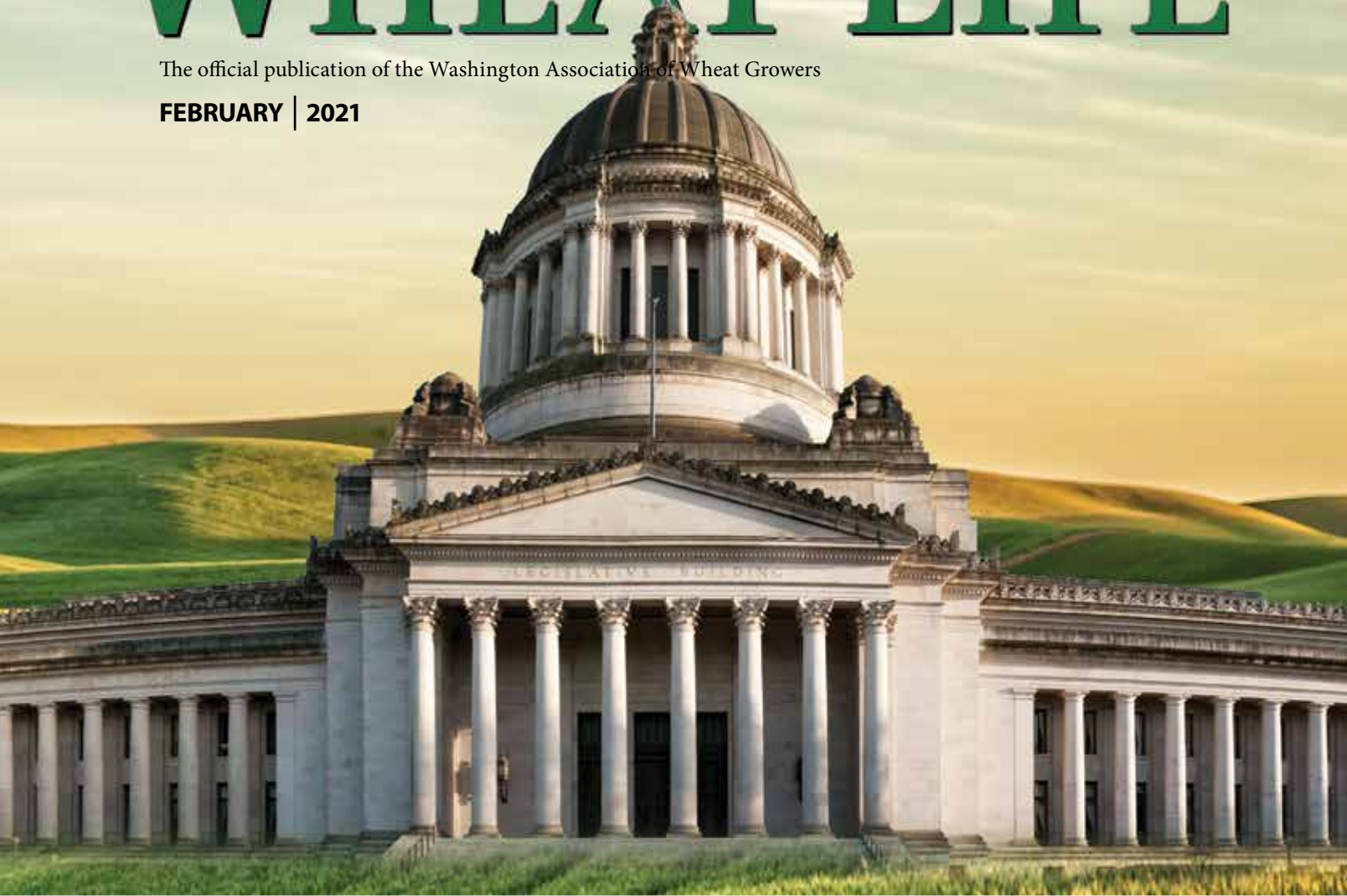


# WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

**FEBRUARY | 2021**



## Making a connection

WAWG'S ADVOCACY PLAN FOR THE STATE'S VIRTUAL 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Why Ecology can't offer a pesticide recertification extension

AMMO previews: Weather with Eric Snodgrass, world outlook with Peter Zeihan

The (ag) show must go on

Spotlight on USW's Adrian "Ady" Redondo

LaCrosse historic stone structures getting new lives

# WHEAT LIFE

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WHEAT GROWERS**

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# President's Perspective



## When the going gets tough...

By Ryan Poe

It's go time for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) in our primary area of focus—lobbying on behalf of our members. As I'm sitting here writing this in mid-January, just a week into the 2021 Legislative Session, I am reminded of a quote by Dwight D. Eisenhower. "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field." This year will be challenging because of the virtual

nature of this legislative session (I touched on some of those challenges in last month's column). We as agriculture need to make sure our story is told and our story is heard.

On the state and national level, carbon legislation and climate policies seem to be front and center right now. We are hearing that state legislators are debating proposals for a low carbon fuel standard and a carbon cap and trade system, and I have concerns, especially with the low carbon fuel standard, that they will increase fuel prices for rural residents that have to drive a significant number of miles on routine errands like grocery shopping or medical appointments. I also have heard a low carbon fuel standard would end up being revenue neutral to the state as the increased cost per gallon would go towards paying for the gas additive (which is needed to make the fuel burn cleaner) rather than helping improve transportation infrastructure or addressing other transportation needs. While we are appreciative of the exemption for dyed special fuel used for agricultural purposes, that is limited to diesel used on the farm itself and does not account for the fuel needed to transport our products to market. In addition, if our fertilizer dealers take a hit, they'll likely pass those increased costs to us, and as growers, we don't have the ability to pass those increased costs along.

Another thing we are monitoring closely is the agriculture overtime exemption. While the wheat industry doesn't have as much at stake as do other, more labor-intensive ag sectors, we are supporting the industry's fight against retroactive overtime pay. The state's dairy industry estimates that retroactive overtime pay could cost it upwards of \$49 million per year, going back three years. I think it is unfortunate that while it seems this court case was trying to benefit agricultural workers, it might actually end up hurting them as employers will likely have to restrict workers to 40 hours a week, even during peak harvesting/processing periods. WAWG will be actively monitoring and reporting to our members any news on this front.

As we go forward into this legislative session, I hope wheat growers will reach out to the WAWG office or board with any questions, and let us know what you think as issues come up. We are here to represent you. Also, if you have any interest in becoming more active with the wheat growers association, we are always looking for more members to help advocate for our cause. ■

**Cover photo:** As the 2021 Washington State Legislative Session commences, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers is springing to action with a game plan tailored for a virtual advocacy effort. See page 20 for details. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.



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We fight every day to ensure that life on the family farm continues to prosper and grow.

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If you are not a member, please consider joining today.

## LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

|  | Greensheet Newsletter | Wheat Life Magazine | National Wheat Grower Newsletter | Annual Harvest Prints | WAWG Convention Free Registration | One Vote per Member |
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## WAWG's current top priorities are:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Protecting agriculture from liability for complying with state overtime laws.         | ✓ Maintaining a safe and sound transportation system that includes rail, river and roads. |
| ✓ Fighting mandatory carbon regulations that would raise prices on fuel and fertilizer. | ✓ Protecting existing tax policy.   |
|   | ✓ Preserving the Snake River dams.  |

**If these issues are important to your operation, become a member today and help us educate our legislators and advocate for agriculture.**  
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- National Wheat Grower updates
- State and national legislative updates



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## Growers review virtual advocacy plan in board meeting

The first state board meeting of 2021 of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) was primarily concerned with setting state and national priorities and discussing an advocacy plan that takes advantage of this year's virtual state legislative session.

Diana Carlen, WAWG's lobbyist, told growers at the Jan. 12 meeting that instead of concentrating on meeting with as many legislators as possible during the normal, two-day trip to Olympia, wheat growers can spread out their interactions over the entire session, which might lead to more meetings overall. Remote testimony and submitting written comments will also play a big part in WAWG's advocacy strategy.

"Since we can't have in-person meetings and you can't come to town to testify, we want to be strategic and have opportunities for our members to be able to testify remotely so it's not just lobbyists speaking," she said. "We would like to identify some WAWG experts on various hot button issues that we can lean on when we need testimony and for meetings with legislators."

Carlen said the main issues this session are likely to be carbon taxes and regulation; tax incentives and a capital gains tax; budgets; pesticide regulation; and overtime pay for agricultural workers. WAWG will also be advocating for the lower Snake River dams.

"Labor is going to be a huge issue this session," she said. "With the courts throwing out the overtime exemption as it applies to dairy, the ag community is working on legislation to protect farmers from retroactive liability at this time."

Carbon regulation, in the form of a low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) and a cap and trade system, are other issues that are likely to dominate the legislative session. Carlen said there are a number of carbon ideas being floated, but that Democrats aren't united on which carbon policy they want to move forward with.



"Cap and trade is more complex and might be hard for Democrats to get through in a session where they can't sit at a table and negotiate it," she said. "It's a complicated measure, and something WAWG needs to be active on."

Carbon regulation is also an issue that wheat growers will be dealing with at the national level, said Nicole Berg, a Benton County grower and vice president of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG). Board members were united in the need to have unbiased research showing agriculture is a great source of carbon sequestration.

"Whether at a national or state level, there needs to be research that we can point to that has substance," Berg said. "At the national level, this will be a big topic of conversation. There's lots of diversity across the U.S. when it comes to how farmers think about carbon regulation. I think Washington, California and Oregon will probably be leading these conversations, as well as the East Coast. This will definitely be at the forefront of discussions for the next six to nine months, at least."

Other national priorities for WAWG include working to establish relationships with incoming agency leaders; expanding markets for trade; Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development funding; farm bill conservation and safety net programs; pesticide regulations; and broadband infrastructure.

For more information on WAWG's 2021 advocacy plan and its state priorities, see page 20.

The board also heard updates from Jon Wyss, state executive director of the Farm Service Agency, and Roylene Comes At Night, Natural Resources Conservation Service's state conservationist.

Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), gave a short update on trade, telling the board that soft white exports are up 47 percent this year, primarily due to Korea and China, which has im-



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ported 2.3 million tons of wheat so far this marketing year, making them wheat's third largest market. South America and Central America imports are up, and a couple of containers of soft white are heading to Ecuador and Peru.

"I think we will continue to see improvements and expansion in South America," Squires said.

The WGC is also gearing up for its annual Research Review, which is currently scheduled for Feb. 17-18 as a remote meeting. Growers who are interested in attending should contact the WGC at (509) 456-2481.

WAWG also took care of some business by appointing members to the executive committee and appointing committee chairs. Anthony Smith of Benton County, Marci Green of Spokane County and Ben Adams of Douglas County were all named to the executive committee. Committee chairs are:

- Natural Resources Committee-Nicole Berg and Larry Cochran;
- Marketing Committee-Andy Juris;
- Membership Committee-Anthony Smith;
- Public Information/Public Relations-Marci Green;
- Research Committee-Jim Moyer;
- State Legislation Committee-Howard McDonald;
- Transportation Committee-Ryan Poe;
- National Legislation Committee-Marci Green and Ben Adams;
- National Barley Growers Association-Sandi Swannack; and
- National Barley Improvement Committee-Larry Cochran.

The next state board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 9. ■

## EPA, WSDA approve new wireworm seed treatment

Last month, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) and the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) received word that their support for a new wireworm seed treatment had been successful.



Teraxxa, manufactured by BASF, was approved in mid-January by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in 2021, just in time for spring seeding. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) approved the label shortly after.

"This is great news for Washington wheat growers who are fighting against wireworms," said Ryan Poe, WAWG president and a grower from Grant County. "Farmers have very few options against wireworms, a pest that can cause significant yield losses. We appreciate the actions by the EPA and the WSDA to complete registration of Teraxxa."

In December, WAWG and the WGC sent a letter to the EPA supporting an emergency exemption (Section 18) for Teraxxa. The letter states that "...growers need a new seed treatment that controls wireworms (causes mortality) rather than suppresses populations during the early season. Currently registered products...intoxicate wireworms but do not consistently kill them. They survive and reproduce, leading to increasing populations and damage."

According to BASF, the active ingredient in Teraxxa seed treatment, broflanilide, is a new class of chemistry that delivers a new mode of action to protect against wireworms. Broflanilide binds to the wireworm's central nervous system causing hyperactivity of nerves and muscles, which ultimately eliminates the pest altogether. Trials show it to be highly effective with rapid wireworm mortality on contact across all species and life stages, with field studies showing 80 to 90 percent reduction in wireworms. ■

## USDA announces quality loss assistance for natural disasters

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that sign up for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program had begun. Funded by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, this new program provides assistance to producers who suffered eligible crop quality losses due to natural disasters occurring in 2018 and 2019. The deadline to apply for QLA is March 5, 2021.

"Farmers and livestock producers nationwide experienced crop quality losses due to natural disasters in 2018 and 2019," said Bill Northey, USDA undersecretary for farm production and conservation. "We have worked diligently over the past couple of years to roll out meaningful disaster assistance programs to help alleviate the substantial financial loss experienced by so many agricultural producers and are pleased to offer quality loss assistance as added relief. Many of the eligible producers



have already received compensation for quantity losses.”

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, except for grazed crops and value-loss crops, such as honey, maple sap, aquaculture, floriculture, mushrooms, ginseng root, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees and turfgrass sod.

Additionally, crops that were sold or fed to livestock or that are in storage may be eligible; however, crops that were destroyed before harvest are not eligible. Crop quality losses occurring after harvest, due to deterioration in storage or that could have been mitigated, are also not eligible.

Assistance is based on a producer's harvested affected production of an eligible crop, which must have had at least a 5 percent quality loss reflected through a quality discount or for forage crops, a nutrient loss, such as total digestible nutrients.

Losses must have been a result of a qualifying disaster event (hurricane, excessive moisture, flood, qualifying drought, tornado, typhoon, volcanic activity, snowstorm or wildfire) or a related condition that occurred in calendar years 2018 and/or 2019. Assistance is available for eligible producers in counties that received a qualifying Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation because of one or more of the qualifying disaster events or related conditions. For drought, producers are eligible for QLA if the loss occurred in an area within a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D3 (extreme drought) or higher intensity level during 2018 or 2019. Producers in counties that did not receive a qualifying declaration or designation may still apply but must also provide supporting documentation to establish that the crop was

Advertorial

## BIN-BUSTER YIELDS START WITH VARIETY SELECTION

2020 National Wheat Yield Contest winners share tips for success.



Combining in Rexburg, Idaho

Winning the National Wheat Foundation's National Wheat Yield Contest (NWYC) requires hard work, dedication and a focus on crop management and choosing the right variety.

### Data-Driven Decision

Trevor Stout from Genesee, Idaho, won Bin Buster for the spring wheat dryland production category with a yield of 139.2 Bu/A\* with WB9303 variety. A good growing season with good rainfall helped demonstrate the yield potential of the product.

“WB9303 seems a little earlier in maturity and throws up a head quicker than WB9668,” said Trevor. “We thought the head size had more yield potential and the protein was as good as WB9668. We liked that a lot in this variety and are going all WB9303 next season.”

Trevor and his dad, Doug, have their fields zone-mapped and work with grid soil sampling and variable-rate fertility in an effort to increase yields and manage input costs. With six years of agronomic data about their fields to study and make decisions on, they have increased the farm average wheat yield by at least 10 bushels per acre, said Doug.

“We are proactive in studying the best zones within fields and pushing the crop to see how much we can raise the yield within those zones,” said Doug. “We are hitting 200-bushel-yield winter wheat in areas, and 130 to 140 bushel range on dryland spring wheat, receiving only about 22 inches of rainfall. My wife builds variable-rate maps. We are constantly looking back on harvest data and tweaking our fertility rates, trying to be better.”

New seed genetics plays a part as well.

“Older varieties just cannot compete with what is coming from the breeding programs now,” said Doug. “It is a race with the wheat companies to come up with better varieties. It is good for the wheat industry to have the companies competing. It means wheat is a valuable crop.”

### Challenge Yourself

In the irrigated spring wheat category, Terry Wilcox in Rexburg, Idaho, took the Bin Buster award with a yield of 172.6\* Bu/A with WB9668 variety. Wilcox and his brothers are third-generation farmers on an 11,000-acre multiple-crop operation. The 2020 growing season began wet, which affected timely planting of some fields. His WB9668 variety was planted early, however, and grew off to a good stand.

“The yield average on our Madison County farm was just under 140 Bu/A, so 172.6 Bu/A is a very good yield,” Wilcox said. “We picked a good spot in that field to enter, and we picked a good variety to plant. It is dependable. The millers seem to like it. It doesn't seem to have many disease problems, and it stands up good for harvest.”

Competing in the NWYC requires extra work, time and focus on details, but for Wilcox, it is all part of staying on top of his game.

“I heard an African proverb — ‘If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door’ — and that is a lot of what you have to do if you want to compete in the contest and be successful in general,” he said. “Every time I've entered, I've placed, so I am encouraged to keep entering. I think you have to challenge yourself to do better and improve and try new technology and new varieties to be successful.”

To learn more about WestBred wheat varieties, go to [westbred.com](http://westbred.com).

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\*Performance may vary, from location to location and from year to year, as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible and should consider the impacts of these conditions on the grower's fields. Bayer, Bayer Cross, WestBred and Design® and WestBred® are registered trademarks of Bayer Group. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2021 Bayer Group. All Rights Reserved.



directly affected by a qualifying disaster event.

To determine QLA eligibility and payments, FSA considers the total quality loss caused by all qualifying natural disasters in cases where a crop was impacted by multiple events.

When applying, producers are asked to provide verifiable documentation to support claims of quality loss or nutrient loss in the case of forage crops. For crops that have been sold, grading must have been completed within 30 days of harvest, and for forage crops, a laboratory analysis must have been completed within 30 days of harvest. Some acceptable forms of documentation include sales receipts from buyers; settlement sheets; truck or warehouse scale tickets; written sales contracts; similar records that represent actual and specific quality loss information; and forage tests for nutritional values.

QLA payments are based on formulas for the type of crop (forage or nonforage) and loss documentation submitted. Based on this documentation, FSA is calculating payments based on the producer's own individual loss or based on the county average loss. More information on payments can be found on [farmers.gov/quality-loss](https://farmers.gov/quality-loss).

FSA will issue payments once the application period ends. If the total amount of calculated QLA payments exceeds available program funding, payments will be prorated.

For each crop year, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive, directly or indirectly, is \$125,000. Payments made to a joint operation (including a general partnership or joint venture) will not exceed \$125,000, multiplied by the number of persons and legal entities that comprise the ownership of the joint



**CONSERVATION CLEANUP.** Mowing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ground in Benton County with Mt. Adams peaking up over the horizon. A reminder to producers that the general CRP sign-up for 2021 ends Feb. 12, 2021. Photo by Nicole Berg.

operation. A person or legal entity is ineligible for a QLA payment if the person's or legal entity's average adjusted gross income exceeds \$900,000, unless at least 75 percent is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities.

All producers receiving QLA program payments are required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60 percent coverage level or higher. If eligible, QLA participants may meet the insurance purchase requirement by purchasing Whole-Farm Revenue Protection coverage offered through USDA's Risk Management Agency.

For more information, visit [farmers.gov/quality-loss](https://farmers.gov/quality-loss), or contact your local USDA service center. ■

## RMA extends crop insurance flexibilities

The U.S. Agriculture Department's Risk Management Agency (RMA) has announced it is extending crop insurance flexibilities for producers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, relief provided for electronic notifications and signatures is extended through July 15, while organic certification, replant self-certification and assignment of indemnity are extended through June 30.

"We recognize that American agriculture continues to face challenges due to the pandemic," RMA Administrator Martin Barbre said. "RMA remains committed to providing flexibility that supports the health and safety of all parties while also ensuring that the federal crop insurance program continues to serve



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as a vital risk management tool.”

RMA is also allowing Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) further flexibilities for production reporting, submitting written agreement requests and obtaining producer signatures for written agreement offers.

Producer signatures for written agreement offers, issued by RMA on or before June 30, 2021, with an expiration date on or before July 30, 2021, will allow producer signatures to be accepted after the expiration date with proper self-certification or documentation. However, all documentation and signatures for these offers must be completed no later than Aug. 2, 2021. AIPs also have 30 business days to submit written agreement requests and applicable documentation for requests with submission deadlines prior to July 1, 2021. ■

## 2021 National Wheat Yield Contest accepting enrollment

The National Wheat Foundation (NWF) is pleased to announce that it is accepting grower enrollment for the 2021 National Wheat Yield Contest! The contest is divided into two primary competition categories: winter wheat and spring wheat, and two subcategories: dryland and irrigated.

The Foundation is accepting entries for winter and spring wheat. The deadline for winter wheat entries is May 15 with an early registration deadline of April 1. The spring wheat entry deadline is Aug. 1, with an early registration deadline of June 15. The wheat contest is administered entirely online, and growers can register at [yieldcontest.wheatfoundation.org](http://yieldcontest.wheatfoundation.org).


“Now in its sixth year, the contest will be carried out under the direction of the Foundation’s new project manager, Anne Osborne. We hope to continue to break our record of eligible entries and for the quality criteria to continue to make the contest more competitive,” said NWF Board president and Texas wheat grower David Cleavinger. “Again, the National Wheat Foundation would like to thank our sponsors for helping to make the contest available to all wheat growers across the United States, and *DTN/Progressive Farmer* for providing exclusive coverage of the contest.”

The 2021 National Wheat Yield Contest sponsors include AgriMaxx, Ardent Mills, BASF, CROPLAN® by WinField United, Grain Craft, John Deere, Miller Milling, Nutrien and WestBred.

*DTN/Progressive Farmer* is the official publication of the contest. ■

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With their annual membership, Washington Association of Wheat Growers members can receive industry updates through the weekly digital Greensheet ALERT via email. If you are not receiving this ALERT, either we don’t have your current email address, or our ALERT is going into your spam folder. Call our office at (509) 659-0610 to make sure we have your current email address. ■



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# POLICY MATTERS

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## 2021 Legislative Session hits the ground running

By Diana Carlen  
*WAWG Lobbyist*

The Washington State Legislature convened in Olympia Jan. 11 for the 2021 session that will be unlike any other in state history. State lawmakers will be conducting most of their 105-day session remotely, holding hearings on legislation and even voting via web conferencing. All public buildings on the capitol campus are closed to the public, and there is limited access for legislators and staff.

On the first day of the 2021 Legislative Session, however, all legislators convened in person to adopt new rules allowing them to go virtual. The state capitol building was protected by perimeter fencing and members of the National Guard as legislators entered to meet in person for one day. Socially distanced and wearing N-95 masks, they debated and adopted rules to allow for a virtual legislative session. Republicans challenged and voted against the virtual format, arguing it would result in limited public access and transparency. With large Democrat majorities, the rules passed along a party-line vote.

After adopting their rules to operate a mostly remote session, most legislators returned home to work from their home or district office. It appears that a limited number of legislators are working from their Olympia offices since they cannot meet with people on campus.

In a surprise move, the Senate and House both held virtual floor action this week, adopting a concurrent resolution to extend 26 of Gov. Inslee's COVID-19 temporary emergency proclamations that were set to expire. Since the pandemic hit, the four corners of the legislature have had to approve proclamations issued by the governor lasting more than 30 days, otherwise they expire. While the proclamations at issue in the concurrent resolution were not controversial, Republicans objected to adopting the resolution because there would essentially be no more legislative oversight over the proclamation process. The measure passed both chambers on a party-line vote. It will likely be the first of many debates this session regarding the governor's emergency orders and COVID-19 restrictions.

While long-year sessions typically start out at a slower pace with lots of work sessions in the beginning, legislative committees have hit the ground running, holding public hearings on controversial bills the first week such

as proposals to enact a capital gains tax and a low carbon fuel standard (LCFS). There was such a high turnout of the public wanting to testify on both proposals that they ran out of time during the public hearings to hear from everyone. In fact, they heard testimony on the low carbon fuel standard over two hearing dates, and still not everyone was able to be heard who signed up to testify.

### Capital gains tax gets heard in Senate

On Jan. 14, a public hearing was held in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on **SB 5096**. This proposal is similar to proposals seen in past years and is legislation requested by the governor. The bill would institute a 9 percent tax on capital gains earnings above \$25,000 for individuals or \$50,000 for joint filers. Under the proposal, the tax would begin Jan. 1, 2022.

Sales or exchanges of some capital assets are explicitly excluded from the capital gains tax:

- Residential dwellings along with the land upon which the dwelling is located;
- Assets held in a retirement account;
- Livestock related to farming or ranching;
- Agricultural land that meets certain requirements;
- Certain types of property used in a trade or business such as machinery and equipment that have been immediately expensed;
- Capital assets acquired and used only for purposes of a trade or business of a sole proprietorship; and
- Timber and timberlands.

Specifically, the agriculture exemption does not apply to the sale or exchange of agricultural land by an individual who has regular, continuous and substantial involvement in the operation of the agriculture that meets the criteria for material participation in an activity under Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 469(h) of the internal revenue code for the 10 years prior to the date of the sale or exchange of the agricultural land.

The hearing drew a lot of attention from both opponents and proponents of the tax proposal, with more than 100 individuals signed up to testify including the governor's budget office, the business community, labor and many private citizens. Much of the testimony against the bill



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focused on the significant impacts such a tax would have on businesses throughout the state in a particularly devastating year due to the pandemic. Opponents also insist it is really an income tax that is likely to be challenged in court if passed. Washington courts have repeatedly held that income taxes are unconstitutional.

## Low carbon fuel standard hearing

On Jan. 14, a public hearing was held in the House Environment and Energy Committee on carry-over legislation from previous sessions aimed at reducing carbon in the transportation sector. **HB 1091** requires the Washington State Department of Ecology to establish a Clean Fuels Program that limits greenhouse gas emissions per unit of transportation fuel, similar to programs underway in British Columbia, California and Oregon.

This bill is a top priority for Gov. Inslee. Representatives from the oil industry, trucking industry, business community and agriculture are opposed to the legislation. While there is an exemption for dyed special fuel used for agricultural purposes, it is limited to diesel used on the farm itself and does not account for the fuel needed to transport products to market. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers signed in opposed to this bill.

The main arguments against a LCFS include how cost effective an LCFS is in reducing carbon emissions and the impacts on fuel prices. A recent study conducted by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (a regional air quality group) when it was considering its own regional program may offer the most accurate picture of what Washington could expect financially. That analysis concluded that a LCFS could raise regional gas prices by \$.57 per gallon by 2030.

For the past two years, proposals to implement a LCFS have passed out of the House but stalled in the Senate. Notably, the LCFS does not generate money for transportation projects, which has been the concern of moderate Democrats in recent years.

## Cap and trade proposal

Legislation to establish a statewide cap and trade program was introduced this week by Sen. Carlyle (R-Seattle) in partnership with Gov. Inslee as governor request legislation. **SB 5126** would cap greenhouse gas emissions from the state's largest polluters and create a carbon credits market. Money raised from the sale of the credits would go to fund various environmental programs. The bill was heard in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on Jan. 19. See [wawg.org](http://wawg.org) for testimony submitted by WAWG President Ryan Poe in the hearing.

Similar legislation was introduced the past couple of

sessions, but has not had much traction. With almost no stakeholder work done in the interim, it is unclear if this legislation will pass this session. A cap and trade program would take a couple of years to set up and will not provide immediate revenue to the state. It is also competing with a green bond proposal funded by a carbon tax that is expected to be introduced shortly from Carbon Washington who previously proposed two different ballot measures that were rejected. Some Democrat legislators see a LCFS and a price in carbon (either through a cap and trade program or a carbon tax) as complimentary to one another, but passage of one, let alone both, would impose significant increased costs on gas and energy prices. ■

## Washington wheat grower appointed to trade committee

**Randy Suess**, a retired wheat grower from Whitman County, has been appointed to serve on the federal Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade in Grains, Feed, Oilseeds and Planting Seeds.



The Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) is comprised of senior representatives from across the U.S. agricultural community who provide advice to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on trade policy matters, including the operation of existing trade agreements and the negotiation of new agreements. Members of the six APACs provide technical advice and guidance from the perspective of their specific product sectors. The appointed advisors will serve until 2025.

"I can think of very few people who are more qualified to fulfill the purpose of the advisory committee to ensure that U.S. trade policy and trade negotiating objectives adequately reflect U.S. public and private sector interests," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). "Randy has been a WAWG committee chair for nearly 20 years, served 11 years with the Washington Grain Commission and was chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates. He has a lifetime of service in the agricultural industry with extensive knowledge and exposure to world markets." ■





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## NORTH BY NORTHWEST SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUTREACH REVIEW

Overall, while all planned in-person events were cancelled in 2020, it was still a good year for digital engagement for the Washington Wheat Foundation.

**Social media.** The top post on Facebook in December was a historical image dating back to 1905. Instagram engagements were up 22 percent with continuing growth on that platform. More than 240 new followers came in December across all platforms. Numbers were down slightly compared to the earlier part of 2020, but with new content planned for 2021, we hope to see those numbers rebound.

**Videos and YouTube.** December was the best month ever on YouTube, with almost 100 views on our channel, and we added two new subscribers! The no. 1 video was the wheat technology piece from 2019 featuring Malone Farms. There are about 20 original videos posted on the channel since 2019, with a few more to be uploaded. Thirteen videos have been created since July, and subsequently, video engagement was up on Facebook compared to the first half of 2020. Videos play well on social media, and the plan is to continue to produce this style of content into the spring and summer.

**Website.** Since July, there have been more than 1,100 visits to the website, with about 200 in December alone. The top visiting locations were Seattle and Spokane (see map). Other than the homepage, the most popular pages are history, meet a farmer and where we farm pages.



**Articles.** Research started for a new series of content that was launched in January. Features focused on 125-plus year old farms. The short pieces generated are and will be featured on social media and the website. The goal is to teach the common consumer about the heritage of farming in Washington, the change in technology on farms, and how family farms have survived throughout the decades. If you are a family or know of a family farm that homesteaded in 1895 or earlier, please reach out to krowe@nxnw.net. ■

### Reminders:

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

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# Making a connection

## WAWG's advocacy plan for the state's virtual 2021 Legislative Session

For the first time ever, the Washington State 2021 Legislative Session will be almost completely virtual. There will be no scheduled events or meetings allowed on the capitol campus. All legislative buildings will be closed to the public and to most staff. Legislators and staff will generally be working from home or from their district offices and holding meetings virtually. In addition, all committee meetings will be held remotely with some modified guidelines in place. Most notably, people must sign up for remote testimony no later than one hour before the hearing, rather than right up until the scheduled start time as it has been in the past.

In light of all the changes, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) will also have to change how we stay actively engaged in legislative issues, and how we advocate for the industry. Those changes include:

- **Meeting with legislators.** Rather than spending two days in Olympia meeting with as many legislators as possible, WAWG is scheduling virtual meetings throughout the session. We will also be targeting our message more specifically to each legislator, depending on their background, the issues they are focused on and their knowledge of agriculture.
- **Committee hearings.** We anticipate that more people will sign up to testify than in previous years because of the convenience of not having to travel to Olympia. It is still unclear, however, how the committee chairs will select who ultimately gets to testify. WAWG will be choosing carefully which issues/bills we testify on. In some cases, we anticipate signing in on the record on something and following up with legislators later.

- **Written communications.** We will likely have to rely more on written communication vs. in-person communication than we have in the past. Grassroots lobbying will be important this session to make sure the wheat industry is heard, and we will be encouraging members to contact their legislator when important issues arise. Our lobbying team will help draft messaging points on key issues that members can send to their legislators.
- **Issue experts.** WAWG will be organizing teams made up of our board and officers that will concentrate on specific issues and be responsible for testifying on those issues as necessary.

Transparency will be another key issue that WAWG will be watching. With less opportunity to monitor hearings in person, not to mention the limitations for public involvement caused by broadband restrictions, we are encouraging members to watch committee meetings on TVW, Washington State's Public Affairs Network, at tvw.org.

"It will be extremely important that growers be willing to provide written testimony—and possibly testify if we call on them—on all of the issues we are facing this legislative session," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "Our staff is busy putting a strategy in place that takes advantage of our ability to meet with legislators throughout the session without traveling to the west side. We expect this session to be challenging, but we are confident we'll be successful in our efforts."

See the following pages for more information on WAWG's 2021 state priorities. ■











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# Washington Association of Wheat Growers 2021 state legislative priorities

## PROTECTING AGRICULTURE FROM LIABILITY FOR COMPLYING WITH STATE LAW

WAWG supports legislation clarifying the scope of a recent court case requiring dairy workers to be paid overtime and overturning a 1959 state law 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. **Washington farmers face significant uncertainty and potentially devastating financial consequences for their past compliance with the overtime statute if this is applied retroactively.**

## PRESERVING WASHINGTON'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Carbon policies should ensure that Washington state retains its economic competitiveness and not disadvantage Washington farmers. Carbon policies, such as a low carbon fuel standard and cap and trade programs, will raise fuel, fertilizer, transportation and processing costs. **Farmers cannot pass these costs on.** Only 6 percent of emissions are attributed to ag, yet ag soils provide significant benefits by sequestering and storing carbon through sustainable farming practices. The wheat industry should be fully involved in discussions of any policy or legislation relating to climate change, and sound science showing ag's environmental benefits should be considered. Additionally, any gas tax generated in Washington should be reinvested in infrastructure.

## PROTECTING EXISTING TAX POLICY

*Retaining all food and farm-related tax incentives are critical to the agricultural industry.* Agricultural tax incentives are a valuable benefit to our economy and offer farmers a more level playing field with other major ag production states. Incentives are intended to be a long-term state investment into the agricultural industry.

## PROVIDING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DNR'S AGRICULTURAL LEASE PROGRAM

DNR's ag leases contain a provision allowing DNR to unilaterally terminate a lease with only 180 days advance notice if DNR has a plan to generate higher rent for the property. **To allow some assurances that land investments will be protected and realized, WAWG supports legislation sponsored by Rep. Chris Corry (HB 1199) requiring fair compensation to farmers for the remainder of their lease term when DNR chooses to terminate an ag lease early.**

## ABOUT WASHINGTON WHEAT

- Family wheat farms are one of the largest economic drivers of jobs in Eastern Washington.
- The Washington wheat industry contributed \$793 million in production value to the state's economy in 2019.
- Agriculture is the state's second largest export category of products shipped through Washington ports.
- Approximately 90 percent of the state's grain is exported, primarily to Asian markets such as the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia and South Korea.
- The wheat industry creates a trade surplus for our state and offers the most dependable, high quality grain around the world.
- Wheat provides 20 percent of worldwide calories consumed annually.



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**WAWG supports the findings in the federal EIS and opposes any effort to remove or disrupt the Snake River dam system.**

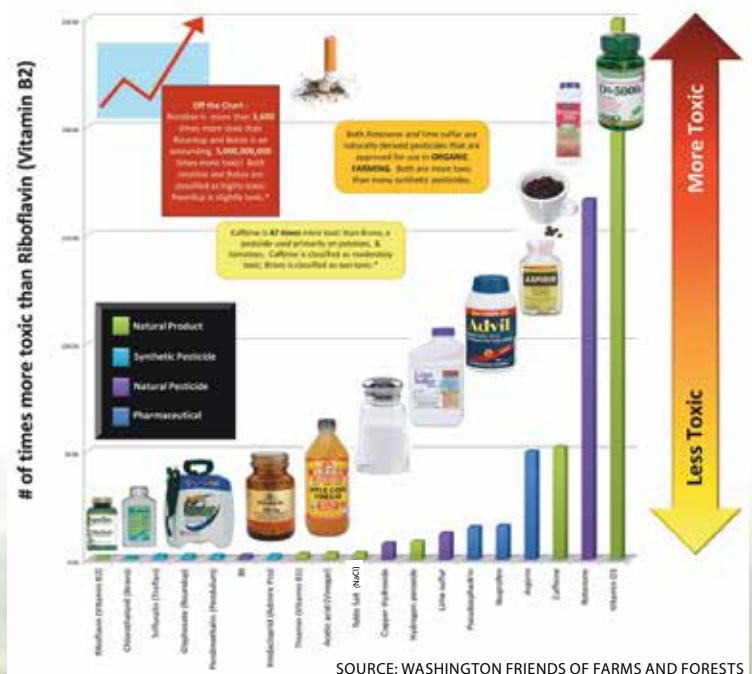
## PROMOTING BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Broadband has become a critical service for economic development, education and health care. **WAWG supports expanding and improving internet connectivity (broadband) in rural, unserved and underserved areas.**

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Washington Wheat Exports     | \$660,806,171          |
| Indirect Output              | \$581,338,371          |
| Induced Output               | \$578,664,838          |
| <b>Total Economic Output</b> | <b>\$1,820,809,380</b> |
| Direct Employment            | 2,216                  |
| Indirect Employment          | 3,137                  |
| Induced Employment           | 4,090                  |
| <b>Total Employment</b>      | <b>9,443</b>           |

Source: WSU SES IMPACT Center, 2019 data

## How Toxic Is It?



SOURCE: WASHINGTON FRIENDS OF FARMS AND FORESTS

## 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.**

## INNOVATION, RESEARCH, SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

**WAWG supports Washington State University's \$8 million request in the 2021-23 capital budget to demolish 60-year-old Johnson Hall to leverage \$104.9 million in federal funds to build a new USDA Plant Biosciences Building.** This will co-locate USDA and university scientists researching wheat, potatoes, tree fruit, grapes and other commodity crops.





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# License laws

Under EPA rules, no recertification extension allowed for Washington pesticide applicators

By Trista Crossley

Unfortunately, Washington state pesticide applicators struggling to get their recertification credits done on time won't be able to count on an extension.

**Christina Zimmerman**, program manager with the Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) Licensing and Recertification Program, Pesticide Management Division, explained that in 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the federal rule on pesticide application certification and training to limit the recertification period to five years. States can have their own limits, as long as they are within EPA's maximum limit; Washington's was already set at five years.

"The EPA issued temporary guidance regarding the certification of pesticide applicators during the pandemic. One of those temporary modifications you can make to your state plan allowed for an extension of the recertification period beyond what you already told the EPA you are limiting it to," Zimmerman said. "However, the caveat was you can do that as long as the recertification period

doesn't extend beyond five years. For those states that have two- and three-year periods, it worked out for them. We couldn't even consider that as an option."

WSDA instead turned to the factors they could control, namely modifying their recertification standards to allow for webinar and hybrid courses that the department hadn't previously considered and expediting review of courses.

Between April 1, 2020, and the end of the year, Zimmerman said there were a total of 768 course sessions available, and of that, almost 500 of them were open, meaning anyone could register for them. The kicker, though, was that only 22 of those courses open to the public were in person. That change to an online format likely delayed some people who weren't comfortable accessing the courses via computer or just preferred the networking and social components of in-person sessions. Zimmerman said she thought a lot of people waited a little too long to see if on-site courses would resume.

"Sponsors just decided not to hold anything because of the safety risk. I think there were a huge number of credits out there, but they were just in a format that some people weren't comfortable with," she said, adding that the majority of recertification courses in 2021 will likely stay online as well.

Private applicators need 20 credits to recertify, but only 10 credits a year are allowed to count. Commercial applicators need 40 credits, and only 15 a year count. That limit





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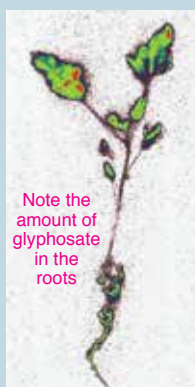
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could be another reason why some applicators are struggling.

“People forget, because it’s such a long recertification cycle, that our state law has a limit on the number of credits you can earn in a calendar year,” Zimmerman said. “The goal there is to require an applicator to try to get continuing education throughout their recertification period rather than getting it all in one year.”

In the past few weeks, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has heard from producers that finding the credits they need isn’t the difficult part—it’s the lack of fast, reliable internet access and having to share what access they do have with kids’ schooling and a spouse’s job. While one of the advantages of an online course is that they can usually be accessed at any time, that’s not very helpful when there is no good time.

Michelle Hennings, WAWG’s executive director, said the organization will take the issue up with Congress to see if an extension could be done there.

“We know some growers are really struggling to recertify their applicator’s license because they just can’t access the online courses they need as easily as they could attend in-person ones. This is another issue highlighting broadband problems many people living in rural areas experience,” she said.

Andy Juris, WAWG’s secretary/treasurer, lives in Klickitat County. He has a commercial applicator’s license and said it can be a challenge to get enough credits even when there are plenty of in-person meetings to attend.

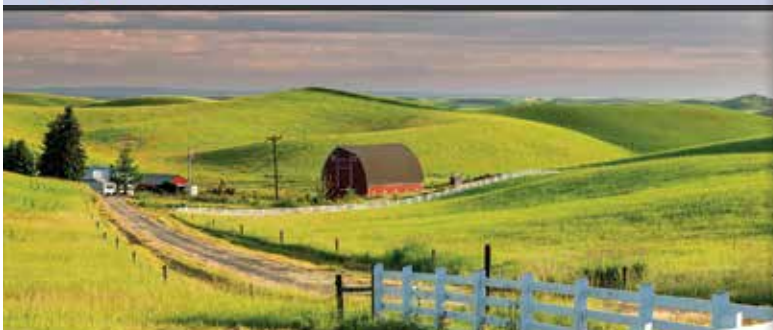
“In Bickleton, we don’t have reliable or fast internet,” he said, adding that in order to attend many of his online wheat industry meetings, sometimes he has to drive 30 or 40 miles out of town in order to get a reliable signal. “There’s also an increased financial burden as most of the online options require a fee. I would hope the EPA would take a more understanding and proactive approach to this problem as it will eventually place a lot of folks, who are trying to follow the rules in good faith, in a really tough position.”

For those applicators that have no hope of getting enough recertification credits, the best thing to do might be to drop that effort and retest to maintain their license. Zimmerman said the only reduction in WSDA testing has been



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at their Everett location because it is a Washington State University campus that's currently closed. WSDA tests weekly in Olympia and Yakima, monthly in Spokane and Moses Lake and bimonthly in Wenatchee.

"If you look at the beginning of the year and you see there is no possible way you'll be able to recertify by earning credits, you just might as well not try to and just retest closer to the end of the year," she said. "For example, a private applicator may only have 9 credits right now going into 2021, and their recertification period ends at end of this year. Even if they got the maximum (credits they are allowed), they will still be one credit short. They might as well not spend money going to courses and just plan on retesting at the end of the year."

The WSDA website includes a searchable list of all the open recertification courses offered in the state. As of mid-January, there were 338 open courses with 317 of them being offered online or as a webinar. Applicators can also search by license number or name to see the courses they've participated in, how many credits they've earned, and how many credits are applicable towards recertification. WSU offers prelicense courses to prepare applicators for the exam, not to mention recertification courses. See sidebar for more information.

For producers that still need help, they can call WSDA at (877) 301-4555 or email them at [license@agr.wa.gov](mailto:license@agr.wa.gov).

"We can work with producers on finding them courses that are occurring in their area. If they are in a county where there's not as many restrictions on gatherings, there may be courses occurring," Zimmerman said. "If they have a pesticide dealer or an organization in their area that they can request to hold an in-person

## Resources

The Washington Department of Agriculture's website has a wealth of information for applicators who need to find recertification courses, look up or renew their license.

- A recertification course search will look for all open recertification courses to earn credits towards a license. [agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/recertification/recertification-courses](http://agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/recertification/recertification-courses)
  - A license search will allow an applicator to search for a license by name, license number or company. When you open your license record, you can click on your license type and get a credit report listing all courses you've participated in and earned credit for. The report will tell you how many credits you took and how many of those credits are applicable toward your license. [agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/pesticide-and-spi-licensing/license-search](http://agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/pesticide-and-spi-licensing/license-search)
  - If any employer or other organization would like to sponsor a recertification course, they can find information on requirements for sponsoring a course and platform-specific guidance at [agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/recertification/sponsoring-a-course/webinar](http://agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/recertification/sponsoring-a-course/webinar)
  - License renewal forms for 2021 can be found online at [agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/pesticide-and-spi-licensing/license-renewal](http://agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/pesticide-license-and-recertification/pesticide-and-spi-licensing/license-renewal)
- Washington State University offers pesticide safety education classes, both webinars and 24/7 self-paced internet courses. You can find that information at [pep.wsu.edu/regonline/](http://pep.wsu.edu/regonline/). ■

course, we can certainly work with that too, even if it's a small course, like one credit for a handful of licensees, as long as our recertification policies are met. We are used to GS Long and Wilbur Ellis having these huge courses available to applicators, and those may not be happening anymore due to COVID restrictions, so we want to be as open as possible to the options presented to us." ■



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# 2021 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Register online at: [www.wawg.org/ammo-workshops](http://www.wawg.org/ammo-workshops)

**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 • WEBINAR**

*Speakers:* Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency

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

**FEB 23**

## **WEATHER RISK IN WHEAT PRODUCTION — AN OUTLOOK FOR 2021 • WEBINAR**

*Speaker:* Eric Snodgrass

*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](mailto:lori@wawg.org)

**Web:** [wawg.org/ammo-workshops](http://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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# The world according to Zeihan

POPULAR CONVENTION SPEAKER WILL TAKE PART IN 2021 GROWER WORKSHOPS

By Trista Crossley

**Peter Zeihan** is back, and he's got some things he wants to talk to Eastern Washington wheat growers about.

"Globalization is not coming back. For reasons demographically and now politically, the U.S. is culturally incapable of holding the world together. The events of Jan. 6 saw to that," he said. "Regardless of what you thought about the U.S. economically or demographically or in any other way...we can't even have the conversation of what we want out of the world right now, and we won't be able to have that conversation for a minimum of two years; 10 is probably more likely. The one force holding the world together is gone."

Zeihan, a geopolitical strategist and book author, has been a popular speaker at past Tri-State Grain Growers Conventions.

He'll be presenting a webinar, "America on the Edge," on Tuesday, Feb. 16, from 1-2:30 p.m., as part of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's (AMMO) winter 2021 schedule.

Another point Zeihan will be making is the world has aged out of being able to have a globalized system because there aren't enough consumers anymore, a process sped up by COVID-19.

"On average, the baby boomers retire in 2022. Since you save more as you age—until you hit retirement, then you never

save again—we were looking at ever easier credit, ever larger volumes of financial capacity until 2022, and then we just fall off a cliff," he explained. "Well, enter coronavirus. It removed 2020 from contention. It's largely removing 2021 from contention. Then we are in 2022. So the peak of globalization in terms of investment and of consumption was in January of 2020, and we will never get back to that. It's not a question of can we change presidents or change a policy set; it's just sheer numbers. It's over. So global consumption, global activity, global trade, global investment has all already peaked."

As Zeihan pointed out, when the world goes from consumption-led to anything else, "the very fabric of globalization no longer works because if there's no one to buy the stuff, then trade doesn't make sense. If trade doesn't make sense, production doesn't make sense. If production doesn't make sense, investment doesn't make sense."

The final point Zeihan wants to make to growers is there's no escaping American politics.

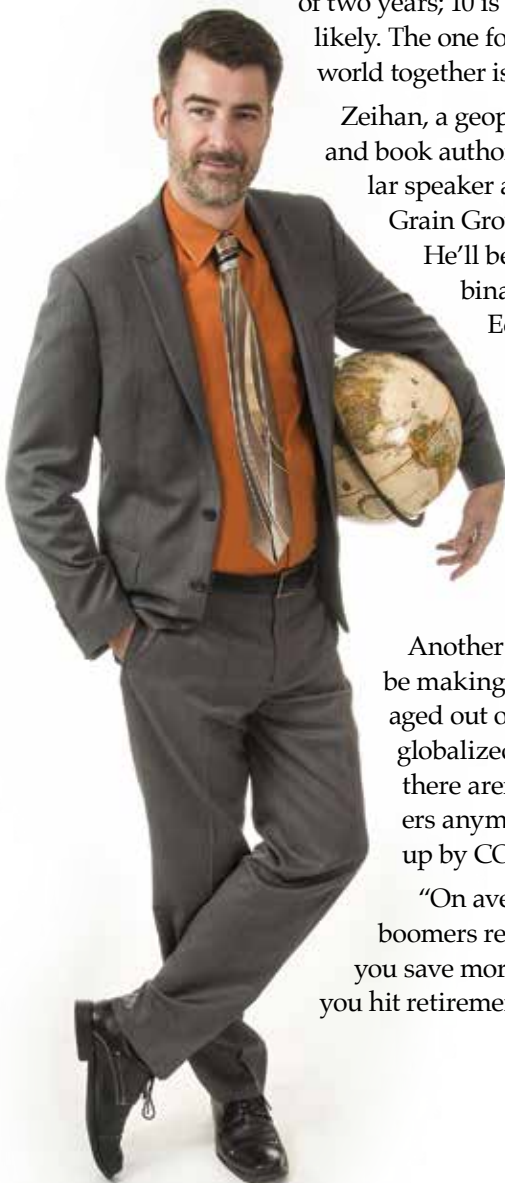
"We have to talk about what the new parties look like moving forward because the Republican Party and the Democratic Party as we understand them are both gone. They are not coming back," he said. "The question is, what are the new factional alignments?"

And what does all this mean for wheat growers? Zeihan said the world is going to see geopolitical rivalries pop up that impact trade.

"In your world, that means an end to the role the former Soviet Union plays in the wheat market. That's one-third of global wheat exports that are just going to go away. You can imagine what that's going to do for prices," he said.

At the end of Zeihan's presentation, there will be extra time for questions and answers. With virtual interactions, he said it is harder to judge an audience's engagement level and to know what parts of his presentation the audience is responding to. He hopes that by encouraging more questions, he is able to address the topics wheat growers are most interested in.

Growers can register for the free AMMO webinar at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/). ■





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# Above-average chance of being informed

SNODGRASS TO ADDRESS WEATHER'S ROLE IN MAKING GOOD GROWING, MARKETING DECISIONS

By Trista Crossley

There's an above-average chance that growers who tune into Eric Snodgrass' upcoming webinar will leave with a little extra knowledge to help them make informed growing decisions come spring.

Snodgrass, the principal atmospheric scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, will present as part of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's (AMMO) winter schedule on Feb. 23, from 9-10:30 a.m. Growers can register for the free webinar at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

"At that point, we'll be midway through winter. We'll really take stock in how much moisture we've got, and what the snowpack looks like," he said. "There'll also be a discussion about drought. There's a pretty widespread and prolific drought in the western U.S. right now, from the Plains to the coast. I want to step back and see what that drought means going into the growing season. Will drought have an impact on southern Plains wheat? Will it put pressure on the market? We'll also talk about the Black Sea region and take a look at a couple of other places globally."

Snodgrass will also discuss what the spring and summer forecast will look like, the fading La Niña and some long-term weather trends.

"The idea is to build a picture where we understand what happened, get ideas on the future and figure out a way to plan around that," he explained, adding he'll discuss where farmers can go to get accurate weather information. "I want to point farmers to resources to help them manage the risk that weather brings."

While Snodgrass' webinar was originally scheduled to be an in-person presentation, he said the webinar format suits him just fine as he considers it less disruptive for his audience than sitting in a large room. Attendees will be able to see his presentation with all its figures and graphs clearly on their screens, and they can stay in their pajamas if they want.

"Only thing I miss is the camaraderie, the handshakes, talking to people. We've got to figure out a way to share virtual coffee," he said.

Snodgrass was an AMMO presenter last year as well. In that 2020 workshop, he told the audience that 20 days is about the limit of predictability in weather forecasting. Asked if that has changed, he said it has, in a way. While



Eric Snodgrass is the principal atmospheric scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions. He will be looking at weather and the role it plays in making informed growing decisions on Feb. 23, from 9-10:30 a.m., as part of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's 2021 winter schedule. Growers can register for the free webinar at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

forecasters will likely never be able to predict exact temperatures or rainfall beyond three weeks, thanks to better observation and computing structure, they are getting better at predicting probabilities, such as the probability of the temperature being above average.

"Probabilities will all be more accurate. That's where the frontier of weather forecasting is going," he said.

Weather doesn't just impact growing crops, it can also influence the market. At times throughout the year, weather can drive the market prices, and each new forecast can quickly move the needle. It may not even matter if the forecasts are correct. If the markets suspect rain over key growing areas or begin to see drought development in the forecast, just the prediction of the impact on yields can move commodity prices. The forecast may completely fail, but price action has happened based on what was predicted. As an example, Snodgrass pointed to recent price rallies (at the beginning of January) that happened partly because of South American weather in soybean-growing regions.

"They haven't yet harvested the crop, but because of



forecasting, it has marketing people thinking there could be an issue with supply. People react to what they think is going to happen," he said. "The idea is that weather is ultimately a part of the puzzle by which we build our year-to-year profitability in this industry. It's not just weather on your fields, but weather on everybody's field that grows what you grow, plus corn, soybeans, cotton, oil prices, currency value, geopolitical issues, etc. It's a multi-faceted problem, and sometimes, I think the weather is the easiest thing to predict out of all of it." ■

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# The (ag) show must go on

By Trista Crossley

Can an ag show work as a virtual event? **Melissa Paul**, director of the Spokane Ag Show, thinks in some ways, it might even be better.

“We don’t have as many limitations as far as who we are serving and as far as who can attend and the information we are putting out there,” she explained.

The 2021 Spokane Ag Show will take place virtually over three days in late February—Feb. 23-25. Like the in-person event, it will feature exhibitors, seminars and offer pesticide recertification courses. Unlike previous years, the show will be free to attend, and many of its offerings will be accessible throughout the year.

But the decision to go all virtual for the 2021 show wasn’t made easily. Paul said they began discussing a virtual platform last August.

“With the amount of planning, either for a virtual or in-person show, we felt like we had to drive a stake in the ground and make a decision before late fall so we could build something either way,” she explained. “A lot of shows nationally continued to plan for an in-person show and secured places and then tried to roll it back. We felt like our clients would want certainty, so we researched platforms and made the decision in mid-October.”

Paul said there was never a choice not to have an ag show this year, as the nonprofit group in charge of the show feels a responsibility to make sure that producers, agribusiness professionals and businesses have a way to connect with each other and gain valuable resources “even in the middle of a pandemic.”

The Spokane Ag Show will be a mixture of prerecorded and live seminars. Dr. Art Douglas will be back with his ever-popular weather seminar, and Washington State University Economics professor, Dr. Randy Fortenbery, will do his annual agriculture economic forecast. The prerecord-



ed seminars will be viewable throughout the day they are posted. A portion of the third day of the show, Feb. 25, will be geared specifically towards youth and FFA. The full schedule will be available at [agshow.org](http://agshow.org) at least a week before the show opens.

The pandemic has severely impacted the ability of producers to get pesticide credits for recertifying their pesticide application license, something that must be done every few years. The Spokane Ag Show will be offering free pesticide recertification courses in Washington, Idaho and Oregon, in addition to CCA credits for integrated pest management. The courses will be monitored and held in real time, so attendees will have to log in through Zoom. As of early January, Paul said they’ve got 13 pesticide credit seminars planned across all three days of the show but hope to add more.

“We know this is really important,” she said.

Exhibitors will have options as well. Paul said they’ll be able to have their own pages to customize with logos and content, post videos and host private events. There will be a searchable directory of exhibitors, and that directory will remain accessible for a year. There are different exhibitor packages available that can be accessed at [agshow.org](http://agshow.org).

“All that info will be in front of attendees when they log in,” she said. “That’s how we are providing visibility and connecting attendees to resources that they may not be able to find right now.”

Attendees will have to register for the show and build a

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profile, which can be done now, and then log in to access the seminars and trade show content. In addition to being able to reach a wider audience, another benefit to going all virtual includes being able to listen to the prerecorded seminars at any time during the day they are posted.

"Another big reason we decided to adjust, pivot and innovate is a lot of farm shows nationally have cancelled. We know our industry isn't being served across the nation, and it feels like we have to make sure the industry has the resources they need," Paul said.

The Spokane Ag Show may never be the same again, even when social distancing restrictions are finally lifted. Paul said that while a virtual format can never replace the social aspect of a trade show, it does have its merits.

"I feel we might be opening up a new market, and it may change the shape of the show permanently," she explained. "There may be a deeper virtual aspect going forward as it works better for some people. In 2022, when we go back to in-person, we will need to have a hybrid model. It's challenging today, but it will force us to grow and will have long-term, positive effects going forward."

For more about the Spokane Ag Show, visit [agshow.org](http://agshow.org). ■



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## Selling wheat seed throughout the western U.S.

### Riley Hille, farm wife and wheat seed expert for Syngenta AgriPro

By Kevin Gaffney

High achievers like **Riley Hille** often graduate from high school along with their classmates. They just do it with two years of college work already completed.

Born and raised in the Tri-Cities, Hille graduated from Hanford High School in 2010. Not only was she earning college credit through the Running Start program at Columbia Basin College, she worked for Calaway Hay Company during her senior year.

"I was a little bored in the classroom, so most of my class time was online, and when I wasn't studying or working, I spent time with my horses," recalled Hille. Hille fell in love with horses at an early age and was fortunate enough to have parents supportive of her equestrian interests.

"I somehow convinced my folks that I should have a horse at age 11," said Hille. "We had 4H friends, and I was able to arrange for my horse to board at their barn. I think it was expected that I would lose interest in horses and get into sports, cars and boys, but my love of horses continued. I got a pickup truck for my 16th birthday and hooked it up to a horse trailer and never looked back."

Hille competed in rodeo events for years and served as rodeo queen twice in high school and once in college. That service included a lot of public speaking and provided excellent background training for her future sales career.

Hille took a year off after graduation to decide the direction of her career. She worked for Simplot, performing soil sampling in potato fields. She advanced quickly, so they arranged for her to obtain her commercial applicators license and her fumigation license.

"I really did love the work, but the hours just were not sustainable," Hille said. "Starting work at 2 a.m. and getting off mid-afternoon was not a workable, long-term situation for me."

The next stop was Washington State University (WSU), where Hille earned a bachelor's degree in ag technology and production management. She also met her future husband, Erik Hille, while attending WSU.

"I took my two horses with me to WSU and actually acquired more horses before I graduated in 2014. I still have two horses now, so obviously, I never outgrew my love for them."



Because the WSU College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS) has such an excellent reputation, Syngenta recruited Hille immediately upon her graduation.

"It worked out really well for me," noted Hille. "I'd guess that half of my colleagues at Syngenta are WSU alums. It is a very well-respected program in our industry."

Hille first went through Syngenta's six-month developmental sales training program. It bounces the new employees all around the U.S., working in various crops and farming systems.

"I was based in Florida, Indiana and Ohio. I worked with peanuts, corn, soybeans and citrus crops. It was quite an experience, with the crops and systems totally unlike anything in the Pacific Northwest where I grew up."

Hille's first permanent sales position was in Madera, Calif. Her territory was Madera County, with her farthest sales calls less than an hour apart. The crop protection sales position was interesting and challenging with a wide variety of crops, including almonds, pistachios, walnuts, tomatoes and wine grapes.

"It really kept me on my toes, as there is never an off-season in California. When one crop is done, another one is just coming along."

During this time, Hille and her fiancée, Erik, had kept their relationship intact. He was employed by Nutrien and also worked for his father, Dan Hille, on the Hille's Ritzville family farm. With marriage plans in the works, Hille had to make a major decision. About the same time, a position with Syngenta AgriPro Seed in Eastern Washington became available. She accepted the position and permanently moved to Ritzville in 2016.

"It's a little unusual for someone on the crop protection side to move over to seed, but it really was a great move for me," said Hille. "As much as I loved my work in California, seed is a better fit for me. I feel more connected to the process. Sometimes we joke that wheat is our life in every way. We live and work on our wheat farm, and I sell wheat seed for a living. We live and breathe wheat 24-7."

Riley and Erik Hille don't just raise wheat. They have a 3-year old son, Everett, and are ready to welcome a new daughter to the family very soon.



One trend Hille has noticed is more wheat growers being willing to diversify their crop rotations, especially with canola and red wheat varieties.

"This year, we actually saw hard red winter (HRW) prices higher than Dark Northern Spring (DNS)," explained Hille. "I don't remember that happening before. Improved genetics of HRW varieties has meant higher end-use quality and better yields. Many traditional soft white growers are now including HRW in their planting decisions.

"We are to the point now, with so many varieties, what variety to plant is not an easy decision for the

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growers anymore. Instead of about 10 good variety choices in a given region 30 years ago, there are now literally dozens of options.

"The growers must weigh the yield potential and the end-use quality in making their choices, because it is so important to maintain the high quality of our wheat. At the same time, they must also consider other traits, including disease resistance, straw height and strength and other factors. Choosing a variety that is less likely to have low falling numbers has become critical in recent years."

Hille's territory is huge, encompassing Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California and western Montana. She has also been experimenting with using soft white wheat as a forage crop.

"It is a challenge, because the crop rotations and the cultural practices vary widely from county to county, not to mention in different states," said Hille. "Central or southern Idaho is totally different than Eastern Washington, for instance. Getting out to inspect the fields is one of my favorite facets of my work. Problems can happen quickly, so we have to stay on top of what is taking place in the fields. The excellent communication we have between our sales force and our researchers helps to minimize problems for our growers."

One irony regarding her wheat seed lines is that AgriPro decided years ago to not offer any club wheat due to a limited market share. Club wheat just happens to be the class of choice for many growers in Adams County, including her husband.

"I joke that I must not be a very good salesperson since my husband doesn't grow AgriPro wheat on our farm. At least not yet."

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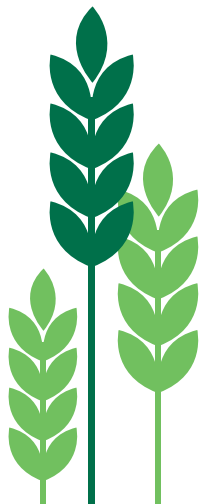
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## WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Mike  
Carstensen



The “Great Reset” is a phrase the World Economic Forum is using to describe changes the pandemic will force on the global economic system and social governance in countries around the world. While I’m not here to comment on the big picture challenges of poverty, inequity and climate change, I do like the phrase as it refers to transitions that are occurring closer to home.

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) has been working through our own reset over the last year. My taking over as chairman of the 63-year-old organization after three years of Whitman County farmer Gary Bailey’s able leadership is just the most recent. I can’t thank Gary enough for his steady hand during what has been a tumultuous period. His advocacy at the state and national level has been outstanding, as well as his outreach to growers, our customers and the two other Northwest wheat commissions. I have big shoes to fill.

Looking at a map of Eastern Washington, Gary’s farm in St. John is almost in the middle of our wheat-growing region, while my farm north of Almira is on its northern fringe. Our micro climates are very different as well as the farming challenges we face, but our devotion to the state’s small grain industry is indistinguishable.

I farm with my son, Justin, and my wife, Lori. Gary farms with his brother, Mark, and his niece, Erin. When people think of family farms, it is farms like ours that they think of.

Gary will continue to serve on the commission, as well as the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) board, where I am his wingman. USW is crucial to our export marketing efforts, and the \$634,000 the WGC directed to the organization in our 2020/21 budget is money well spent. USW has gone through its own reset during the pandemic, but then transitions are a given in the dynamic world of wheat marketing.

Consider in 1985, 3 percent of U.S. wheat exports went to China; 33 percent to the rest of Asia; 25 percent to Latin America; 8 percent to Europe; 18 percent to the Middle East/North Africa (ME/NA); 8 percent to sub-Saharan Africa; and 5 percent to the USSR. Fast forward 36 years, and China is taking 12 percent of our wheat with nearly 50 percent going to the rest of Asia; 33 percent to Latin America; 3 percent to Europe; 2 percent to ME/NA; and 5 percent to sub-Saharan Africa.

Today’s emphasis on Asian markets is a tremendous benefit to us here in the Northwest, not only because we

grow soft white wheat, a class that really has no substitute anywhere in the world, but also because we are on the doorstep of the region. Not to mention, Asians love our wheat. In meetings before the pandemic, customers often said, “Don’t change anything about soft white.” Of course, we do. We are constantly increasing its quality.

The Pacific Northwest, as well as our flagship soft white class, has huge growth potential in the decades to come, which isn’t to say change won’t bring hurdles and bumps along the way. No doubt we will take a few steps back as we step forward.

Certainly, the discoveries of genetically engineered wheat in Washington in 2016 and 2019 caused us plenty of concern, but thanks to our customers working with our U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, the worst was avoided, and I’d like to keep it that way. Like I said, one step backward, two steps ahead.

The political arena in both Olympia and Washington, D.C., presents another set of transitions facing us. While some fear this changeover could be a “Great Reset” for the wheat industry, I see the future as an opportunity for positive policy decisions.

U.S. farmers constantly worry about prices, conservation programs, loss of safety nets and political gamesmanship, but change is a constant, and challenges should not to be feared. Certainly, there are worrisome issues facing us, such as carbon and pesticide legislation, not to mention potential loss of our agriculture tax preferences on the state level. Nationally, trade, transportation and funding for research are on our radar. But rather than living in fear, we should use the transition ahead as an opportunity to educate legislators and shape legislation with strong advocacy. We have a powerful message. Agriculture, after all, is the only essential industry on the planet.

Every generation has its own changes, challenges and transitions. Look around you at your farmer neighbors. Those of us “most responsive to change” have succeeded while others have gone extinct. Change is coming at all levels of our industry, and it’s coming fast. As the Boy Scouts motto puts it, we need to “be prepared.”

As the new chairman of the WGC, I believe the job of your commission is to help the industry navigate the risky waters ahead, because it is only by working together that we can minimize those “one step back” moments!

Best wishes to all of you for this growing season! ■

# REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

## Welcome Brian!

**Brian Liedl**, director of merchandising at United Grain Corporation (UGC) in Vancouver, Wash., joined the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) as an industry representative, replacing Damon Filan who earlier announced he would retire as manager of Tri-Cities Grain in Pasco, Wash., in 2021. Ty Jessup, grain merchandiser for HighLine Grain, is the other industry representative serving on the WGC board. Liedl started his career in the open outcry pit at the Minneapolis Grain Exchange. He joined United Grain in 2011 as a spring wheat merchant and relocated to Vancouver in 2011 before moving up to senior merchant operating UGC's hard red winter and soft white wheat programs. In 2020, he was made director of merchandising for the company. ■



## Big, bigger, biggest

A recent study suggests that 1 percent of farms operate 70 percent of the world's farmland, including cropland, orchards and ranches. Researchers with the International Land Coalition found that control over land has become far more concentrated since the 1980s worldwide. Short-term financial instruments are said to increasingly shape the global environment. Landlessness was lowest in China and Vietnam and highest in Latin America, where the poorest 50 percent of people owned just 1 percent of the land. Asia and Africa have the highest levels of smallholdings, where human input tends to be higher than chemical and mechanical factors. Although 80 to 90 percent of farms globally are considered family or smallholder-owned, they cover a shrinking part of the land and commercial production. ■

## Seattle's brutal backyard

In 2018, when a mother orca gave birth to a dead calf that she subsequently carried around Puget Sound for 17 days looking to all the world like the grieving parent she was, environmentalists who would like to breach the four lower Snake River dams used the occasion to again indict Eastern Washington's transportation corridor. They maintained the large whales were starving because of a decline in salmon numbers, which are an important component of the orcas' diet.

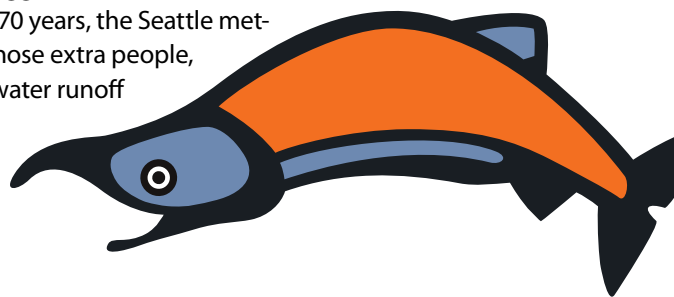
The conclusion was wrong on many counts, but especially because the orca's primary food source is from salmon within the Puget Sound watershed. At the time, the Washington Grain Commission suggested those who want to protect orcas need to look in their own backyard, noting that over the last 70 years, the Seattle metropolitan area had grown from 935,000 people to 3.8 million. Along with those extra people, we argued, there had been an attendant increase in chemicals and storm water runoff flowing into the Puget Sound.

Not two years later, according to a Dec. 3, 2020, article in the *New York Times*, research confirmed what commonsense made plain. According to the article, despite 20 years of restoration projects to bring coho salmon back to urban creeks in the Seattle area, the fish were dying.

"After it rained, the fish would display strange behaviors, listing to one side, rolling over and swimming in circles. Within hours, they would die—before spawning, taking the next generation with them. In some streams, up to 90 percent of coho salmon were lost," the article reported.

Scientists have been working for 15 years to identify what was happening, and in an article in the journal *Science*, the culprit was finally identified. The residue of a widely used chemical in tire rubber is being left behind on highways and freeways around the region and then washing into waterways through stormwater runoff. The scientists brewed up a test concoction by soaking shredded tire treads in water and then placing salmon in the mixture. The salmon appeared to suffocate.

But there are more than 2,000 chemicals in the tires of our cars and trucks. It took still more time to identify the culprit, an antioxidant chemical used to prevent deterioration in tires called 6PPD-quinone. The scientists involved in the research are now looking at how roadway runoff affects other species of fish. Conversations are ongoing with tire manufacturers about a replacement for the fish-killing toxin. ■







## Tear down, start over

It was one thing for the federal government to come up with the \$105 million to build the new Plant Biosciences Building on the Washington State University (WSU) campus. It was another to find the money to demolish Johnson Hall, the 60-year-old research building that has outlived its usefulness. For that, agriculture had to band together to urge Gov. Jay Inslee to come up with an \$8 million appropriation in his capital budget to demolish the old building to make room for the new structure. In a thank-you letter to Gov. Inslee from the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), the two groups reiterated the importance of the new building, which will co-locate the 110 scientists of the Agricultural Research Service with WSU scientists. As the letter from WGC Chairman Gary Bailey and WAWG President Ryan Poe stated, the new building is vital not only for ongoing scientific efforts, but as a means to leverage millions of dollars of industry-supported research. Research in the new building will include plant breeding, plant pests, diseases, genomics, water conservation, soil health and land management. ■

## River users heads up!

The Walla Walla District of the Corps of Engineers announced that the annual maintenance lock closure for the region's navigation lock maintenance is scheduled to begin March 6 and continue through March 28. Lower Granite and Ice Harbor dams will be closed the entire time. Little Goose, Lower Monument and McNary dams will close from March 6 to March 21. Maintenance, inspection and repair work will take place during the closure, which is conducted in coordination with the Portland District. All locks will close at 6 a.m., Saturday, March 6. ■

## Calling all wheat farmers!

One of the most important meetings held by the Washington Grain Commission throughout the year is the annual Research Review when wheat and barley farmers gather to prioritize research projects for funding in the next budget. The 2021 meeting is scheduled for Feb. 17-18. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, this year's meeting will take place virtually. Glen Squires, CEO of the organization, is hopeful the meeting format will permit many more farmers to engage with the process, which annually earmarks more than \$2 million of the commission's funding to research projects. Contact the WGC at [wgc@wagrains.org](mailto:wgc@wagrains.org) or call (509) 456-2481 for details. ■

## Bad news for HRS?

Grain Craft and ADM Milling Company are working together to cut out the need to blend hard red spring wheat into hard red winter wheat in order to create acceptable end-use products for an unnamed "major baking company." As part of the program, the millers will supply hard red winter wheat of certain varieties that obviate the need for blending. Hard red spring with its higher protein is often thought of as the preeminent class of wheat grown in the U.S., a ranking that allows for higher prices. In the past, subpar quality among hard red winter wheat varieties meant that a blend of 30 percent hard red spring was necessary to obtain necessary performance at a premium of 80 cents a bushel or more. ■

## Silver lining for snacking

COVID-19 has mostly devastated the U.S. and the world, but there are glimmers of silver linings for the wheat industry. In its annual State of Snacking report, Mondelez International, the maker of Oreo cookies, among other snacks, said 46 percent of respondents to a survey of 6,292 adults in 12 global markets were snacking more during the pandemic than before, with 52 percent saying that snacking has been a "lifeline" during the pandemic. To reach those customers, Mondelez announced a "humaning" global market strategy that will emphasize human connections. The same survey found that snacking was an antidote for loneliness with 77 percent saying they connected with others through food in the past six months. Positives to eating snacks were "a few moments of peace," 64 percent; and "bright spot in the day," 63 percent. "Comfort" at 45 percent and "unplug" at 35 percent were emotions experienced while snacking. Soft white wheat is used in many Mondelez formulations. ■



## Inspired to help by hard work and a hero

*Editor's note: This is the seventh in a series of posts profiling U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) technical experts in flour milling and wheat foods production. USW Vice President of Global Technical Services Mark Fowler says technical support to overseas customers is an essential part of export market development for U.S. wheat. "Technical support adds differential value to the reliable supply of U.S. wheat," Fowler says. "Our customers must constantly improve their products in an increasingly competitive environment. We can help them compete by demonstrating the advantages of using the right U.S. wheat class or blend of classes to produce the wide variety of wheat-based foods the world's consumers demand."*

By Steve Mercer  
Vice President of Communications, U.S.  
Wheat Associates

Growing up on his grandparents' small farm in the Philippines province of Batangas, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) Technical Specialist Adrian "Ady" Redondo learned that hard work is a great motivator.

"My father was away working in Saudi Arabia, and my mother worked as a midwife, so my three sisters and I spent our childhood helping our grandparents raise chickens and grow rice and corn. I learned that life is hard, and you don't get to eat if you don't sweat," Redondo said. "But my grandparents also encouraged me to do well in school and be successful for them because they had to work on the farm with their parents to make ends meet instead of getting an education."

At his elementary school, lessons about a Batangueño hero added inspiration to Redondo's interest in science.

María Y. Orosa was from the same hometown as Redondo's mother and was considered the Philippine's first female scientist. She invented the palayok oven to help families bake without access to electricity and devel-



**Name:** Adrian "Ady" Redondo

**Title:** Technical Specialist

**Office:** USW Manila Office

**Providing Service to:** Republic of the Philippines and Korea

oped recipes for local produce, including a banana ketchup formulation that became a favorite Filipino condiment and cooking ingredient. Orosa also used her knowledge of food technology to help save prisoners in World War II by inventing soyalac, a protein-rich powder from local ingredients that she smuggled into the prison camps. Then, tragically, Orosa was killed in an Allied bombing raid.

At home, Redondo had started cooking rice and eggs by the age of 7, and his interest in food and the sciences grew. He was valedictorian of his elementary school class and salutatorian of his high school class. Once again, his grandparents were the catalyst for his next chapter.

"My grandparents always talked with respect about someone who graduated in agriculture from the University of the Philippines in the city of Los Baños, an area also known for its hot springs resorts," Redondo said. "That is where they wanted us to go. When I found that the university offered a degree in food science and technology, I knew I had to pass the tough exams and get in the program."

Part of Redondo's university studies included collaborative work with Nestlé Philippines Inc. The company was looking for ways to develop coffee and coffee mixes that aligned the most sensory appeal for Filipino consumers with its international standards. As a student and during an internship at Nestlé, Redondo helped develop "3-in-1" flavored coffee mixes that were launched commercially to Philippine consumers under the Nescafé brand.

After graduation (which offered a great sense of pride for his grandparents), Redondo took the advice of his Nestlé internship supervisor to gain a wide range of experience inside the Philippines' thriving food production industry before venturing outside as a sales representa-



tive. So, he said the start of his career included “most of the work that a food technologist could see,” including research and development; quality control and assurance; technical service; production management; and technical sales.

“Almost all of that work related to the baking industry,” Redondo said. “I did technical servicing for Sonlie International, a company that distributed LeSaffre yeast in the Philippines, and learned proper commercial baking there under the tutelage of the company’s head baking technician Rolly Dorado, who had served as a baking consultant for U.S. Wheat Associates in the 1980s.”

Redondo also worked as a production supervisor for the food service department of “a local burger chain” and in research and development for a company supplying premixes to Dunkin’ Donuts franchises in the Philippines.

### Toward the next generation

It was his next career move into technical sales for commercial ingredient companies that put him on a direct path to his current position in USW’s next generation of technical experts.

“I love to meet people, interact with them and share what I know, while learning from them at the same time,” Redondo said. “I had that opportunity as a technical sales executive at Bakels, a Swiss company that manufactures, sells and supports high quality bakery ingredients around the world.”

Redondo joined Bakels Philippines in 2005 where he found great value in the work of a colleague, Gerardo Mendoza, who is now a veteran baking technologist with USW/Manila.

“I worked with Gerry on provincial accounts, and eventually, I moved to key accounts where I had a lot of success,” Redondo said. “Gerry moved on, and I moved on to a multinational food ingredient company called Ingredion specializing in modified starches and sweeteners.”

Redondo said his experience at Nestlé opened the door to the technical sales position at Ingredion. Gleaning from Mendoza’s passion for the work and people, as well as his experience at Bakels, Redondo was able to build additional revenue for Ingredion’s Philippines and greater Southeast Asia bakery segment. He was recognized with Southeast Asia top sales awards and “best campaigns” for three consecutive years.

“I think this success also came from trying to create additional value for whatever product Ingredion was selling,” Redondo said.



The wisdom of grandparents helped set Ady Redondo on a path toward education and a career in food technology. (Top photo) His grandmother, Barbara (right), joined Redondo (far left), his mother, Paz, younger sisters, Anna Rose and Angelica, and a friend at a Flores de Mayo prayer service at church. (Bottom photo) His grandfather, Miguel, holds Redondo, surrounded by neighbors and friends. Redondo said his grandfather fought to get him in first grade even though he was too young. “He insisted I was just as smart as everyone in the class...and they accepted me.”



Future food technologists at their 2001 graduation from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños. College buddies (from left) CJ, Redondo, Ed and Joel were all student members of the Philippine Association of Food Technologies.

### Any resource available

Toward the end of the 10 years Redondo spent at Ingredion, USW Regional Vice President Joe Sowers was making plans to maintain a high level of technical support to the growing wheat foods industry in the Philippines. USW/Manila’s reputation for employing any resource available to help its customers succeed had helped make the Philippines the top global market for U.S. hard red spring and soft white wheat. A fortunate change in USW’s funding sources helped solidify Sowers’ plan. ▶

"As a result of the trade dispute between the U.S. and China, USDA's (U.S. Department of Agriculture) Foreign Agricultural Service made additional export market development funding available under the Agricultural Trade Promotion program," Sowers said. "This allowed us to hire a new technical specialist in Manila who could expand our after-sales service while training for a long time with our regional technicians. Fortunately, Gerry Mendoza had someone in mind for the job."

"I liked working in the commercial food industry, but no matter how well you did, you would only be as good as last month's or last year's sales," Redondo said. "Then, I was able to talk with Gerry and bakery consultant Roy Chung during an interview who told me that success in technical support at U.S. Wheat Associates would be about helping local companies grow while helping farmers in the U.S. build demand for their wheat. I was all in after that talk."

"We knew Ady had a solid background in the bakery ingredients industry that gave him the capability and credibility to contribute at a high level to our mission in the Philippines from his first day," Sowers said. "He has also shown a strong work ethic combined with a pleasant demeanor since he joined our team in June 2019."

"Right away, I understood that my focus would be on building relationships and serving bakery manufacturers and associations; providing technical support to flour mills; and promoting innovations in baking and quality analysis in the Philippines," Redondo said.

### Character doesn't change

Late on a Friday afternoon, not long after he joined USW, Redondo had the chance to apply that focus for a flour mill that had a question about performance issues with a new U.S. wheat crop shipment. Sowers said Redondo responded immediately and asked to visit the mill Saturday morning to better understand the problem. Coordinating with other USW colleagues and a state-side university expert, Redondo was able to help the customer solve their immediate concern and change purchase specifications to avoid similar issues in the future.

"Roy Chung likes to say the value of people is in their character—skills can be learned, character doesn't change," Sowers said. "Redondo's willingness to go the extra mile, providing attention outside of office hours, was a solid indication that he would be very successful with our organization."

That is becoming a hallmark of Redondo's work. A Philippines baking industry executive recently noted



Redondo worked with USW Baking Technologist Gerry Mendoza (left) when they both worked in technical sales at global bakery ingredient company Bakels.

that he is easy to work with and always responsive to the company's inquiries.

"I am thankful that during this COVID-19 pandemic, Redondo was able to respond to our request for a webinar about Solvent Retention Capacity as a measure of flour functionality," the executive said. "He effectively organized the webinar and gave us new knowledge, proving there is no right time and venue to learn. He is surely adding value to U.S. wheat."

In addition to "learning the ropes" with Mendoza and Chung, Redondo said he had been actively participating in trade visits, technical support inquiries and teaching bakery science until the pandemic put restrictions on face-to-face interactions with customers.

Another opportunity Redondo looks forward to is a Cereal Science Seminar that he and Mendoza have created for technical staff at local flour mills.

"This will hopefully give them a better understanding of the quality testing they conduct with wheat and flour," Redondo said. "And, of course, to help further affirm the superior qualities of U.S. wheat."

While continuing to help customers and train with his USW colleagues, Redondo is looking forward to the future.

"I like the working culture at U.S. Wheat Associates," he said. "Everyone is so passionate about their jobs. They genuinely work as if they are fulfilling a duty of care for the industry they are in, and it is infectious. This really is an organization that you can grow in—and it also grows on you." ■



# Barley begins its Washington comeback

BREEDING PROGRAM TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING VARIETIES FOR MALTING INDUSTRY

By Robert Brueggeman

Barley, one of the world's first domesticated crops, has been grown since the dawn of agriculture. Hardy, with a multitude of uses, including as a food and an animal feed, its paramount use throughout history has been as malt used in the production of beer and distilled spirits.


In this role, barley has had an immeasurable impact on civilization as it has played a lubricating role in an array of social interactions and, indeed, agricultural infrastructure. The word "barn" originally meant "barley-house."

Today, brewing and distilling industries are a multimillion dollar presence around the globe, but recent research suggests that climate change could imperil the production of quality malt needed to meet these needs. Barley production is predicted to suffer substantial yield losses, ranging from 3 to 17 percent, depending upon warming temperatures and changing rainfall patterns.

But these production shortfalls may increase domestic demand as they create new opportunities in the international malt barley market.

Thirty five years ago, in 1985, barley production in Washington state stood at 400,000 harvested acres. Almost all of this was feed barley. As a result, the Washington State University (WSU) public breeding program was centered on developing six-rowed feed varieties. However, as corn took over the feed market, Washington barley acreage plummeted. In 2020, a dismal 70,000 acres of barley were harvested in the state.

The feed barley market is not going to return, but I believe malt barley, which brings a price nearly double that of feed, will increase in demand. As the Robert A. Nilan Chair of barley research and the WSU barley breeder, I would like to see our state become a major producer of malting barley for both domestic and international use. ▶



Bob Brueggeman, Washington State University's barley breeder, makes malt barley selections with spray paint from 12,000 head rows planted at Spillman farm in 2020.





(Above) The Washington State University (WSU) barley breeding team, front row from left, are Gazala Ameen (lab manager); Sudha Upadhaya (research technician); and Arjun Upadhaya (Ph.D. student). Middle row from left are Sarah Harkin (undergrad researcher); Matthew Brooke (Ph.D. student); Max Wood (field manager); and Shyam Solanki (post-doctoral researcher). Back row from left are Shaun Clare (Ph.D. student); Bob Brueggeman (Nilan Chair/WSU barley breeder); and Karl Effertz (Ph.D. student). (Right) Bob Brueggeman, Washington State University's (WSU) barley breeder and the Robert A. Nilan Chair of barley research, crossing malting barley in the WSU greenhouse.

This will not only require marketing efforts to champion the region for its premium malt barley production, but also necessitate the creation of infrastructure to easily get the state's barley into the hands of end users. But first, broadly adapted quality malting barley varieties are needed, and that is no easy task. It requires bringing together optimal genetic packages for broad adaptation that meet quality parameters and provide excellent agronomics.

During my first year as the WSU barley breeder, my program has made excellent progress adding important infrastructure and support instrumentation that has allowed us to quickly shift gears towards the goal of developing premium spring and winter malt barley varieties. Our resources have been mainly directed at enhancing the existing WSU spring malt barley breeding program and establishing a winter malt barley breeding program.

The major goal of both spring and winter classes of malt barley is the development of varieties that can make the American Malting Barley Association (AMBA) recommended list. Meeting these standards are necessary in order that large malting facilities like Great Western



Malting will contract for the varieties. Although we will continue to develop malt varieties directed at the craft malt and brewing industry, these sectors do not demand the large acreage of commercial malt barley that we are targeting in the future.

To quickly achieve efficiency in the WSU malt barley breeding program, adding and upgrading equipment, instrumentation and technologies was paramount. Funded by the Washington Grain Commission, the most important addition to instrumentation and capabilities included the installation of the state-of-the-art WSU Malt Quality Lab. Located on the Pullman campus adjacent to our barley breeding and molecular lab, we will begin analyzing 2019 field season material this February. This addition will provide us with much greater efficiency when selecting early and late generation materials for malt quality.

To aid rapid early generation selection, we also equipped the WSU barley breeding and molecular lab with the capability to run DNA markers and added the computational power to provide bioinformatics analysis. In collaboration with Deven See of the U.S. Department



of Agriculture's cereal genotyping lab, we developed a panel of 100 DNA markers associated with malt quality traits. These initially focus on malt extract, low protein and low beta-glucan, the three main malt quality characteristics lacking in the current material coming down the WSU breeding pipeline and a requirement of AMBA recommendations. This will allow us to utilize DNA marker-assisted selection strategies to make early generation quality predictions and select progeny for malt quality characteristics.

Early generation material and advanced yield trials will be enriched for malt quality so we can concentrate on selecting for farmer traits including yield, height, standability and disease resistance in the field utilizing traditional selection strategies. This capability will also be important in the winter malt barley selection process as we begin advancing those materials in the program.

To aid in later generation selection, our new "Wintersteiger classic plus" plot combine with the Harvest Master H2-Classic weighing system was a major upgrade. The new combine provides us with real time yield, test weight and moisture data, saving time and resources previously dedicated to threshing and analysis. This will allow for greater field capacity of later generation lines, which will be very important as we add winter field nurseries and trials to the breeding program.

As we further optimize and streamline our selection processes using high throughput genotyping and phenotyping procedures, we intend for the Washington Grain Commission's early infrastructure investment to have a measurable impact in optimizing our research.



Max Wood harvesting a new malt barley advanced line with the barley program's new Wintersteiger plot combine.

I believe the investment in time and resources will expedite the development of AMBA-recommended malt barley varieties.

The goal of my career at WSU is to develop an excellent malt barley breeding program and to see a major increase in barley acreage to supply quality malting barley for domestic as well as international markets. Considering that this is my first full year as WSU's barley breeder, I believe my team, consisting of Max Wood (field manager); Gazala Ameen (lab manager); Shyam Solanki (post-doctoral research scientist); and Shaun Clare, Karl Effertz, Arjun Upadhaya and Matthew Brooke (Ph.D. students), have made excellent progress towards achieving our long term goals. ■

# WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

## Thanks to corn, wheat prices rise



By T. Randall Fortenbery

We entered the 2021 calendar year with some of the highest wheat prices since December 2014. Beginning with the second quarter of the marketing year (Sept. 1, 2020) soft white wheat prices rose about \$1.85 per bushel, or 35 percent, through mid-January.

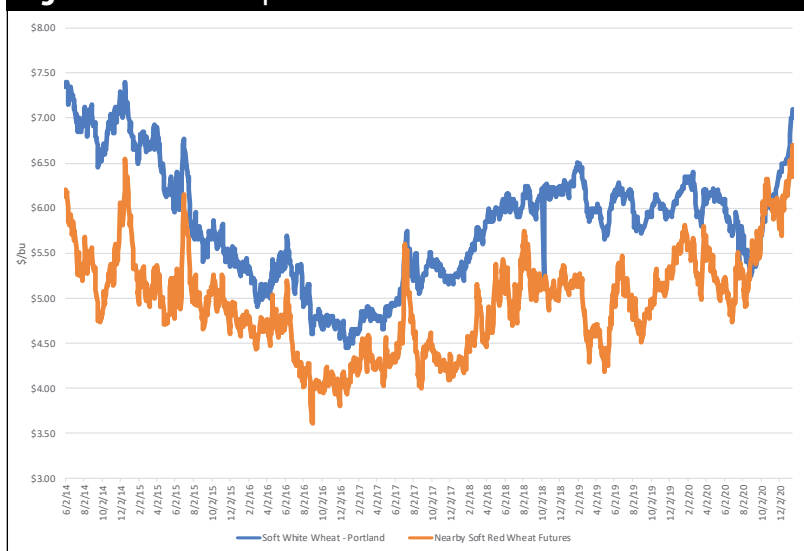
Wheat futures prices also showed significant improvement, with the March 2021 contract for soft red winter rallying from \$5.56 per bushel on Sept. 1, 2020, to \$6.71 per bushel by Jan. 15, an improvement of about 21 percent (Figure 1).

There are several factors that have contributed to price improvement in wheat prices, but major support has come from the corn market. There have been some bullish dynamics influencing the corn market over the last several months, with some spillover to wheat. For example, there was a significant price move in corn following the derecho storm event in August 2020 that laid down wide swaths of corn from the western to the eastern corn belt, hitting Iowa especially hard.

Even with the storm event, however, much of the corn price improvement comes from dramatic revisions in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) corn balance sheets that track all the way back to the 2019 corn harvest (the corn marketing year starts on Sept. 1, so the 2019/20 corn year ended Aug. 31, 2020). Many of the balance sheet changes were not the result of large shifts in underlying market conditions, but rather corrections to earlier USDA estimates that many market observers argued were inaccurate at the time they were released.

Revisions to the corn balance sheet have been numerous. Many market analysts believed that USDA's initial estimates of the

Figure 1. U.S. wheat prices



2019 corn crop were too large, and as time progressed, small changes to production estimates were made. In October 2019 (about halfway through last fall's harvest), USDA estimated the 2019 corn crop would total 13.8 billion bushels. By January 2020, they had lowered the estimate slightly to just under 13.7 billion bushels. In the most recent World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), released Jan. 12, 2021, USDA pegged the corn crop for 2019 at 13.6 billion bushels.

The Grain Stocks reports issued in September 2020 (reflecting corn stocks as of Sept. 1, the start of the new marketing year) revealed stocks were 13 percent below USDA's earlier estimate of corn ending stocks for the 2019/20 marketing year (these were reported in the September 2020 WASDE). USDA released their 2019/20 ending stocks estimate just a couple weeks before the physical stocks data became known. The stocks report revealed there was not nearly as much corn in storage as USDA had predicted—thus, either their 2019 production estimate was too large or their demand estimates for the 2019/20 marketing year were too small.

As a result of the large discrepancy between actual corn stocks on Sept. 1 and the September WASDE estimate of ending stocks, USDA made big changes to their 2019/20 corn demand estimates. At the end of September 2020, USDA reduced their earlier June 2020 corn stocks estimate by more than 4 percent. This led to a 13 percent reduction in 2019/20 corn ending estimate in the October 2020 WASDE and was partially accomplished by increasing earlier estimates of both feed use and corn exports for the 2019/20 marketing year.



In addition, USDA lowered their estimate of the 2020 corn harvest by 178 million bushels in the October 2020 WASDE. Their corn production estimate was then further reduced by 215 million bushels in November. However, market observers believed the October production estimate was too large so the price response in November was somewhat muted, and wheat prices actually declined through November (Figure 2).

The real surprise in corn balance sheet adjustments came in the January 2021 WASDE. USDA lowered their 2019/20 corn ending stocks estimate (the amount of corn carried into the 2020 harvest) by another 4 percent and simultaneously lowered their estimate of the 2020 corn harvest by another 325 million bushels.

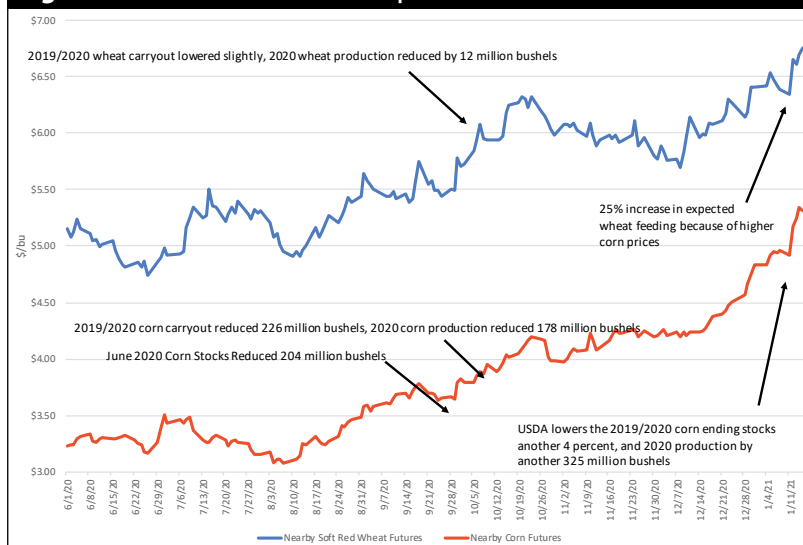
The changes in the corn balance sheet impacted wheat markets in several ways. First, there is competition between corn and spring wheat acres in parts of the western corn belt, particularly in eastern North Dakota, and the perception that high corn prices may result in increased corn acres likely led some wheat traders to be concerned about the total U.S. wheat supply.

USDA has estimated that winter wheat seedings are up about 5 percent this year compared to last, but they are also predicting a significant reduction in wheat ending stocks for the 2020/21 marketing year. The winter wheat plantings will impact the 2021/22 balance sheet, but reduced ending stocks this year could offset any production increase for 2021/22, thus offsetting the price impact from more wheat acres. Further, decreased spring wheat acres due to increased corn plantings could contribute to a reduction in total wheat available in 2021/22.

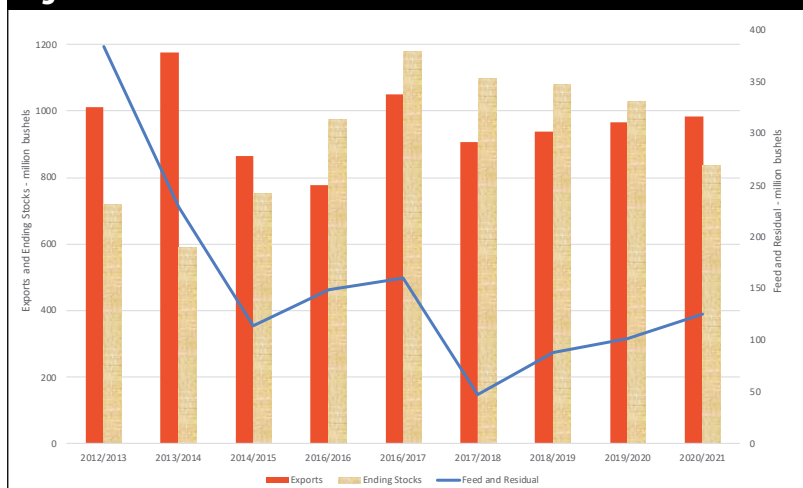
The other influence of corn on wheat prices comes from the demand side and helps explain the forecast of reduced year-over-year wheat ending stocks. For example, due to higher corn prices, USDA is projecting a 25 percent increase in wheat feeding this year (Figure 3).

There is also an expectation that some

**Figure 2. Wheat vs. corn futures prices**



**Figure 3. U.S. wheat**



foreign buyers (i.e., China, for example) will switch some purchases from corn to wheat due to increased corn prices. Thus, USDA is projecting an increase in U.S. wheat exports this year. The January 2021 WASDE estimate pegs wheat exports at 985 million bushels this year, compared to 965 and 937 million in 2019/20 and 2018/19, respectively.

Despite improved wheat prices this year, I still expect the average marketing year price for wheat (the price that determines Price Loss Coverage payments) will remain below the trigger price. The current USDA marketing year forecast wheat price is \$4.85 per bushel. Given that we are more than halfway through the marketing year, it is unlikely average prices will exceed the \$5.50 PLC trigger price this year. This means producers who stored some of last year's wheat will be rewarded for their storage while simultaneously collecting PLC payments if that is the program they elected. ■

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



In LaCrosse, Wash., this 1930s service station built out of local basalt rock will eventually become an ice age museum/visitors center. It is being restored by LaCrosse Community Pride, a nonprofit organization. Photo courtesy of Peggy Bryan.

# ROCKED

## Historic stone structures in LaCrosse getting new life | By Trista Crossley

Is there a better way to showcase the geological history that makes Eastern Washington so unique than in a museum literally built with pieces of that history?

In LaCrosse, Wash., a small farming community west of Colfax along Highway 26, the nonprofit group, LaCrosse Community Pride, is in the middle of restoring a group of structures built out of basalt rock, material deposited in the area by the Missoula Floods 13,000 to 15,000 years ago. The original structures were built between 1934 and 1936 by LaCrosse resident Clint Dobson using rocks found in the surrounding fields. The property includes two houses, a service station and four bunkhouses that were used to house travelers and farm and railroad workers.

Peggy Bryan has been instrumental in driving the project.

"I've lived in LaCrosse all my life, and I'd drive by the rock houses every day on my way to work. They are so unique and attract many visitors and photographers,

generating a lot of interest," she said. "It was a shame that they were deteriorating and so dilapidated, and I thought it would be so nice if we could do something with them to better the community and help economic development."

So in 2014, Bryan called the phone number on the for sale sign that hung on the door of the service station. The current owners were interested in donating the property to LaCrosse Community Pride, but they couldn't as the state had a lien on it. Bryan reached out to the Washington State Department of Revenue to see if they'd consider lifting the lien. Eventually the department agreed, after a local legislator intervened, and the property was gifted to the organization.

With the property in hand, the next step was to figure out what to do with it. LaCrosse Community Pride brought in students from Washington State University's Rural Communities Design Initiative (RCDI), a research program focusing on the revitalization of small, rural,



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(Very top) The four old bunkhouses will eventually become overnight guesthouses and a business incubator. (Right and above) One of the bunkhouses has been completely restored. It currently houses an ice age flood exhibit from the Whitman County Library. Photos courtesy of Peggy Bryan.

under-resourced communities. The RCDI students drew up potential designs after meeting with the community to find out how residents wanted to use the property.

“The community wanted an ice age museum and visitors center,” Bryan said. “There were other ideas that were wonderful, but this what we settled on.”

LaCrosse sits on the edge of the Cheney-Palouse scabland tract, one of the regions that was scoured during the Missoula floods. The ice age floods, the largest known to have occurred on this planet, are growing in interest. The Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, established in 2009 as part of the National Park Service, follows the floodwaters through Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon, from Missoula to Astoria, with LaCrosse a stop along the way.

The property will be developed in two phases. The first phase, which started back in 2017, was renovation of the bunkhouses and the service station, although renovation maybe isn’t the right word for what has to happen.

“(Dobson) was just a local guy and probably didn’t have a lot of knowledge of engineering,” Bryan said. “We’ve had to tear the bunkhouses down, disassemble them. We are rebuilding them with more structural integrity. We couldn’t just shore them up.”

With grants from Whitman County .09 Economic Development Funds (in conjunction with the Whitman County Library) and the Port of Whitman County, LaCrosse Community Pride has finished renovating one bunkhouse and is working on the other three. The finished bunkhouse currently houses an ice age flood exhibit from the Whitman County Library and will be used as a business incubator. Two of the other bunkhouses will be for overnight guests, and the fourth bunkhouse will have restrooms and showers. Bryan said she believes guests will enjoy staying in bunkhouses from “back in the day.”

The service station will eventually house the museum/visitor’s center. It, too, will need to be torn down and reassembled. Bryan said the service station project has been awarded a Heritage Capital Project grant, but that grant





Two nearby homes, also made out of basalt rock, will eventually be restored. Photo courtesy of Peggy Bryan.

must be funded by the state legislature in the 2021-2023 budget.

In the process of taking apart and reassembling the bunkhouses, the restoration team discovered they needed more basalt. So, like Dobson, they've taken to the surrounding fields (with owners' permission, of course) to find it.

"We know where rocks are located and really appreciate those who are willing to donate them," Bryan said.

Besides the community support, which includes donations of money and time, the museum is also being supported by the Palouse Falls Chapter of the Ice Age Flood Institute. Bryan said that when the museum is ready, she anticipates working with the Ice Age Flood Institute and the community to find local items that would be interesting to display.

The final phase of the project will involve renovating the two homes. At this time, Bryan isn't sure what they will be used for, but ideas include a bed and breakfast or rental properties.

"I think some of us who have lived here forever and drive by them every day, we stop noticing them. But when you see them through the eyes of visitors or photographers who come, you view them in a new light. We're excited about this opportunity. LaCrosse Community Pride has achieved so much, pulling together to save the grocery store, bank, café and getting a fine new library branch too. We're working to show what rural communities can do," Bryan said.

To follow along with the restoration, visit LaCrosse Community Pride at [lacrossecommunitypride.com](http://lacrossecommunitypride.com). For more information on the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, visit [iafi.org/ice-age-floods-national-geologic-trail/](http://iafi.org/ice-age-floods-national-geologic-trail/) or [nps.gov/iafl/index.htm](http://nps.gov/iafl/index.htm). ■

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## Are you prepared to sell your farmland?

By Tim Cobb  
*Farmland Company*

Growing up in production agriculture, uttering the words “sell the farm” was akin to deserving having my mouth washed out with soap. To consider selling something that you or a family member worked so hard to preserve can, at times, be a daunting and arduous task. However, in the course of a farm’s life, the decision to sell may end up being the most appropriate end when facing factors such as changing financial needs, a shift in the management direction of current owners or the prospects of ensuring future productivity and care of the land.

If the time has come for you or your family to consider a transfer of ownership of your legacy asset, then below are four essential topics to consider in order to better prepare.

**Market price analysis.** Often the first place to start when considering the sale of your farm is to understand its current value in the marketplace. The market value is derived not only from comparable sales (what the neighbor said they received) in the local area, but also from a return-on-investment calculation that is based directly on what the farm produces on an annual basis in crop as it relates to dollar revenue. There is no substitute for true “price discovery” to get a real sense of what to expect in today’s market. This specialized type of information comes readily from a qualified real estate or appraisal firm. It is essential that the professional you hire is one who specializes in analyzing agricultural properties, as there can be no substitute for direct knowledge of the industry to ensure the most accurate valuation.

**Condition of title.** Understandably, it’s easy for title records of farmland that have been passed down through generations to sit on a shelf out of mind—and a lot of times—out of date. However, it’s not uncommon for encumbrances to occur over the normal operation of a farm (loans, liens, ownership divisions, etc.) that are recorded on the land’s title history. As such, one of the best ways to prepare to

sell property is to know the condition of the current title prior to taking the land to market so that any items that may come up can be dealt with ahead of negotiations or a time-sensitive closing process. A title company can supply a preliminary title report to be reviewed for accuracy and remedied of impediments, if needed. When working with a brokerage, pulling a title report of the subject property is usually done systematically by the firm in their initial process of representation, but one can also be obtained directly by the owners for a minimal fee.

**Production review.** The ability to yield a crop is the greatest asset that production agriculture land has to offer in the marketplace. One of the items that is most sought after by potential buyers is the average production data that is kept on the crops grown. Having this information accurate and available will propel you forward in the ability to adequately market and ultimately sell your farmland. Often, this information is an incomplete afterthought, and I can say from professional experience that the more correct and complete the yield information is, the more likely the price can be justified, allowing for potential buyers to validate that the land produces as advertised.

**Leasing agreement and information.** One of the largest reasons a farm is kept in the family revolves around a current (often long-term) lease arrangement with a farm tenant who depends on access to leased land for a viable farming operation. Ensuring a smooth ownership transition in this regard includes first discussing a potential sale with your farm tenants in order to understand their current positions and their potential to be part of the buying pool. This provides an earnest approach to transparency and can also potentially aid in an eventual sale if the buyer is needing a tenant farmer already in place to continue operations. On the other hand, if you know that selling your farm is a potential on the horizon, then be sure to negotiate a lease with the tenant with that future sale in mind. This will safeguard the rental decisions and current lease agreements by allowing flexibility of both the owner and farm tenant when operating within the sales process. Not only may an existing tenant not want to work with new ownership and need the flex-





ibility to terminate the lease, but a piece of farmland with a long-term lease agreement may also be a negative impact on the general buyer pool and value of the land.

Being prepared to sell farmland can seem like a daunting task. However, when broken down, it is merely a series of methodical steps that can be taken over time in order to help the experience be both positive and profitable. ■

**Tim Cobb** is a farm kid from Eastern Washington and is the owner of Farmland Company, based in Spokane, Wash. Farmland Company specializes in direct farmland management, real estate brokerage, appraisal and insurance across the Pacific Northwest. For more information, visit his website at [farmlandcompany.com](http://farmlandcompany.com).



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# THE BOTTOM LINE

## Death and taxes, Part III

By William O. Etter  
Attorney, Foster Garvey PC

In Part III, the final installment of our discussion regarding estate taxes, I will discuss the use of a simple credit shelter trust in order to maximize the estate tax credit amounts for married couples.

### Maximizing the credit amount for married couples

As discussed in Part I (see the May 2020 issue of *Wheat Life*), for a person dying in 2020, the estate tax credit amount is \$11.58 million for federal estate tax and \$2.193 million for Washington state estate tax. For married couples whose assets are composed primarily of community property, one of the primary goals of estate tax planning is to ensure that both spouses' credit amounts are combined so that as a married couple, they may shield \$23.16 million of marital assets from federal estate tax and \$4.386 million of marital assets from Washington's estate tax.

It is important to remember that

an estate tax credit amount is held individually by each spouse and not jointly by the married couple. In order to ensure that a married couple is maximizing the amount of property it may shield from estate tax, certain planning needs to be implemented in the form of a credit shelter trust.

Please note that under current federal estate tax law, the concept of "portability" exists. Portability permits a spouse to leave his or her unused exemption amount to the surviving spouse by timely and properly completing a federal estate tax return. Unfortunately, portability does not exist for Washington estate tax purposes, hence, the necessity for Washington domiciled married couples to utilize a credit shelter trust.

### What is a credit shelter trust?

A credit shelter trust is a type of trust used to shelter the estate tax credit of the spouse that dies first, hence the name, credit shelter trust. The trust terms are contained in the wills of both spouses, and the trust does not come into existence until it is funded with property, which occurs only after the death of the first spouse. The surviving spouse can be nominated as the trustee of the credit shelter trust, and the trust may provide that the surviving spouse is the sole beneficiary of the trust during his or her lifetime. The surviving spouse will be able to receive distributions of income and/or principal from the trust. Importantly, the surviving spouse cannot have the general authority to change the remaining beneficiaries of the credit shelter trust after he or she dies. Those remaining beneficiaries of the credit shelter trust are locked in at the time of the first spouse's death. If the credit shelter trust is drafted correctly, the assets remaining in the trust will not be subject to Washington estate tax on the death of the surviving spouse.

### Washington estate tax credit shelter trust planning

In order to explain the benefits of utilizing a credit shelter trust, assume the following facts: Jane Doe and John Doe are a married couple domiciled in Washington with a total gross estate of \$4.386 million. The Doe's entire estate is composed of community property, therefore, each spouse is deemed to have a gross estate of \$2.193 million.

**Scenario #1: John and Jane Doe have simple wills.** John and Jane Doe have simple wills that leave the entire estate of the spouse that dies first to the surviving spouse. In the event John passes first, his entire \$2.193 million estate would be distributed to Jane. Jane would then have an estate worth \$4.386 million, but a credit amount of only \$2.193 million. Under Washington law, John's credit amount cannot be transferred to Jane by will. If, at the time of Jane's death, her estate remains \$4.386 million, half of said estate (\$2.193 million) would be subject to Washington estate tax. Under current law, Jane's estate would have a Washington estate tax bill of \$268,950, which would be paid from the estate assets prior to distribution to the beneficiaries.

**Scenario #2: John and Jane Doe have wills that utilize a credit shelter trust.** In lieu of the simple wills described above, John and Jane Doe have wills that provide on the death of the first spouse, his or her estate will be transferred to a credit shelter trust. Let's assume the same facts as Scenario #1, namely, John dies

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first, and his estate is worth \$2.193 million.

In this instance, John's assets don't pass to Jane outright, rather they are transferred to the credit shelter trust. Jane is the trustee and sole beneficiary of the credit shelter trust during her lifetime, therefore, she is entitled to take distributions of the trust assets if necessary. However, if Jane were to pass away, and at such time, the total assets of both spouses were still \$4.386 million (\$2.193 million in Jane's name and \$2.193 million in the credit shelter trust), there would be no Washington estate tax owed. Jane's estate tax credit of \$2.193 million would result in a \$0 tax bill for her estate. The credit shelter trust is not subject to Washington estate tax on Jane's death (if drafted correctly by an attorney), and thus, the tax bill for John's portion of the estate would also be \$0. The use of a simple credit

shelter trust has saved the heirs of Jane and John Doe \$268,950 in estate taxes. Not a bad result for a simple estate planning technique. ■

**William O. Etter** is a tax attorney that specializes in estate planning, probate and trust administration in the Spokane office of Foster Garvey PC. He has previously served on the executive committee of the Real Property, Probate, and Trust section of the Washington State Bar Association and can be reached at [william.etter@foster.com](mailto:william.etter@foster.com).



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# Your wheat life...



Mowing male canola rows in Connell. Photo by Colton Johns.



Grayson Kerns (4) confers with his grandfather, Russ Floyd (middle), and Gary Widman about a header issue. Grayson is a true future farmer and loves helping his grandpa on the family's 4th generation farm outside of Rosalia. Photo by Karen Mattausch Floyd.



Steve Jordan, great-grandson Colson Parker (5 months) and granddaughter Shae Parker at Jordan Farms, north of Waterville. Photo by Cody Parker.





Sunset above Hartline.  
Photo by Jon Heathman.



Rhett Dormaier (2.5) waiting on his father, Mike Dormaier,  
in Edwall. Photo by Brenda Dormaier.

Email pictures to  
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names of all people appearing  
in the picture and ages of all  
children.

Cody Cox (18 months) checks out the  
equipment before firing it up in Garfield  
County. Photo by Andrea Cox.





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