle-related fees. The Office of Financial Management estimated that the initiative could result in a loss of \$4.2 billion in state and local transportation funding in the next six years. Unlike gas taxes, which can only be spent on roads, some car tab fees go to multimodal funding, which can be spent on transit, rail and other types of transportation.

Following the passage of I-976, Gov. Inslee ordered the



delay of more than 70 scheduled (but not broken ground) highway and transit projects while the Legislature determines how to adjust the transportation budget. Legislative budget writers are expecting to have to cut \$478 million from the 2020 Supplemental Transportation Budget. Various local governments, including King County, have challenged the initiative in court arguing it violates several provisions of the Washington State Constitution. The groups also filed an injunction to prevent I-976 from going into effect while the litigation is ongoing, which was recently granted by a King County Superior Court Judge. However, the state and many local governments plan on cutting transportation budgets to assume I-976 impacts anyway, in case the courts ultimately uphold the initiative.

Some other issues that the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) will be following during the upcoming session include:

- **Carbon policies.** Last year, the Legislature passed several major climate-related policies on clean energy generation and reducing emissions from buildings. However, bills on a low carbon fuel standard and a greenhouse gas cap and trade system stalled, but are likely to be hot topics during the 2020 session. ►

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WAWG supports carbon reduction policies that recognize agricultural practices as a benefit to the environment, complement existing policies, do not impose inefficient costs on Washington agriculture and do not make wheat growers less competitive in the global market.

- **DNR early termination of agricultural and grazing leases.** The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a clause in their agricultural and grazing leases allowing them to unilaterally terminate such leases early with 180 days advanced notice. WAWG is working with DNR, other agricultural groups and Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima) on legislation that would require DNR to pay fair compensation when it terminates such leases early.
- **Orca task force recommendations.** Earlier this fall, the Orca Task Force wrapped up and issued its final report. Notable new recommendations that could see legislative action include moving permitting decisions from a “no net loss” standard to a “net ecological gain” standard and addressing the impacts of climate change on salmon and orca habitat. A concern would be that moving to a “net ecological gain” standard would make environmental permitting much more difficult.
- **Lower Snake River dams.** The 2019 Operating Budget appropriated \$750,000 for the Governor’s office to study the economic impacts of the lower Snake River Dams and their possible removal. This stakeholder study has been ongoing this fall, and the facilitator is expected to take public comment in January and finalize the report by February 2020. The Governor intends to use the final report to inform the state’s comments in the ongoing federal EIS process for the Columbia-Snake River Hydrosystem. WAWG was interviewed this fall by the facilitators and will stay engaged as the study progresses. WAWG opposes removal of the dams along the Snake River.
- **Road usage charge.** The state has been studying replacing the gas tax with a road usage charge because of long-term declines in gas tax revenue due to more fuel efficient vehicles. A road usage charge would record a vehicle’s miles on Washington state roads, and the state would charge based on the miles traveled. A pilot project at the Washington State Transportation Commission ended in January of 2019, and the final report and recommendations will be delivered to the legislature in January 2020. The recommendations could turn into legislative proposals in 2020 or another future session. WAWG will be tracking this issue, since rural commute distances tend to be longer

and so a road usage charge would disproportionately impact rural residents.

For more information on WAWG’s 2020 legislative priorities, see page 20.

WAWG will be participating in their annual Olympia Days on Jan. 20-22 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. ■

Ecology director to step down

In early December, Washington State Department of Ecology Director **Maia Bellon** announced she was stepping down.

“After 25 years of state service, and nearly seven years as Ecology’s director, I have made the decision to step down at the end of this year. Arriving at this choice has been bittersweet, but I’m confident that it’s the right time for me to make a professional and personal change,” she said in a statement. “My current plans are to enjoy some time off reconnecting with my family and friends. I then intend to dust off my law degree and try my hand at private practice focusing on environmental law and policy. It has been an incredible honor to serve Gov. Jay Inslee and lead Ecology’s mission of environmental protection and restoration in Washington state.”



Bellon was instrumental in forming the Agriculture-Water Quality Advisory Committee in 2014. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers was involved in the committee from the beginning, seeing it as a way to ensure that agriculture had a voice and seat at the table when regulators set definitions and guidelines.

“Maia has been a resolute leader who has made decisions based on science and data, listened to impacted communities and worked tirelessly to protect our state’s water, air and lands,” Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said. “The work she has done at the Department of Ecology will benefit Washingtonians for generations to come. While she will greatly be missed, I know that whatever challenges Maia takes on next will be met with the same dedication and passion that she has brought to state service.” ■

Father and Son Team Have "What It Takes" to Break Wheat Yield Records

When it comes to growing wheat, Doug and Trevor Stout have the resilience to get the job done right. The father-son duo have taken top honors in the National Wheat Foundation's National Wheat Yield Contest three years in a row — and they've done so with WestBred® wheat varieties.

- For 2019, Doug won first place in Idaho, and first place in the nation, with KELDIN in the Winter Wheat – Dryland, High Yield category. He achieved a yield of 181.93 Bu/A.
- Trevor won first place in Idaho, and first place in the nation, with WB9668 in the Spring Wheat – Dryland, High Yield category. He had a yield of 111.13 Bu/A.

For the Stouts, these record-breaking wheat yields began with selecting the right variety. "We chose KELDIN for its winter hardiness and yield potential," Doug says. "It's really been a rock for us."

"It all starts with choosing varieties with the best genetics," Trevor agrees. "But it also takes a great team."

Teamwork is very much a family affair on the Stout farm. "My favorite part of farming is the close bond



Growers Trevor and Doug Stout with Jeff Koscelny,
Bayer Crop Science Global Wheat Commercial Strategy Lead
and WestBred Business Lead

I have with my parents from working with them every day," Trevor shares. Tammy, wife and mother, does the books and the yield maps, and Doug and Trevor work closely together on everything from variety selection to input plans.

"Trevor brings a young, progressive mind to the team — and the more ideas, the more success you're going to have," states Doug. Agronomists, like Kyle Renton with Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative, Barry Greenwalt with Helena Chemical Co. and WestBred Technical Product Manager Lindsay Crigler, round out the team.

Overcoming Challenges

The 2019 growing seasons in the Northwest were not without their challenges. The Stouts had no measurable precipitation until February, when more than a foot of snow fell right on top of their new winter wheat plants. Fortunately, warm days and nights followed and "really gave it a shot in the arm," according to Doug.



Mother Nature was kinder to their spring wheat — cooler temperatures minimized stress, although high winds did dry the ground out and cause the wheat to emerge unevenly. "We're always looking for wheat that has good protein and still yields, and WB9668 was a good blend of both — with a strong disease package, too," says Trevor. "We're grateful to WestBred wheat for letting us reap the rewards of their breeding program."

Farming is a challenge, but it's one this family enjoys. "It's fun to be progressive, to try different things on small areas and to see how far we can push yield," says Doug.

***"As a family working together,
we face challenges together and we enjoy
successes together." — Trevor Stout***

The Stouts' 2019 wheat growing seasons will definitely go down as successes.

The National Wheat Yield Contest has two categories: spring wheat and winter wheat, and two subcategories: dryland and irrigated wheat. New for 2019, national awards were given for overall high yield (regardless of USDA county averages) as well as the percentage increase by which measured yield exceeded recent five-year Olympic county averages (as published by USDA).

To learn more about the Stouts, as well as other WestBred contest winners, go to WestBred.com/NWYC.

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Congressional legislator decides to not seek re-election

Last month, Washington Rep. **Denny Heck** announced his decision to not seek re-election after his current term ends. Heck, a democrat, represents Washington state's 10th District, which encompasses Pierce, Thurston and Shelton counties. In a letter posted on his website, Heck cited time spent away from his family and the current political climate as reasons for his decision.

"I promise to 'run through the tape' until the end of my term and continue to work hard and give it my best. But after that, Paula (Heck's wife of nearly 44 years) awaits as well as at least two books I will write. And more movies and sleep and time at the cabin. Washington state so has it over Washington, D.C. Finally, after more than 40 years of intermittent public service, know this: I got more out of it than I gave it, and I gave it all I had," he wrote in his letter.

Heck listed some of the accomplishments he was most proud of, including:

- Handing the long overdue Purple Heart to the deserving soldier whose serious injuries had been overlooked by the authorities;
- Forming the State Road 167 Coalition to successfully fight for completion of this critical roadway;
- Leading Congress on reauthorization of the job-creating Export Import Bank;
- Writing the New Democrats' Housing Task Force Report which helped to finally throw a spotlight on the national housing crisis;
- Working on issues with Indian Country such as renaming the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge for my friend Billy Frank, Jr. and reauthorizing the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act; and
- The honor of serving on the House Intelligence Committee and being entrusted with our nation's most sensitive security secrets.

Heck also wrote that he was discouraged by the degradation of civic discourse where success is measured by Twitter followers and a president who, he said, unrelentingly attacks the free press, assassinates the character of



anyone who disagreed with him and has a "demonstrably very distant relationship with the truth.

"None of this discouragement in any way diminishes the bone-deep gratitude I feel for the privilege to serve in Congress and for all who have made this incredible journey possible—my family, the voters of the 10th District, my staff and all the countless people who have extended a thousand kindnesses along the way," he wrote.

Heck served five terms in the Washington State House of Representatives, beginning in 1976. He was first elected to Congress in 2012. ■

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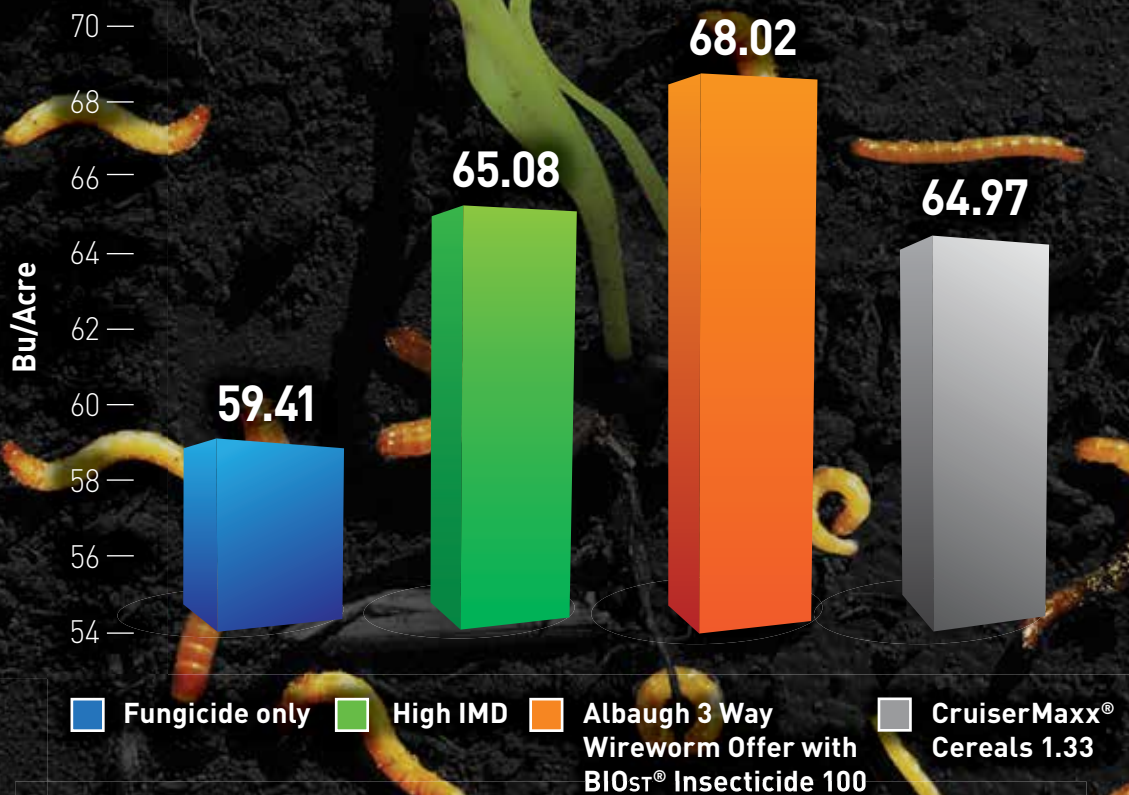
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MINORE SCHOLARSHIP PAST WINNERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

The National Wheat Foundation works to advance the wheat industry through strategic research, education and outreach collaborations, guided by core values of grower centeredness, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. As part of their mission, they help advance knowledge and research by offering scholarships to students interested in a career in agriculture, including the Jerry Minore Scholarship.

Through the Jerry Minore Scholarship, the future of agriculture is promoted by today's students, who are given the ability to learn more and think critically about their place in the world of agriculture. The Foundation board will choose two applicants to be awarded a \$2,500 scholarship each. The scholarship is available to both graduating high school seniors and college students for the 2020/21 academic year. The application deadline was Dec. 31, 2019.

The late Jerry Minore was a BASF senior market manager and a liaison to the wheat industry. Since his unexpected death in 2012, BASF has partnered with the National Wheat Foundation to fund scholarships and honor his advocacy efforts for wheat growers.

Several students who were awarded in the past have benefitted from the scholarship and have had the opportunity to seek out further interests in agriculture, gain a better world-view and continue forward in their academic careers. Below are a few of their stories.

ADRIENNE BLAKEY, a senior from Oklahoma State University double-majoring in plant and soil sciences and agricultural communications, said, "I am considering graduate school opportunities for the next few years and continuing to gain new experiences in my wheat research, working to learn more about the Spanish language and cultures and seeking opportunities to learn more about food and agricultural policy."

SAMANTHA FISCHER, a junior from Kansas State University double-majoring in food science and industry as well as global food systems leadership, said, "This past summer, I was a food safety quality and regulatory intern for Cargill at their starches and sweeteners plant in Dayton, Ohio. This school year, I have undertaken the roles as president of the K-State Food Science Club; vice president of my professional agricultural sorority, Sigma Alpha; as well as continuing my role as manager of the Kansas Value-Added Foods Lab. This summer, I plan on taking a product development internship."

KAYLA BEECHINOR, a senior from Washington State University majoring in integrated plant sciences, agricultural biotechnology and field crop management, said, "I am planning on starting my masters in plant breeding and then continuing on to get my Ph.D. With this, I want to work for a company as a plant breeder where I can be a valuable asset to the agricultural community through creating high yielding varieties that will feed the world's growing population. The Minore Scholarship has allowed me to save money to pursue a plant breeding internship in France and to meet multiple amazing people in the agricultural industry while attending the Commodity Classic. I am very thankful to be selected for this scholarship and the opportunities it has granted me!"

STORM SOAT, a senior from Michigan State University, said, "I am planning on returning to Hasenick Brothers farm after completing school and getting on my feet. I would like to start a small farm in the near future if I am able to get my hands on some funding and a few rented acres. If not, I would like to offer some sort of farm service business." ■

Reminders:

- Remember the Washington Wheat Foundation in your charitable giving. Go to wawheat.org to find out more about ways that you can support your industry.

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TO DO LIST

WAWG sets its 2020 legislative priorities

As 2020 kicks off, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers is gearing up for a busy year where trade, fighting mandatory carbon regulations and preserving the lower Snake River dams top the legislative to-do list.

“At the state level, we will be opposing any potential harmful carbon regulations that would unfairly impact our growers. Protecting the lower Snake River dams will also be one of our top priorities,” said Michelle Hennings, WAWG’s executive director. “At the national level, we’ll be monitoring continued implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, changes to the Conservation Reserve Program and, of course, trying to push Congress to pass the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement. We encourage all of our members to get involved by coming with us to Olympia, writing letters to your state and federal officials and providing comments when the federal environmental impact statement on the Columbia-Snake River System is released, which is scheduled to happen in February.”

In the next three months, WAWG members, leaders and staff will travel across the country, from Olympia to Washington, D.C., to meet with lawmakers and agency officials to put forward the wheat industry’s priorities and concerns. WAWG leaders will also be attending the National Association of Wheat Growers annual winter meeting to help chart the national organization’s course. Here’s a closer look at some of the issues WAWG will be working on in the coming year.

✓ Preserving the lower Snake River dams

In what feels like a never-ending cycle, the subject of dam breaching on the Columbia-Snake River System is once again dominating news cycles. Proponents of breaching the dams, specifically the lower Snake River dams, believe it is a necessary step to restoring Columbia River salmon runs that make up part of the diet of the Puget Sound orcas. Two things are scheduled to happen in the coming months that could have a significant impact on the discussion surrounding breaching the dams.

First, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are wrapping up a federally mandated en-

vironmental impact statement (EIS) on salmon and the Columbia-Snake River System. A draft EIS is scheduled to be released in the next few months with the final draft expected in June or July. When the draft EIS is released, the public will have the opportunity to submit comments.

Second, at the state level, a study commissioned by the governor’s office to have a neutral third party interview, among others, dam stakeholders, state and federal agencies and elected officials to gain their perspectives on lower Snake River dam retention and removal or breaching is nearing its conclusion. The governor’s office has said the report will not recommend whether or not the dams should be breached or removed, nor will it develop new or prioritize potential mitigation options. Both Hennings and Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission, were interviewed. Hennings said her interview went very well, and she was able to communicate how important the lower Snake River dams are to the wheat industry.

WAWG is confident that dams and salmon can co-exist and breaching the dams would negatively impact the wheat industry’s ability to move grain economically and efficiently to ports in Portland and Vancouver. According to research published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, breaching the lower Snake River dams will likely not have a noticeable impact on the Puget Sound orcas as Columbia River salmon are but one part of their diet. In addition, WAWG believes the state process is redundant and an example of not using taxpayer dollars efficiently as the study duplicates the EIS process currently underway by the federal government.



✓ Carbon regulation

In recent years, various forms of carbon regulation have made the rounds of the Washington State Legislature with mixed success from both legislators and voters. Last year, the Washington State Legislature passed a bill that mandates all energy used in Washington state be 100 percent carbon-free by 2045. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that we are done with potential carbon regulations. WAWG's lobbyist, Diana Carlen, has warned growers at recent county meetings that carbon regulation, in the form of cap and trade or a low carbon fuel standard, is still very much on the agenda for the 2020 Legislative Session.

Recognizing the need to direct WAWG efforts on potential carbon regulations, growers passed several resolutions at the 2019 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention in November. Growers agreed that WAWG should support recognizing agricultural practices as a benefit to the environment, and that any policy or regulation regarding practices that aid in the reduction of carbon should be administered through the farm bill. Growers also passed a resolution that said WAWG does not support any cap and trade, carbon sequestration or climate change provision without being a full partner in the development of any policy or legislation.

✓ Trade and tariffs

While Pacific Northwest growers cheered the announcement that a deal had been struck with Japan that keeps U.S. wheat competitive with Canadian and Australian wheat, there is still much work to be done on the trade front.

With Mexico being one of the top markets for U.S. wheat, passage by the Senate of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a top priority for the wheat industry. Although the majority of Eastern Washington's wheat is sent to Japan, not Mexico, Nicole Berg, treasurer of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), says that passage of the USMCA will help all wheat growers because, "...the more markets that are open to U.S. wheat, the more wheat that is moved off the market." Berg is also a past president of WAWG.

"Because the majority of Eastern Washington's wheat is exported, having fair trade agreements with our overseas customers is vital to the well being of our industry," Berg said. "The longer we take to pass these trade agreements, the easier it will be for our overseas customers to find alternate suppliers. Once that happens, it will be that much harder for us to get those markets back."

During their visits to Washington, D.C., WAWG leaders will be meeting with Washington's congressional delegation and asking them to support passage of USMCA.

WAWG is also urging the White House to end tariffs (and the resulting retaliatory tariffs that usually fall more heavily on the agricultural industry) and to re-establish overseas markets that are so important to Washington wheat growers that have been damaged in the current trade environment.

✓ Transportation

Despite warnings that state and local governments could lose billions of dollars for transportation projects, voters overwhelmingly passed I-976, which lowers vehicle registration fees to \$30. Wheat growers in Eastern Washington are heavily reliant on the roads and railways that help them move grain to market, and while WAWG supports lower taxes overall, the association opposes any cuts that could irreparably damage the state's transportation system or make it hard to carry out needed maintenance.

✓ Taxes

WAWG opposes any tax that unfairly targets rural populations, such as a pay-per-mile gas tax, because rural residents generally have to drive longer distances to access amenities, such as grocery stores or gas stations, or to commute to a job.

✓ Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The 2018 Farm Bill made several significant changes to CRP that could adversely affect Eastern Washington farmers. While the acreage cap was expanded to 27 million acres by 2023, rental rates and cost share rates were reduced. In addition, State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) acres are no longer excluded from county acreage caps, meaning counties with high SAFE acres may not have a general CRP sign-up this year. In Washington state, Douglas County, which has SAFE acres for sage grouse, is negatively impacted by this change. See page 26 for more information.

WAWG is working with NAWG and the Farm Service Agency to find a solution to this problem. In the meantime, WAWG has passed resolutions that support the authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the 25 percent CRP cap in a county that has a designated CPA (Conservation Priority Area).

Speaking of CPAs, WAWG supports research into how the Farm Service Agency determines which acreage is actually included in a CPA.

✓ 2018 Farm Bill

WAWG will continue to monitor implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, including providing grower education on the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. WAWG will also be working with

Washington State University and the Farm Service Agency to hold workshops to help educate growers on 2018 Farm Bill changes to these programs. See page 11 for more information.

✓ DNR

A few years ago, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) terminated several leases in the Horse Heaven Hills early. The handling of the situation by DNR officials angered many farmers and strained relationships with the agency. DNR has reached out to WAWG to talk about how the department can regain the trust of growers, asking to work together to find a solution that would help better protect farmers in situations where leases are terminated early under their "better and higher use" lease agreement clause.

Hennings said she is encouraged by DNR's outreach, and WAWG will continue to work with the agency to address these types of situations.

✓ Rural broadband

More and more growers are relying on technology to help them farm better and smarter, but that can be a problem in areas with unreliable access to the internet. WAWG will be supporting efforts by the state and federal government to expand high speed internet across rural America.

✓ Continued use of glyphosate

Recognizing the critical role glyphosate plays in no-till and reduced tillage systems, WAWG supports the continued use of glyphosate for all applications and opposes cancelling crop protection product labels or uses unless equivalent replacement products are available. ■

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2	Shelley Kloba	D-Kirkland
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	Alex Ybarra	R-Quincy
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
33	Vicki Kraft	R-Vancouver
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
40	Ed Orcutt	R-Kalama
41	Strom Peterson	D-Edmonds
42	Lillian Ortiz-Self	D-Mukilteo
43	Laurie Dolan	D-Olympia
44	Beth Doglio	D-Olympia
45	Sherry V. Appleton	D-Poulsbo
46	Drew Hansen	D-Poulsbo
47	Mike Chapman	D-Port Angeles
48	Steve Tharinger	D-Sequm

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What the 2020 State Legislature is going to look like:

State House of Representatives

57(D)

41(R)

State Senate

28(D)

21(R)

On Jan. 13, 2020, the Washington State Legislature convened in Olympia for a 60-day "short session." The main task of legislators was to pass supplemental budgets for the operating, transportation and capital budgets. The supplemental budgets are generally minor adjustments to the biennial budgets based on updated spending and revenue information.

WAWG's 2020

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 Warmick	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	Elizabeth Lovelett	D-Anacortes
16	Maureen Walsh	R-Walla Walla	41	Lisa Wellman	R-Mercer Island
17	Lynda Wilson	R-Vancouver	42	Doug Erickson	R-Ferrdale
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 2019, Washington farmers planted 2.26 million acres of wheat (both winter and spring) and harvested 2.2

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
	Vacant	
31	Drew Stokesbary	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-Sealac
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
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37	Sharon Tomiko Santos	D-Seattle
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38	June Robinson	D-Everett
	Mike Sells	D-Everett
39	Robert Sutherland	R-Granite Falls
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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
	Frank Chopp	D-Seattle
44	John Lovick	D-Mill Creek
	Jared Mead	D-Mill Creek
45	Roger Goodman	D-Kirkland
	Larry Springer	D-Kirkland
46	Gerry Pollet	D-Seattle
	Javier Valdez	D-Seattle
47	Debra Entenman	D-Kent
	Pat Sullivan	D-Covington
48	Vandana Slatter	D-Bellevue
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In 2018, apples topped the list of Washington state's most valuable crops, followed by milk and then wheat. The value of the Evergreen State's 2018 agricultural production totaled \$9.67 billion, down 2 percent from the revised previous year's value of \$9.86 billion.

FSA opens CRP general sign-up

Rule changes mean lower rental rates, no sign-up for Douglas County

By Trista Crossley

After several years of one-year extensions and months of anticipation, the first Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up under the 2018 Farm Bill—and the first general sign-up since 2015—has finally arrived.

According to Farm Service Agency (FSA) records, there are nearly 190,000 acres expiring in Washington in 2019, with another 195,000 expiring next year. Rod Hamilton, farm programs chief for the Farm Service Agency's Washington state office, said this is expected to be one of the bigger sign-ups in state history.

The general sign-up began Dec. 9, 2019, and will run through Feb. 28, 2020. Under the 2018 Farm Bill, the acreage cap was raised from 24 million acres to 27 million acres. For most Eastern Washington farmers, the most significant change they will see in this general sign-up is a reduction in rental rates, Hamilton said. To help pay for the increased acreage cap without negatively impacting other conservation programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reduced rental rates to 85 percent of a county's average rate for the general sign-up. Rates for continuous sign-up were reduced to 90 percent of the county's average. How much of an impact those reduced rental rates will have on Eastern Washington farmers remains to be seen, as Hamilton said they'll have to wait until the offers are processed.

"The other thing that folks would be interested in is SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement) acres used to be under continuous sign-up, so if they were in a SAFE area,



Conservation Reserve Program land near Steptoe Butte.

their land was (automatically) eligible. But now, they will have to meet normal general CRP sign-up requirements and compete just like everybody else," he said.

Under the 2018 Farm Bill, many SAFE acres are no longer exempt from counting towards a county's CRP acreage limit, which is 25 percent of a county's total cropland that is eligible for CRP. In Douglas County, which has slightly more than 187,500 acres in CRP, 63,000 acres of which are in SAFE, their county acreage cap is 143,700 acres, meaning they are roughly 43,800 acres over their cap. According to Hamilton, that means farmers in Douglas County will not be able to participate in this general sign-up. To change how SAFE acres are classified would require Congressional action, and he said that there are folks in Congress who are looking at this.

Michel Ruud, FSA's Douglas County executive director, said they've made the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) aware of the situation. She added that NRCS is equally concerned and is exploring options that might temporarily help producers with expiring contracts. Under current rules, Douglas County won't have a CRP general sign-up until 2022.

While there are other counties throughout the U.S. with the same problem, Douglas County is the only county in Washington state in this predicament. There seems to be a broader trend within this farm bill's CRP rules to move more towards water quality initiatives, something that is seen in a new initiative, the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative. That move is not necessarily in the best interests of parts of Eastern Washington.

"Congress clearly said water quality is an emphasis (in this farm bill). If you are going to have water quality issues, then you have to have water," Hamilton said. "Water is more abundant back east than here in the West. Although we clearly have water quality issues, we also have land miles from any water source."

For the most part, Hamilton said CLEAR is in some degree a new name for water quality practices they've had in the past. One of the big differences is that expiring contracts that are eligible for CLEAR will have the opportunity to re-enroll under a 30-year contract.

"I think we will see, when the handbook comes out, that a riparian buffer is still a riparian buffer, but now it will be considered a CLEAR practice," he explained, adding that the rules are still being ironed out.

Another thing that could impact some wheat growers are changes to the haying and grazing provisions in CRP. Hamilton said while the rules for haying and grazing are "convoluted," there may be more opportunities for grazing CRP as a midcontract management practice with no payment penalty. Under previous rules, if a producer used grazing as a midcontract management practice to help stimulate the plant stand, there was a 25 percent loss of

income (except under certain emergency conditions).

"The question becomes, how often will we let people do midcontract management?" Hamilton said. "One of the challenges with the new grazing opportunities provision says whatever we allow, we can't allow grazing that will cause long-term damage to the stand." FSA will be working with producers and NRCS to figure out how much grazing will be allowed.

Hamilton said no changes were made to the state's conservation priority areas (CPA), but he is hopeful that there will be a potential opportunity for revision in 2020 for 2021. In order for land to be eligible for a CRP general sign-up, it either has to be in a CPA, have a calculated erodibility index of 8 or higher or be in a CRP contract expiring that year. In 2015, in order to meet federal acreage cap requirements, Washington state had to trim the amount of cropland that was in CPAs by more than 600,000 acres, leaving some farmers with less opportunity to enroll during a general sign-up.

Some of the other changes to CRP, as outlined in FSA's press release, include:

- **Grasslands Sign-ups.** CRP Grasslands sign-up helps landowners and operators protect grassland, includ-

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ing rangeland, and pasture-land and certain other lands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. A separate CRP Grasslands sign-up will be offered each year following the general sign-up. The sign-up period for CRP Grasslands in 2020 runs from March 16, 2020, to May 15, 2020.

- **Land Transition.** The CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP) is an option for producers interested in transitioning land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group to return land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants may have a lease less than five years with an option to purchase, and they have two years before the end of the CRP contract to make conservation and land improvements.

- **Previously Expired Land.** Land enrolled in CRP under a 15-year contract that expired in September 2017, 2018 or 2019, may be eligible for enrollment if there was no opportunity for re-enrollment and the practice under the expired contract has been maintained.

Despite such a large number of acres expiring, Hamilton said he wasn't concerned about hitting the CRP cap, because everything that is expiring is already under the cap. Currently, in the U.S., there are approximately 22.3 million acres in CRP, and the cap for the 2020 sign-up is 24.5 million acres (each year of the 2018 Farm Bill, the cap will increase incrementally until it hits the overall cap of 27 million acres).

Hamilton urged farmers who



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are interested in submitting a CRP application to contact their local FSA office sooner, rather than later. He expects local offices to be extremely busy with a number of other deadlines during the first few months of the year, including acreage reporting and Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program sign-ups. ■

Editor's note: The Washington Association of Wheat Growers will be partnering with Washington State University to hold grower education workshops on CRP, the Agriculture Risk Coverage and the Price Loss Coverage programs in multiple Eastern Washington locations this month. See the ad on page 11 for more information.

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Learning the ropes

FSA presentations help educate growers on 2018 Farm Bill program changes

By Trista Crossley

Last month, efforts to educate Eastern Washington growers on 2018 Farm Bill programs began ramping up, with more to come.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened enrollment for the 2019 and 2020 crop years for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs late last year. Producers will make one program election for 2019 and 2020, which must be made by March 15. For crop years 2021, 2022 and 2023, producers will have the opportunity to make yearly program elections. The sign-up deadline for 2019 is March 15, and the sign-up deadline for 2020 is June 30.

In December, FSA held meetings in Ritzville and Davenport to update producers on changes to ARC and PLC. Sara Cossio, FSA county executive director for Lincoln County; Chris Holt, FSA county executive director for Adams County; and Aaron Esser, Washington State University Extension's county director for Adams County, presented the information to growers. The overriding message of the presentation was that growers should start using the available online tools now to explore their program options and make an appointment to talk to their local FSA office soon. Those online tools are available at fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index under resources (scroll down to find the resources link).

"I know that a lot of you have talked to your accountants, and they've told you to hold off a little bit (on making a program election). That's

fine, but all I'm going to say today, even if you want to hold off until February or March, that's fine, but call today or tomorrow and make an appointment. Do not wait until March 14 to call and make an appointment," Cossio said.

In Davenport, Cossio kicked off the presentation by talking about some of the changes to ARC and PLC that producers should be aware of. Those included:

- An opportunity to update PLC yields by using 2013 through 2017 average yield times 90 percent times a yield adjustment factor. This would be effective for 2020 and beyond. Cossio said owners, not operators, have to make the decision to update yields, and if they decide to prove up the yields, but the yields actually go down, no change will be made. "All you can do is prove it up," she said. This is applicable to covered commodities with base acres.
- Farms that had all cropland planted to grass or pasture, including idled or fallow, from Jan. 1, 2009, to Dec. 31, 2017, may not receive ARC/PLC payments for the life of the 2018 Farm Bill. Some producers might be eligible for the Grassland Conservation Initiative, which will pay \$18 per acre for a five-year contract.
- The ARC-County (ARC-CO) yield calculation will be determined by taking the average county yield per planted acre in the county for five crop years, excluding the highest and lowest county yield. The years used will skip the immediate past year and use the next five preceding years. So for 2019, the calculation will skip 2018 and use 2013-2017.



MEANWHILE IN BENTON COUNTY...The Farm Service Agency also held a meeting at the Horse Heaven Hills Community Center to talk to producers about the Conservation Reserve Program general sign-up that is happening now. For more information, see page 26.

WSU, WAWG schedule additional workshops

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers will be partnering with Washington State University to hold grower education workshops on the Agriculture Risk Coverage and the Price Loss Coverage programs in multiple Eastern Washington locations this month. The workshops are scheduled for Monday, Jan. 13, at the Davenport Memorial Hall in Davenport; Tuesday, Jan. 14, at the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla; and Thursday, Jan. 16, at the Sherman McGregor Training Facility in Colfax. Each workshop will run from 9 a.m. to noon. See the ad on page 11 for more information, or email lori@wawg.org. The workshops will also look at the impacts of the changes in the Conservation Reserve Program. ■

- In many Washington counties, including Adams and Lincoln counties, wheat will now have separate irrigated and nonirrigated ARC-CO yields. The other Washington counties that will also have separated wheat yields are Benton, Franklin, Grant, Klickitat, Walla Walla and Yakima.
- FSA will base payments on the physical location of the farm, rather than the administrative location of the farm.

Holt, from Adams County, talked about the differences between ARC (both the county version and the individual version) and PLC. PLC is a price protection or income loss program, while ARC is an income support program based on a benchmark revenue and guarantee that is compared to actual revenue. He also went through several scenarios to show how both ARC and PLC determine their various benchmarks yields, revenues and averages.

Because both ARC and PLC formulas skip the previous year when calculating their numbers, Holt said producers will have actual figures to rely on when making their decisions. He also told producers they need to run their calculations on a yearly basis because of these rolling averages.

"Part of your take-home message needs to be, this isn't a one and done analysis. You need to do it each year if you are doing your due diligence," he said.

Holt also spent some time talking about ARC-IC, or the individual option. ARC-IC works on a producer's actual yields, not the county yields, and all revenue from a farm is grouped together. Holt said producers might consider ARC-IC if their risks of production are significantly higher than in other places in the county or if the county average doesn't normally reflect what happens on their farm.

Esser touched on the online calculation tools. Producers who created users in them for the 2014 Farm Bill should still be able to log in. He said both programs are simpler to use this time around, that they are much more of a "straight-up calculation." The Texas A&M University tool has the advantage of including most, if not all covered commodities, while the University of Illinois tool only includes corn, soybeans and wheat. ■



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Farmer worked in Extension before coming home to Palouse

Ben Barstow, WAWG past president (2010/11)

By Kevin Gaffney

Leaders in the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) come from various backgrounds. Many worked on family farms from their youth and eventually took over when their parents or a relative retired. Past president **Ben Barstow's** path was slightly different.

Barstow was born in Viola, Idaho, but has no memory of living there since the family moved when he was only nine months old. His father operated his own plumbing-heating business for many years. Eleven of those years were in Orofino, Idaho.

"We rarely saw the man because he was so busy," recalled Barstow. "So many of the calls were long distances from his shop, and as a self-employed professional, you stayed until the job was done. You didn't want to make a second trip if you didn't have to."

The family later moved to Lewiston, where Barstow graduated from high school in 1976.

Having plans for a career in agriculture, Barstow earned a degree in plant protection from the University of Idaho (UI) in 1980.

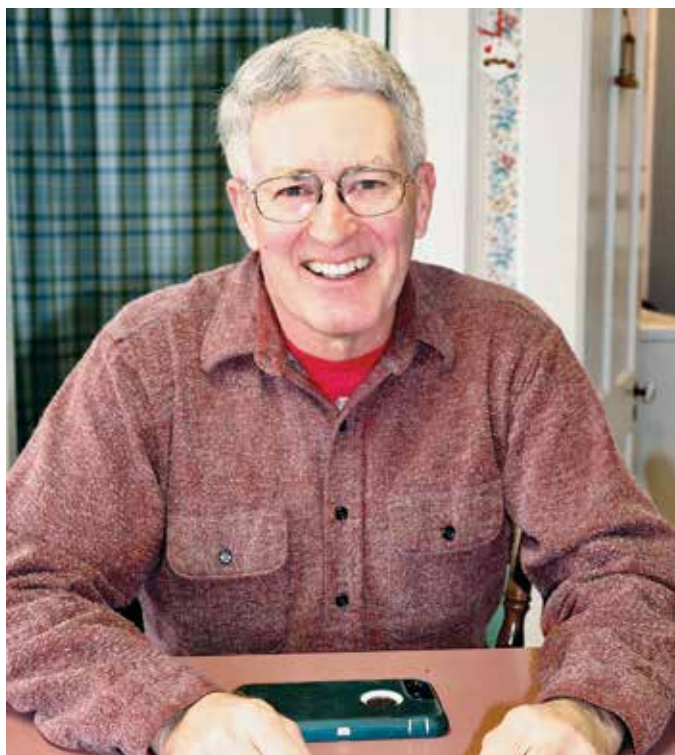
"It was a bachelor of science degree with an emphasis on upper-division classes in soils, weed science and plant pathology," noted Barstow. "It was like a pre-vet degree for a plant doctor."

The job market for field managers in the ag chemical-fertilizer industry was lackadaisical at that time. Barstow decided to pursue additional schooling. He earned his master's degree in entomology in June 1983 from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

"The original plan was that my fiancée, Janet, and I would get married after I finished up at Purdue," explained Barstow. "However, our two mothers got together, and it was decided that we would be married when I came home for the Christmas holiday break. Hence, we were married on Jan. 3, 1981.

"Janet transferred to Purdue to finish college, and it turned out Purdue was one of the few schools that offered the ag journalism degree she wanted. Looking back, I guess you could say, in this case, the mothers knew best."

Once Barstow had completed his degree work, his main goal in life was to get back to the Pacific Northwest. They moved back to Moscow, and both of them worked with UI pulse crop breeder Dick Auld while they looked for permanent positions.



Barstow landed a job as an area pest management specialist in Casa Grande, Ariz., in late 1983.

"It was all about cotton down there," said Barstow. "And for an entomologist, it was both fascinating and challenging, because there are amazing amounts of bugs that attack cotton crops. At that time, they would often spend \$200 per acre or more to eliminate the bugs. Now the advancements in seed have eliminated the need for insecticides, so instead, they are paying \$200 per acre for their seed."

Barstow stayed there for four years, long enough for their two children to be born. Eventually, an Extension agent position opened up in Lewis County, Idaho. Barstow was based in Nezperce.

"It was truly an ideal position for me, because the neighboring agent in the next county handled all the animal work, and I could concentrate on my specialty of working with crops. In modern-day agriculture, you have to specialize to provide the kind of knowledge and expertise that farmers and ranchers need to operate efficiently."

Barstow worked there for five years, enough time to earn a promotion and tenure.

"It was a job that I could have made my career in," he said. "But about that time, Janet's father had gone through

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two heart attacks and had turned 62. It was time for someone to take over the centennial family farm, and that someone turned out to be us."

So the Barstows relocated, and 1993 was their first year on the farm, located just west of Palouse, Wash. Barstow inherited a set of well-seasoned farm equipment.

"For several years, I had five IH 453 combines. Two of them ran, and the other three were for parts."

Barstow didn't make many major changes initially, but he did begin to put his own stamp on the operation. He began plowing uphill, to conserve the soil. He doesn't disc pea acres after harvest anymore. He will chisel plow stubble rather than using a moldboard plow, depending upon the conditions in a given year.

His rotations on the main farm are a mix of either winter wheat/spring legumes or winter wheat/spring crop/spring legumes. Like many farmers in the Palouse, he doesn't have summer fallow. He has grown only club wheat for several years now and has been pleased with the results.

On their farm acreage above the Snake River breaks near Almota, a three-year rotation of winter wheat/spring crop/summer fallow is the norm.

Barstow likes to have his winter wheat seeded by the last week of September, as a rule. Unlike many growers, he doesn't spray fungicide as a preventive measure with his herbicides. He wants to avoid developing fungicide resistance on his farm.

"Herbicide resistance is becoming a major problem," he said. "I only use fungicide if I have an infestation in my crop."

"Corn and soybean growers are now having terrible problems with weed resistance. There are fields in the Midwest with Palmer Amaranth (a strain of pigweed) as tall as the combine cabs. They thought they could just keep spraying Roundup year after year and never have any problems, but they were wrong. Weeds resistant to herbicides are already here in the Pacific Northwest. Russian thistle strains that are resistant to Roundup are not uncommon in our state now."

Barstow believes properly timing tillage, varying the

herbicides used and utilizing spring crop rotations can help break the cycles of problem weeds.

In one of the most unusual years for harvesting in many decades, Barstow was still able to get all of his crops harvested in 2019. He counts himself among the fortunate ones, as thousands of acres of crops in Eastern Washington weren't harvested.

Barstow used to have a few cattle on the place until his "hired gal," (his wife, Janet) decided she was done hauling hay and feeding critters through the winter months. His hired gal is also the only other employee on their farm. They market their alfalfa crop to other cattle feeders now.

Barstow became involved with WAWG on the recommendation of another farmer who invited him to a county meeting.

"From the very start, I was so impressed with the organization," he said. "The breadth of knowledge that was provided at the meetings was amazing. Someone at each meeting had attended virtually every important seminar or conference recently held, and they shared that information with the growers."

Barstow went through the county leadership chairs and then served on the WAWG state board representing Whitman County.

With encouragement from fellow growers, Barstow served as a WAWG officer, and was president for 2010-11. Randy Suess was a key mentor for Barstow in developing his wheat association leadership skills.

"I had served as president of my fraternity in college, which actually was very good experience for my future leadership positions in WAWG," said Barstow. "My years in Extension also were good preparation for working with people."

Barstow credits the WAWG staff and his executive committee with helping to make his term as president go smoothly.

"A farmer I worked for in high school once told me something that stuck with me all these years," remarked Barstow. "He told me that you could take all the skills, knowledge and ability that it takes to efficiently operate a farm into almost any other business and make more

"A farmer I worked for in high school once told me something that stuck with me all these years. He told me that you could take all the skills, knowledge and ability that it takes to efficiently operate a farm into almost any other business and make more money than you will in farming. But you will never find a nicer bunch of people to work with than you will in the agriculture industry. I have found that to be true throughout my entire career."

—Ben Barstow

money than you will in farming. But you will never find a nicer bunch of people to work with than you will in the agriculture industry. I have found that to be true throughout my entire career.”

Barstow currently serves as the Whitman County representative on the WAWG committees for marketing and transportation and is a Washington Grain Commission commissioner. He also is a board member for Whitman County Fire District #4 and serves on the board of the Palouse Grain Growers.

Looking to the future, Barstow expects farm sizes will continue to grow larger. Farmers will continue to work long hours for less pay than many folks, but they will still love their work and their lifestyle.

“I think the secret of why farmers are farmers and why we do what we do and love it so much is that we are too darned independent to work for anyone else. I know that is what I love about farming. I can choose what I need and want to do on any given day. How many people in other lines of work can say that?” ■



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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



As we look forward to a new year, I'd like to look back on the challenges we faced in 2019.

January: A mild January left us feeling like we may have an early spring. Fall seeding conditions weren't that great for many of us, and late 2018 rains finally allowed the winter wheat to emerge. Everyone was busy finishing winter shop projects and looking forward to getting in the field.

February: The first half of February continued to be mild. The early areas of the state were getting sprayers ready to hit the fields and preparing tillage equipment. Then came winter! Cold, strong winds blew across fields, putting the idea in our heads that the winter wheat crop might be facing winter kill. Fortunately, adequate snow cover insulated the crop. More snow and strong winds closed roads and posed additional challenges.

March: The first half of March continued to bring snow and winds. Later in the month, the weather melted, but it would be weeks before the snow drifts would melt enough to get into the fields.

April: The first of April is generally when farmers in our area around St. John begin spring work. Wet fields from the late winter were slow to dry out. Understanding the Prevented Plant Provisions of our crop insurance policies was the talk among farmers. But then winter weather conditions broke midmonth allowing spring work to begin in earnest. It's amazing how much farmers can get done in a short time!

May: Spring planting continued through May, as many areas had final plant dates that extended well into the month. Although late for a typical year, most spring crops were planted before the final plant dates that crop insurance dictates. Winter wheat was sprayed, and spring crops peeked out of the soil.

June: As spring crops were sprayed, and fallow ground cleared of weeds, it was announced that GE wheat had been discovered in Eastern Washington. The Animal Plant Health Inspection Services was notified and visited the site to work with the farmer and find facts related to the discovery. A tremendous amount of work was quietly done by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State Crop Improvement Association, Washington State University and others to assure the GE wheat discovery hadn't entered commercial markets. Government-to-government communication was sufficient to keep our important markets open.

July: Harvest began for most, with the exception of the eastern-most part of the state. The weather was cooler this harvest than in 2018 or 2017. Crops were average to above average yields in most areas, but the later than usual spring and mild weather delayed everyone.

August: Harvest was in full swing. Reports of falling numbers started circulating. The incidence of falling numbers was much less than in 2016, and the industry was able to manage the risk with little discount to farmers. Late August saw rain showers which slowed down an already late harvest.

September: This year, harvest on our farm finished on Sept. 5. Typically, we would be completed in August. Rains continued in early September. For us, the rains were both a blessing and a curse—a blessing because we had good moisture to seed our winter wheat into, and a curse because we weren't able to cut our garbanzo bean crop. For those in the central part of the state, the rains created a different curse: crusted fields.

October: There were still crops to be harvested. Late maturity and wet weather really created challenges. The rains caused quality issues, and much of the late harvested wheat found its way into feed channels. As in the prior month, seeding continued as many farmers planted in the mornings and harvested in the afternoon. With unharvested crops still in the fields, farmers were talking to their insurance agents to understand coverage options on unharvested acres.

November: Fall work wrapped up and equipment was put away for the winter. November was full of meetings, with the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention and the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW)/National Association of Wheat Growers fall meeting. As one of two representatives who serve on USW from the Washington Grain Commission, I had the opportunity to meet with my peers from other wheat-producing states and learn of the challenges they faced this past year. Suffice to say, we were not alone when it came to challenges. Prevented plant, flooding, falling numbers, harvest rains, unharvested crops, stuck machinery and a host of other problems were much worst elsewhere. We in the Pacific Northwest have a lot to be thankful for.

December: The final month of the year found us attending grower meetings, servicing equipment for the upcoming year and spending time with family and friends. On behalf of the staff and commissioners of the Washington Grain Commission, we wish you a prosperous New Year. ■

REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Harvesting plaintiffs

Those multimillion-dollar verdicts as a result of ailments caused by Roundup? They're part of a boiler-room operation that involves lawyers, call centers, television and sick Americans who want answers to their suffering. A Nov. 25, 2019, story in the *Wall Street Journal* laid out the machinations involved in getting nearly 43,000 people to sue the chemical manufacturer. It all began at a 2016 Las Vegas convention, called Mass Torts Made Perfect, as plaintiff lawyers looked for a new target. Glyphosate became that target as the result of an arm of the World Health Organization calling it a "probable carcinogen" in 2015. Working with contractors, law firms buy online ads and create social media pages to steer potential clients to a hotline. Those hotline conversations determine if individuals qualify, and then lead-generation companies hired by law firms send them contracts to sign and request medical records. Anyone who has watched commercial or cable television recently has also seen some of the more than 650,000 advertisements seeking more plaintiffs to sue. It's estimated that plaintiffs' law firms spend \$20 to \$30 million pursuing long-term complex cases like Roundup. But the return on investment is steep. In 2016, it's estimated lawyers collected fees in excess of \$75 billion on tort cases. Meanwhile, Bayer, which purchased Monsanto in 2018 for \$63 billion, is getting hammered. Its share price has dropped 27 percent. ■

Toy truck or Cybertruck?

Elon Musk will know his new Cybertruck has hit the big time when the first farmer buys one. The electric pickup is pretty much in the same category, dimension-wise, as the Ford F-150. Of course, the Cybertruck will reach 60 mph in



2.9 seconds. It can also tow 14,000 pounds and can go as far as 500 miles on a charge. Various versions range from \$39,000 to \$70,000. Farmers will have more electric trucks to choose from in the future, but they'll cost more. A Bollinger B2 which has 614 horsepower costs \$125,000. Nearly 3 million pickups were sold in the U.S. in 2018. The mining industry is already using electric trucks, but the purchase cost is about 40 percent more to three times as much as diesel-powered versions. Running costs, however, are lower. ■

The great private/public divide

Of the 397 entries in the 2019 National Wheat Yield Contest, 372 were varieties released by private companies. Steve Joehl, the director of the program on behalf of the National Wheat Foundation, said universities are dropping the ball.

"It's not the breeders who are at fault, it's how universities market their varieties," he said. "Even in Kansas and North Dakota, public varieties used to be the largest selling in the state, but acreage is waning because they are not promoting their varieties." In the case of the Wheat Yield Contest, it also helps that some private companies will pay the entry fee for the contest, but others don't. Seed dealers, meanwhile, are promoting varieties that promise the biggest return. Even though some public varieties yield at the top of their class, Joehl said the absence of support is not limited to public institutions. He cites companies like Limagrain and AgriPro-Syngenta for not doing enough to promote the yield contest. WestBred Bayer, meanwhile, is "busting their butts to get farmers to enter the contest," and using it as part of their marketing strategy, he said. The more entries the contest receives, the more valuable it will be to all growers looking to improve yield, Joehl said. The contest has been growing slowly but surely. There were 128 entries in 2016; 287 in 2017; and 318 in 2018. The *Progressive Farmer* magazine is the lead publication for the National Wheat Yield Contest, and its March issue includes a list of winners as well as interviews that tell how they did it. Joehl discussed the yield contest in episode 120 of the Wheat All About It! podcast entitled, "The National Wheat Yield Contest Stumbles But Gets Up Again." Go to the Washington Grain Commission website (wagrains.org), click on summaries and navigate back in time to episode 120. ■

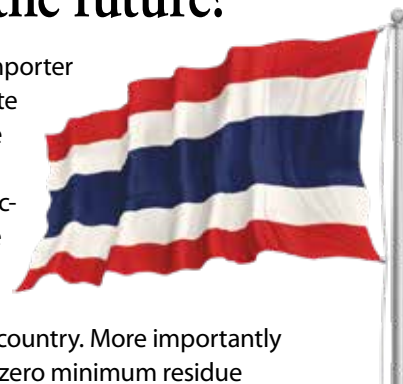


Drowning America's farmland

Eastern Washington farmers who endured a very wet spring season that had them wondering if they were going to be able to get their crops planted might appreciate the fact that 2019 was the wettest year on record in the contiguous United States. Although all the extra precipitation caused some nervous moments in the Pacific Northwest, it was dramatically worse in the Midwest and northern tier states where saturated soils meant many farmers couldn't get crops in or got them in very late. This year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that the amount of prevented planting acres was the highest since tracking began in 2007. Farmers reported being unable to plant on nearly 20 million acres. Dennis Todey, the director of the USDA's climate hub in Ames, Iowa, said it's not just how much precipitation is falling, but when it is falling—in the spring and autumn “exactly the time we don't want more water on our cropland.” ■

Harbinger of the future?

Thailand, which is a top 10 importer of Pacific Northwest soft white wheat, has moved to ban the herbicides glyphosate and paraquat along with the insecticide chlorpyrifos. Under the new rules, the ban means the chemicals can no longer be used or sold within the country. More importantly for world wheat exporters, a zero minimum residue level will be allowed on imported foods. Glyphosate has been under a microscope for several years since large jury awards to people who claim they developed cancer from using the chemical. Farmers have indicated that if glyphosate is banned from use, their next line of defense would be the much more toxic paraquat. ■



Wheat's good, but what's GoodWheat?

Arcadia Biosciences is expected to begin selling GoodWheat as a retail flour with reduced allergenicity and improved protein quality soon. Arcadia Biosciences uses technology to help create products with the aim to “de-commoditize wheat by adding nutritional value to a well-loved food ingredient.” In 2018, the company introduced reduced gluten content wheat. Arcadia, which has offices in Davis, Calif., and Seattle, entered into an agreement with Ardent Mills to develop wheat varieties with an initial focus on extending the shelf life and improving flavors of whole wheat products. Elsewhere, the company has also entered into a deal with Arista Cereal Technologies and Bay State Milling for commercialization of its high fiber resistant starch wheat in several key markets. Resistant starch is a sort of dietary fiber, and the GoodWheat version can deliver three times as much as traditional varieties. ■

Breadbasket to cornbread basket?

We think of Kansas as “America's Breadbasket,” because from 1839 when the crop came into the state until the introduction of genetically modified corn and soybeans, it was. As recently as 1989, Kansas farmers planted more than 12 million acres of wheat. The first GMO corn crop was introduced in 1996. By 2019, planted wheat acreage fell below 7 million acres. The value of Kansas wheat has whipsawed along the way. In 1989, it was worth about \$800 million. A record value was achieved in 2012 at \$2.9 billion. In 2018, that had fallen to \$1.3 billion. ■

Cougars multiplying across the state

If you're a fan or alumni of Washington State University (WSU), then you'll be pleased to know that the land-grant school set an enrollment record in 2019, with 31,607 students systemwide. The word “systemwide” is key. WSU's enrollment at its Pullman campus was just shy of 21,000 students, a decrease of 46 students compared to last fall. WSU Spokane had a 33 percent increase in professional students enrolled in the Elson Floyd College of Medicine, with a total student population of 1,685. WSU Vancouver was up eight students. More than 5 percent of the student body in Vancouver are veterans, the highest rate across the WSU system. WSU Everett, the newest campus, enrolled 283 students this fall, up eight from last year. WSU Tri-Cities experienced a slight decline in enrollment, but saw gains in minority and international student representation for a total of 1,813 students. The WSU Tri-Cities campus has the highest rate of minority enrollment at 42 percent, compared to 30 percent systemwide. Nearly one out of every three WSU students are the first in their family to attend college. ■



It all starts with the farmers

THREE COUNTRIES, 10 DAYS, UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

By Mike Carstensen

My November 2019 overseas travel to three South Asian countries was a prime example of what U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) President Vince Peterson means when he says, “At any given hour of the day, there is someone, somewhere, talking about the quality, reliability and value of U.S. wheat.”



I was honored to participate in the South Asia crop quality seminar with USW staff and wheat industry representatives. From Nov. 1-10, 2019, an eight-person team crisscrossed the South Pacific covering almost 20,000 miles in 10 days to report on the quality of the 2019 U.S. wheat crop.

In Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, we interacted with more than 300 wheat buyers, flour millers and wheat food company executives who represented a major portion of wheat importers in those markets. While our seminars imparted valuable information to buyers, USW West Coast office assistant director Michael Anderson put it best when he said it was also valuable for us to “see and taste some of the beautiful pastries, breads, noodles and other end products these customers produce with flour milled from U.S. wheat.”

Matt Weimer, who serves as USW regional vice president for South Asia, and Joe Sowers, USW regional vice president for the Philippines and South Korea, conducted the crop quality seminars, providing a wonderful opportunity to meet face to face with the millers and buyers in South Asia. These seminars are chock-full of valuable end-use quality data; production and inventory conditions; transportation information; and promotional activities for the major classes of U.S. wheat. But they also provided me with the opportunity to witness the efforts, connections, creditability and professionalism of the USW overseas staff as they interacted with the trade while promoting U.S. wheat.

Reporting on crop quality is USW's largest trade

servicing activity every year. It starts as soon as the U.S. harvest gears up. Partner organizations collect and analyze hundreds of samples from country elevators. USW compiles that data into an annual crop quality report and takes it on the road where customers are alerted to the quality and production of all six U.S. wheat classes as well as their functional characteristics.

Southeast Asia's population is exploding, giving rise to increased wheat consumption. The region now accounts for 30 percent of global wheat trade. The Philippines and Thailand are among the top 10 customers for U.S. wheat, with the Philippines ranking second among U.S. wheat importers year-to-date. Closer to home, it is the No. 1 market for Washington soft white wheat. The entire South Asia region makes up the second largest destination for wheat imports from the U.S., totaling 3.28 million metric tons (mmt) so far in marketing year 2019/20.

It was humbling to be part of a group that included cereal chemist Art Bettge, formerly of the Western Wheat Quality Laboratory in Pullman; David Green, executive vice president of the Wheat Quality Council based in Lenexa, Kan.; and Don Sullins, former vice president of ADM Milling in Shawnee, Kan. These professionals went through the technical data relating to U.S. wheat inventory, condition and end-use quality. There were also technical presentations on SRC (Solvent Retention Capacity) analysis, gluten assessments and proper procedures as well as mill hygiene. In addition, Roy Chung, longtime bakery consultant at USW, and Ivan Goh, biscuit, bakery and noodle technologist, assisted in technical presentations and interactions.

My job at the seminar was to present what, how and why we do what we do. I talked about the production process as it relates to sustainably planting and growing wheat, especially with end-use quality in mind. I also related how research, as well as American wheat quality councils, crop improvement associations, variety trials and breeding programs are tools farmers use to ensure customers receive the very best grain.

With video that WGC program director Joe Bippert has taken of Eastern Washington's rail, truck and barge



(Above) The Washington Grain Commission's Mike Carstensen provided seminar participants with the unique perspective of a farmer who provides their wheat. (Below) The U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) South Asia team relaxes and confers after a long day of seminar presentations. Clockwise from left are Roy Chung, USW bakery technologist; Joe Sowers, USW vice president for South Korea and the Philippines; Matt Weimar, USW vice president for Southeast Asia and Ivan Goh, biscuit, bakery and noodle technologist.

systems, I was able to show how the entire grain handling systems functions to get production from our family farms to their overseas mills. Infrastructure is one of America's strengths, and it can't be stressed enough. Finally, I thanked customers for their purchase of U.S. wheat and reminded those at every seminar in every country that sales are more than transactions. They are about relationships.

Grain traders Ron Williams, Columbia Grain International; Bryan Liedl, United Grain Corporation; and Tyler Seeger, Cenex Harvest States, presented individually and also participated in panel discussions on the U.S. grain handling systems. In-depth discussions on crop storage and blending, rail and barge freight systems, freight markets and contract specifications were discussed, reinforcing the infrastructure message.

Other overseas-based U.S. government officials discussed issues such as balance of trade, on-going trade issues and the importance of trade. Particularly disconcerting issues were Thailand's recent decision adopting a zero tolerance for glyphosate and the China trade war.

Despite the strained trade environment that exists in the Asian sphere currently, any trip where a WGC commissioner can thank his customers and promote a con-



nection between mills and Eastern Washington farms is a very good trip indeed. Assuring our customers of a consistent and ample supply of quality wheat is very important, not to mention reinforcing the message that the U.S. is the go-to market for a reliable, quality supply of wheat.

It has taken many years of market development from farmers, the WGC and USW to achieve our current position, but we need to keep it that way. It all starts with farmers listening to our customers and working to enhance the quality of our wheat. ■

The war on wheat diseases

Management options for wheat diseases in the Inland Pacific Northwest

By Tim Murray

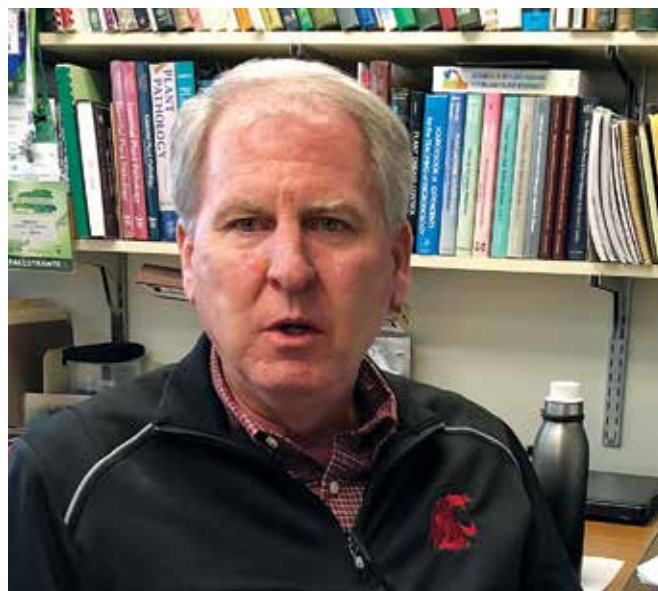
A diversity of wheat diseases commonly occur in Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho and northeastern Oregon as a result of the tremendous variation in climatic zones across the region. Annual precipitation ranges from about six inches to 24 inches, and temperatures range from relatively hot in the central Columbia Basin to cool in the mountainous foothills (see Table 1 on page 44).

Precipitation and temperature are important factors that determine which diseases occur, where they occur, and how severe they become. Some are favored by warm and dry conditions and others by cool and moist weather.

Eyespot, previously known as strawbreaker footrot, (Figure 1), Cephalosporium stripe (Figure 2), Pythium root rot (Figure 3) and soilborne wheat mosaic (Figure 4) tend to be most damaging in higher rainfall regions. Rhizoctonia root rot (Figure 5), Fusarium root and crown rot (Figure 6), snow mold (Figure 7) and wheat streak mosaic (Figure 8), on the other hand, tend to be most important in the lower rainfall areas. In contrast, stripe rust (Figure 9) and barley yellow dwarf (Figure 10) occur across all rainfall zones. In the biological world, however, there's an exception for every rule. Consequently, diseases favored by higher rainfall may also occur in lower rainfall areas and vice versa, but they tend to be less common.

Management for control of wheat diseases fall into three categories: cultural practices, variety selection and chemical control (not including seed treatments. See Table 2). Variety selection and chemical control are self-explanatory, but cultural practices (see Table 3) include several different tools used to manage growth of the crop including seeding date, residue management, elimination of the green bridge, soil fertility, crop rotation and soil pH adjustment. Knowing the history of wheat diseases in a field is critical to making decisions about control, especially those involving cultural practices and variety selection. As decisions involve trade-offs, understanding the impact of each is important.

Seeding date is a cultural practice that affects nearly all the diseases listed. For winter wheat diseases in general, seeding too early relative to the production area results in greater risk from more diseases than seeding later. This is especially true for stripe rust, Cephalosporium



In 2019, Tim Murray, Extension plant pathologist and professor, was named chair of Washington State University's plant pathology department. His research program primarily focuses on the ecology, epidemiology and control of wheat diseases caused by soilborne fungi.

stripe, barley yellow dwarf and wheat streak mosaic, all of which are favored by early seeding.

But early seeding of winter wheat is recommended in the case of snow mold since larger plants are more resistant and likely to survive the winter better than small plants. Seeding winter wheat later results in greater risk of damage from Pythium root rot because these pathogens are most damaging in cool and wet soil. Later seeding also results in greater risk from wind and water erosion because plants are too small to protect the soil.

The effect of residue management and tillage on disease severity is discussed frequently. Because these practices differ widely, I'll refer here to conventional and reduced tillage approaches only.

The effects of residue management and tillage on the occurrence and severity of wheat diseases often are due to indirect effects. For example, Pythium root rot is favored by reduced tillage methods more so than conventional tillage because residue insulates the soil, resulting in cooler temperatures and greater soil moisture, both of which favor these pathogens. However, these are the same conditions that occur when seeding dates are later in the fall and earlier in the spring, both of which also favor Pythium root rot, regardless of tillage/residue management practices. Similarly, eyespot and



Figure 1. Eyespot



Figure 2. Cephalosporium stripe



Figure 3. Pythium root rot



Figure 4. Soilborne wheat mosaic



Figure 6. Fusarium root and crown rot



Figure 5. Rhizoctonia root rot



Figure 7. Snow mold



Figure 8. Wheat streak mosaic



Figure 9. Stripe rust



Figure 10. Barley yellow dwarf

Cephalosporium are less severe under reduced tillage systems in the Pacific Northwest. There are reasons why residue could have this impact, but it's more likely due to the later seeding dates that occur in reduced tillage systems.

Rhizoctonia root rot is the only disease where the lack of tillage likely has a direct effect on the pathogens that cause this disease. Eliminating tillage allows the pathogen to establish a network of mycelia in the soil which increases the potential for inoculum to infect roots of the host plant.

Management of volunteers, i.e. the "green bridge," has been applied to many different diseases including stripe rust, Rhizoctonia root rot, Pythium root rot and barley yellow dwarf. It was originally conceived, however, for the control of wheat streak mosaic, which survives in volunteer wheat and other grasses. By eliminating volunteer wheat, barley and grassy weeds, the roots where the pathogens live are reduced and hence, the potential to infect wheat roots.

For barley yellow dwarf and wheat streak mosaic, which are both transmitted by insect vectors, infected volunteer plants serve as a reservoir for both the virus and insect, that is, a place to survive between susceptible wheat crops. Approaches to volunteer control are slightly different for these two groups of diseases. Managing volunteers for soilborne diseases with herbicides needs to be done at least two weeks prior to seeding and preferably three or four weeks so the volunteer plants and roots are completely dead, regardless of whether a systemic or burn-down herbicide has been used. In contrast, a burn-down herbicide for barley yellow dwarf and wheat streak mosaic removes the reservoir

Table 1. Common diseases of wheat that occur in the Inland PNW and their causes

Common name	Pathogen ¹	Crop ²	Type
Stripe rust	<i>Puccinia striiformis</i> ^f	W, S	Foliar
Eyespot	<i>Oculimacula yallundae</i> , <i>O. acuformis</i> ^f	W	Soilborne
Cephalosporium stripe	<i>Cephalosporium gramineum</i> ^f	W	Soilborne
Rhizoctonia root rot	<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> , <i>R. oryzae</i> ^f	W, S	Soilborne
Fusarium foot rot	<i>Fusarium culmorum</i> , <i>F. pseudograminearum</i> ^f	W	Soilborne
Pythium seed/root rot	<i>Pythium</i> spp. ^{FLO}	W, S	Soilborne
Snow molds	<i>Typhula ishikariensis</i> , <i>Microdochium nivale</i> ^f	W	Soilborne
Take-all	<i>Gaeumannomyces graminis</i> var. <i>tritici</i>	W, S	Soilborne
Leaf rust	<i>Puccinia recondita</i> ^f	W, S	Soilborne
Stem rust	<i>Puccinia graminis</i> ^f	W, S	Soilborne
Barley yellow dwarf	Barley yellow dwarf virus, Cereal yellow dwarf virus ^v	W, S	Foliar
Soilborne wheat mosaic	Soilborne wheat mosaic virus ^v	W	Soilborne
Wheat streak mosaic	Wheat streak mosaic virus ^v	W	Foliar
Black chaff	<i>Xanthomonas translucens</i> ^B	W, S	Foliar ¹

B= bacterium, F= fungus, FLO= fungus-like organism, and V= virus.

²W= winter and S= spring crop.

as soon as the foliage dies.

Although fertility is important for crop health and attaining maximum yield potential, its use in disease management considerations is limited. We recommend applying fertilizer at rates appropriate for the yield potential based on average precipitation and soil tests. Plants that are not nutrient stressed are more able to resist diseases.

But problems arise when too much nitrogen is applied, particularly with stripe rust, Fusarium crown and root rot and barley yellow dwarf. Luxurious plant growth results in plants that are more susceptible to fall infection by stripe rust and barley yellow dwarf pathogens. They are also more susceptible to summer water stress that favors Fusarium crown and root rot.

Crop rotation is another practice that has beneficial effects for wheat productivity but is an effective disease management practice for just two of the diseases in this discussion: Cephalosporium stripe and Rhizoctonia root rot. A rotation in which winter wheat is included no more than every three years is recommended for Cephalosporium stripe and avoiding continuous small grains is recommended for Rhizoctonia root rot.

For Cephalosporium stripe, the break between winter crops allows time for infested residue to decompose. This is effective since the pathogen survives only in the residue of plants it colonized while they were alive; consequently, the pathogen dies out when the residue decomposes or about three years under our conditions. For Rhizoctonia root rot, avoiding continuous small grains prevents the pathogens from establishing the mycelial network in the soil as noted previously. It's worth mentioning that the eyespot pathogens also survive only in the residue of plants colonized while alive; however, they reside only in the stem bases that are woody and slow to decompose, and even a three-year rotation doesn't eliminate them from soil.

Soil pH is the final cultural management we'll consider. We know soil pH is decreasing across our region due mainly to ammonium-based nitrogen fertilizers. In some areas, soil pH is low enough that aluminum toxicity has become

a concern (pH less than about 4.9). Although several diseases are affected by low soil pH, the greatest impact is on Cephalosporium stripe, which becomes much worse in low pH soils, i.e. less than pH 5.5. Liming to raise soil pH above 5.5 will result in less Cephalosporium stripe and improve other fertility issues caused by low pH.

Planting a disease-resistant variety is the best control method when available because it's cost-neutral, effective and environmentally benign. Resistant varieties are available for stripe rust, eyespot, Cephalosporium stripe, snow molds and soilborne wheat mosaic. I recommend studying the Washington State University (WSU) Variety Testing program data from the plots located close to your operation and pick those that perform the best and are most resistant to the disease problems you anticipate in your fields.

Lastly, chemical control is an option for several diseases: foliar fungicides for stripe rust and eyespot and seed treatments for Pythium root rot and barley yellow dwarf. Historically, seed treatments were used to effectively control bunts and smuts. I won't discuss seed treatments in detail since we don't have recent data comparing the many options available in the marketplace. However, it is worth noting that mefenoxam-resistant isolates of Pythium have been detected, which can compromise effectiveness of seed treatments containing that active ingredient. Also, some seed treatments provide limited protection against Rhizoctonia in the seedling but not adult-plant stage.

Several foliar fungicides are available for both stripe rust and eyespot. Refer to the WSU Small Grains Extension team's website (smallgrains.wsu.edu) for more information on products and thresholds for applications. I recommend scouting fields before spray time to determine whether a fungicide application is warranted. The

Table 2. Disease management options for common wheat diseases

Disease	Cultural practices ¹	Variety selection	Chemical control
Stripe rust	+	+	+
Eyespot	+	+	+
Cephalosporium stripe	+	+	-
Rhizoctonia root rot	+	-	-
Fusarium root and crown rot	+	-	-
Pythium root rot	+	-	+
Snow molds	+	+	-
Barley yellow dwarf	+	-	+
Soilborne wheat mosaic	-	+	-
Wheat streak mosaic	+	+	-

¹+ = useful for management; - = not useful for management

threshold for stripe rust is 5 percent of the plants with actively sporulating lesions, and for eyespot, 10 percent of the plants with recognizable lesions on the stem base.

Application timing is also important. All the available fungicides for stripe rust have growth stage restriction—some at anthesis and others with a 30-day preharvest interval. For eyespot, fungicides need to be applied before the first node is present on the main stem, but not too early, to insure the active ingredient gets to where it needs to be in the plant.

It's clear that multiple options exist for management of wheat diseases that occur in our region. Knowing which ones are likely to cause the greatest damage in a field is important to making good management decisions because not all tools are effective against all diseases. More information on wheat diseases and their management is available on the Extension Small Grains website at smallgrains.wsu.edu. ■

Tim Murray is an extension plant pathologist at Washington State University. You can find an interview with Murray on the Washington Grain Commission sponsored Wheat All About It! podcast, episodes 147 and 148. Go to wagrain.org and click on summaries at the bottom of the page.

Table 3. Cultural disease management tools for common wheat diseases

Disease	Seeding date ¹	Residue management	Green bridge	Fertility	Crop rotation	Soil pH
Stripe rust	+	-	+	+	-	-
Eyespot	+	+/-	-	-	-	-
Cephalosporium stripe	+	+/-	-	-	+	+
Rhizoctonia root rot	+/-	+	+	-	+	-
Fusarium root and crown rot	+	-	-	+	-	-
Pythium root rot	+	+	+	-	-	-
Snow molds	+	-	-	-	-	-
Barley yellow dwarf	+	-	+	+	-	-
Soilborne wheat mosaic	+	-	-	-	-	-
Wheat streak mosaic	+	-	+	-	-	-

¹+ = useful for management; - = not useful for management

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

US wheat stocks down, prices fail to respond



By T. Randall Fortenbery

Global wheat consumption is expected to increase in 2019/20 compared to the 2018/19 marketing year. Global ending stocks fell in the 2018/19 marketing year for the first time in several years, but the anticipated increase in consumption this year is more than offset by an increase in total world wheat production.

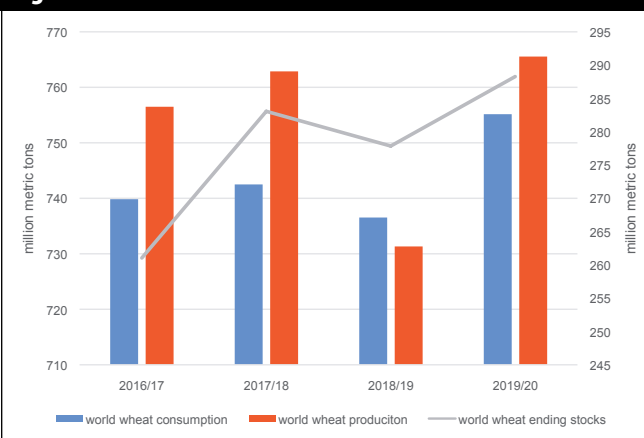
As a result, global ending stocks are expected to increase about 4 percent. Figure 1 shows world consumption, production and resulting ending stocks over the last several marketing years.

U.S. wheat ending stocks are expected to be lower at the end of the 2019/20 marketing year compared to last, but it will not be enough to offset the bearish price picture that results from a burdensome global stocks picture. In contrast to the global picture, increases in both domestic consumption and U.S. exports are expected to more than offset the year-over-year increase in domestic production.

The result is an expected 10 percent reduction in U.S. wheat ending stocks for 2019/20. This will be the first time ending stocks have been under 1 billion bushels since the 2015/16 marketing year. Figure 2A presents the U.S. wheat balance sheet for the last seven years, and the forecast for the 2019/20 balance sheet based on estimates from December 2019.

The burden international stocks are placing on the

Figure 1: World wheat



U.S. market is evident when looking at the U.S. export pace and domestic price forecasts. In the past year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been overly optimistic in the first two quarters of the marketing year relative to total U.S. wheat exports (the first half of the marketing year ends Dec. 1). As a result, we have had significant price deterioration in the fall and early winter months as the market came to realize that the export forecasts were overly optimistic.

This year the opposite has happened—USDA was likely too pessimistic concerning U.S. wheat exports early in the marketing year. But even as we have experienced an export pace that suggests we will exceed USDA's early export forecast, and despite USDA revising export projections upwards in the fall months, prices did

Figure 2A: US wheat balance sheet for the last seven years

US Wheat Balance Sheet (June/May)									
Based on Dec 2019 WASDE - USDA									
Marketing Year	USDA 12/13	USDA 13/14	USDA 14/15	USDA 15/16	USDA 16/17	USDA 17/18	USDA Dec Est 18/19	USDA Dec Fore 19/20	
Begin Stocks	743	718	590	752	976	1,181	1,099	1,080	
Imports	123	189	151	113	118	157	135	105	
Acres Planted	55.7	56.2	56.8	55	50.1	48.1	47.8	45.2	
Acres Harvested	48.9	45.3	46.4	47.3	43.8	37.6	39.6	37.2	
% Harvested	87.8%	80.8%	81.7%	86.0%	87.4%	81.6%	82.8%	82.3%	
Yield	46.3	47.1	43.7	43.6	52.7	46.4	47.6	51.7	
Production	2,268	2,135	2,026	2,062	2,309	1,741	1,855	1,920	
Total Supply	3,131	3,021	2,768	2,927	3,402	3,079	3,119	3,105	
Food	945	951	958	957	949	984	955	955	
Seed	73	77	79	67	61	63	59	61	
Feed and Residual	384	228	114	149	160	51	90	140	
Exports	1,012	1,176	864	778	1,051	901	936	975	
Total Demand	2,414	2,432	2,015	1,951	2,222	1,980	2,039	2,131	
Ending Stocks	718	590	752	976	1,181	1,099	1,080	974	
Stocks To Use	29.74%	24.26%	37.32%	50.03%	53.15%	55.51%	52.97%	45.71%	
Avg. Farm Price	\$7.77	\$6.87	\$5.99	\$4.89	\$3.89	\$4.72	\$5.16	\$4.55	

Figure 2B: US wheat prices vs. export projections



not improve much through the end of the 2019 calendar year.

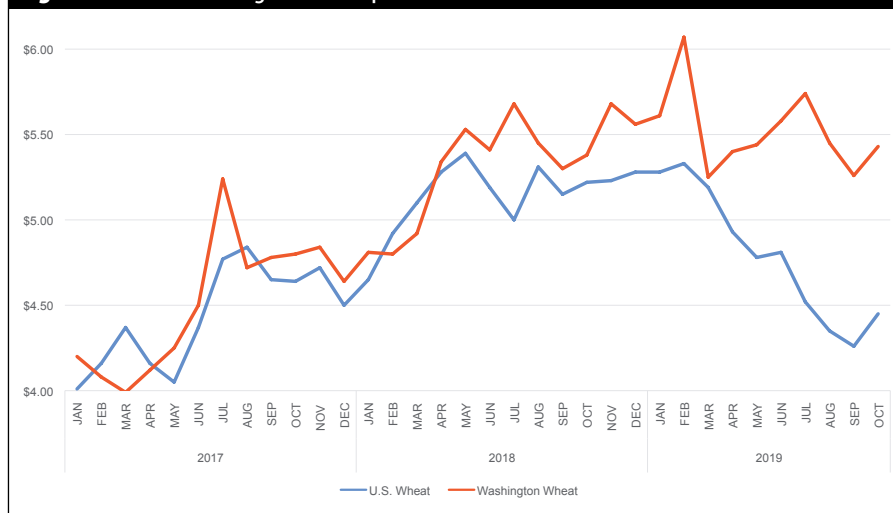
The announcement of Congress taking up the U.S.-Mexican-Canadian trade Agreement (USMCA) and the announcement of a resolution to the Phase 1 China trade package still did not move U.S. wheat futures prices outside the trading range they had experienced over the previous several weeks. This really points to the market's concern over total world stocks—both U.S. trade and domestic disappearance pictures for wheat have improved substantially, yet though mid-December, there was no real price response.

In fact, USDA has consistently lowered the average market year price projection through the first half of the marketing year (Figure 2B). This has occurred even as new crop futures prices improved a bit in the second quarter of the marketing year.

The low expected prices for the 2019/20 marketing year suggests Washington wheat producers will receive income support from the farm support programs authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill. Farmers and landlords have until March 15, 2020, to sign up for benefits for the 2019 harvested crop and June 30, 2020 to sign up for the 2020 wheat crop. The basic program opportunities are the same as in the previous farm bill: producers can elect for Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC), a revenue protection program, or Price Loss Coverage (PLC), a price loss program.

The 2018 Farm Bill requires producers to make a single program choice for both the 2019 and 2020 crops. However, in contrast to the 2014 Farm Bill, they can change their program choice on an annual basis in subsequent years. Given the late sign-up, producers will

Figure 3: US vs. Washington wheat prices



know with near certainty what the optimal choice is for the 2019 and 2020 crops, and since they can change their program selection in later years, losses associated with lack of flexibility under the previous farm bill are likely to be minimal. Given the poor price outlook, it is anticipated that most Washington producers will initially elect the PLC program.

Washington producers generally receive a premium over USDA reported wheat prices, and the USDA market price used to determine PLC payments. This is true for a couple of reasons: first, most wheat grown in Washington is soft white wheat headed to Asian markets. It is of higher quality than most other wheat varieties produced in the U.S. and thus captures a price premium. Second, Washington producers are closer to the export terminals compared to producers further inland, thus their local price does not have to be discounted as much relative to the export price to cover transport costs to export terminals. Figure 3 shows the USDA calculated average all-wheat price on a monthly basis compared to the all-wheat Washington price.

U.S. white wheat production did not increase year-over-year in 2019, in contrast to overall wheat production. Total U.S. winter white wheat production was 231.7 million bushels in 2019, compared to 236.1 million in 2018. When spring varieties are included, total U.S. white wheat production remains unchanged between 2019 and 2018. About 91 percent of white winter wheat was soft white. Washington farmers accounted for about 86 percent of U.S. winter white wheat production and 71 percent of spring white wheat.

Similar to all U.S. wheat, white wheat ending stocks for 2019/20 are expected to decline relative to 2018/19. As of December 2019, USDA was projecting white wheat ending stocks this year would total 85 million bushels compared to 88 million last year and 87 million in 2017/18. If realized, this will be the smallest white wheat ending stocks in the U.S. since the 2015/16 marketing year. The reduction in white wheat ending stocks for this year is completely driven by an increase in domestic consumption, with exports actually expected to decline slightly year-over-year. ■

Randy Fortenbery holds the Thomas B. Mick Endowed Chair in Grain Economics at Washington State University. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign.

EPA requirements place spotlight on closed transfer systems

LABELING AND TRAINING CHANGES WILL TAKE EFFECT IN SEPTEMBER

Editor's note: This content was provided by GoatThroat Pumps. Printing this does not imply any sort of endorsement by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers or Wheat Life Magazine. This magazine doesn't usually accept sponsored content, but we felt this information about new EPA requirements was important to bring to the attention of our readers.

The liquid herbicide paraquat is widely used throughout North America as an effective herbicide. However, in response to the risks associated with it, the EPA has pursued new, significant, restricted-use requirements. It is important that growers get up to speed on what the EPA has mandated in terms of new closed transfer systems required to safely dispense it.

"There are some big changes in the EPA's rules for paraquat use, and growers need to understand and follow them to remain in compliance," says Kerry Richards, director of Delaware's Pesticide Safety Education Program. "Otherwise, there could be some hefty fines."

By September 2020, new container standards for paraquat will take effect, with "closed-system packaging for all nonbulk (less than 120 gallon) end-use product containers of paraquat," according to the EPA.

The agency will require "new closed-system packaging designed to prevent transfer or removal of the pesticide except directly into proper application equipment.

This will prevent spills, mixing, pouring the pesticide into other containers or other actions that could lead to paraquat exposure," states EPA's website ([epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/paraquat-dichloride](https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/paraquat-dichloride)).

Paraquat containers from manufacturers will need to be completely sealed, with no screw caps, adaptors or other ways to open and decant the chemicals. To prevent accidental exposure or spills while transferring the liquid herbicide to smaller containers (for mixing or use), certified applicators must also utilize a closed transfer system that connects to the sealed container and cannot be easily circumvented.

Closed transfer systems are specifically designed to transfer liquids safely, while preventing accidental exposure to the concentrated/diluted pesticide or rinse solution. Unfortunately, the EPA is leaving it to growers to engineer their own solutions or find solutions already on the market.

"The grower is going to have to figure out which closed-transfer systems meet the specific EPA requirements to the letter, and if they don't get it right, they could get fined," says Richards.

Although many types of closed transfer systems exist, many do not satisfy this new EPA mandate because they can be breached or circumvented in some way. ►



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Within this category are gravity-assisted inversion systems, which are inserted into containers using adaptors and flipped upside down. The adapter depresses a valve so the chemical flows freely out of the container. However, gravity-assisted inversion systems can be easily circumvented and the chemicals decanted if the valve is pressed when the container is not properly seated in the adapter.

Container breaching systems are another alternative. With this approach, sealed 1 to 2.5-gallon containers of product would be placed in an enclosed system and then pierced so the liquid contents drain to the bottom before being fed through hoses to the application equipment. A water input valve can also be used to safely rinse out the enclosure. The downside is that each grower would have to purchase a container breaching system to use the product at all, and partial container use would not be possible.

Probes inserted into containers for fluid extraction are also commonly used for volumes ranging from 10 to 120 gallons. Because the container doesn't have to be inverted, like a gravity-assisted device, a larger vessel can be used. However, when the probe is extracted, it is a breach of the closed system. Also, there is no safe or compliant way for growers to rinse out the container after use.

The industry is responding to growers' need to comply with the EPA's new closed-system mandate. One company, GoatThroat Pumps, a Connecticut-based pump designer and manufacturer, is developing a system to specifically comply with EPA paraquat use requirements. In fact, California, the largest agriculture-producing state, already requires a closed transfer system for Category 1 pesticides, and the company already produces products that meet those exacting requirements.

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According to Richards, this type of pump is not only for paraquat, but can also be used for a variety of other ag chemicals that growers already use by utilizing various adaptors available from the pump manufacturer.

"Using a hand-operated, closed-transfer pump system will not only help growers meet the new EPA paraquat standards by September, 2020, but also enhance the safety and ease of use of many other chemicals growers are pouring and mixing every day," says Richards.

For more information about GoatThroat Pumps, visit their website at goatthroat.com. ■



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Wanted: Landlords for Olympia Days

By Trista Crossley

One of the primary functions of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is to educate lawmakers on issues that could impact agriculture and advocate on behalf of wheat farmers trying to make a living growing a crop. The best way to do those things is to meet with elected officials face to face. It's especially effective if the grower happens to live in that legislator's district.

And there's the rub. Wheat growers are predominantly on the east side of the state, leaving the majority of west-side urban districts wheat grower-free. But WAWG's lobbyist, Diana Carlen, thinks there might be an untapped resource to fill that need—landlords.

For many years, a group of wheat farmers has traveled to Olympia during the legislative session—usually in January or February—to visit with lawmakers and agency officials and present them with the wheat industry's priorities for that year. They discuss bills that are being debated and answer any questions lawmakers might have. This annual trip, called Olympia Days, allows WAWG to establish relationships with elected officials and introduce urban lawmakers to the wheat industry. Carlen is primarily responsible for setting up the Olympia Days appointments, and every year, she says legislators make a point to ask if anybody from their district will be attending.

"We have landlords based in other parts of the state, many of them in urban areas, so it would be nice to have those people participate in Olympia Days. It gives us a chance to show legislators that agriculture doesn't just involve people in Eastern Washington," she explained.

The typical Olympia Days schedule involves a group dinner, where priorities are reviewed and growers are assigned to visit legislators. The visits with legislators are usually about 15 minutes long, and wheat growers will try to see as many legislators as possible in a day and a half. Each group that visits a legislator includes at least one WAWG leader, staff member or Carlen, and a packet with WAWG's priorities and general wheat industry information. Growers aren't expected to be an expert on any particular issue, and the meetings are generally meant to be casual and pressure-free.

"Legislators just want to hear from real people," Carlen said. "They get tired of always seeing me and the other ag lobbyists."

A nonfarming landlord might wonder what they could



contribute to these legislative meetings, but Carlen pointed out that they are part of the wheat industry as well.

"Having a nonfarming or retired landlord shows an alternative business model of farming from what we typically see," she said. "It shows that sometimes, it doesn't make financial sense for a person live on the farm and work there. Instead, they have to have other people work on the farm, and they themselves live and work elsewhere. It shows legislators that there are all types of people involved in agriculture."

For those landlords that aren't quite ready to participate in Olympia Days, Carlen said there are other ways they can support the wheat industry.

"They could write their legislator a letter on an issue that WAWG is working on, or they could become more engaged in the association," she said. "There are other opportunities for them to participate in the process."

This year's Olympia Days trip will take place Jan. 21-22, with a planning dinner on the evening of Jan. 20. Any wheat grower or wheat landlord is invited to participate. For more information, contact the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610. ■

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Deferring crop insurance payments, adjustments

By Curtis Evanenko

McGregor Risk Management Services

Greetings and Happy New Year!

Our topic this month is a timely one, perhaps something to file away for any potential, future loss-year reference. What are deferred payments and a delayed loss adjustment, and are they different? First off, I'm not an accountant or tax advisor—but I did spend the night in a Holiday Inn Express—and each operation and producer is different. Please contact a trusted tax advisor for concerns or questions specific to your business operation.

For purposes of this article, deferred Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI), specifically revenue protection (RP), is deferring the crop insurance loss payment from the current tax year into the following tax year. IRS Publication 225, "Farmer Tax Guide," makes a large generalization that all revenue policies only protect the revenue side, however, the RP policy provides both yield and revenue

protection. Several accounting firms that I have contacted disagree with the IRS's broad statement. "Payments made for 'destruction or damage' of the crop are clearly allowed to be deferred," says Amy Reimer, a CPA with Leffel, Otis, & Warwick. Again, please contact your tax advisor about your specific operation.

The key to deferring an RP loss payment is the ability to separate the loss amount(s) that are directly from production (bushels) and revenue (price). All Approved Insurance Providers (AIP) do separate and identify the amounts attributed to production and revenue, thereby allowing the producer to defer the production portion of the loss into the following year. If there is no identifiable peril (drought, frost, hail, etc.) that caused "damage and destruction," meaning the loss was solely revenue, deferring loss proceeds is not an option.

Generally speaking, harvest for our region is completed by late summer; correspondingly, losses in our area are typically finalized prior to the end of the calendar year. This means delaying or procrastinating a returned phone call to the loss adjuster may not stretch the loss payment into the following tax year.

In order to defer any potential loss payments under the MPCI policy, 1) the insured must qualify; 2) there must be a cause of loss creating the payment; and 3) total loss monies paid to the producer must be identified separately by production (bushels) and revenue (dollars). For tax planning purposes, this may be a perfect option for your operation.

As a resource, CliftonLarsonAllen posted a blog in August of this year regarding this matter at blogs.claconnect.com/agribusiness/can-you-defer-rp-crop-insurance-proceeds/

Regarding a delayed loss adjustment, specifically, a delay in farm-stored production, this is a (relatively) recent policy choice from the Risk Management Agency (RMA), specifically for insurance units that have production stored on the farm vs. production hauled to a commercial elevator. If all production has been hauled to a commercial elevator, the extension is not an option. The MPCI policy allows for up to a 180-day delay in the measurement of production from the end of insurance period (EOIP), which is Oct. 31 for wheat. The specific statement from the 2020 MPCI wheat county actuarial says:

"The gross amount of production will be determined by us not later than 180 days after the EOIP. At the end of 180 days, the adjuster will measure the production as soon as possible so your claim can be completed and submitted no later than 30 days after the 180th day."

The purpose of this choice is to allow for exact bushels to be used when determining production and corresponding loss for the MPCI policy. The loss adjustment manual that all AIP adjusters follow requires that any farm-stored production calculation determination use a "pack factor." My experience indicates the calculation and determination process of farm-stored bushels to be overstated, accounting for more bushels than are actually present. In other words, more determined bushels makes for more production to count and correspondingly reduces any payable loss. Prior to this extension being available, I've seen growers ultimately deliver fewer bushels than what was previously calculated by the

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loss adjuster, and their request that the loss be reworked with the correct bushels be denied. Ultimately, the intent of RMA and the MPC policy is not to underpay production losses, but rather pay them correctly.

A producer can choose to have some units worked (i.e. units where production has been delivered to a commercial buyer) and units with farm-stored production delayed (up to 180 days) until production is delivered commercially and precise bushels are known. As stated previously, if all production has been delivered to a commercial facility, the

delayed production determination is not a viable option.

I believe this flexibility and having accurate bushels used to determine any and all losses are ultimately what is best for both the producer and RMA. Anytime a producer has a potential loss and any production is farm stored, I highly recommend taking advantage of the delay in farm-stored production option.

I wish all a blessed and successful new year! ■

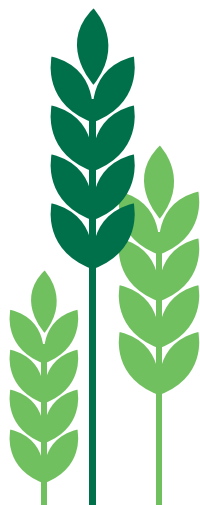
Curtis Evandenko has more than 25 years of crop insurance experience serving the Pacific Northwest from both the wholesale and retail sides of the business. He currently serves as a risk management advisor with McGregor Risk Management Services. He can be reached at (509) 540-2632 or by email at cevanenko@mcgregorrisk.com.

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“When you think about the scale... and that’s double the highest exports we’ve ever had. That’s a significant number, and it would be a real bonanza if we can trust China to do what they say they’ll do.”



—Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue during an event in Omaha on the news that China has agreed to a trade deal, which includes a promise to purchase \$40-\$50 billion in ag products from the U.S. (*Des Moines Register*)

“But ultimately, whether this whole agreement works is going to be determined by who’s making the decisions in China, not in the United States. If the hardliners are making the decisions, we’re going to get one outcome. If the reformers are making the decisions, which is what we hope, then we’re going to get another outcome.”



—U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on the phase one agreement between China and the U.S. Details are still unclear. (cnbc.com)

“This deal would amount to a modest de-escalation of trade hostilities but hardly resolves the fundamental trade and economic tensions that are dampening business sentiment and investment in both countries.”

—Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University and former head of the International Monetary Fund’s China division. (capitalpress.com)

“So unfortunately, USMCA is an exercise through all kinds of new provisions to diminish trade, and that’s why I hope Republicans reconsider this. We have historically recognized we’re all better off with more open markets.”

—Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Penn.) arguing that the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement is a “complete capitulation” to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on trade. (thehill.com)

“It is infinitely better than what was originally proposed by the administration.”



—House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) after provisions were added to the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that addressed labor law enforcement, environmental standards and prescription drugs. (washingtonexaminer.com)

“Despite all of this challenge over the last couple years, them not buying wheat, we (in) the U.S. wheat industry have continued to provide trade servicing, to interact, to bring Chinese teams...to the states. We’ve been fully engaged with them, looking forward to the time we could return to the market.”

—Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission, on “phase one” of the deal with China. (capitalpress.com)



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(From left) Ryker Wagner (6), Colden Wagner (6) and Bennett Wagner (9) during harvest in Harrington. Ryker and Bennett are brothers, and Colden is their cousin. They are all the grandsons of John and Linda Wagner. Photo by Linda Wagner.



This day during harvest 2019 at James Farms in Dayton was too wet for the grown-ups to cut, but not too wet for Levi Bowen (11). Photo by Josh Bowen.

Riley Dormaier (20 months) heads home after delivering lunches to the harvest crew on the family's fourth generation wheat farm near Hartline. Photo by Robin Dormaier.



Your wheat life...



Ashlynn Norton on Coyote Flats Farms south of Ralston. Photo submitted by Brenden Bell.

Email your wheat life pictures to us at editor@wawg.org. Please include location of picture, names of all people appearing in the picture and ages of all children.



Harvest 2019 at Four Aces Farms Partnership in Pomeroy. Photo by Selena Wolf.



Sunrise on Alpowa Summit near Pomeroy. Photo by Nate Gilbert.



Michaela Goetz (17 months) waiting for a combine ride with her dad, Nick, at Kunz Farms in Davenport. Photo by Natasha Goetz.

HAPPENINGS

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

JANUARY 2020

7-8 2019 CROPPING SYSTEMS

CONFERENCE. Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Wash.

Presentations on integrated nitrogen management, drought resistant soil and implementing regenerative ag practices. Breakout sessions will include cover crops, precision ag, soil health, ag business and consumer trends. Registration and more information is online at directseed.org/events/annual-conference/

9 WAWG BOARD MEETING. Meeting starts at 10 a.m. at Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash. (509) 659-0610, wawg.org

15-16 NORTHWEST HAY EXPO. Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash. For more information visit wa-hay.org/nwhayexpo/

17-18 CASCADIA GRAINS

CONFERENCE. Connecting growers, processors, brokers, investors and policymakers across the grain value chain. Olympia, Wash. Registration required. cascadiagrains.com

17-26 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, fire-

works and more! Chelan, Wash. lakechelan.com/winterfest/

18 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

18-19 BAVARIAN ICE FEST. Snow sculptures, games and fireworks. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org

25 WOMEN IN AG CONFERENCE. Join women in 25 different locations throughout the Pacific Northwest for inspiration, learning and networking. This year's theme is "Healthy Farms." Find a location and register at womeninag.wsu.edu

FEBRUARY 2020

4-6 SPOKANE AG EXPO. The largest farm machinery show in the Inland Northwest. More than 250 agriculture suppliers and service companies all under one roof. Spokane Convention Center. greaterspokane.org/ag-expo/

11 WAWG BOARD MEETING. Meeting starts at 10 a.m. at Washington Wheat Foundation Building, Ritzville, Wash. (509) 659-0610, wawg.org

27 3RD ANNUAL PALOUSE ALTERNATIVE CROPPING SYMPOSIUM. This event will promote healthy soils and profitable farming. Local farmers will share experiences on cover cropping,

intercropping and integrating livestock. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., View Room, Gladish Community Center in Pullman. More information at palousecd.org/symposium

MARCH 2020

1 SAUSAGE FEED. All you can eat from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Homemade sausage, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, green beans, roll, applesauce, pie and beverage. There is also a beer garden. Uniontown Community Center, Uniontown, Wash. uniontownwa.org/events/

6-8 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

20-22 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW. Features 150 professional artists and crafters from across the U.S. HAPO Center, Pasco, Wash. 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. Include date, time and location of event, plus contact info and a short description.

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