

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

JANUARY | 2021



GROWERS LOOK AHEAD TO 2021

ISSUES ON DECK INCLUDE CARBON TAX, AG OVERTIME PAY, DAMS, PESTICIDES, TRADE

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for 2021 Legislative Session

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getting better all the time

2020 spring wheat, barley
variety trial results are in

When wheat queens held court

WHEAT LIFE

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**WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION OF
WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



New year, same dedication to growers

By Ryan Poe

Happy New Year!

It's an honor to be here writing the president's column. It was a tough decision for myself and the other Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) officers to keep the same officer group for another year. But with our National Association of Wheat Growers' (NAWG) fall meeting and Commodity Classic being held virtually and a lot of uncertainty around the upcoming winter meeting (which is usually held in Washington, D.C., we thought it would best for WAWG and for our grower members to go into this year with as much experience as possible. It is hard enough to get your feet under you on the NAWG board when you are attending all the NAWG meetings in person, but to have to try to get up to speed virtually would be particularly challenging, I think.

This upcoming legislative session is going to look much different than any I am aware of, at both the state and federal levels. It will be challenging, but I think there may be some great opportunities for us, as well. Usually when we visit members of Congress, we might meet with one or two staff members. By meeting virtually, however, I've heard you might get to meet with the entire staff, which can be very beneficial in getting our issues out to a wider audience. I've also heard that you'd better be keeping your points brief as it is harder to keep your listeners from drifting off.

It's likely that the Olympia Days trip we are accustomed to won't be happening as many of the state legislators won't even be on campus, and, for those that are, they can't receive any visitors in their offices. If necessary, I am hopeful that we might be able to have some small group meetings in Olympia if an urgent need arises. On the bright side, however, I think we'll be able to bring a concise, targeted message to each legislator we are able to meet with. Another potential benefit I see to us in Eastern Washington this session will be the ability to testify remotely and not have to make the trek over the pass.

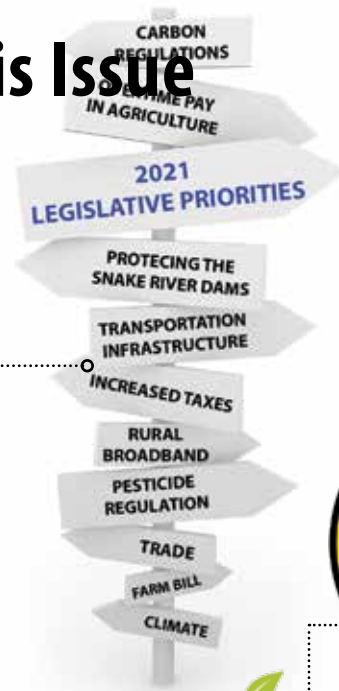
I see some big challenges at both the state and federal levels. On the state side, our lobbyist has told us that any potential legislation must hit one of four buckets to be even be considered: advance racial equity; address the response to the COVID-19 pandemic; advance economic recovery; or address the global climate crisis. I also think the potential for some form of carbon legislation is highly likely, and something that we must be on guard against. I've also heard rumblings about some of our tax preferences being on the chopping block as they could help offset the state's revenue losses caused by the pandemic. I can't necessarily fit it into one of those buckets, but I also see pesticide issues being something we need to be monitoring. On the federal side, the biggest challenge I see is establishing relationships with a new administration and department heads that we work with.

You know how farming doesn't stop just because of the weather? Well, neither does advocating for our grower members, even in the face of a global pandemic. No matter what comes in 2021, I have confidence that your WAWG officers and staff will get the work we need done. ■

Cover photo: The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) handicaps this year's legislative efforts. See page 22 for a look at the issues WAWG will be focusing on in 2021. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

Inside This Issue

WAWG President's Perspective	2
Membership Form	4
WAWG at Work	6
Policy Matters	14
Washington Wheat Foundation	20
Advocacy in action	22
WAWG's 2021 legislative priorities	
Who's representing you?	28
A list of state, federal legislators	
A champion for ag	30
Former WAWG president takes Senate seat	
Focus on small business	32
Talking to Walla Walla's newest representative	
The future of ag	36
AMMO recap: Damian Mason	
WGC Chairman's Column	41
Getting better all the time	42
WSU's winter wheat breeder 10 years in	
Wheat All About It!	43
Popular podcast records its last episode	
A good year	44
Spring wheat, barley variety trial results	
Wheat Watch	50
Holding court	52
Revisiting WAWG's wheat queens	
On Lease	56
The Bottom Line	58
Your Wheat Life	60
Advertiser Index	62



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Clark Neely, Extension agronomist and Cereal Variety Testing lead, Washington State University
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 Curtis Evanenko, McGregor Risk Management Services

WAWG MEMBERSHIP FORM

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LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

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

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

More member benefits:

- Greensheet ALERTS • WAWG updates
- Voice to WAWG through opinion surveys
- National Wheat Grower updates
- State and national legislative updates



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Annual meeting goes virtual, business gets done

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) hasn't let pandemic-induced social distancing stop it from continuing its work of advocating for the Washington wheat industry.

Early last month, more than 50 members virtually took part in WAWG's annual meeting to hear state and federal agency updates and to review WAWG's resolutions for the upcoming year. A special guest was **Martin Barbre**, administrator of U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA).



"All things considered, I'm very pleased with how the annual meeting went," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "We had participation from all the major state and federal agencies, and members were able to have a robust discussion on our resolutions. We are going into the 2021 legislative season with clear priorities from our members and a road map to help direct our advocacy efforts. Thank you to all those who took time to join the meeting."

Barbre kicked off the meeting with some Washington state small grains crop insurance facts, including:

- In 2020, more than 2.07 million wheat acres (92 percent of all planted wheat acres) were insured, with the

average coverage level at 81 percent;

- \$594 million liability insured;
- 98 percent of acres enrolled with buy-up coverage under either a revenue or yield plan of insurance;
- In 2020, 51,000 barley acres (75 percent of all planted barley acres) were insured, with the average coverage level at 80 percent;
- \$11 million liability insured; and
- As of Nov. 30, 2020, \$8.5 million had been paid out in claims to wheat producers and \$37,000 to barley producers, not including claims yet to be finalized.

Ben Thiel, director of RMA's Spokane Regional Office, reviewed some proposed crop insurance changes, including establishing enterprise units by cropping practice or type and issuing replant payments for winter wheat that is damaged before the fall final planting date. WAWG supports both proposed crop insurance changes. Thiel said that if everything goes according to the plan, those changes will be implemented for the 2022 crop year.

Jon Wyss, state executive director of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), told attendees that county FSA offices have once again been closed to the public, and all FSA business is being done remotely. He reminded producers of upcoming sign-up deadlines, including the general Conservation Reserve Program (Feb. 28), Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands (April 23) and Agriculture

Industry thanks Inslee for WSU funding in proposed budget

Last month, the Washington wheat industry sent a letter to Gov. Jay Inslee, thanking him for including \$8 million in funding for demolition of Johnson Hall on the Washington State University (WSU) campus in his proposed capital budget.

The letter, signed by Ryan Poe, president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, and Gary Bailey, chairman of the Washington Grain Commission, said, "Johnson Hall has served plant, soil and other sciences well over its 60-year history. But the reality is that the useful life of Johnson Hall has run its course. Operating costs for Johnson Hall are \$1 million a year

now, and deferred maintenance is mounting. The layout of Johnson Hall is highly compartmentalized, making the building a poor candidate for renovation."

The removal of Johnson Hall is necessary to make room for eventual construction of a new plant biosciences building. That new building will be home both to U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service personnel and university scientists and researchers. Research activities in the new building will include plant breeding; plant pests, diseases and genomics; water conservation; and soil health and land management, among others. ■



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Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs (March 15).

Speaking of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wyss said 32 producers in Douglas County that couldn't participate in the last CRP sign-up because the county was over its acreage cap were able to get temporary funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Wyss said that funding looks like it will be available for 2021.

"If we can get through this year (2021), we'll get into farm bill negotiations and can fix that Douglas County issue in the next farm bill," he said.

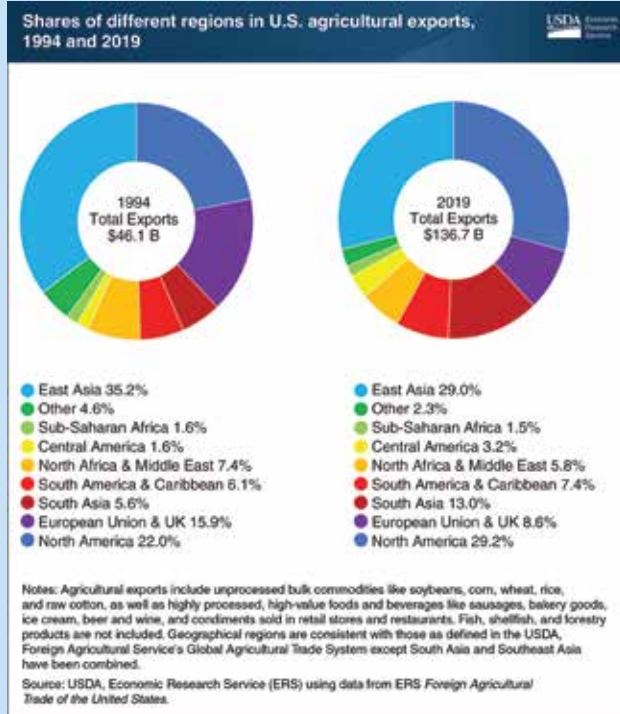
Rounding out the USDA agencies, Roylene Comes At Night, state conservationist for NRCS, reviewed her agency's activities over the past year and addressed staffing and workload issues. In 2020, NRCS helped producers implement conservation practices that:

- Improved soil quality on 337,521 acres of cropland;
- Improved water quality by applying conservation practices to 638,010 acres of land; and
- Protected 303,178 acres of grazing and forest land.

The state office obligated approximately \$42 million dollars in conservation work in 2020, nearly double their normal yearly amount. The state office approved 236 new Environmental Quality Incentive Program contracts, obligating nearly \$21 million. They approved 80 new Conservation Stewardship Program contracts on 219,500 acres for \$13.5 million, and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program got \$7.8 million in funds.

Looking ahead to 2021, Comes At Night said the agency was approved for an additional 1,500 employees, and she's hoping some of those will come to the Washington state office. Although CRP is technically an FSA program, NRCS provides technical assistance as well as assistance with conservation planning and practice implementation. NRCS staff are required to do a physical review of all expiring CRP contracts on top of the agency's own obligations, creating a huge workload for NRCS employees. Comes At Night said she is working with FSA to try to streamline some of those requirements as her employees start reviewing expiring 2022 CRP contracts.

Derek Sandison, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), said it's been a rough year for certain segments of the state's agricultural industry as the nation's restaurant and food service sectors shut down. He estimated that the potato and potato processing industry has lost almost \$1 billion, and some agricultural products haven't received any federal assistance to date. Worker housing and worker protection were big issues in many of the state's agricultural sectors, and processing



The United States is the world's second largest agricultural trader after the European Union. U.S. agricultural exports have grown significantly over the last quarter century, from \$46.1 billion in 1994 to \$136.7 billion in 2019. The elimination of agricultural trade barriers as a result of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement—superseded by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement in July 2020—nearly quadrupled exports (by value) to Canada and Mexico. Rising household incomes and changing trade policies in developing east and southeast Asia have driven export growth, especially for China, whose share of U.S. agricultural exports more than quadrupled from 3 percent during 1994-2000 to 14 percent during 2010-19.

plants had to retrofit their operations. At the beginning of the year, WSDA, like so many other agencies, struggled to provide personal protection equipment to those who needed it.

"We did our part in terms of keeping commerce moving, but it's been a struggle," Sandison said. "We expect, probably even with the vaccine, we are going to feel these impacts going into the next growing season."

Sandison also touched on trade and retaliatory tariffs. The WSDA is still trying to determine how the Biden Administration will handle trade.

Josh Tonsager, vice president of policy and communications for the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), gave a federal policy update. NAWG was working on a letter that will be sent to the Biden-Harris transition team about the association's priorities and some of the issues the wheat industry is dealing with (see more on page 18). Some of NAWG's priorities for 2021 include ag appropriations, ag research funding, COVID-19 relief, pes-

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ticide regulation, trade agreements and the farm economy.

Carbon is also likely to be an issue in the next administration, and Tonsager said NAWG is working to establish a policy directive to help guide the association's efforts in case a voluntary carbon market is established.

Carbon is also likely to be a big state issue. Diana Carlen, WAWG's lobbyist in Olympia, said a carbon tax or a low

carbon fuel standard is back on the table as the legislature will be looking for additional sources of revenue to make up a \$2.5 billion projected five-year deficit.

The state's 2021 Legislative Session will be almost completely virtual, Carlen said. Legislators will be asked to limit the number of bills that are introduced, and bills that will be considered will need to address either racial equity,

Members update, refine association's 2021 resolutions

During the virtual annual meeting in early December, Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leadership, members and staff reviewed, updated and approved the 2021 resolutions that will direct policy for the next 12 months. The updated resolutions are listed here. For the complete set of resolutions, visit our website at wawg.org/about-us/.

NATIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

- WAWG supports organizations, like U.S. Farmers and Ranchers in Action, which are working to make the voice of agriculture heard in discussions related to climate change.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

TRADE

- WAWG supports Trade Promotion Authority (Fast Track), to be fully utilized for brokering trade agreements and urges Congress to extend it beyond the July 1, 2021 deadline.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

- WAWG strongly encourages the prioritization of wheat and barley research, including Varietal Development, Production and Marketing:
 1. All aspects of diseases, insects, and weeds management including development of resistant varieties and BMPs to minimize herbicide resistance in weeds.
 2. Improved adaptation for new varieties, especially for drought, winter hardiness, falling numbers and sprout damage.
 3. Soil conservation and fertility related to plant nutrition.
 4. Cropping Systems: Crop rotation and alternative crops.
 5. Regional Approaches to Climate Change with emphasis on Carbon Sequestration and Drought.
 6. Marketing (including the restoration of IMPACT funding—WSU's International Marketing Program for Agricultural Commodities and Trade—and the Wheat Marketing Center).
 7. Agriculture economics.
 8. Varietal testing of all public and private cultivars grown in Washington for performance; adaptation and grain quality across all of Washington's major wheat growing environments.
- WAWG supports restoration of funding in the Washington State Soil Health initiative which provides funding to Washington State University, to conduct research and pilot projects for practices and policies by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Washington State Conservation Commission that would improve soil health and improve agricultural productivity.

- WAWG supports the use of approved best management practices for addressing weed resistance.

RESEARCH FUNDING

- WAWG requests the Washington State Legislature to ensure that funding be maintained at Washington State University in the College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences to prevent further erosion of faculty, staff, and student positions.
- WAWG supports federal funding for the PNW herbicide weed resistance initiative.

STATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

LEGISLATION

- WAWG supports an employee's right to earn a competitive wage for his or her productive work.
- WAWG supports legislation clarifying the scope of the recent Washington State Supreme Court Case (Martinez-Cuevas, et al. v. DeRuyter Brothers Dairy) requiring dairy workers to be paid overtime and overturning a state law in place since 1959 that exempted all agriculture from paying overtime.
- WAWG opposes paying workers overtime retroactively when neither state or federal law required payment of overtime for agricultural workers.

STATE AGENCIES

Department of Agriculture

- WAWG supports maintaining the WSDA as a standalone agency and that they take the lead on any agriculture related issue.
- WAWG supports paying reasonable pesticide registration and licensing fees to maintain a robust pesticide safety program.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ROAD

- WAWG supports funds collected from any transportation source or mode be allocated back solely for transportation uses.

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION COMMITTEE

EDUCATION

- WAWG shall actively produce public information and educational programs in order to increase the awareness of the wheat industry that drives agriculture's importance to the state and nation's economy.
- Each county association of wheat growers is encouraged to annually help fund agriculture education programs. ■

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the COVID-19 response, economic recovery or global climate change. See a preview of the upcoming legislative session on page 14.

After hearing state and federal updates, meeting attendees reviewed WAWG's 2020 resolutions and modified them as necessary. See page 10 for those changes. A full copy of WAWG's 2021 resolutions can be found at wawg.org/about-us/.

The 2020/21 Wheat Ambassadors, Grace Hanning of Centerville, Wash., and Julia Klein of Ritzville, Wash., were introduced and awarded college scholarships. Hanning will receive \$5,000, and Klein will receive \$4,500.

The following names were drawn for the Legislative Action Fund prizes:

- Wheat Rolling Pin - Paul Enyeart
- WAWG Yeti Tumbler - Peter Robison
- Wheat Cutting Board - Aaron Gfeller
- Amazon Gift Cards - Willard Lange and the Whitman County Wheat Growers
- AirPods - Stan Schwartz
- Smart TV - Whitman County Wheat Growers

- Blackstone Griddle - Barry Buth

Finally, a proposal was made and passed to keep the same slate of WAWG officers for the following year. Ryan Poe of Hartline will remain president, while Howard McDonald of Coulee City will remain as vice president, Andy Juris of Bickleton as secretary/treasurer and Jeffrey Shawver of Connell as past president.

The next WAWG board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 12. ■

Spokane Ag Show goes virtual

Like nearly all events since early last year, the Spokane Ag Show is going virtual in 2021. The show will take place Feb. 16-18 beginning at 8 a.m. each day. The online show will allow attendees to visit "booths" set up by exhibitors, view videos of their products and services and even contact them for more information or an exclusive consultation. In addition, a variety of live presentations will be available. The Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization is a proud sponsor of the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum. For more information, visit agshow.org. ■



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Farmers encouraged to sign up for 2021 CRP programs

The sign-up periods for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the CRP Grasslands for 2021 are fast approaching. The general CRP sign-up period runs from Jan. 4, 2021, to Feb. 12, 2021, and sign-up for CRP Grasslands runs from March 15, 2021, to April 23, 2021. Both programs are competitive and provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

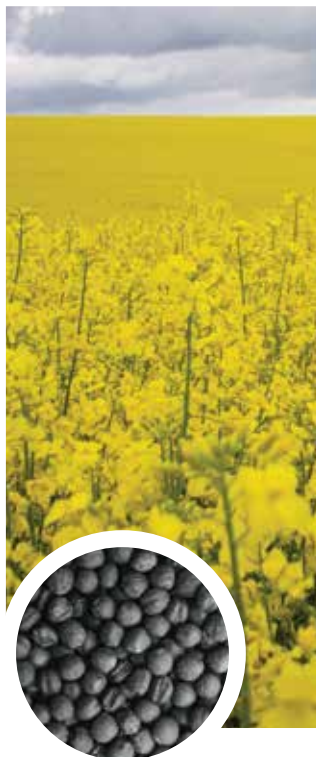
"The Conservation Reserve Program and the many focused programs that come under it, like CRP Grasslands, are some of our most critical tools we have to help producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources," said Richard Fordyce, administrator of USDA's Farm Service Agency. "As one of our nation's largest conservation endeavors, CRP has proved to protect our valuable resources, and next year's sign-up gives our farmers and ranchers an opportunity to enroll for the first time or continue their participation for another term."

For more information on CRP, visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA county office. ■

How are we doing?

Like something you read in *Wheat Life*? Disagree with something you read in *Wheat Life*? Let us know by emailing your comments and suggestions to editor@wawg.org or mail them to 109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, Wash., 99169-2394. Please keep submissions less than 350 words. Submissions may be edited for length. ■

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POLICY MATTERS

2021 Legislative Session goes almost entirely virtual

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

On Jan. 11, 2021, the Washington State Legislature will be back in session, but operating very differently from past years due to the pandemic. For the first time in the state's history, the session will be mostly conducted in a virtual format, and come January, the typically bustling capitol campus will be noticeably quiet and empty. There will be no scheduled events or meetings allowed on the capitol campus as legislative buildings will be closed to the public and most staff. Legislators and staff will mostly be working from home or their district offices and holding meetings virtually. All committee work will be completed through Zoom and aired on TVW with the public testifying remotely.

The 2021 session is scheduled to last 105 days. The primary job of the Legislature will be to pass operating, capital and transportation budgets for 2021-23, and much of the conversation is likely to be dominated by discussions of the impact of COVID-19 and economic recovery.

Democrats continue to control the agenda in Olympia and continue to hold significant majorities. Democrats will control the Senate 29-20 and the House by 57-41. Given the virtual format, democrat leadership in the Senate and House has requested that legislators reduce the number of bills they introduce and focus on the following issues in the upcoming session: racial equity, response to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recovery and climate change.



Ahead of the 2021 Legislative Session, Gov. Inslee unveiled his proposed 2021-23 operating, capital and transportation budgets for the next biennium. The \$57.6 billion operating proposal relies on new revenue including a new capital gains tax and a tax on health insurers. It also relies on tapping all of the state's emergency fund, known as the rainy day fund. In conjunction with his proposed budgets, Gov. Inslee released a slate of policy proposals focusing on climate change and equity.

The governor's proposed budgets are a starting point in budget negotiations. The Senate and House will consider the governor's budget and propose their own respective budgets during the legislative session and ultimately negotiate a final budget before the Legislature adjourns.

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

- **Carbon policies.** Carbon reduction policies will be a main focus in the upcoming session as the governor and Senate and House democrat leadership have listed climate change as one of the few priorities for the upcoming session. 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.
- **Protecting existing tax policy.** Agriculture tax incentives are a valuable benefit to our economy and offer farmers a more level playing field with other major ag production states. WAWG will be vigorously defending ag-

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riculture's ability to create jobs and compete in world markets by maintaining existing, agriculture-based tax incentives.

- **Pesticide safety.** Access to pesticides is essential to keeping Washington agriculture productive and globally competitive, and proper training is essential for keeping workers and neighbors safe during pesticide use. WAWG supports paying reasonable pesticide registration and licensing fees to maintain a robust pesticide safety program.
- **Protecting agriculture from liability for being in compliance with state statute.** WAWG is considering legislation clarifying the scope of the recent Washington State Supreme Court case (*Martinez-Cuevas, et al. v. DeRuyter Brothers Dairy*) requiring dairy workers to be paid overtime and overturning a state law in place since 1959 that exempted all agriculture from paying overtime. WAWG opposes agriculture having retroactive liability for payment of overtime wages when state law did not require such payment at the time. Without the Supreme Court clarifying their recent decision or a legislative fix, Washington farmers could face significant uncertainty and potentially devastating financial consequences for their past compliance with the overtime statute.

Due to the virtual form of the session, WAWG will not be holding their annual Olympia Days in January in person, but will instead meet with legislators virtually throughout the session to educate members about the issues of importance to the agricultural community.

See page 22 for more about WAWG's 2021 state and federal priorities. ■

Governor releases climate proposals for 2021 session

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

In mid-December, Gov. Inslee laid out his climate policy package for the new biennium. The proposals are intended to move the state closer to the state's greenhouse gas limits that were updated last session. In his announcement, the governor focused on passing the Climate Commitment Act, which would implement a cap-and-trade program. Essentially, the legislation would cap greenhouse gas emissions for the largest emitting industries and authorize the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to administer a program that confirms industries comply with the cap through accounting for greenhouse gas al-

Schoesler steps down as Senate minority leader

Sen. Mark Schoesler, a Washington state legislator and a fifth-generation Ritzville wheat grower, announced last month that he would be stepping down as Senate minority leader after eight years of leading Senate republicans. He was recently re-elected with more than 65 percent of the votes in the 9th Legislative District, which covers all or parts of Adams, Asotin, Franklin, Garfield, Spokane and Whitman counties.



In interviews, Schoesler said he is stepping down in order to spend more time with his family and his farm. He will continue to serve on the Senate Ways and Means Committee as well as the Senate Labor, Commerce and Tribal Affairs Committee.

Sen. John Braun (R-Centralia) was chosen by Republicans as the new Senate minority leader. ■

lowances. In turn, funds collected from the sale of allowances would be used for investments in clean transportation, climate resilience efforts, clean energy endeavors and emissions reduction projects. In addition, the governor is proposing implementation of a low carbon fuel standard. Some budget highlights from the governor's released climate package include:

- \$12.6 million to implement the Climate Commitment Act (setting up a cap and trade system);
- \$66 million to provide clean energy retrofits to over 200 public buildings;
- \$55 million to weatherize 7,000 homes of low-income families in Washington state;
- \$20 million for clean building projects to shift from fossil fuels to high-efficiency electric heat pumps and other electric equipment;
- \$318 million in investments toward ferry electrification efforts over four years, including funds for the second electric ferry conversion;
- \$2.85 million for Ecology to implement a low carbon fuel standard;

- \$100 million in projects that incorporate the development, demonstration and deployment of clean energy technologies including grid modernization projects; research and development of new clean energy technologies; projects to electrify the transportation system; grants to nonprofit lenders providing loans for clean-energy technologies; dairy digester bioenergy projects targeting rural communities in our state; and decarbonizing the maritime sector, including work to decarbonize ports and add charging and refueling infrastructure.

More details about the governor's proposed climate change plan can be found at ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/budget/statebudget/highlights/budget21/ClimateBrief-Dec2020.pdf. ■

Chapman chosen as House ag chair

Rep. Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles) has been chosen to chair the Washington State House Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, replacing Rep. Brian Blake (D-Aberdeen) who lost his bid for re-election in November.

"It's an honor to follow in the footsteps of the previous chair, Rep. Brian Blake," Chapman said.

"Whatever we accomplish in this committee will only build on the good work he did along with the members of the committee from both parties and every corner of the state. We work hard because the



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people we're fighting for—in farming, logging, or fishing—work even harder, day after day.”

Chapman previously served as vice chair of the committee and as a county commissioner.

“Rural areas got hit the hardest by the virus,” he said. “Small businesses are hurting, and working moms and dads are struggling to find child care—or to work from home while they have students trying to learn from home, often without fast internet. Those are some of the everyday, kitchen-table issues that we need to come together on, as Democrats and Republicans, in a spirit of bipartisanship.” ■

NAWG congratulates Vilsack on nomination as ag secretary

Last month, President-elect Joe Biden announced his intention to nominate former Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** to assume the role of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary under the Biden-Harris Administration. Vilsack is the current president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council.



“The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) congratulates former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for being nominated to serve under the Biden-Harris Administration as secretary for the USDA. We look forward to working again with former Secretary Vilsack and are ready to engage with any new staff at USDA,” said Dave Milligan, NAWG president and a wheat farmer from Cass City, Mich. “Former Secretary Vilsack’s understanding of policies important to wheat will be critical as the department continues work to address the many economic challenges facing farmers across the country. Previously, his willingness to meet and listen to stakeholders as the USDA develops programs and regulations was key. Former Secretary Vilsack’s wealth of experience and his knowledge of agriculture are important attributes for this role.” ■

Wheat industry applauds GSA reauthorization

Last month, President Trump signed into law the United States Grain Standards Reauthorization Act (GSA) of 2020,

S. 4054, through Sept. 30, 2025. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives in early December, while the Senate passed it in November.

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) applauds both the House and Senate for their bipartisan work to move the bill forward and reauthorize the GSA. NAWG and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) have worked collaboratively over the last year and a half to identify priorities for the reauthorization process, given the critical importance of the U.S.’s weighing and inspection system to our competitiveness in the world market.

“With our farmers facing tough economic challenges, including several years of low commodity prices and headwinds blowing against overseas demand, it is critically important that we at least maintain a smooth grain inspection system. We applaud Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate for working together to get this piece of legislation passed by the end of the year,” said Dave Milligan, NAWG president and a farmer from Cass City, Mich.

“This law and our system of standardized, independent grain inspection makes U.S. wheat more valuable,” said USW Chairman Darren Padgett, a wheat farmer from Grass Valley, Ore. “The proof of that came this year when many of our overseas buyers expressed a real concern that the pandemic would interrupt our supply chain and FGIS (Federal Grain Inspection Service) inspections.”

The Grain Standards Act serves a critical role in exporting grains and oilseeds, including U.S. wheat, of which about 50 percent is exported each year. The grain inspection system assures overseas buyers that an independent agency has certified shipments to their contracted specifications. This objective certification adds a competitive advantage to U.S. wheat and other commodities that helps maintain and grow export markets. ■

NAWG sends letter to incoming Biden administration

Last month, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) issued a letter to the Biden-Harris transition team which introduced NAWG, outlined pending policy issues needing immediate attention for the upcoming administration and provided a primer on the wheat industry.

“With inauguration quickly approaching, NAWG is seizing the opportunity to make the new administration aware of its policy positions for the next four years and current issues facing wheat farmers,” said Dave Milligan, NAWG president and Cass City, Mich., wheat farmer.

"In its communication to the transition team, NAWG discussed the vital role farm support programs, like the federal crop insurance program, play in protecting the livelihoods of farmers when a disaster strikes. NAWG also touched on how wheat contributes to a healthy diet and the work wheat farmers are doing to end hunger at home and abroad."

The letter also stressed that as Congress and the administration look to address climate change policy and engagement, the impacts to farmers need to be factored in for any policies that are developed. To see a list of NAWG's priorities for the upcoming year, see story page 24.

The letter can be found at wheatworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Letter-NAWG-to-Biden-Harris-Transition-Team-FINAL-12-15-20.pdf. ■

Growers congratulate McMorris Rodgers on key appointment

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) congratulates Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers

(R-Wash.) for her recent selection as the Republican leader of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

"Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers has been a steadfast advocate of the farmers and ranchers of Eastern Washington. She has fought to make sure the agricultural community remains strong and vibrant by supporting the lower Snake River dams, which not only allow us to transport our product to overseas markets, but also provide a source of clean, reliable and affordable energy," said Ryan Poe, president of WAWG and a farmer from Hartline, Wash. "She has honorably served in previous leadership roles to advocate for rural healthcare needs, access to jobs, connection through technology and more. It is comforting to know that someone like Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers, who understands agriculture and the economic and energy needs facing rural America, is representing our industry and region in such an important Congressional committee." ■



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NORTH BY NORTHWEST SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUTREACH UPDATE

We're just coming off of holiday cookie season! In order to prep for the holidays and encourage at-home baking, we launched the holiday cookie showdown as an organic way to gain engagement in the second half of December. It played incredibly well, especially on Instagram, which is the platform we are working to grow.

We've continued to perform well on Facebook and are growing on Instagram. We earned 135 new followers in the month of November. The holidays were filled with more positive consumer information, as well as myth busting.

For Thanksgiving, we built an ad centered around the importance of crust! It was the top performing piece of the month. It gained more than 16,500 impressions. It also garnered some good comments and opportunities to address the issues of glyphosate and GMOs. Partner videos from the Washington Grain Commission and Washington Grown were highlighted as well.

We are still hard at work developing videos featuring kids baking, Centennial farms, the Wheat Quality Lab and the new Barley Quality Facility in Pullman, Wash.

As for the website, the majority of visitors are from the greater Seattle area, and most people are using their desktops to view the site. We spent time cleaning up the page, adding a Wheat Facts tab and preparing it for Google optimization, which is the top search engine used by visitors.

NWF ANNOUNCES WINNERS FOR THE 2020 WHEAT YIELD CONTEST

The National Wheat Foundation's (NWF) National Wheat Yield Contest (NWYC) offers growers the opportunity to compete with farmers from across the U.S. and improve their production practices through new and innovative techniques. In November, the NWF announced the national winners for the 2020 National Wheat Yield Contest.

"This year, the foundation is awarding four bin buster winners, one from each of the four categories: winter wheat dryland and irrigated and spring wheat dryland and irrigated," stated Foundation Board President David Cleavinger. "COVID-19 created many setbacks for growers across the country. It is exciting to see that it did not prevent wheat farmers from participating in this year's contest."

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

"NWF would like to thank each grower for enrolling in the NWYC and thank our sponsors for helping to make the contest available to wheat growers in the U.S. Entries for the contest continue to be on an uphill trend, and this year, we received a record-breaking 418 total entries, up from 397 last year," continued Cleavinger.

The full list of winners is posted at wheatfoundation.org. ■



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Despite restrictions, advocacy goes on

This year's issues look familiar, but how the wheat industry connects with legislators won't

In 2021, how the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is going to advocate for the wheat industry might look different than in years past, but what they will be advocating for (or against) will be familiar.

Last month, the Washington State House and Senate announced they will be conducting the 2021 Legislative Session remotely, and all legislative offices in Olympia will be closed to visitors. Most federal offices in Washington, D.C., are also closed to visitors. According to Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG, the association is mapping out a federal and state strategy that will allow advocacy activities to continue while still observing social distancing guidelines and meeting requirements.

"We will likely be doing most of our legislative activities virtually, especially at the state level," Hennings said. "While meeting remotely isn't ideal, it will still allow us to establish relationships with lawmakers and agency directors and give us the opportunity to explain the importance of agriculture and how certain issues are affecting us, especially to freshman legislators who maybe aren't as familiar with the wheat industry and our issues."

One positive aspect of a remote "visit" to Olympia, is that WAWG members will be able to meet with more legislators than they generally can during their normal, two-day visit to the west side. Another positive is that because all testimony during committee meetings will also be done remotely, wheat growers won't have to travel far to make their voices heard. For a preview of the upcoming state 2021 Legislative Session, see page 14.

"At the state level, we'll be monitoring proposed carbon policies, pesticide regulations and overtime requirements

in agriculture. This legislative session is going to be challenging, especially with the budget deficit," Hennings said. "At the federal level, we are starting to prepare for the next farm bill. We know that climate-related policies are going to be a major topic of discussion in Congress, and, of course, trade is always a major priority. We'll be working with our national organization, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), to make sure that wheat growers are involved in any policy discussions."

At the state level, here are some of the issues WAWG will be monitoring in 2021:

CARBON TAX OR A LOW CARBON FUEL STANDARD. Over the past several years, carbon-related legislation has made the rounds through Olympia but failed to pass both legislative chambers or been rejected at the ballot box by voters. With a projected \$2.5 billion budget deficit over the next five years, however, state legislators will be looking for ways to increase revenue, and a tax on carbon or a low carbon fuel standard is likely to be on the legislative menu.

WAWG opposes any state legislation and regulation pertaining to greenhouse gases that are economically disruptive, such as cap and trade, carbon tax or a low carbon fuel standard, without being a full partner in the development of such a policy or legislation. WAWG believes that any legislation that is market-based legislation needs to be fair, affordable and achievable using the best scientific information. Furthermore, any such legislation should not make wheat growers less competitive in the global market or add undue costs to growers.

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Supreme Court ruling that dairy workers are not exempt from overtime pay is still reverberating throughout the state's ag industry. Currently, it is still unknown if this ruling will apply to the entire agriculture industry or just to dairy. In addition, the question of whether or not employers will be required to retroactively pay overtime or not is still to be decided. WAWG is part of a coalition of agricultural interests that is working to clarify the ruling and hopefully pursue a legislative fix.

While WAWG supports an employee's right to earn a competitive wage for his or her productive work, the association opposes paying workers overtime retroactively when neither state nor federal law required payment of overtime for agricultural workers.

AGRICULTURAL TAX PREFERENCES. With the Legislature's likely focus this legislative session on budgets and the economy, WAWG is concerned that agriculture's tax preferences will be under fire. Repealing those ag tax preferences, which include a sales tax on pesticides, fertilizers and seed; a tax exemption for off-road or dyed-diesel fuel; and sales tax on repairs and maintenance on farm equipment, could end up costing farmers thousands of dollars more each year.

WAWG opposes any changes to any tax preferences that would be harmful to agriculture. Those tax preferences help Washington agriculture compete in domestic and international marketplaces.

LOWER SNAKE RIVER DAMS. Although the federal government released the final Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in August 2020 that identified a preferred alternative that did not include dam breaching, WAWG doesn't believe the fight to preserve the lower Snake River dams is over. In fact, at least one environmental group has said they intend to file a lawsuit over the EIS, and we anticipate other proponents of dam breaching will follow suit.

WAWG is a member of multiple coalitions that are fighting to protect the lower Snake River dams and educate the public on the important role that the dams play in the Pacific Northwest. WAWG believes that breaching the dams would negatively impact the wheat industry's ability to move grain economically and efficiently to ports in Portland and Vancouver. In addition, the dams provide an abundance of clean, affordable energy through hydropower, an important component of any fight against carbon emissions.

RURAL BROADBAND. If there's one good thing that's come out of the pandemic, it might be the spotlight it has placed on the lack of fast, reliable internet access in many rural areas. WAWG believes investments into rural infrastructure, including internet access, is a critical part of any successful farming operation. As technology continues to play a larger role in agriculture, so does the need to access that data and share it, not to mention communicating with customers and other industry stakeholders both locally and globally.

PESTICIDES. WAWG opposes any efforts, governmental or otherwise, to remove the labels from commonly used agricultural pesticides in the Pacific Northwest. In the past few years, the state ag industry has seen efforts by local and state government to limit access to necessary chemicals or to place undue restrictions on the use of such chemicals. We believe that chemicals inspected by the Environmental Protection Agency

NAWG 2021 priorities

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) is the national lobbying arm of the U.S. wheat industry. Last month, in a letter to the Biden-Harris transition team, NAWG outlined their priorities for 2021:

- Assistance for growers who have experienced significant quality loss from excessive moisture through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus.
- Staffing issues in USDA offices, especially in the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- European Union-imposed tariffs on nondurum wheat as part of the Airbus-Boeing dispute that have effectively shut out wheat purchases and potentially cost U.S. farmers 400,000 metric tons in sales per year—predominantly in hard red spring wheat grown in the upper Midwest.
- Continued enforcement against trade-distorting domestic support policies. In 2019, the U.S. won two World Trade Organization (WTO) cases against China's tariff rate quota (TRQ) scheme and domestic support policies. However, China has yet to fully comply in either case. Additionally, India and other developing countries have been on the same trend of providing trade-distorting subsidies that far exceed WTO commitments.
- NAWG has asked Congress to appropriate \$1 billion in U.S. international food aid programs to help address what the World Food Programme has called "the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II." COVID-19 has compounded hunger at home and abroad, and American farmers have the capacity to help the 265 million people who are facing starvation in 2020. ■

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are safe to use when label requirements are followed. WAWG supports funding for pesticide applicator training programs that educate handlers and applicators on how to use pesticides safely and effectively.

Many of WAWG's state priorities are also present at the federal level, including pesticide regulation, carbon policies and broadband access. Other issues that WAWG will be monitoring at the federal level will include:

CLIMATE CHANGE. WAWG supports recognizing agricultural practices as a benefit to the environment and believes that any policy or regulation regarding conservation practices and technological advancements that aid in the reduction of carbon emissions should be administered through the farm bill or the private sector. The wheat industry should be fully involved in discussions and development of any policy or legislation relating to climate change.

FARM BILL. While negotiations on the next farm bill won't really ramp up for another year or two, WAWG and NAWG will start working on the legislation in 2021, talking to ag committee members and fed-

eral agencies about some of the issues the industry would like to see addressed in the next version of the legislation.

A major farm bill priority for Washington wheat growers is addressing a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) issue that prevented growers in Douglas County from participating in the last two CRP general sign-ups. Under the 2018 Farm Bill, many State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (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. That classification change pushed Douglas County over its limit because it has a large number of SAFE acres for sage grouse.

Another WAWG priority for the next farm bill is an increase in the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program reference price to a level closer to \$6.50 per bushel to truly enable the program to function as an effective safety net for wheat. Currently, the wheat reference price is \$5.50. PLC makes payments to growers



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when the market year average price falls below the reference price.

WAWG is also asking the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to review changes introduced in the last farm bill that discouraged growers from participating in some programs. Those changes include improving software training for agency staff and re-examining extremely stringent requirements for participation in USDA programs, particularly in conservation programs.

TRADE. WAWG supports bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that are favorable to the U.S. wheat industry and opposes any withdrawal from a trade agreement prior to any new trade agreement ratification. ■

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2	Shelley Kloba	D-Kirkland	18	Paul Harris	R-Vancouver	34	Mia Su-Ling Gregerson	D-Seattle
3	Andrew Barkis	R-Lacey	19	Brandon Vick	R-Battle Ground	35	Eileen L. Cody	D-Burien
4	J.T. Wilcox	R-McKenna	20	Larry Hoff	R-Vancouver	36	Joe Fitzgibbon	R-Allyn
5	Marcus Riccelli	D-Spokane	21	Jim Walsh	R-Aberdeen	37	Dan Griffey	R-Union
6	Timm Ormsby	D-Spokane	22	Joel McEntire*	R-Cathlamet	38	Drew C. MacEwen	D-Seattle
7	Bob McCaslin	R-Spokane Valley	23	Peter Abbarno*	R-Centralia	39	Noel Christina Frame	D-Seattle
8	Rob Chase*	R-Liberty Lake	24	Ed Orcutt	R-Kalama	40	Liz Berry*	D-Seattle
9	Bill Ramos	D-Isaiah	25	Strom Peterson	D-Edmonds	41	Sharon Tomiko Santos	D-Seattle
10	Lisa Callan	D-Isaiah	26	Lillian Ortiz-Self	D-Mukilteo	42	Kirsten Harris-Talley*	D-Hillman City
11	Mike Volz	R-Spokane	27	Laurie Dolan	D-Olympia	43	Emily Wicks*	D-Everett
12	Jenny Graham	R-Spokane	28	Jessica Bateman*	D-Olympia	44	Mike Sells	D-Everett
13	Jacquelin Maycumber	R-Republic	29	Tarra Simmons*	D-Bremerton	45	Robert Sutherland	R-Granite Falls
14	Joel Kretz	R-Wauconda	30	Drew Hansen	D-Poulsbo	46	Carolyn Eslick	R-Sultan
15	Brad Klippert	R-Kennewick	31	Mike Chapman	D-Port Angeles	47	Debra Lekanoff	D-Bow
16	Matt Boehnke	R-Kennewick	32	Steve Tharinger	D-Sequim	48	Alex Ramel	D-Bellingham
17	Mary Dye	R-Pomeroy	33	Kelly Chambers	R-Puyallup	49	Tana Senn	D-Mercer Island
18	Joe Schmick	R-Cofax	34	Gynda Jacobsen*	R-Puyallup	50	My-Linh Thai	D-Bellevue
19	Greg Gilday*	R-Camano Island	35	Jesse Young	R-Gig Harbor	51	Alicia Rule*	D-Blaine
20	Bill Bruch	R-La Conner	36	Michelle Caldwell	R-Port Orchard	52	Sharon Shewmake	D-Bellingham
21	David Hackney*	D-Tukwila	37	Laurie Jenkins	D-Tacoma	53	Nicole Macri	D-Seattle
22	Steve Bergquist	D-Renton	38	Jake Fey	D-Tacoma	54	Frank Chopp	D-Seattle
23	Keith Goehner	R-Dryden	39	Mari Leavitt	D-University Place	55	John Lovick	D-Mill Creek
24	Mike Steele	R-Chelan	40	Dan Bronoske*	D-Lakewood	56	April Berg*	D-Mill Creek
25	Tom Dent	R-Moses Lake	41	Melanie Morgan	D-Parkland	57	Roger Goodman	D-Kirkland
26	Alex Ybarra	R-Quincy	42	Steve Kirby	D-Tacoma	58	Larry Springer	D-Kirkland
27	Chris Corry	R-Yakima	43	Jamila Taylor*	D-Federal Way	59	Gerry Pollet	D-Seattle
28	Gina Mosbrucker	R-Goldendale	44	Jesse Johnson	D-Federal Way	60	Javier Valdez	D-Seattle
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32	Skyler Rude	R-Walla Walla	48	Lauren Davis	D-Shoreline	64	Amy Walen	D-Kirkland

*Freshman Representative

Washington State Senators

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Congress in 2021:

U.S. House of Representatives

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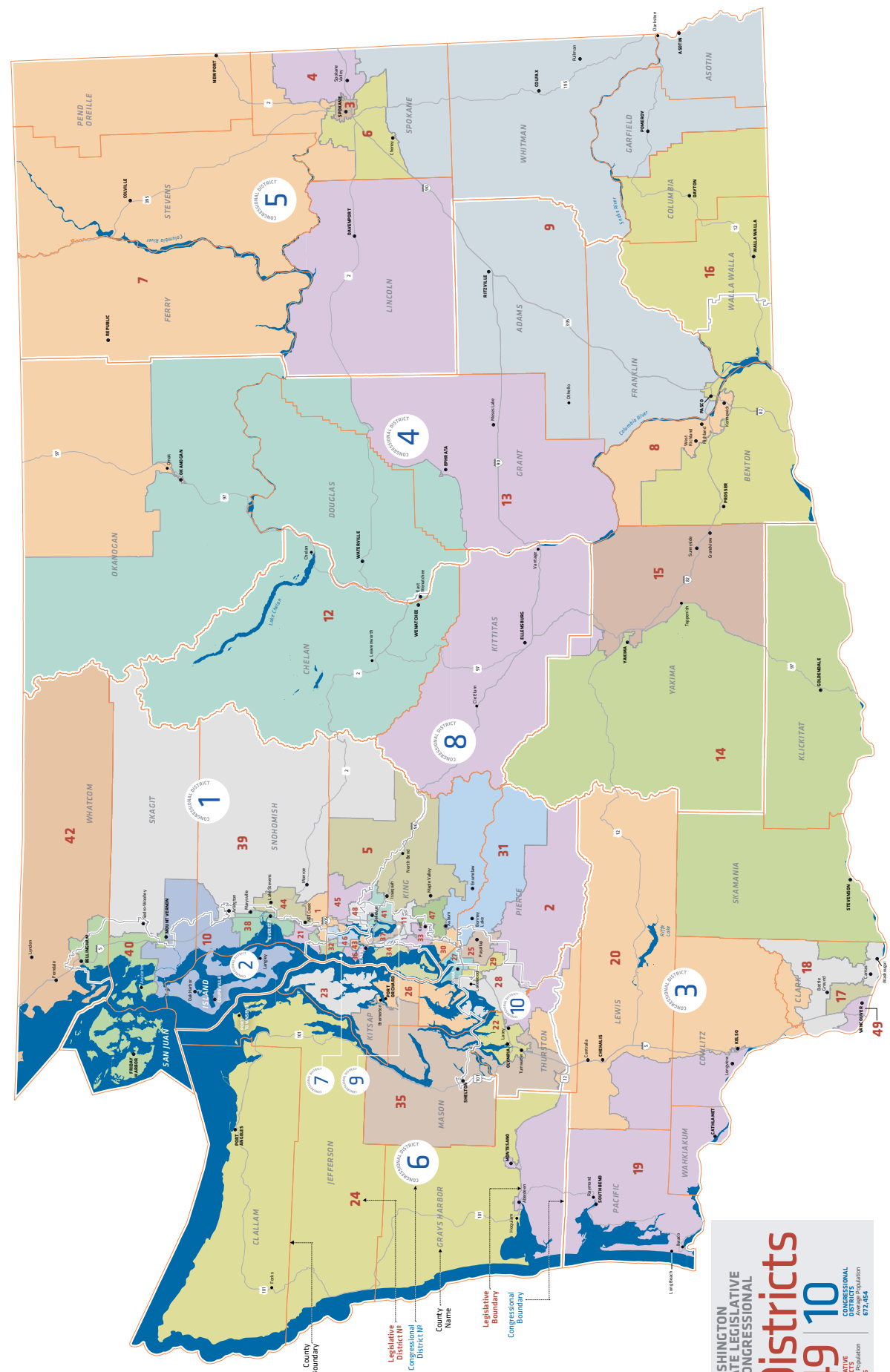


State Legislature in 2021:

State Senate	29(D)	20(R)
State House of Representatives	57(D)	41(R)

7	Shelly Short	R-Addy	23	Christine Roifes	D-Kitsap County	39	Keith L. Wagoner	R-Sedro-Woolley
8	Sharon R. Brown	R-Kennewick	24	Kevin Van De Wege	D-Sequim	40	Elizabeth Lovelett	D-Anacortes
9	Mark Schoester	R-Ritzville	25	Chris Gildon*	D-Puyallup	41	Lisa Wellman	D-Mercer Island
10	Ron Muzzall	R-Oak Harbor	26	Emily Randall	D-Bremerton	42	Doug Erickson	R-Ferndale
11	Bob Hasegawa	D-Seattle	27	Jeanne Darnelle	D-Tacoma	43	Jamie Pedersen	D-Seattle
12	Brad Hawkins	R-E Wenatchee	28	T'wina Nobles*	D-Fircrest	44	Steve Hobbs	D-Lake Stevens
13	Judy Warrick	R-Moses Lake	29	Steve Conway	D-South Tacoma	45	Manka Dhingra	D-Redmond
14	Curtis King	R-Yakima	30	Claire Wilson	D-Federal Way	46	David Frockt	D-Seattle
15	Jim Honeyford	R-Sunnyside	31	Phil Fortunato	R-Auburn	47	Mona Das	D-Covington
16	Perry Dozier*	R-Walla Walla	32	Jesse Salomon	D-Shoreline	48	Patty Kuderer	D-Seattle
						49	Annette Cleveland	D-Vancouver

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A champion for agriculture

PREVIOUS WAWG PRESIDENT, COUNTY COMMISSIONER HEADS TO STATE SENATE

By Trista Crossley

There's a number of past Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) officers who have used their time leading the association as a springboard into politics. **Perry Dozier**, a newly elected state senator from Walla Walla County, is the latest.

Dozier, a republican, is replacing retiring Sen. Maureen Walsh in the 16th Legislative District. He was elected with 59 percent of the vote over his opponent, Danielle Garbe Reser, a democrat. The 16th Legislative District covers Columbia and Walla Walla counties, the southern portion of Benton county and the city of Pasco in Franklin County.

Dozier was WAWG president in 2000/01. He was recruited to go through the WAWG chairs by outgoing President Alex McGregor, who called him one night to ask him if he'd be interested in being an officer in the association. Dozier agreed, maybe a little too quickly, because McGregor called back the next day just to make sure.

"He (McGregor) must have felt a little guilty," Dozier said, laughing. "I tell you without a doubt, though, when I got interested in politics was when I was elected to the chairs of the wheat growers. Getting that opportunity to represent the wheat industry and to do it at the state and federal level. Going in and visiting your elected leaders... it's kind of where it began."

After his time on the WAWG board, Dozier served as a barley commissioner for two years. His next step into the political arena was to run as a Walla Walla County Commissioner. He served two terms, 2009-2016. It was that county commissioner experience that pushed him into running for a state office.

"As a county commissioner, you get a pretty broad and diverse knowledge of all the aspects of what happens at the federal and state level, especially, and how decisions affect us. With the skill set I've gained over 20 years representing this district and city, I felt I had the tools to go over to Olympia and be effective and be a voice for the people of Eastern Washington," he said.

Dozier will serve as ranking member on the Business, Financial Services and Trade Committee as well as a member on the Early Learning and K-12 Education and the Human Services, Reentry and Rehabilitation committees.

"When I was elected (as county commissioner), it was during a time of recession," he explained. "I learned quite a bit about budgeting on the government side and working through a downturn economy and doing it without raising taxes."



Budgets and the economy are sure to be two of the major topics the state Legislature will be dealing with during the upcoming legislative session. Dozier is concerned that small businesses won't survive the latest round of shut-downs ordered by Gov. Jay Inslee and that the pressure of increased payroll taxes on small businesses will have a factor in their recovery.

"You can't tax yourself out of a bad financial situation, and I'm afraid that's what the Democrats are looking at doing. I've heard lots of proposals about huge tax increases," he said. Other issues that Dozier is concerned about include a carbon tax or a low carbon fuel standard; water issues, especially for irrigators; sales tax exemptions for ag replacement parts; and the recent state Supreme Court decision that overturned the ag overtime exemption for dairy workers.

The 2021 Washington State Legislative Session will be new to Dozier in another way—it's shaping up to be a mostly virtual session. He is concerned that will make it difficult to conduct business. While he will have office space at the capital, he won't be able to have visitors.

"I was looking so forward to this. If I won this election, I'd get to visit with you guys in a different capacity," he said, referring to the visits WAWG makes to Olympia every year to discuss issues and concerns with legislators. "I miss being involved in WAWG after being a part of it 20 years ago. I'm disappointed. I feel like these high school or college kids who were supposed to graduate during

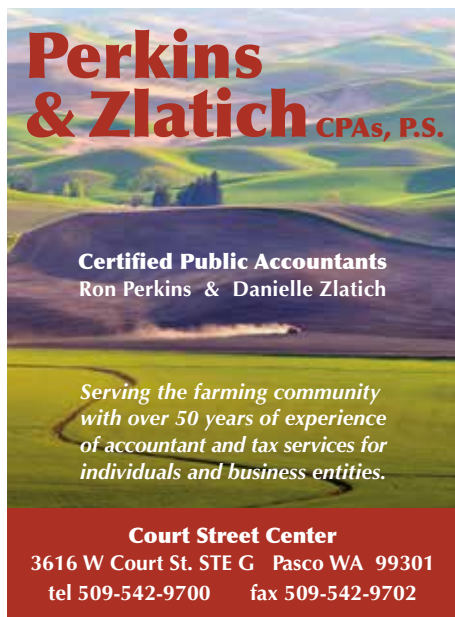
COVID. My family can't even go in when I'm sworn in."

Dozier and his wife, Darleen, have two sons who graduated from Washington State University, neither of which are employed on the family's farm. The Doziers grow wheat, both irrigated and dryland, as well as irrigated seed corn and legumes. He joked about trying to campaign while still working on the farm.

"I think I was the last one to finish seeding (winter wheat)," he laughed.

With his experience lobbying for WAWG and his county commissioner service, Dozier said he has a deep understanding of how the legislative process works, and thanks to his agriculture background, he has the knowledge to address issues important to the state's agricultural industry.

"I will be a strong voice over there (Olympia) and will fight for our issues," he said. ■



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WALLA WALLA GROWER'S BACKGROUND WILL COME IN HANDY AS A STATE REPRESENTATIVE

By Trista Crossley

Mark Klicker's agricultural experience is as diverse as his family's history of raising crops, and he's planning on taking that experience and putting it to work as a newly elected state representative for the 16th Legislative District.

"If we don't step up, we are going to lose this country," he explained, referring to a rural America that includes smaller urban areas like Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities. "It's important that we get involved. I believe if I can find ways of working in collaboration with both sides of the aisle, we can find solutions. That's what we need to do. We need to bring people together."

The Klickers go back four generations in Walla Walla County. Along the way, they've raised wheat, cattle, alfalfa, strawberries and cherries, among other things. Klicker, a republican, currently owns a forest management business that looks after his family's timberland, as well as some of his neighbors' land, and is a licensed realtor. He's also spent 16 years as a regional field director for the Washington Farm Bureau. He defeated his democratic opponent, Frances Chvatal, with 63.5 percent of the vote, for the seat previously held by Rep. Bill Jenkin. The 16th Legislative District covers Columbia and Walla Walla counties, the southern portion of Benton county and the city of Pasco in Franklin County.

Klicker's main focus going into his first legislative session is business recovery, especially for small businesses, which includes agriculture.

"We have to help small businesses, because they are taking a hit," he explained. "We are looking now to see what we can do for small business in tax incentives, cost sharing or grants, something that will help them. As we speak, I'm trying to put a bill together...I'm coming out of the box as explosively as I can."

He believes this session will be all about the budget and is concerned that other legislators will look at raising taxes as a way to help balance the budget. He said he's heard whispers about possible increases in the B&O tax, a carbon tax and a capital gains tax.

"We have to create tax incentives so businesses and people can go back to work and generate revenue," he said. "If we tax and nobody is in business or is not employed, that will only create more problems for us."

Klicker is hoping to be named to the House Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee where he can use his farm bureau legislative



experience, as well as his committee and board member experience that includes land-use planning, watershed planning and growth management work.

The pandemic has not only brought budget issues to the forefront of the upcoming legislative session, it's also caused House leaders to turn the session into a virtual one. Klicker is concerned that that decision will put rural legislators at a disadvantage. He predicted that a broadband bill will make an appearance this session as legislators discover just how hard it is to get reliable internet in some parts of the state.

"For a large part of our legislators in Eastern Washington, the broadband just isn't there. What's going to happen when you have a legislator that gets thrown off (a meeting) because their internet speed is so slow and can't keep up? Are they now out of it, and will there be a vote they can't be on?" he asked. "I really believe we aren't going to be able to operate correctly to get our voice and our opinions and arguments out because the session is virtual."

Technological issues aside, Klicker also believes that being able to meet face to face with legislators on both sides of the aisle is how consensus is built and common ground is found.

"That's where you start sprouting new ideas," he said. "I enjoy being at home, that's where family is, but I didn't take this position just to sit around at home and eat bon bons. I want to get to work." ■

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JAN 26

WHAT'S BEHIND SEED TREATMENT • WEBINAR

Speaker: Syngenta

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. PST

JAN 29

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF YIELD • WEBINAR

Speaker: Peter Johnson aka Wheat Pete

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PST

FEB 8

STRATEGIC COMMODITY MARKETING • WEBINAR

Speakers: Randy Fortenbery, Washington State University

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PST

FEB 11

WHEAT LIES AHEAD FOR AG POLICY IN DC: AN UPDATE FROM NAWG • WEBINAR

Speaker: National Association of Wheat Growers

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST

FEB 16

AMERICA ON THE EDGE • WEBINAR

Speaker: Peter Zeihan

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. PST

FEB 18

WHEAT 101: WHAT'S NEW IN 2021 • IN-PERSON

Speaker: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST

FEB 23

WEATHER RISK IN WHEAT PRODUCTION – AN OUTLOOK FOR 2021 • IN-PERSON

Speaker: Eric Snodgrass

Location: Spokane, WA

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PST

JUN 15

WHEAT COLLEGE • IN-PERSON

Speaker: Peter Johnson aka Wheat Pete in coordination with Corteva Agriscience

Location: Ritzville, WA

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

For more information:

1.877.740.2666

Email: lori@wawg.org

Web: wawg.org/ammo-workshops

Meeting restrictions are being monitored. Should a session need to convert to a webinar format due to travel restrictions, watch for updates from WAWG. Webinars and Wheat College are free of charge. Other in-person sessions are free to WAWG members. Non-members are welcome at \$25. Lunch included at any in-person session.



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AMMO RECAP

Workshop focuses on the future of ag

By Trista Crossley

As promised, **Damian Mason** found a way to have fun while addressing some serious topics last month at the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's (AMMO) first workshop in the 2020/21 winter schedule.

More than 45 growers, landlords and industry stakeholders joined a Zoom call to listen to Mason talk about the business of agriculture, and what he sees in the industry's future.

"The industry of agriculture is the world's most important industry. It's the foundation of all societal advancements. There's no Silicon Valley without the San Joaquin Valley," he said. "The cobbler couldn't make shoes for somebody until somebody made food for the cobbler."

Farmers sometimes forget, Mason said, that agriculture is a consumer business, and all businesses work for other people's money. He told listeners that despite the oft-repeated mantra that farmers "need to educate the consumer," consumers may not want to be educated. After all, he pointed out, does Ford think they need to teach you how they build a truck in order for you to buy it?

"I think we get that wrong sometimes," he said. "We are not self-employed. We work for customers. It's important to understand that. Our consumer increasingly wants a food that helps them tell a story. That's why they buy what they buy. It means something to them. Everything we do needs to come back to the consumer feeling good about it."

Statistics say that only 1 to 2 percent of the U.S. population is involved in agriculture. As Mason pointed out, that's about 3.2 million farmers on 2 million farms. However, the numbers are a little deceiving, because 58 percent of those farms don't market more than \$10,000 worth of products a year. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 105,453 farms sold 75 percent of the nation's crop revenue. Mason predicts we'll see a decrease in the number of those top producers.

"We are going to see that top level of commodity producers get bigger (in terms of operation). We are going to see commodity production continue to be about scale and production," he said. "In the future, I think we will see more contractual production. If it happened in poultry and pork, why not for everything else? Contractual arrangements are going to increase because of capital requirements."

Mason also predicts that there will be more government



involvement in agriculture in the future, especially as a push to move marginal land into conservation programs. He thinks it is likely farmers will be incentivized to implement practices that increase carbon sequestration.

"Agriculture is squarely in the crosshairs of Biden's policy," he said. "Hopefully, we will see an increase in conservation funding and incentives to plant cover crops. That's a good thing for fields with a lot of slope. I'm hoping we don't see heavy-handed government regulations that dictate what we can produce and how we can produce it."

More environmentalism is also on Mason's future radar. He said that behind all the activists is what he calls the "conflict industry," meaning those organizations that make money, mostly through fundraisers, by opposing something. Going hand-in-hand with the conflict industry is a likely increase in lawsuits, such as the recent Roundup lawsuit that Bayer AG settled for almost \$11 billion.

Mason sees an agricultural future that is autonomous. He predicts a time when drones or small machines with a 50-gallon sprayer roam through (or over) fields doing targeted chemical sprays for weeds and pests, and tractors are smaller and self-driving. He also sees a switch from farmers owning their own equipment to renting it when needed or sharing ownership within a group. All those changes could shake up the ag equipment industry. ▶

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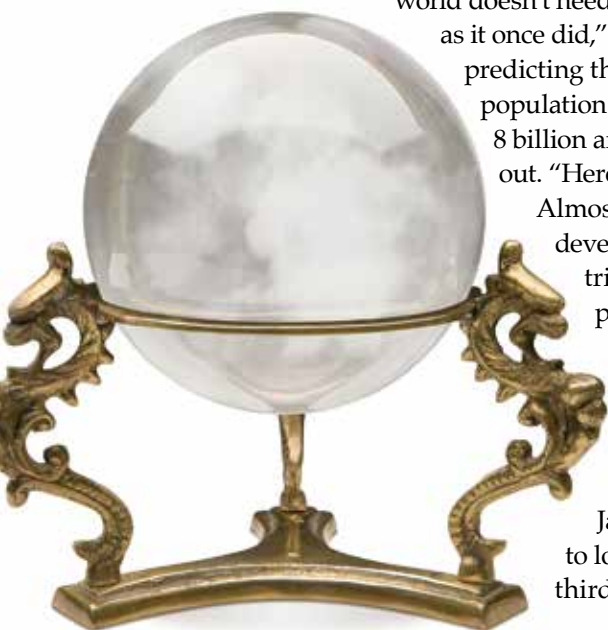
"I think equipment needs to get smaller. Combines don't fit down the road in my part of the world (Mason lives in Indiana). They exceed weight limits on bridges. Machines also pack down the soil. Your most valuable asset is soil, so why are you beating the hell out of it with a tractor that weighs 30 tons, because squished dirt is not good for productivity," he said.

As far as future trends go, Mason believes the gluten-free craze is slowly dying down. He also believes that the increase in home baking we've seen since early last year won't be a long-term trend that replaces wheat consumption in restaurants. He also thinks consumers will eventually prefer products they see as "natural," meaning fake meat has an uphill climb.

"If I had to sell wheat, I would push the idea that it has been around since ancient humans," he explained. "Wheat is natural. Wheat is good. It has nourished people for thousands of years. Not fake meat. The only thing they have to sell is environmentalism."

Mason also touched on the economics of farming, saying that in some cases, the land itself is starting to be worth more than the value of the crops grown on it. He explained that for the first time in several decades, outdoor recreation has been increasing, and recreational and rural property is in demand. In addition, the internet and the food movement have created heirloom and niche markets that a small-scale farmer with 80 acres could take advantage of. He sees a growing interest in grass-fed meat and thinks farmers will start growing less familiar crops, such as quinoa, kale, sorghum, hemp and Kernza (a type of perennial wheat).

"We love to say we feed the world. We've been saying this for as long as I've even around. The problem is, the world doesn't need fed as badly as it once did," Mason said, predicting that the world's population is going to hit 8 billion and then level out. "Here's the deal. Almost all of the developed countries are losing population right now. China is in a declining birth rate right now. Japan is going to lose almost a third of its popu-

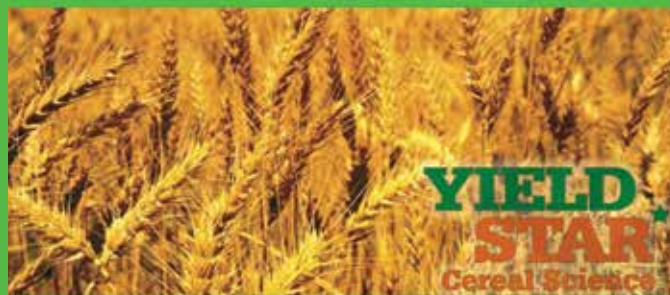


lation in the next 20 years because they are very old and do not breed. We've got to get past the mindset of more humans and more mouths to feed."

The next AMMO workshop, What's Behind Seed Treatment, is scheduled for Jan. 26, 2021, and will be presented by Syngenta as a webinar. Visit our website at wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ to register. ■

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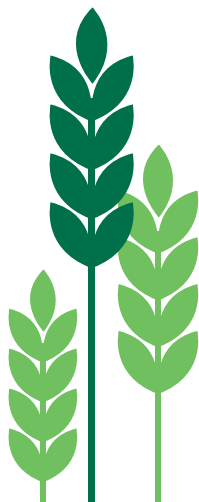
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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



Anyone who has seen a wheat crop during the growing season knows there are various stages of growth that plants go through when they move toward harvest. During my tenure on the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), and particularly the last three years as chairman, I too have made a similar transition.

What drew my interest in serving on the commission in the first place was my curiosity to know more about what happens to our wheat after it leaves the farm. Today, as I write my last column as chairman, I have a much deeper appreciation for the journey of our crop. The knowledge I've drawn from the opportunity to travel overseas has surpassed my wildest imagination. Still, when it comes to understanding the full breadth of the wheat industry, there's much more to learn.

Looking back over the 30-plus columns I've written over three years, I'm struck by their diversity. Little did I know when I started how much there was to write about! A few subjects merited repetition including dams and trade, but most of the columns written were one-offs, addressing subjects as diverse as the falling number phenomenon, the WGC's 60th anniversary, the Census of Agriculture, the importance of landlords, barley's future and the fallout from COVID-19, among others.

It's true that Washington's small grains industry faces many challenges, but in my tenure as chairman, I've seen many successes. Negotiation of the U.S./Japan bilateral trade agreement was an enormous relief, and the release of the final environmental impact statement on the lower Snake River that protected its four dams represented a huge win for all of agriculture.

Although I have served on other boards during my career, the WGC's board is the most structured and professional. That is reflected in the caliber of my fellow commissioners, as well as the organization's staff. The fact that we all respect each other and bring such varied experience to our roles is another plus.

I'll admit, however, that the transition from meeting in person to meeting virtually has been a challenge. I think I can speak for all 10 of us on the board when I say we look forward to meeting again in person. In the meantime, the work of the commission continues in the virtual realm.

But it hasn't all been work. In my case, the WGC's 60th anniversary celebrations when I traveled through several countries will remain a highlight of my life. One of my

duties on the trip was to give a short "thank you" speech, which is out of my comfort zone. But with practice, I got better and more comfortable day by day. The experience was a great relationship-building activity along with the celebration events. It was fun seeing our soft white wheat flour turned into beautiful cakes made by young bakers from foreign cultures. It really made the connection back to the work we do on our farms.

It is hard to imagine that anyone among us doesn't look forward to the end of 2020 and the promise of 2021. Since last March, COVID-19 has upset numerous apple carts, and it will be a long climb back to business as usual. At the same time, however, the pandemic revealed the strength of our food chain.

Farmers, country elevators, transportation workers, export companies and grain inspection services were all considered essential workers, making sure our commodities were shipped without interruption. Can you imagine the catastrophe that would have occurred if any link of this chain was broken by the pandemic? To date, the system has performed flawlessly.

I'm particularly grateful to the staff of the grain commission who continue their efforts to ensure our overseas customers have access to the information and infrastructure they need to buy our wheat with confidence. Although I would never wish for a pandemic, it is worth noting that many of the virtual meeting formats that have been developed in response to COVID-19 will continue into the virus-free future, making the WGC even more effective in its mission.

Looking back, it is hard to believe how much I have learned in the four years since I replaced Randy Suess as the Whitman County representative on the WGC. Thanks to my time serving on the board, I have cultivated a whole new appreciation and understanding of wheat's journey from varietal development, to planting and on to final use in mills and bakeries overseas. I suspect I will never know everything there is to know about wheat, but thanks to the opportunity to serve on the WGC, I'm that much closer to harvest.

Next month's column will be penned by a new chairman, as officers will rotate in January. It has been a pleasure to serve the wheat farmers and landlords who make the WGC and its activities possible. Thank you for your support. I wish everyone a happy—and COVID-free—New Year. ■

It's getting better all the time

ARRON CARTER STARTS SECOND DECADE AS WSU WINTER WHEAT BREEDER



By Scott A. Yates

Asked what he's come to love about being Washington State University's (WSU) winter wheat breeder after a decade on the job, **Arron Carter** said his interaction with growers and getting to know them and their concerns is at the top of the list.

"It is really rewarding for me to be able to work with farmers to find the problem and then to develop a product to solve that problem. That is a part of the job I really love," he said.

As for something he doesn't love, cutting head rows by hand in the heat of the summer is right up there.

"That is a job I don't know I'll ever fall in love with. It's in the hottest part of the year, and you get all nasty and dirty out there. But there's not many things I don't love about the job," he said.

Carter said his decade of experience has not only given him a more complete understanding of the process of plant breeding, he now knows much better how everything fits together.

"Over time, you learn the process and how it works, from making a cross to developing a cultivar, and how it all fits into the entire system. And, of course, with additional time in the game of making selections, I understand what is important and what isn't, where to focus my time, and what technologies are going to be useful to make me more effective, some of which is just trial and error," he said.

Although a private company did ask Carter whether he was interested in jumping ship during his time at WSU, he said a university environment suits him.

"I definitely enjoy being at the public institution. One of the big things for me is recognizing the great mentors I had that got me where I am with my education and paying that forward. Training new graduate students

and having that teaching component is something I really enjoy," he said.

In 2016, Carter and WSU spring wheat breeder Mike Pumphrey were named co-chairs of the Vogel Endowed Chair in Wheat Breeding and Genetics, an endowment created by the Washington Grain Commission, which provides additional funding to their programs.

"Building on the legacy of Dr. Vogel and all the other wheat breeders that came before, to follow in their footsteps and build upon their legacy is a great honor," he said, explaining that Vogel funds allow his program to bring in new technologies to become more effective, including such things as drones, high throughput phenotyping and work with genomic selection to make predictions for different traits.

Although the Washington Grain Commission earmarked \$527,000 to Carter's program in the 2020/21 budget year, he estimates that on an annual basis, funding support, including WSU's contribution of salaries; office; lab and greenhouse space; vehicles; and federal money, the figure is closer to \$1.2 to \$1.5 million. That spans everything from the breeding program to the graduate students assisting in the research. As to whether that's enough, Carter said he's satisfied, but indicated if he had more, that would allow additional trial locations because "the more data we can get back the better we are." ■

210 podcast episodes later

Wheat All About It! ceases new episodes

After four years and 210 episodes, the Washington Grain Commission-sponsored Wheat All About It! podcast posted its last new show Dec. 29, 2020.

Beginning in January 2017, the podcast, hosted by Scott Yates, Washington Grain Commission (WGC) director of communications and producer relations, covered an array of farming and rural life topics. New episodes were posted every week. By its end, the podcast was averaging about a 1,000 listens a month and had nearly 50,000 listens since the first episode was released.

Yates called the podcast a labor of love and said the fact that he made four years' worth of weekly deadlines without missing one was his badge of honor. He expressed immense gratitude to all of his listeners. He was especially indebted to the dozens of farmers, researchers, agribusiness operatives and others who shared their insights during the podcast run.

Glen Squires, CEO of the WGC, made it clear it was Yates' decision to cease producing new podcasts, but he understood the desire to tackle new challenges.

"I will miss listening to new podcasts myself because I always learned so much," Squires said, adding that as a result of the podcast, the WGC was seen around the nation as having one of the wheat industry's most innovative communications programs.

"In my role as CEO, I have put a lot of effort into what I call constituent outreach, that is, connecting with the farmers and landlords who provide the assessments that allow the commission to do its work. Wheat All About It! has been a wonderful accompaniment to that effort," he said. Wheat All About It! was also a connection with customers overseas, especially with COVID-19 restrictions on travel.

Said Squires, "U.S. Wheat Associates often plugged Scott's podcasts in their various communication outreach efforts when a topic pertained to something our customers would find interesting. And during COVID-19 restrictions, Scott put together two podcasts with a Japanese milling audience in mind when they couldn't travel to the U.S. in person."



Yates, who was a journalist for 27 years, 22 of those years as an agricultural reporter before joining the WGC 13 years ago, said he felt the podcast was the best thing he has ever done in terms of providing unfiltered information to an audience.

"When I began the podcast, I was struck by the power of people telling their story directly to an audience, without having their accounts filtered through a reporter. I only hope that as broadband becomes more widespread in the countryside, other podcasters will use the medium to tell new stories about farmers, not to mention researchers, agribusinesses and consumers," he said.

The 210 episodes available at the end of December will continue to be housed on the WGC website for the foreseeable future. The list of podcasts is searchable by topic, and Yates said most are as relevant today as when they were first posted.

"There's hundreds of hours of information and entertainment that are still accessible, even if new episodes will no longer be recorded," he said. ■

All episodes of Wheat All About It! will continue to be housed on the Washington Grain Commission website at wagrains.org for the foreseeable future.

A good year for spring wheat

By Clark Neely

While 2020 may not go down as a stellar year for many reasons, one bright spot for growers in Washington was a bumper year for spring crops. In general, temperatures stayed cool, and rains hung around longer than normal after a dry start to the spring.

The dry conditions experienced in much of March and April also facilitated planting one to four weeks earlier than normal in most locations. As a result, yields in our variety trials were up across the board, particularly in our drier locations, with only a few exceptions.

Another ray of sun for my program came in the form of new lead technician, Brandon Gerrish, who started last March. Brandon was the former Extension program specialist in my previous job at Texas A&M University. Despite the challenges associated with COVID-19, he hit the ground running.



Clark Neely leads Washington State University's cereal variety testing program.

In 2020, the Variety Testing Program (VTP) had 18 spring wheat nurseries across five precipitation zones. Compared to 2019, yields in the low rainfall zones were up this past year between 8 percent and 76 percent. Only the trials at Bickleton were down (37 percent to 57 percent) as they missed out on much of the spring rain.

Test weights were a mixed bag this year, with some spots improving over last year and some not. Reardan stood out with the highest test weight, averaging 64.2 lb/bu across the hard red spring trial. Almira, on the low end, averaged 56 lb/bu in the soft white spring trial.

Yields in the 16-to-20-inch precipitation zone were down slightly on average, while yields in the more-than-20-inch zone had some striking differences. Pullman and Fairfield were up between 44 and 64 percent while Farmington and Palouse were down 26 to 29 percent. Walla Walla had some impressive Hessian fly pressure that greatly reduced yields of susceptible lines, while many resistant va-

Table 1. 2020 WSU Extension Spring Wheat

Precipitation Zone=Irrigated						
VARIETY	MOSES LAKE	PASCO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	---Yield (Bu/A)---				Lb/Bu	%
WB6341	111	151	131	141	62.1	11.0
Tekoa	118	132	125	140	62.3	12.3
WB-1035CL+	104	143	124	130	62.3	13.5
Melba	116	122	119	133	61.0	11.3
WB6121	109	129	119	130	63.6	13.0
Ryan +Zn	111	119	115	122	59.7	12.2
Ryan	104	123	113	116	60.5	12.3
Whit	105	115	110	121	61.5	12.7
Seahawk	100	109	104	113	61.8	12.6
AP Coachman	83	102	93	108	57.6	11.3
C.V. %	6	7	6	6	2.1	1.8
LSD (0.05)	12	17	9	6	1.5	0.3
Average	106	124	115	125	61.3	12.2
	---Yield (Bu/A)---				Lb/Bu	%
Dayn ²	125	145	135	143	63.7	14.12
AP Venom	120	140	130	134	62.0	14.3
SY Gunsight	121	136	128	136	63.0	13.9
WB7202CLP ²	119	132	125	134	62.8	13.5
AP Octane	111	135	123	133	62.3	14.0
CP3066 (CPX36619)	102	130	116	128	62.8	14.4
SY Coho	113	117	115	128	60.2	15.1
Alum +Zn ³	106	123	114	--	61.0	12.7
WB9668	101	126	113	123	63.8	15.7
WB9662	101	124	113	122	62.5	15.6
AP Renegade	109	112	110	126	61.8	14.0
Kelse	105	114	110	118	62.3	15.5
WB9303	97	108	103	--	63.3	15.6
Glee	96	106	101	106	61.7	14.6
Net CL+	95	100	97	107	61.4	15.2
Alum	93	100	97	109	61.2	15.5
Chet	90	82	86	95	61.9	16.3
C.V. %	7	8	7	6	1.3	1.6
LSD (0.05)	15	18	9	6	1.0	0.3
Average	106	119	113	123	62.2	14.7

²Hard white wheat ³HRS zinc seed treatment comparison

ieties yielded 10 to 20 bushels per acre more than 2019.

VTP entries included submissions from two land-grant university breeding programs (Washington State University (WSU) and University of Idaho); the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); and four private companies (Limagrain, AgriPro, Westbred and Croplan). The soft white spring trials in

at Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=>20"									
VARIETY	FAIRFIELD	PALOUSE	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		
	----Yield (Bu/A)----					Lb/Bu	%		
Melba ¹	81	69	98	78	72	60.6	8.9		
Tekoa	75	79	97	78	76	62.6	8.8		
Ryan	86	59	105	73	74	60.4	9.2		
WB6121	78	57	98	73	69	62.2	10.0		
WB6341	89	56	102	73	73	60.2	8.7		
AP Coachman	78	70	98	73	71	59.3	9.0		
Whit	82	62	97	72	73	60.9	9.4		
Seahawk	78	61	95	71	74	61.4	9.5		
AP Mondovi CL2	70	70	94	70	67	60.7	9.8		
Hedge CL+ (WA 8295 CL+) ¹	68	61	91	69	68	62.0	9.6		
JD ¹	69	68	85	69	65	61.9	9.4		
Louise	76	64	87	68	67	60.3	8.9		
WB-1035CL+	73	45	90	61	62	58.1	10.4		
C.V. %	7	11	5	8	7	1.4	5.4		
LSD (0.05)	10	14	9	5	3	0.7	0.4		
Average	77	63	95	71	70	60.8	9.3 WA		

Precipitation Zone=>20"									
VARIETY	FAIRFIELD	PALOUSE	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		
	----Yield (Bu/A)----					Lb/Bu	%		
8315	98.65	78	99	92	83	62.8	12.2		
Dayn ²	95	80	99	91	84	62.6	11.4		
Ryan +Zn ³	96	74	104	91	--	60.9	10.3		
Ryan ³	94	72	104	90	--	60.8	10.1		
WB7202CLP ²	101	70	99	90	81	62.2	11.5		
SY Gunsight	99	68	94	87	77	62.2	12.0		
WA 8299 CL+	84	69	103	85	79	63.1	12.5		
Glee	88	70	97	85	78	62.2	12.0		
AP Renegade	89	70	94	84	79	61.5	12.2		
WA 8302 CL+	93	65	94	84	77	62.5	11.9		
Alum	87	70	93	83	75	62.0	12.7		
WA 8314	87	67	91	81	76	62.3	13.0		
SY Selway	80	73	90	81	72	61.6	12.2		
Net CL+	77	68	94	80	73	62.0	12.9		
WB9303	73	63	103	80	--	63.0	13.7		
WB9668	83	61	92	79	70	62.5	13.9		
CP3066 (CPX36619)	82	60	91	78	71	62.0	12.9		
10PN2018-12 CL2	74	74	85	78	69	60.8	12.4		
Kelse	80	59	90	76	70	61.3	13.5		
WB9662	74	61	92	76	65	61.7	13.4		
Chet	64	71	90	75	71	62.2	13.2		
SY 605 CL2	74	44	89	69	62	60.9	13.6		
C.V. %	5	8	5	6	6	1.6	4.7		
LSD (0.05)	9	11	8	4	3	0.9	0.5		
Average	85	68	95	83	74	62.0	12.4		

Precipitation Zone=16-20"									
VARIETY	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	PLAZA	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu	%		
Tekoa	61	55	78	104	102	80	79	62.0	10.4
Seahawk	65	60	75	95	98	79	77	61.8	10.5
WB6121	68	54	78	98	81	76	72	61.5	11.3
Ryan	64	57	75	93	87	75	75	59.1	10.5
WB6341	66	57	79	62	93	72	74	60.0	9.9
Louise	56	51	76	80	93	71	74	58.9	10.3
AP Coachman	67	57	70	72	86	70	74	57.5	10.1
Whit	62	55	67	71	83	68	71	59.4	10.7
AP Mondovi CL2	56	48	64	88	73	66	67	59.7	11.8
JD ¹	62	58	72	102	33	65	66	61.2	11.5
WB-1035CL+	66	51	69	49	91	65	65	57.8	11.6
Melba ¹	72	61	78	87	22	64	68	59.9	10.8
Hedge CL+ (WA 8295 CL+) ¹	64	60	72	92	25	63	67	61.1	11.7
C.V. %	6	10	8	11	11	10	9	1.8	4.8
LSD (0.05)	7	11	14	18	15	5	3	0.9	0.4
Average	64	56	73	84	74	70	71	60.0	10.9

Precipitation Zone=16-20"									
VARIETY	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	PLAZA	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu	%		
Ryan +Zn ³	64	80	97	90	90	84	--	59.4	11.4
WB7202CLP ²	72	78	105	80	75	82	77	61.0	12.6
Ryan ³	62	73	101	85	78	80	--	58.4	11.6
WA 8315	65	73	102	72	83	79	76	60.1	13.8
WA 8299 CL+	70	68	92	82	77	78	73	62.6	13.4
WA 8302 CL+	65	71	85	81	84	77	75	61.1	13.3
Glee	62	72	85	84	80	77	73	60.5	13.5
AP Renegade	68	66	87	77	83	76	76	60.4	13.5
10PN2018-12 CL2	62	66	87	73	77	73	69	59.2	13.6
Net CL+	67	64	82	71	76	72	72	60.3	13.9
SY Selway	60	62	89	70	76	71	70	59.2	14.0
WA 8314	59	65	80	74	75	71	72	58.5	14.6
WB9668	66	59	85	69	73	70	64	61.1	15.4
Kelse	64	70	68	74	73	70	68	60.1	14.5
Alum	60	64	75	64	80	69	70	58.2	14.0
Dayn ²	62	73	95	76	32	67	70	60.6	13.6
WB9662	71	68	93	72	31	67	62	60.7	15.1
SY Gunsight	64	74	91	79	28	67	67	59.9	14.1
Chet	54	65	71	62	82	67	67	59.3	14.9
WB9303	59	59	80	72	63	67	--	62.1	15.3
SY 605 CL2	58	59	65	70	64	63	62	60.4	15.1
CP3066 (CPX36619)	66	65	80	75	23	62	62	60.8	14.2
C.V. %	4	9	6	9	10	8	9	1.8	3.5
LSD (0.05)	5	12	10	12	10	4	3	0.9	0.4
Average	64	68	86	75	68	72	70	60.2	13.9

¹Club Wheat ²Hard white wheat ³SWS zinc seed treatment comparison ⁴Walla Walla not included in 2020 TW average due to Hessian fly damage and missing data

2020 consisted of 13 commercial varieties, three of which were club wheats, combined with 12 experimental soft whites and one experimental club wheat. The hard spring wheat trial included 18 commercial varieties and 13 experimental lines, one of which was a durum.

There were very few new entries this year in either trial. WB9303 was the only true new entry to the hard red spring trials and none in the soft white spring trials. However, there were two newly named varieties previously tested as experimental lines. These include Hedge CL+ (formerly WA8295 CL+), a club wheat from WSU, and CP3066 (formerly CPX36619), a hard red spring wheat from Croplan. Hedge CL+ is unique in that it is the only 2-gene Clearfield spring club wheat on the market.

WB9303 started out yielding close to the trial average in the high rainfall zone, then yield declined steadily to the bottom of the trial in the lowest rainfall zone. While it had excellent test weight and protein, it was generally no better than WB9668 for these traits combined with lower yield potential in the irrigated and low precipitation zones. CP3066 yielded mostly below average, though it did close to the trial average in the irrigated and 12-to-16-inch precipitation zones. It was typically at or just above the trial average for test weight and protein. Hedge CL+ has been in the trial for three years and performs very similarly to JD in all precipitation zones for both yield and test weight, with the added benefit of the 2-gene Clearfield trait.

AP Coachman is on its second year of testing in the soft white spring trial. It had a very good year in 2019, but did slip a little in yield for 2020 in the intermediate rainfall zones. Having said that, it held its



Hessian fly damage in spring wheat trials at Walla Walla, Wash., on June 14, 2020. Resistant varieties have headed out on either side of the stunted susceptible border in the center of the photo.

own in the more-than-20-inch zone and really excelled in the less-than-12-inch zone in 2020, topping the regional summary there. Lodging was a problem at both of the irrigated sites.

Net CL+ was released last year and continued to yield similarly in 2020 as it has in the past. It was near the trial average in the high rainfall zones, and while it slipped slightly in the 12-to-16-inch zone, it remains at the top of the trial for the less-than-12-inch zone. In all cases, it out-yields SY 605 CL2, the only other 2-gene Clearfield hard red spring variety in the trial.

AP Octane and AP Venom are on their second year of testing in the irrigated sites, where they again performed well. On the two-year regional average, they were statistically tied with SY Gunsight as the top yielding hard red spring entries in the trial. AP Octane was similar to SY Gunsight for test weight and protein, while AP Venom was slightly lower in test weight and slightly better on protein.

Results from the 2020 high rainfall and irrigated regional summaries can be found in Table 1 while the low rainfall summaries can be found in Table 2. Results from the Farmington hard red spring trial are not shown due to a high C.V. (coefficient of variation), indicating too much unexplained variability within the trials due to herbicide-resistant Italian ryegrass.

When possible, growers are always encouraged to view multiple years and multiple locations of data for making varietal comparisons to better estimate the stability of varietal performance across environments. *A good variety is one that can reliably perform well across multiple environments.* This article includes a two-year average for most entries, but three- and five-year averages are available for some on the small grains website at smallgrains.wsu.edu.

In coordination with other programs at WSU, University of Idaho and USDA-ARS, entries in the WSU VTP are screened for disease resistance, insect

Table 2. 2020 WSU Extension Spring Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=12-16"									
VARIETY	ALMIRA	ENDICOTT	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
SOFT WHITE	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----						Lb/Bu	%	
	Ryan	56	84	56	105	75	65	59.2	11.0
	Louise	53	96	50	96	74	65	58.8	10.9
	Tekoa	51	79	57	104	73	62	61.4	11.5
	Melba ¹	53	96	53	89	73	62	59.0	11.0
	Whit	48	80	56	96	70	61	60.2	11.3
	Seahawk	47	77	55	100	70	60	60.9	11.2
	Hedge CL+ (WA 8295 CL+) ¹	53	80	53	90	69	59	61.3	11.4
	WB6341	52	82	52	88	68	61	59.6	10.7
	JD ¹	48	83	48	94	68	59	60.9	11.6
	AP Coachman	48	81	47	90	66	60	56.9	10.9
	WB6121	44	71	53	89	65	57	59.9	12.0
	WB-1035CL+	47	78	53	77	64	55	57.3	12.0
	AP Mondovi CL2	40	76	42	82	60	54	58.3	11.9
	C.V. %	11	9	10	7	9	9	2.5	6.1
	LSD (0.05)	11	15	10	13	5	3	1.2	0.6
	Average	49	82	52	92	69	59	59.5	11.3
HARD RED SPRING	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----						Lb/Bu	%	
	Ryan ³	52	89	60	101	75	--	59.5	11.1
	Ryan + Zn ³	51	83	59	98	73	--	58.9	11.0
	WB7202CLP ²	49	78	54	88	68	58	59.5	12.1
	WA 8299 CL+	48	82	59	75	66	56	61.8	13.0
	AP Renegade	43	79	49	86	64	56	58.4	13.3
	Glee	42	83	52	77	64	54	60.4	13.0
	Dayn ²	41	79	50	85	64	54	59.6	12.6
	SY Gunsight	42	77	50	85	64	51	59.2	13.2
	WA 8315	42	78	53	77	63	53	59.9	13.6
	Alum	36	78	52	84	62	52	58.2	13.3
	WA 8302 CL+	42	82	47	76	62	53	58.9	13.3
	10PN2018-12 CL2	42	73	48	78	60	51	57.8	13.3
	CP3066 (CPX36619)	42	67	52	79	60	51	60.5	13.6
	WB9668	42	67	54	74	59	50	60.3	14.9
	WA 8314	42	78	44	71	59	52	60.0	13.7
	SY Selway	42	74	48	70	58	50	58.8	13.6
	Chet	43	71	43	74	58	50	59.8	13.8
	Net CL+	35	75	47	74	58	50	58.4	13.8
	WB9662	41	68	51	70	58	48	59.4	14.2
	Kelse	41	76	43	70	57	50	59.2	13.5
	WB9303	41	60	55	60	54	--	60.1	15.1
	SY 605 CL2	42	64	46	63	54	46	58.4	14.7
	C.V. %	8	6	11	7	8	8	2.9	4.9
	LSD (0.05)	7	10	11	10	4	3	1.4	0.5
	Average	43	75	51	78	62	52	59.4	13.3

Precipitation Zone=<12"									
VARIETY	BICKLETON	HORSE HEAVEN	LIND	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		
SOFT WHITE	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----						Lb/Bu	%	
	AP Coachman	21	43	55	40	35	60.1	9.7	
	Tekoa	18	44	56	40	34	62.1	10.3	
	Louise	17	41	54	37	34	61.1	10.2	
	Melba ¹	16	40	55	37	35	60.7	10.2	
	Ryan	18	38	49	35	33	61.7	10.5	
	Hedge CL+ (WA 8295 CL+) ¹	15	38	51	35	32	62.0	10.8	
	Seahawk	17	33	54	34	32	62.2	10.2	
	Whit	17	35	49	34	32	61.9	10.4	
	WB6341	17	37	46	33	32	61.5	10.2	
	AP Mondovi CL2	16	35	47	33	30	61.3	12.1	
	JD ¹	15	33	50	33	30	62.3	11.0	
	WB6121	15	32	46	31	29	62.6	11.8	
	WB-1035CL+	16	32	43	30	29	61.1	11.6	
	C.V. %	11	10	4	8	8	0.7	3.3	
	LSD (0.05)	3	10	4	3	2	0.4	0.4	
	Average	17	37	51	35	32	61.6	10.7	
HARD RED SPRING	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----						Lb/Bu	%	
	WA 8314	24	37	49	37	32	61.4	13.3	
	10PN2018-12 CL2	24	36	49	36	31	60.6	12.9	
	Alum	23	34	49	35	32	62.0	13.0	
	Dayn ²	20	35	50	35	31	61.6	13.4	
	WA 8315	22	34	49	35	32	61.9	13.3	
	Ryan + Zn ³	24	33	47	35	--	61.0	11.2	
	Net CL+	23	31	50	34	33	61.3	13.2	
	Ryan ³	22	32	49	34	--	60.8	11.4	
	SY Gunsight	22	28	52	34	31	61.1	13.0	
	Chet	22	32	46	33	30	62.3	13.7	
	WB7202CLP ²	24	27	47	33	30	61.8	12.8	
	Kelse	21	29	45	32	29	61.3	14.0	
	Glee	22	27	45	31	29	61.8	13.2	
	SY Selway	22	27	45	31	29	59.5	13.6	
	WA 8302 CL+	23	28	42	31	28	62.5	13.0	
	AP Renegade	21	24	47	31	28	61.0	13.1	
	WA 8299 CL+	25	24	42	31	27	63.1	13.3	
	SY 605 CL2	20	29	40	30	27	61.6	13.8	
	WB9668	19	24	38	27	24	61.5	16.1	
	WB9662	22	21	38	27	26	60.9	14.9	
	CP3066 (CPX36619)	20	18	29	22	22	62.0	14.6	
	WB9303	17	14	27	19	--	62.1	16.1	
	C.V. %	11	10	5	8	9	1.3	4.1	
	LSD (0.05)	4	6	5	2	2	0.7	0.5	
	Average	22	28	44	31	29	61.5	13.5	

¹Club Wheat ²Hard white wheat ³SWS zinc seed treatment comparison

resistance, acid soil tolerance, falling numbers and end-use quality, among others. Be sure to check out these ratings in the final 2020 technical report on our small grains website (smallgrains.wsu.edu) or through our variety selection tool (varietyselection.cahnrs.wsu.edu/). The Washington Grain Commission also publishes a “Preferred Wheat Varieties” brochure at wagrain.org/2018-preferred-wheat-varieties/ with end-use quality ratings for commercial varieties.

As we look ahead to 2021, I am *hopeful* that we will again be able to host in-person field days and have the opportunity to meet face to face. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at clark.neely@wsu.edu or (509) 335-1205. ■

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We are grateful for the on-farm cooperators we partner with to conduct these trials around the state. They are essential for producing quality data, and their donations of land, time and resources are appreciated.

Barley yields trend up

DESPITE FEWER ACRES PLANTED, PRODUCTION UP BY 9 PERCENT

By Clark Neely

Despite planting 5,000 fewer acres of barley in Washington in 2020 (90,000 acres), average yield was up 29 percent (4,320 lb/a), improving overall production by 9 percent for the state. The same trend held true this year for the Washington State University (WSU) Spring Barley Variety Trials.

In all but a few locations, many variety trials saw substantial yield increases over 2019. In fact, the Reardan trial yielded an impressive 104 percent increase over 2019. Remarkably, this occurred after most yields beat the five-year average in 2019. Test weights were still good, but decreased more often than not compared to 2019 levels. Most notably, Almira saw a 5.9 lb/bu drop compared to last year. Early planting combined with later June rains and cooler temperatures combined for favorable growing conditions this season for barley.

Twelve spring barley variety trials were planted across three precipitation zones in 2020. Data from Palouse and Pullman are not shown due to high C.V. values and unreliable results. Yield, test weight and protein results from the remaining 10 barley locations are summarized in Table 3. The trials included seven feed, eight malt and two hullless food varieties, along with seven experimental lines. There continues to be a trend towards more malt varieties in the trial.

We saw some significant changes in the entry list this year by dropping malt varieties AAC Connect, CDC Copeland and LCS Genie, along with feed varieties Champion, LCS Vespa and Muir. We also saw the addition of KWS Amadora, KWS Chrissie, KWS Fantex, KWS Jessie and LCS Diablo.

As shown in Table 3, many of the new malt barleys performed very well in 2020. Most notably, KWS Chrissie was statistically in the top yielding group in all three precipitation zones. KWS Jesse and LCS Diablo were also in the top yielding group in two out of the three regions. Many of the new malt varieties out-yielded the feed varieties in the intermediate and low rainfall regions and were comparable in the high precipitation zone.

On the two-year average, Altorado and Oreana (feed barleys) and LCS Opera and LCS Odyssey (malt varieties) continued to do well across all locations, while Lyon and Lenetah were competitive with these varieties in the highest and lowest precipitation zones. A recently named variety “Charger” (formerly BZ512-319) was comparable in 2020 to Altorado in the greater-than-20-inch zone, but was less competitive for yield in the intermediate and low precipitation zones. Palmer was a newly released malt variety in 2019, but struggled in 2020 and landed near the bottom of the trial in most cases.

Additional information and yield data can be found at our website smallgrains.wsu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at clark.neely@wsu.edu or (509) 335-1205. ■

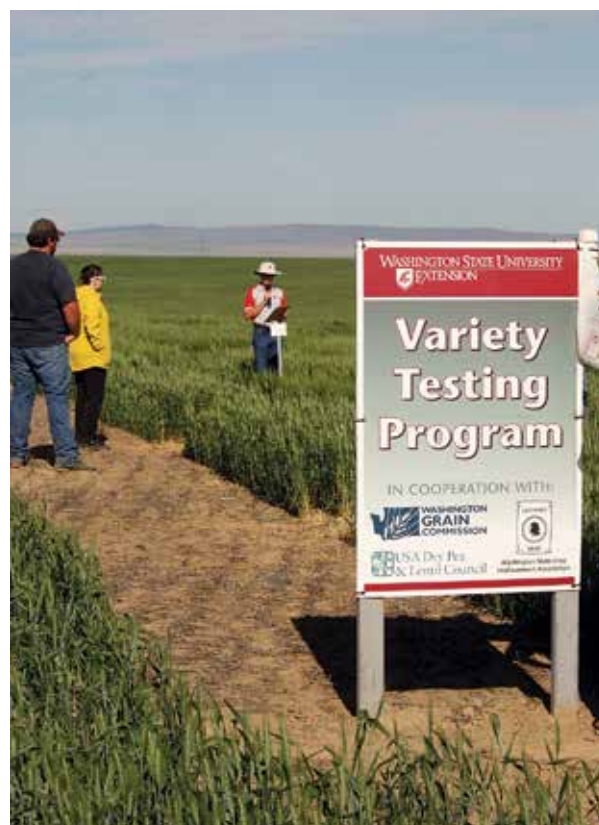
Table 3. 2020 WSU Extension Spring Barley Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=>20"							
VARIETY	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----			Lb/Bu		%	
Oreana	6070	5160	5620	5220	53.1	9.1	
Lyon	5680	5140	5410	5250	52.8	9.4	
Altorado	5400	4790	5090	5250	52.9	9.1	
Charger (BZ512-319)	5270	4890	5080	--	53.4	8.6	
Claymore	5260	4820	5040	5020	52.6	9.0	
Lenetah	5290	4710	5000	5110	54.0	9.4	
Survivor	3110	4030	3570	4590	52.7	10.6	
KWS Jessie	6480	4890	5680	--	52.3	9.0	
KWS Chrissie	5740	5250	5490	--	52.1	8.6	
LCS Diablo	5720	5170	5440	--	49.8	8.5	
KWS Amadora	5730	4670	5200	--	52.9	8.6	
LCS Opera	5310	4740	5020	5360	51.2	8.8	
LCS Odyssey	5220	4690	4960	5140	51.7	8.8	
KWS Fantex	4970	4420	4690	--	51.5	9.1	
13WAM-136.1	4580	4120	4350	4910	50.8	9.1	
Palmer	3840	4120	3980	4570	51.1	10.1	
Havener	4630	3570	4100	4010	57.3	9.8	
Meg's Song	3930	3760	3850	4160	58.5	10.9	
C.V. %	8	7	8	8	1.9	5.0	
LSD (0.05)	800	640	420	260	1.1	0.5	
Average	5120	4610	4870	4880	52.8	9.3	

Precipitation Zone=16-20"								
VARIETY	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----			Lb/Bu		%		
Oreana	4980	4080	6090	5280	5110	5080	52.4	11.0
Altorado	4840	4530	5390	5210	4990	4950	53.0	11.0
Claymore	4470	4270	6010	5010	4940	4950	52.8	10.6
Lenetah	4940	4040	5400	5110	4870	4910	54.3	10.8
Lyon	4550	4370	5590	4980	4870	4840	52.8	11.2
Charger (BZ512-319)	4300	4000	5520	4900	4680	--	53.2	10.6
Survivor	4120	3210	4560	4750	4160	4360	53.6	12.2
KWS Chrissie	5460	4720	5780	6140	5530	--	52.9	11.0
KWS Jessie	5380	4700	5790	5600	5370	--	51.9	10.7
LCS Diablo	5250	4540	5360	5740	5220	--	50.8	10.6
KWS Fantex	5320	4480	5550	5330	5170	--	51.7	11.4
KWS Amadora	4890	4490	5360	5890	5160	--	52.8	11.1
LCS Odyssey	4900	4620	5580	5370	5120	5070	52.5	11.1
LCS Opera	4940	4100	6050	5080	5040	5150	51.6	10.5
13WAM-136.1	4310	3880	5340	5270	4700	4810	51.0	11.4
Palmer	4140	3790	4880	5580	4600	4600	52.1	12.5
Havener	3810	3680	4520	5210	4310	4030	60.4	12.0
Meg's Song	4040	3360	4600	4390	4100	4100	58.7	13.4
C.V. %	6	7	8	8	7	8	1.4	5.2
LSD (0.05)	570	580	820	800	290	210	0.6	0.5
Average	4700	4160	5400	5270	4890	4740	53.2	11.3

Precipitation Zone=<16"								
VARIETY	ALMIRA	ENDICOTT	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----			Lb/Bu		%		
Lenetah	3440	5690	4310	5790	4810	3940	52.2	10.8
Lyon	3420	5730	4450	5470	4770	3880	49.3	12.2
Altorado	3560	5540	4560	5210	4720	3920	48.9	11.6
Claymore	3470	5680	4170	5220	4630	3840	50.2	11.5
Oreana	3530	5680	3960	5300	4620	3890	50.7	11.6
Charger (BZ512-319)	3320	5300	3770	5240	4410	--	51.0	11.2
Survivor	3210	5050	4140	4360	4190	3650	51.9	11.9
LCS Diablo	3440	5610	4320	7050	5100	--	46.3	11.2
KWS Chrissie	3680	6220	4760	5440	5020	--	50.3	11.0
KWS Amadora	3300	5700	4150	6450	4900	--	49.5	11.2
KWS Jessie	3450	6190	4150	5340	4780	--	49.7	11.0
LCS Odyssey	3150	5520	4020	5620	4580	3940	48.4	11.4
KWS Fantex	3180	6050	3780	5260	4570	--	49.5	11.9
LCS Opera	3040	6170	3570	5210	4500	4010	48.6	10.9
13WAM-136.1	3000	5630	3990	4880	4380	3680	48.2	12.0
Palmer	3360	5120	3840	4510	4210	3560	48.7	12.7
Havener	2650	4560	3260	4680	3790	3180	54.8	12.8
Meg's Song	2680	4460	3200	4290	3660	3020	54.1	13.8
C.V. %	8	5	9	7	7	9	3.0	5.6
LSD (0.05)	510	530	690	760	250	210	1.2	0.5
Average	3270	5550	4022	5300	4540	3710	50.1	11.7





WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Many moving parts driving markets



By Mike Krueger

Markets have certainly been interesting this fall and early winter. Reports from the U.S.

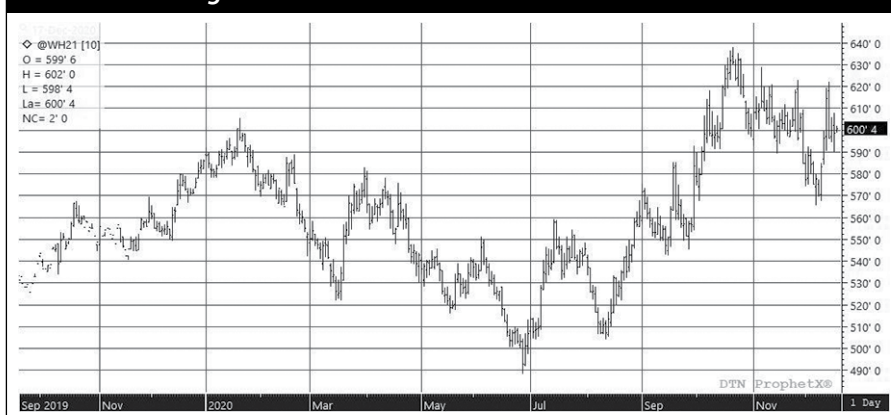
Department of Agriculture (USDA) in November created some excitement by cutting corn and soybean production, increasing export forecasts and reducing ending supplies. The wheat numbers, however, didn't change much.

There were also ongoing concerns about dry weather across much of Argentina and Brazil as their soybean planting season was getting underway. In addition, dry weather continued across nearly all of the U.S. southern Plains hard red winter wheat region as well as significant parts of the Black Sea region. China continued to be an aggressive buyer of U.S. soybeans, corn and even some wheat.

All of these events eventually pushed March corn futures towards \$4.40, while March soybean futures touched \$12, and Chicago March wheat futures headed towards \$6.50. That happened in late November and the first days of December. Markets have been relatively quiet and range-bound since these highs were established. The speculative trading funds have maintained big long positions in corn and soybeans, but have been sliding back and forth between long and short in Chicago wheat. Chart 1 shows Chicago March wheat futures.

The December series of USDA

Chart 1: Chicago March wheat futures



reports did not add any energy to the markets. Many analysts believed USDA would increase the corn and soybean export forecasts and further reduce ending supplies. Instead, the USDA punted and made zero changes to the corn supply and demand and only increased the domestic soybean crush by 15 million bushels. The wheat numbers were also just slightly changed.

The failure of the USDA to reduce ending supplies disappointed the markets, and we slipped lower. That, in turn, brought fund liquidation and more selling instead of the expected (hoped for) post-report rally to new highs.

The USDA also punted in terms of any reductions in corn or soybean production in Brazil and Argentina as a result of several months of dry and very hot weather. Argentina is still struggling with dry conditions. Much of Brazil received some beneficial rains in mid-December, but the overall patterns continue to look drier than normal. Of course, we are now in prime-time crop development season in both countries. Analytical groups in Brazil and Argentina have already started to reduce corn and soybean crop production estimates. Argentina's wheat crop was much below early estimates because of the dry weather.

All of this sets up the USDA's Jan. 12 reports, when the USDA will release "final" 2020 U.S. corn and soybean production estimates, to be potentially explosive. Most believe the yields will be reduced at least slightly from the previous estimates. That means smaller production estimates. The USDA will also release their important quarterly stocks estimates on Jan. 12. These numbers will be as of Dec. 1. These stocks numbers should corroborate the production estimates. In the case of corn, they will also be the first measurement of quarterly corn feed/residual consumption.

Lastly, the Jan. 12 reports will include the supply and demand revisions and world crop production updates. Many analysts are expecting USDA will have to increase U.S. corn and soybean export forecasts since they didn't in December. They also expect to see small reductions in Brazil's corn and

soybean production estimates. Reductions in Argentina should be more significant.

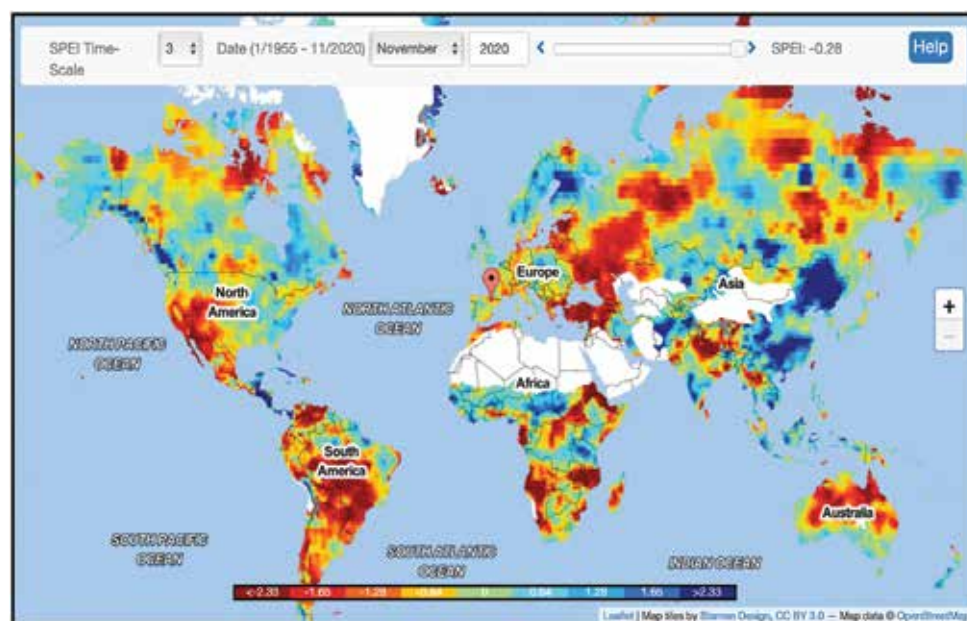
The soybean situation is still getting the most attention. There are ideas circulating that U.S. soybean ending supplies could get as small as 25 to 50 million bushels. That could put USDA in a box as 25 to 50 million bushels is essentially bin-bottom supplies. The reality is that prices would have to increase to ration supplies, something that \$12 soybean futures doesn't do.

U.S. export activity continues to move at an aggressive pace. Total corn export sales for this marketing year (Sept. 1-Aug. 31) now stand at 41 million metric tons (mmt) compared to 17 mmt a year ago. China has purchased 11.5 mmt of corn compared to just 60,000 metric tons last year, and there are still seven mmt of corn sales listed as "unknown." Much of that could also go to China. China has purchased 30 mmt of U.S. soybeans compared to 10 mmt a year ago.

Wheat export sales have still been somewhat tepid. Total wheat sales are 19.6 mmt compared to 17.8 a year ago (the wheat marketing year runs from June 1 to May 31). China has purchased 2.2 mmt of wheat from the U.S. compared to 200,000 metric tons last year, of which 450,000 metric tons is white wheat.

But no white wheat had been shipped as of mid-December.

There has been more chatter recently that Russia "might" impose a wheat export tax



of as much as 75 cents a bushel in mid-February. Wheat markets had big gains the Friday these rumors surfaced, but crashed the following Monday on talk Russian wheat exporters would simply try to export as much wheat as possible before mid-February. Talk of Russian export restrictions has become an annual affair in recent years. It has yet to happen.

The winter wheat crops in the U.S. southern Plains and parts of the Black Sea, especially southern Russia, went into dormancy in generally poor condition. Stands were poor, and root development was certainly less than ideal. These conditions make crops more susceptible to winter kill. Of course, no one will know the end result in terms of adverse yield impacts until these crops break dormancy in late February and March. Spring rains will be critical to holding average or better wheat yields. That's always the case, but more important this year because of poor fall development.

These will be the critical market factors going forward:

- Crop finishing weather and corn/soybean production in Brazil and Argentina. Keep in mind the market is still assuming record corn and soybean production in Brazil.
- World winter wheat production potential in February/March. This is especially true in Russia. Russia is still a cheap and aggressive wheat exporter.
- Additional wheat, corn and soybean purchases by China.
- The pace of U.S. wheat export sales needs to improve to stimulate independent strength in wheat markets.

Finally, it's worth noting that the U.S. dollar has declined to its lowest level in almost three years. That will help the U.S. be more competitive in world markets. ■

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



HOLDING COURT

Once upon a time, queens ruled over Washington's wheat industry | by Trista Crossley

It's been 34 years since Washington wheat last had a queen.

If you grew up before the 1990s, you probably remember seeing those be-sashed, tiara-wearing young women celebrating Eastern Washington's top commodity at various parades and events. Back then, it seems every community had a queen; some still do (think Wenatchee's Apple Blossom Festival or Spokane's Lilac Festival). But not wheat. The title went unclaimed at the end of 1987, when the program became a victim of budgetary belt-tightening amid low commodity prices.

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers' wheat queen program may be long gone, but its influence still lingers in those fortunate enough to wear the crown.

"As a 17-year-old high school girl, I was standing in front of both chambers of the state Legislature and talking about the importance of the wheat industry to the state of Washington. I was just taken by the process of govern-

ment and the whole political side of it. I ended up going to Washington State University and majoring in political science and administration. I got an internship in Olympia and was an aide to Rep. Otto Amen. I did another internship for the secretary of state's office," said Christi Janett, 1971 wheat queen from Lincoln County. "For me, personally, it really influenced what I ended up doing as an education at Washington State University and with my moving to Olympia and my career. It all ties back to the year I spent as wheat queen."

The first wheat queen, Cheryl Eskelson from Whitman County, was chosen in 1966. Competition was open to girls who were at least high school seniors but no older than 24 by the time of the state convention. They had to live east of the Cascades and be from families who were members of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). They also had to promise not to marry during their term as wheat queen, if they were chosen. Girls began competing at the county level and moved to the district



Brenda (Isaak) Carey from Grant County was the 1987 wheat queen. She didn't ride a float in parades, instead, she rode combines, antique farm equipment or sports cars. Unfortunately, Carey was the last wheat queen. The program was discontinued after 1987 due to budget cuts. Photo courtesy of Brenda Carey.

The 1966 Wheat Queen and Contestants



KAREN MARIE WILLIAMS
Lincoln County - District I
State Wheat Queen Runner-up



DIANA KOLLER
Garfield County - District III



LINDA STRUTHERS
Walla Walla County



QUEEN CHERYL ESKELSON
WHITMAN COUNTY - DISTRICT II



TERRE JENSEN
Grant County



DAWN SCHWISOW
Adams County - District IV



CRYSTAL STINSON
Franklin County - District V



LORRIE ANN ANDERSON
Spokane County

As documented in *Wheat Life*, the first wheat queen was crowned in 1966.



Brenda (Isaak) Carey (second from left in back) and the other wheat queen contestants from 1987 took a break from the annual convention to get a picture with Santa in downtown Seattle. Photo courtesy of Brenda Carey.



Mary Kaplan from Spokane County was the 1978 wheat queen. Her picture appeared on the front page of the 1977 Christmas Eve edition of the *Spokesman-Review*. Photo courtesy of Mary Kaplan.



Christi Janett from Lincoln County was the 1971 wheat queen. She spoke in front of both chambers of the state Legislature. She was escorted to the House floor by Rep. Otto Amen (pictured), a legislator from Ritzville. She would later intern for him. Photo courtesy of Christi Janett.

level (counties were grouped into five districts) before ending at the annual convention where a wheat queen was crowned for the coming year. At each level, the contestants had to give speeches and sit for interviews. According to an article published in the July 1966 issue of *Wheat Life*, girls would be judged on four criteria: poise, attractiveness, personality and public speaking ability. In 1966, the wheat queen received a \$300 scholarship or a \$300 bond, plus a \$200 wardrobe budget.

After being crowned, wheat queens were expected to represent the wheat industry at all sorts of events, from hometown parades, ribbon-cuttings and field days to handing out ribbons at livestock shows and speaking to the state Legislature. Many wheat queens also attended the national wheat convention.

"In this particular year, we were in Seattle (for the state convention)," said Brenda (Isaak) Carey, 1987 wheat queen from Grant County. "It was really fun for all of us contestants. We went downtown and took pictures with Santa with all of us dressed in our wheat queen stuff. We had things we were supposed to do all over convention, such as greeting people and being part of things, but they also wanted us all over downtown."

That year's convention, themed "Combining Washington," featured a combine parked outside the Sheraton in downtown Seattle.

"I was honored to be introduced on the floor of the



Christi Janett, 1971 wheat queen, on her float at the Lilac Parade in Spokane, Wash. Photo courtesy of Christi Janett.

Kingdome during a Mariners game during Grange Week. I made an appearance at Pike Place Market (in Seattle) and spoke at the national convention," said Mary Kaplan, 1978 wheat queen from Spokane County. Kaplan was also featured on the front page of the *Spokesman-Review* on Christmas Eve, holding a wreath made out of bread. "My dad used to go out to get the paper in the morning. We hadn't told him I was going to be on there. He was pretty surprised."

The wheat queens were kept busy, as were the adults responsible for chaperoning them, building their parade floats and generally making sure the wheat queens showed up where they were supposed to at the appointed hour. According to records kept by Carey's mother, in her year as a wheat queen, Carey traveled 4,740 miles, made 30 appearances, gave 12 speeches and 10 invocations, took part in nine parades and distributed 2,000 small sacks of wheat sewn out of old flour sacks by Carey's grandmothers. Parents played a large part in the wheat queen's year, as did many other growers in the wheat queens' home counties. Kaplan said it was only later in her life that she understood how much support it took to be a successful wheat queen, something she realized a few years ago when she came across scrapbooks from her reign.



Mary Kaplan, 1978 wheat queen, on her float at a parade in Moses Lake. The float won the trophy for most unique float. Photo courtesy of Mary Kaplan.

"That made me appreciate all the work that went into it that year," Kaplan said. "I didn't realize the impact of my parents taking that much time away (from their ranch) and the sacrifice they made for me to be able to do it that year."

Janett said she had a "committee" who helped her out during her year, building her float and driving it and her to events around the state.

"They were such wonderful people," she said.

If the wheat queens were hesitant about speaking in front of people, that fear was soon overcome, as one of the main parts of the job was speaking in front of crowds.

"I tried to shed light on agriculture, the costs and what it took to raise a crop," Kaplan said. "All my speeches had the same thread that ran through them...you work all year to have three weeks of harvest, and you hope and pray it comes in correctly, that you don't have a fire and it burns up."

Many of the wheat queens also had the opportunity to speak in front of the state Legislature during WAWG's advocacy trips.

"When WAWG went to Olympia for lobbying, I went with them and had several photo appearances with representatives from around state, but then I actually spoke on the Senate floor," remembered Carey. "It was probably terrifying, however, I think it was a fabulous experience. I don't know how many other high school seniors can say they've done that. The program, as a whole, was so good in terms of developing a whole group of people, not just winners, but all of the women who gave speeches all across Eastern Washington who represented their county and their community, learning to speak publicly, learning to shake hands with people, learning

to really think about the role of agriculture within the state."

Kaplan said her year as wheat queen gave her the confidence to "stand up in front of 5,000 people and give a speech." She appeared on national television and met Sen. Bob Dole at the national convention in Kansas.

"It was an opportunity to meet and sit alongside a lot of people that I now look back and realize were pretty important people. I sat with the speaker of the House, Tom Foley; the governor of Washington; and the mayor of Spokane," she said. She even got a letter from the White House. "It was a once in a lifetime opportunity and is irreplaceable. It was a fairy tale year."

Janett had much the same thoughts.

"It was really challenging," she said. "Looking back, I'm not sure how I had the confidence to do it. It was a really good experience from that perspective as well. What more could you ask for as a 17-year-old, speaking in front of people, meeting people, being comfortable around older adults. It was a special year." ■



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To sell or not to sell—that is the question

By Trista Crossley

Making the decision to sell farmland, especially farmland that's been in the family for generations, isn't easy, but sometimes, it's the best way forward.

A little less than a year ago, Jim Reiha and two family members finalized the sale of 750 acres of dryland wheat just north of Sprague, Wash. The land was originally purchased by Reiha's grandfather, around 1930, who farmed it before passing it to Reiha's father and then uncle. About 30 years ago, the family stopped farming it themselves and leased it to a local farmer. Reiha, who grew up on the farm, ended up in Southern California working as a brewmaster for Anheuser-Busch. When he retired, he moved back to Eastern Washington. One day, he said, his cousin, who owned a share of the land along with Reiha's sister, brought up the idea of selling.

"Out of the clear blue, my cousin said 'I'm just not getting the return on investment that I think I should be getting (from the land).' My sister and I looked at each other and said, 'What do we want to do? Do we want to take out big old loans to buy out the cousin or look at selling the wheat land?'" he said, adding that he was reluctant to sell the land. "But I understood where they (the cousin) were coming from. They have no kids, nobody to pass anything on to."

The family also owns 1,500 acres of pasture and hay next to the wheat acreage. Reiha and his sister decided to sell the cropland and use the money to buy the cousin's share of the remaining 1,500 acres. Once the



Last year, Jim Reiha and his family made the decision to sell part of their family's farmland in Lincoln County. The family still owns the land where the farmhouse and outbuildings stand, and their tradition of gathering at the farm to cut down a Christmas tree, make decorations and decorate the tree the week before Christmas and spending the Christmas holidays at the farm house is one of their favorite family gatherings. Photo courtesy of Jim Reiha.

decision was made, Reiha went to his tenant and asked him how much time he needed to continue leasing the land so as not to lose money. They agreed on two more years and redid the lease.

Instead of going to a real estate agent, the family had an attorney in Davenport, Wash., handle the sale. The first thing the attorney did was send out notices to local farmers who might be interested in buying the land. Reiha also considered a buyer that, from the outside, seems a little unusual—the Shriners (yes, the guys who wear red hats, drive little cars at parades and raise money for children's hospitals). It turns out, the Shriners own and lease farmland in the same area as Reiha's family's land. The Shriners were interested and eventually agreed to buy the land with a minimum of negotiation. The next step was figuring out where the boundaries of the land actually were.

"Surveying was painful. The land hadn't been surveyed for so long," Reiha said. "They had to start miles away and work back until they knew where they were to determine where the boundaries were. It was a lot of money and a lot of time. We had some borders that were a little wonky."

Reiha said that if they'd been selling to a local farmer, the process might have been a little easier, but the Shriners "had to have all the 'T's crossed and 'T's dotted." It turned out, the family didn't have title documentation to a small portion of the land. They ended up putting ads in the local paper to take care of some

legal proceedings and to find out if any of the previous owners were still alive and had interest in that acreage.

“That (the surveying) was the only thing that dragged on and on and cost a boatload of money,” Reiha said. For other landlords who are thinking about selling land that may have title and/or boundary issues, he suggested negotiating with the buyer to share that cost. He also suggested checking with nearby landowners to see if they’ve had any surveying done recently to help establish a starting point.

The family still owns the land where the farmhouse and outbuildings stand. Their tradition of gathering at the farm to cut down a Christmas tree, make decorations and decorate the tree the week before Christmas and spending the Christmas holidays at the farm house is one of their favorite family gatherings.

“(The land) means a lot to me. As we are getting further away, generations, from the original owners, there’s less and less interest for people to stick around and farm,” Reiha said. “I’m hoping to be able to pass it on to my kids and grandkids. We still have 1,500 acres of pasture and hay ground. My heart still goes pitter patter when I go out there.” ■



As part of the sale, the Reiha family had to have the land surveyed to determine exact property lines. Photo courtesy of Jim Reiha.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Covering the basics of cover crops, crop insurance

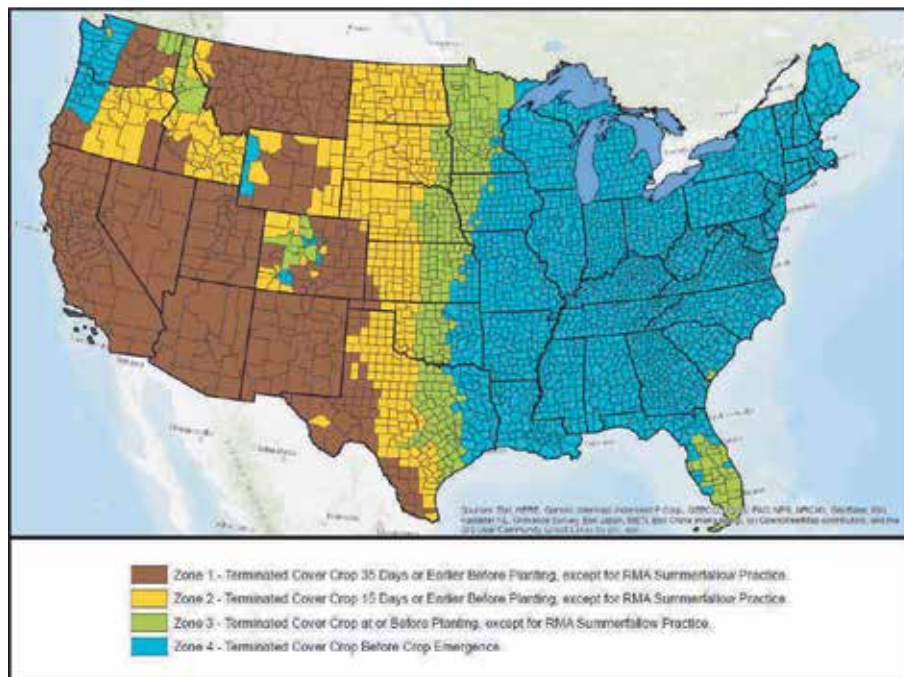
By Curtis Evanenko
McGregor Risk Management Services

Greetings all.

Cover crops have continued to gain momentum and implementation across the U.S., especially east of the Rockies where the moisture pattern is more favorable than that of the Pacific Northwest's (PNW). That said, this management practice of utilizing cover crops to help build and maintain soil health is more widespread across our region than it was a mere five years ago.

For those of you not familiar with cover crops, various crops such as grasses, legumes and forbs planted for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes are used for this purpose. My limited experience with cover crops and their usage in the PNW is most often associated with a livestock operation and the use of cover crops for forage grazing purposes.

I believe cover crops are a viable tool to help build or rebuild soil



health via the concept of maintaining “living organisms” in the soil profile. The 2018 Farm Bill provided language supporting the planting of cover crops and the corresponding impact on crop insurance. In effect, the 2018 Farm Bill required the various U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies to develop a comprehensive guideline all agencies could agree to. As long as the farming practices implemented meet the Risk Management Agency (RMA) guidelines for crop insurance, there is no impact on policy coverage.

Cover crop management practices are reviewed under the RMA guidelines for Good Farming Practice (GFP) Handbook, similar to management decisions pertaining to fertilizer and pesticide applications, tillage, seeding rates, etc. A cropping practice is considered a GFP if agricultural experts agree that it does not impact the insured crop's ability to mature or produce the yield to meet the producer's crop insurance guarantee. Part 3 of the GFP, paragraph 25 (A): Cover Cropping—The voluntary practice of cover cropping shall be considered a good farming practice if the cover crop is terminated in accordance with NRCS Cover Crop Guidelines.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has established four termination zones across the country for continuous crops (summerfallow acreage has a different termination date...see below). This zonal guidance helps determine when cover crops should be terminated so as not to impact the soon-to-be-planted cash crop. Our region is rather complicated in that all four zones can be found here. Generally, east of the Rockies, an area is in one zone or another (see map above).

The predominant cash crop for dryland production in the PNW is winter

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wheat, which is typically seeded into ground classified as summerfallow by RMA for crop insurance purposes. My paraphrased, RMA definition of summerfallow, is allowing acreage to “idle” for a full crop year so moisture can build in the soil profile for next year’s crop. This includes terminating any and all plant growth, weeds, volunteer crops or perennial vegetation (CRP acreage) during the crop year prior to planting. Plant growth must be terminated prior to June 1, and any subsequent regrowth must also be controlled chemically or mechanically. Nonirrigated acreage that doesn’t meet the summerfallow practice definition is considered continuous crop.

Naturally, there are exceptions to the rule and specific to cover crops so as not to negatively impact coverage provided by the crop insurance policy.

Under the cover crop exception, acreage will qualify for summerfallow practice in the current crop year if the cover crop was planted during the preceding year, provided the cover crop was not hayed, grazed or otherwise harvested. Additionally, the cover crop must be terminated according to the NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines (June 1), and later regrowth controlled chemically or mechanically.

The GFP Handbook also outlines a means for a producer to request an exception, in writing, by obtaining support from an agricultural expert. The GFP Handbook provides a list of approved agricultural experts. Your crop insurance agent would be a great resource to initiate an exception request.

RMA has published county specific actuarials, Special Provisions of Insurance, that contain language defining what must be done by the producer to meet insurability for the county. This information is the first step in sourcing insurability guidelines as each county can be different.

I believe the main pitfall of incorporating a cover crop practice into a producer’s current crop rotation is meeting the definition of “summerfallow” for the following year’s cash crop of winter wheat or winter canola. If the cover crop wasn’t terminated prior to June 1, or additional plant regrowth wasn’t controlled in a timely manner by chemical or mechanical means, crop insurance coverage could be jeopardized.

As stated earlier, I believe cover crops are a very beneficial practice to employ, if possible, for your operation. The PNW has some constraints with regards to the cash crop grown following a cover crop, in particular fall-seeded wheat on summerfallow acreage. All plant growth must be terminated via chemical or mechanical means no later than June 1 preceding the insured crop, whereas other parts of the country require plant growth termination

within a specific number of days prior to planting. I can only surmise this requirement, unlike other parts of the country, is due to the moisture pattern of the PNW.

I wish all a blessed and healthy New Year! ■

Curtis Evanencko 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 cevanencko@mcgregorrisk.com.



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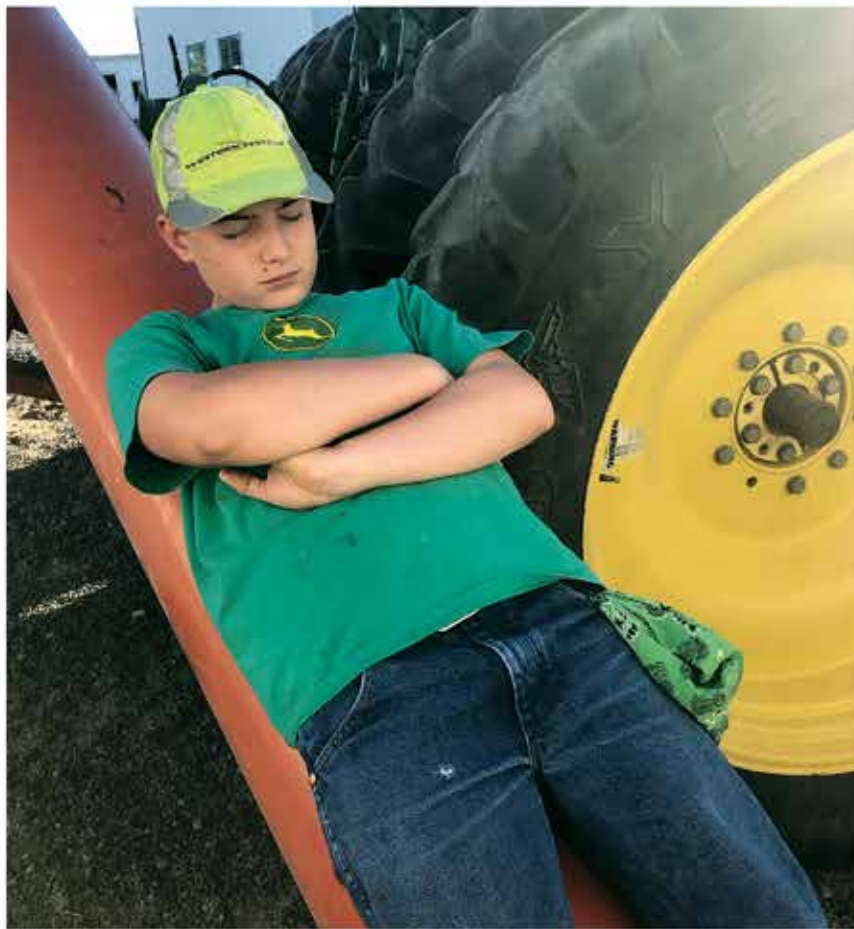
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Mason Slaybaugh (2) during harvest in Pomeroy. Photo by Andrea Slaybaugh.

(Above) John Melcher (12) finds a comfortable place to nap at Melchers LLC in Ritzville. Photo by Jeff Melcher. (Right) The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow at Ritzville Warehouse Company in Ritzville. Photo by Donna Koch.

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





Harvest near Pomeroy. Photo by Jaril Pietras.

Your wheat life...



Harvest in Colton above the Snake River. Photo by Jake Meyer.



Jaxon Miller (2) gives orders to the "big boys," Steve Krupke (left), of Krupke Farms JV in Reardan, and Charles Miller (Jaxon's grandpa). Photo by Tricia Miller.

Advertiser Index

AGPRO	55	Jones Truck and Implement	15
Albaugh Inc.	64	Kincaid Real Estate	27
Bank of Eastern Washington	27	Landmark Native Seed	26
Barber Engineering	39	McGuire, DeWulf, Kragt & Johnson PS	33
BASF	5	North Pine Ag Equipment	7
Battery Systems	40	Northwest Farm Credit Services	63
Big Iron Repair	15	Northwest First Realtors	19
Blue Mountain Realtors	33	Odessa Trading	25
Butch Booker	27	Perkins & Zlatich PS	31
Byrnes Oil Company	55	Photosyntech	13
Class 8 Trucks	63	PNW Farmers Cooperative	7
CO Energy	33	Pomeroy Grain Growers	57
Coldwell Banker Tomlinson	15	R & H Machine	39
Correll's Scale Service	40	Rock Steel Structures	39
Corteva	9, 23	Spectrum Crop	37
Country Financial	40	State Bank NW	59
Diamond Distributing	39	T & S Sales	12
Edward Jones	31	Tankmax Inc	37
Eljay Oil	15	Vantage-PNW	25
Farm & Home Supply	63	Wagner Seed	38
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