

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

MARCH | 2020

GROWERS SEE U.S. FOOD AID IN ACTION

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Breaking mental health barriers in agriculture

Ten NRCS practices get special treatment

Waxy wheat variety targets
udon noodle market

A call to arms! When the horse industry
declared war against tractors

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WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



WAWG for the win!

By Ryan Poe

The wheels of government can turn slowly, and many times, the “win,” if it comes, comes years after the battle was started. I’m very pleased to be able to report that in the last few weeks, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has had two wins on issues that are extremely important to Eastern Washington wheat growers.

One of the biggest concerns we took to Washington, D.C., with us in January was a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) issue in Douglas County. Currently, Douglas County producers can’t participate in the general CRP sign-up because the county is over the maximum 25 percent CRP acreage cap, thanks to a change in how sage grouse acres are now classified in the 2018 Farm Bill. We talked about this issue extensively with our federal delegation and top U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials. A permanent fix means getting a federal waiver for the county, but that’s a long, time-consuming process. Fortunately, there’s a temporary solution.

At our February state board meeting, Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency (FSA) state executive director, explained that the Natural Resources Conservation Service is going to have EQIP funds available for some of those sage grouse initiative priority areas. Read more about this temporary solution on page 22.

The other “win” came from Christopher Mertz, director of the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s (NASS) Northwest Region. Mertz also attended our February board meeting and told us that thanks to the efforts of WAWG and other commodity organizations, NASS will be doing a special survey to gather data about crop share rental rates.

Currently, CRP rental rates are based on the county’s cash rental rate as reported by NASS. The problem that I and many other Eastern Washington wheat farmers had was we almost exclusively use crop share leases. NASS asks about cash rents but doesn’t ask any questions about crop share. Until now, that is. This is a big win for us who use crop share leases. It means FSA will have much more accurate data on which to base CRP rental rates. See page 23 for more information.

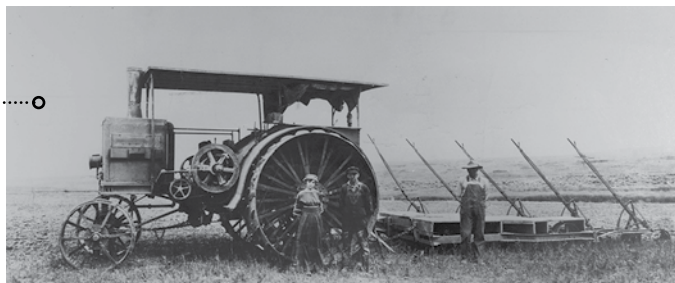
I understand it’s frustrating and time consuming to fill out NASS reports, but these surveys have value. I recently finished the ARMS survey, which wasn’t a fun thing to do and took a lot of time, but it is important to provide as accurate and complete data as we can. These reports help legislators with farm bill decision criteria and evaluate how those programs are working. At the board meeting, Wyss said he’s a numbers guy, and the NASS reports are incredibly important to him.

I think both of these developments highlight what WAWG is capable of doing when growers put something forward as a priority that we need to address. The NASS crop share option would not have happened, in my opinion, if I and other farmers hadn’t spoken up and said that the data didn’t accurately reflect our farms. The Douglas County issue had a lot of people and agencies involved in finding a solution, and I believe WAWG, and our national organization (the National Association of Wheat Growers) played a big part in keeping the conversation going. Most agency people and legislators don’t know how our operations work like we do. We need to educate and inform them on how legislation impacts us. If you keep telling your story, you never know who might hear it and care. ■

Cover photo: Winter wheat at sunset on Westside Farms outside of Harrington, Wash. Photo by Stacey Rasmussen. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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Dialogue

New trade agreement will unleash the shackles from our agricultural industry

"Mr. President, our farmers love you!"

President Trump looked up, smiled, walked over to me and shook my hand. What a moment! It was the culmination of more than a year's worth of effort, seeking support from legislators in Olympia, our local governments, and especially from our farmers for the proposed U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

I have a deep love for agriculture. From growing up in Idaho, to studying plant science and crop management at the University of Idaho and from serving in the Peace Corps overseas where I taught people about agriculture and living off the land—it is my passion.

There is nothing more sad than when our own government breaks the entrepreneurial spirit of the American farmer through regulations and agreements that shackle the ability to be productive, cripple competitiveness and pay to idle some of our most fertile land.

When President Bill Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into law on Dec. 8, 1993, he said, "NAFTA means jobs. American jobs, and good-paying American jobs." And while that may have been the case in some sectors of our national economy, many farmers tell me they feel as though they were left behind.

Significant restrictions and tariff quotas were imposed on agricultural products through NAFTA, mainly sugar and poultry products, but particularly on our dairy industry, which has suffered mightily. It hampered our ability to have fair market competition.

President Trump called NAFTA "a nightmare," and it was repealed in 2018. However, we need to have a strong trade agreement in place with our north and south neighboring countries. That is especially true for Washington state, which is the most trade dependent state in the nation. We are responsible for one in every four jobs from our \$86 billion in yearly exports.

In April, I authored a letter to President Trump, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, which was signed by Washington state legislators from both parties in the House and Senate, asking for "the expeditious ratification of the USMCA by Congress to ensure continued free, fair, open and mutually beneficial trade with our northern and southern border neighbors." Furthermore, I authored a similar letter to the president, speaker and majority leader in support of the USMCA, signed by many of our local farmers and ranchers who serve as the backbone of the Washington state agricultural economy.

After more than a year of talks, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass the USMCA in December, followed by the Senate on Jan. 16. A few days after the Senate approval, I received an invitation from the White House to attend the bill signing.

As a state legislator representing one of the largest agricultural legislative districts in

the state, I thought of our farmers as I watched the president speak.

"This agreement is a tremendous breakthrough for American agriculture," he said. "Canada will finally provide greater access for American dairy. Canada is opening up. It will grow annual exports to our neighbors by an estimated \$315 million. Poultry exports to Canada are expected to rise by at least 50 percent, and egg exports could increase by 500 percent."

This is exactly what we need. President Trump then said something even more noteworthy to our local area. "Very importantly, Canada will finally give fair treatment to American-grown wheat."

The agreement has already been approved by the Mexican parliament, and Canada is expected to follow with its own ratification. I just can't help but think what an amazing future our agricultural industry has ahead by opening markets and unshackling our farmers to do what they do best—feed the world. All we want is fair trade to level the playing field, which is what President Trump assures us will happen under the USMCA.

As the crowd began to disperse, I made my way to the front, where I met Vice President Mike Pence. But one of the most memorable highlights was when I shouted out to President Trump, he looked up, saw my red coat and came over to shake my hand.

In that moment, I handed him a small flash drive of a video I did, which discusses another enormous issue of importance for our Eastern Washington farmers—the completion of the Columbia Basin Project for irrigation. This would open even more opportunities for our agricultural economy. I can only hope he watches it. In any case, I am optimistic that as a farmer, we now have brighter days ahead. ■

Rep. Mary Dye (R-Pomeroy) represents the 9th Legislative District. She serves on the House Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. Mary and her husband, Roger, operate a 3,000-acre dryland wheat farm. They also tend to 3,000 sheep on the farm.



Rep. Mary Dye
(R-Pomeroy)



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Family \$200 (2 family members)	X	X	X			X
Partnership \$500 (1-5 family members)	X	X	X	X		X
Convention \$600 (2 individuals)	X	X	X		X	X
Lifetime \$2,500 (1 individual)	X	X	X	X		X
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Student \$75	X	X	X			
Industry Associate \$150	X	X	X			

WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

More member benefits:

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



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Growers get good news at February board meeting

Growers heard some good news from two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies during February's state board meeting of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG).

Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Washington state executive director, announced a temporary fix for some growers in Douglas County who are ineligible for the current Conservation Reserve Program's (CRP) general sign-up due to the county's CRP acreage cap. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering producers the opportunity to enroll former CRP ground into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) using funds from the national Sage Grouse Initiative. See page 22 for more information.

Growers are reminded that the March 15 deadline for choosing either the Agriculture Risk Coverage or the Price Loss Coverage program for crop years 2019 and 2020 is rapidly approaching. Growers are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office immediately to make an appointment.

that there won't be enough time slots to accommodate everybody if farmers wait until the last minute to call for an appointment. Farmers have until March 15 to make an Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program election for crop years 2019 and 2020. The CRP general sign-up deadline was Feb. 28, 2020.

The other good news came from Chris Mertz, regional director of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). In the past, CRP rental payments have been based on county cash rent averages. Unfortunately, in Eastern Washington, the majority of dryland wheat rental agreements are crop share agreements, which means Eastern Washington CRP payment rates could be based on incomplete information. Mertz told the board that FSA has asked NASS to do a special survey in Washington, Arkansas and Texas to gather more information on crop share rental agreements.

This was another issue that WAWG leaders have been

advocating for in Washington, D.C. See more on page 23.

The board also heard state legislative updates from WAWG lobbyist Diana Carlen. At the time of the board meeting, the 2020 Legislative Session was at the half-way mark. Carlen said that while the number of bills in play has decreased significantly, she is still watching several closely. One is **HB 2498**, which would require the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to compensate a grower when the department terminates a rental agreement early under their "higher and better use clause." That bill has broad support from legislators and DNR.

Another bill Carlen is watching is **SB 6518** that partially bans chlorpyrifos-based pesticides. WAWG is opposed to the bill, as it prevents growers from using an important pest management tool and sets a bad precedent by taking pesticide regulation out of the science-based EPA process.

Potential carbon regulation action is still on the table, Carlen said, including a low carbon fuel standard or a cap and trade program. But the carbon-related legislation that seems to have the most momentum is legislation that would do an end run around a court ruling that said the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) does not have the legal authority to regulate indirect carbon emitters. In 2017, Gov. Inslee directed Ecology to use authority under the Clean Air Act to help limit carbon emissions.

The next WAWG board meeting is scheduled for March 10. ■

Round up of February's county grower meetings

Growers in Franklin, Spokane and Whitman counties all held meetings in February.

Franklin County

February's meeting of the Franklin County wheat growers was well attended, as growers, old and new, gathered at a local restaurant in Connell to hear updates on 2018 Farm Bill programs and enjoy a dinner.

Bruce Clatterbuck, Farm Service Agency's (FSA)

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Franklin County growers heard Farm Service Agency updates and enjoyed a meal at the February county growers meeting in Connell.

Franklin County executive director, walked growers through FSA's programs, including the Market Facilitation Program, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs.

Regarding CRP, Clatterbuck explained to growers that it isn't the CRP of the 1990s, or even the early 2000s. He said with all the changes, including lower rental payments and reduced cost share payments, the program may not fit into producers' business plans anymore.

"It's something you need to look hard at," he said.

Switching to ARC/PLC, Clatterbuck walked growers through FSA's yield update tool, which is an Excel spreadsheet located at fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index?active=resources. Growers will need a 156EZ report, as well as their yield production history, both of which can be requested from their local FSA office, in order to use the spreadsheet. Growers should also make use of the online tools to help them decide between ARC and PLC. Those tools are also available at the above link.

Clatterbuck advised growers to play with the yield calculation tool and the ARC/PLC tools before sitting down with FSA to make 2019 and 2020 program elections. He also advised them to call their local FSA office to make an appointment as soon as possible.

Mike Miller, a Washington Grain Commission commissioner, called into the meeting to talk about trade, including the bilateral agreement with Japan, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and Phase One of the China deal. He said South African countries, such as Kenya, are likely next on the government's list of potential trade partners.

Brian Cochrane, another WGC commissioner who was at the meeting, expanded on Miller's information, talking about the potential markets in Asia. Cochrane also talked about the county's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). Producers who are planning to put former CRP ground into production can apply for funding under VSP to help them implement no-till or minimum tillage practices in order to reduce the chances of wind erosion.

The next Franklin County wheat growers meeting will be in Kahlottus in March, the exact date to be determined.

Spokane County

Wheat industry updates and discussions on using wheat grower funds to support local organizations were the main topics of conversation at the February meeting of the Spokane County wheat growers.

President Marci Green gave a report on recent Washington Association of Wheat Growers activities, including the group's trips to Washington, D.C., and Olympia to advocate for the wheat industry. She also told growers that if they haven't yet made an appointment at the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to talk about 2018 Farm Bill programs, they need to do it immediately. Deadlines for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs are rapidly approaching.

The group also discussed using funds to support local groups and organizations, including how to best encourage students to develop an interest in agriculture and advocating for the industry, possibly through supporting local FFA chapters. The group voted to continue making donations to the Northwest Natural Resources Institute, the Washington Wheat Foundation and AgForestry.

Whitman County

Bob Brueggeman, the new Washington State University (WSU) barley breeder, was the guest speaker at February's meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers.

Brueggeman introduced himself and talked about his goals for the barley breeding program. He said he'll be "all in on barley," focusing especially on developing malt-quality varieties in order to attract attention from some of the big brewers. He is establishing a malt barley quality lab at WSU and is working on bringing in genetic material that



Bob Brueggeman (second from left), the new Washington State University barley breeder, talked to Whitman County growers at their February meeting.

will help new WSU lines meet American Malting Barley Association standards.

Growers also heard about the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' recent Olympia Days trip, national wheat industry news and upcoming grower education workshops.

The next meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers will be March 9, at noon, at Eddy's Chinese and American Restaurant in Colfax. WSU economist Randy Fortenbery will be attending. ■

Farm Fair volunteers wanted

Every year, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers participates in Washington State Farm Fairs in Kennewick and Spokane. Volunteers are needed to help describe the role of farmers and the Washington wheat industry in the region to fourth- and fifth-grade students.

Farm fairs are a fun and interesting way to interact with students and teachers. This year, the Kennewick event is scheduled for March 26-27 and the Spokane event for May 6-7. While both farm fairs are two-day events, volunteers who can only participate for a limited time are gladly welcomed.

For more information, please contact Lori Williams, WAWG's outreach coordinator, at lori@wawg.org or by phone at (509) 659-0610. ■

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers is hiring!

We are looking for a dedicated, passionate advertising sales professional, preferably with print industry experience, to join our team as our **ad sales manager** for *Wheat Life Magazine*. Our ideal candidate lives in Eastern Washington, has a background in agriculture and cares deeply about promoting the people who grow the best wheat on earth.

Wheat Life is a high quality, monthly publication covering all aspects of the Washington wheat industry. You can view past issues at wheatlife.org/pastissues.html.

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If this sounds like a good fit for you, please email a resume to michelle@wawg.org by March 15. If you have any questions, call (435) 260-8888.

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- Generating new prospects and clients through scheduled appointments and cold calls;
- Developing advertising strategies, schedules and campaigns for local, regional and national clients;
- Designing ad layouts and writing copy for ads; and
- Turning in monthly ad run sheets for billing and layout.

There is some light travel involved, including attending monthly board meetings in Ritzville, regional trade shows and to cover the sales territory, which includes Eastern Washington, North Idaho and NE Oregon.

Scholarships available to seniors

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Contact FSA now to enroll in key safety net programs

By Jon Wyss

*Washington State Executive Director,
Farm Service Agency*

The clock is ticking! March 15 is THE LAST day to make what is likely one of the most important business decisions you will make for your farming operation this year.

If you have not already visited your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office to make your election for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and to sign your annual enrollment contract, you should call and make your appointment now.

Many of you are gearing up to head to the field for spring planting, but I cannot stress enough the importance of not letting this deadline get lost in the hectic, day-to-day



AG EXPO EXCITEMENT. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) participated in the 2020 Spokane Ag Expo, which was held Feb. 4-6 at the convention center. Booth traffic was similar to prior years, with a later start on Wednesday of the show likely due to weather. The wheel/trivia game returned and appeared to attract visitors to the booth. Participants spun the wheel to answer a wheat-related trivia question and were entered to win a television. The winner of the television was Meghan Kulm of Lind, Wash. Other giveaways included ice scrapers, letter openers, rulers, etc. Hats were given to members and proved popular. Membership forms and industry materials were provided, and WAWG programs including the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO) were promoted. AMMO was a sponsor of the Farm Forum, receiving recognition on materials and event signage. Spokane County wheat grower and WAWG past president, Marci Green, was awarded the Excellence in Ag Award.



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obligations of farm life. If you fail to enroll for 2019 ARC or PLC, you will be ineligible to receive a payment for the 2019 crop year.

FSA anticipates more than 1.7 million producers will enroll in ARC or PLC—that's a lot of producers to assist in a short period of time. As of Feb. 4, FSA records in Washington state show 2,967 farms out of an expected 9,723 farms have completed ARC or PLC enrollment for the 2019 crop year.

Want to maximize your time visiting with FSA? Inquire about deadlines and options for also enrolling in 2020 ARC or PLC and updating PLC payment yields. Our staff will help you make the most out of your visit or set you up with a future appointment to help check FSA programs off your lengthy "to do" list.

If you're still unsure about the choice of ARC or PLC, we offer online decision tools to help you determine the best program election for your farming operation. To access these tools, visit fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. Call FSA today for an appointment. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator. We know that time is money...so make the time to avoid losing the money. ■

Are you receiving your ALERT?

With their annual membership, Washington Association of Wheat Growers members can receive industry updates through the weekly digital Greensheet ALERT via email. Call our office at (509) 659-0610 to make sure we have your current email address. ■

WAWG thanks members

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers would like to thank each and every member of our organization. You, the members, keep the organization strong. The grassroots WAWG is built on keep the leadership, committees and board members moving forward in a positive way. Without your support and activity, WAWG would not be the efficient and effective organization it is today. Thank you for your time and support.

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CHVATAL FARMS INC
-ED CHVATAL
-DAVID FLOREN
DARREL W & NINA CLAASSEN
CORKRUM & DERBY RANCH

COYOTE FLATS FARMS INC
CROW FARMS INC
D & P ELDER FAMILY LLC
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DAVID B WILLIAMSON &
PAULA M WILLIAMSON
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KULM FARMS
DINGMAN FARMS JV
DORMAIER DIPPER RANCH LLC
DOUBLE A FARMS
DOUBLE D FARMS
DP JOINT VENTURES
DRB FARM INC
ROY L & CARLEY J DUBE
ROGER & MARY DYE
E & M WILLIAMS INC
E & P JOINT VENTURES
ECKHART FARMS LLC
-CHRIS ECKHART
-SALLY ECKHART
ELMER C ANDERSON INC
ELSCO INC
MICHAEL P & CATHERINE
ENSLEY
KARL & IONE FELGENHAUER
FIVE T FARMS INC
FOGED FARMS
FRANZ RANCH INC
G & A SMITH FARMS
G-02 FARM INC
MARTIN & PAM GERING
GERING & KUCH FARMS
GLENCO FARMS INC
GM FARMS
GOETZ WHEAT FARMS JV
GREEN VIEW FARMS INC
-JORDAN & CARLY GREEN
-LONNIE & MARCI GREEN
GREENE RIDGE FARMS
-JESSE GREENE
-MARK GREENE
GREG FERREL LLC
HEATHMAN HEREFORD
RANCH
-JOHN HEATHMAN
-STEVE HEATHMAN
HEATON FARMS
HEIDER FARMS INC
HENNING FAMILY FARMS INC

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-HAYDEN HERDRICK
HI-CREST FARMS INC
HILLSIDE FARMS INC
-ALAN SMICK
-DALE SMICK
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-WYSTERIA RUSH
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JOHN GRANT & SON
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KENNEY FARMS INC
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KLC INC
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ROBERT & PAULA KRAMER
LANEFIELD FARMS INC
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BRETHREN
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FARMS INC
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-CHARLES SCHWAB
-SCOTT SCHWAB
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TWIN TOWERS FARMS LLC
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-ELLENBURG OFFICE
-ELTOPIA OFFICE
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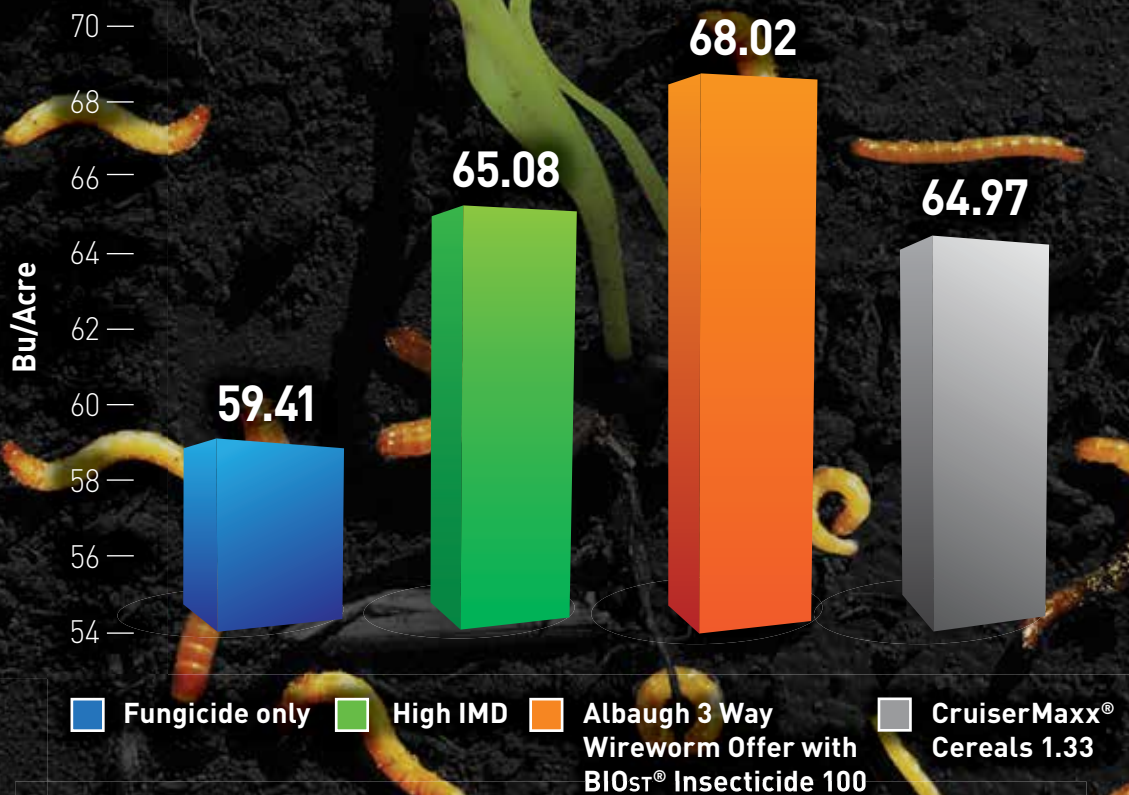
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POLICY MATTERS

Low carbon fuel standard could be costly to farmers

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

During the 2020 Legislative Session, state lawmakers are once again considering adopting a low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for transportation fuels. A top priority of Gov. Inslee's, LCFS legislation passed the House last year, but stalled in the Senate.

Aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, a LCFS would require fuel suppliers to reduce the carbon "intensity" of gasoline and diesel fuels by blending them with increasing amounts of biofuels or by purchasing compliance "credits" from suppliers of lower carbon transportation fuels. Only two states in the country have this standard—California, and more recently, Oregon.

HB 1110 and **SB 5412** would direct the Washington State Department of Ecology to develop a statewide LCFS with the goal of reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuels by 10 percent by 2028 and 20 percent by 2035.

A similar but more aggressive fuel standard has also been proposed by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) for King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

Whether statewide or regional, an LCFS would have costly implications. In California, the LCFS is adding about 19 cents per gallon to the cost of gasoline, which is projected to increase to 63 cents per gallon by 2030. Oregon's LCFS has had limited impact because of its early stage of implementation, but is on track to duplicate or even exceed California's fuel cost impacts.

In Washington, a study commissioned by the PSCAA found that its regional LCFS could add up to 57 cents per gallon to the cost of gasoline and up to 63 cents per gallon to diesel fuel by 2030.

In a recent hearing before the Senate Environment, Energy and Technology

Committee, Washington farmers informed lawmakers that as price-takers, farms would have limited ability to recoup transportation cost increases attributed to the LCFS. The added costs of transporting crops to market would have to be absorbed, which would put Washington farms at a competitive disadvantage compared to those in other states and countries.

Fortunately, the proposed statewide LCFS would exempt fuels used to operate off-road farm equipment—at least until 2028. Even so, farmers at the hearing expressed concerns about the use of ethanol blends that are corrosive and can clog pumps and filters and cause damage to fuel lines, seals, gaskets and injectors. Such problems could be exacerbated over time with increased biofuel blending as the LCFS becomes more stringent.

LCFS proponents claim the LCFS would benefit Washington corn and wheat growers as local crops could be used to produce ethanol in the state. However, according to the study commissioned by PSCAA, "these crops are unlikely to be developed as a resource for low carbon transportation fuel production in Washington. While the volumes of these feedstocks are substantial, there are significant hurdles to constructing new ethanol production facilities."

Most existing ethanol production facilities in the country are in the Midwest, where the concentration of low-carbon feedstocks is greater, giving them a competitive advantage over any potential new facilities that could be built in Washington.

Overall, the proposed LCFS would be high cost with little to no benefit. While the goal of the LCFS is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, PSCAA's own study did not even address the potential impacts on climate change emissions. In terms of air quality, the study modeled only one pollutant and found the LCFS would have minimal impact.

WAWG supports carbon reduction policies that recognize agricultural practices as a benefit to the environment, complement existing policies, do not impose inefficient costs on Washington agriculture and do not make wheat growers less competitive in the global market. The LCFS policy would not meet any of those criteria. ■



The scientific explanation.

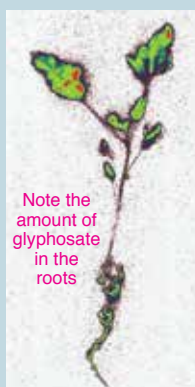
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University of Illinois phosphorescent image of a glyphosate/C-14 radioactive isotope + WETCIT application. Areas of green and red in the roots show that a high concentration of glyphosate was delivered to the roots within 12 hours.

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Temporary fix offered for Douglas County CRP

There's some good news for Douglas County producers who are wondering what to do with their expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

At February's state board meeting of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Washington state executive director, announced a temporary fix for growers in Douglas County who are ineligible for the current CRP general sign-up due to the county's CRP acreage cap. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering producers the opportunity to enroll expiring CRP ground into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) using funds from the national Sage Grouse Initiative. This is a competitive sign-up, growers will have to meet FSA eligibility and have an NRCS conservation plan that addresses wildlife management for sage grouse. Depending on the practices implemented and the monitoring level selected, producers can receive payment for the work they will do to enhance, manage and monitor the habitat for sage grouse.

"Through the joint efforts of NRCS and FSA, we were able to find a program that can assist those producers, especially in Douglas County, with a program that keeps the common goal of protecting ag lands and enhancing habitat for wildlife," Wyss said. "We could not have done this without the assistance of our NRCS State Conservationist Roylene Comes at Night and her staff, along with our federal partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We look forward to continuing to work on behalf of all our producers in the state."

Douglas County growers interested in taking advantage of this opportunity need to make sure all their FSA paperwork is up to date before contacting NRCS and submitting an application. Once they have their paperwork in order, they'll be able to sign up for the program beginning March 1 through April 2.

Under the 2018 Farm Bill, many State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) acres are no longer exempt from counting towards a county's CRP acreage limit, which is 25 percent of a county's total cropland that is eligible for CRP. In Douglas County, which has slightly more than 187,500 acres in CRP, 63,000 acres of which are in SAFE, their county acreage cap is 143,700 acres, meaning they are roughly 43,800 acres over their cap. To change how SAFE acres are classified would require Congressional action.

Wyss said the state FSA office has been working on the

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issue since November and is still working on getting a waiver that would allow the county to exceed the CRP acreage cap, a more permanent solution. He called the EQIP program a "short-term fix to a longer-term issue that needs to be addressed in D.C."

During their trip to the nation's capital in January, WAWG leaders addressed this issue with members of the state's federal delegation and in meetings with USDA officials.

"We appreciate the quick response from the state FSA office to the CRP situation in Douglas County," said Ryan Poe, president of WAWG. "Jon Wyss and his staff worked closely with us, other industry groups, our federal delegation and other USDA agencies to understand the problem and to try to find a solution. Farmers in Douglas County have made great strides in protecting natural resources through conservation practices, and this situation threatened to derail much of the work that had been done."

Producers interested in the Sage Grouse Initiative EQIP program should consider:

- This is a five-year program, and signups officially begin March 1, 2020.
- All eligibility forms for FSA need to be updated to show ability to qualify for programs, including AGI limitations. This needs to be done before NRCS will process an application for the Sage Grouse Initiative as a temporary solution to expiring CRP.
- Monitoring will be a component of the project, and the rental rate depends on how much work the producer wants to put into the program.

NRCS will work with farmers to develop wildlife management plans. The program does allow prescribed grazing, but has some specific requirements, including fencing, water developments, markers, etc.

Producers that have questions should contact their local NRCS office. ■

NASS to gather information on crop share rent data

By Christopher Mertz

Director, Northwest Region, National Agricultural Statistics Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is working with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to conduct a pilot nonirrigated cropland survey. The purpose of this pilot study is to provide supplemental data to FSA to help set Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rates as they pertain to share rent. With the potential adoption of this pilot into production, FSA could increase the precision of estimates in counties where share renting predominates and set annual CRP payment rates that more accurately reflect local market conditions.

The survey will sample a total of 1,500 respondents in three states—Washington, Texas and Arkansas. The timing of the survey follows a similar timeline as NASS's current cash rent survey. The questionnaire was mailed

to producers on March 1. Producers have the option of returning the questionnaire by mail or completing the questionnaire online. Producers that do not return the questionnaire will be contacted by telephone beginning March 16. Data collection is expected to end on May 11.

NASS's Northwest Regional Field Office made efforts to reduce additional contacts to producers that may have been selected for other surveys during this time frame. Producers are asked to please take the time to complete the questionnaire as results from the survey have the potential to improve CRP in Washington state. Changes to the program are unlikely to be made without the use of additional information. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers had previously made requests to FSA and NASS to adequately represent land that is share rented into CRP payment rates. The efforts by NASS and FSA are a direct response to suggestions by the local producer organization.

All questions about the survey can be directed to Christopher Mertz, director, Northwest Region, at (360) 890-3300. ■



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WASHINGTON WHEAT FOUNDATION OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP FOR AGFORESTRY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

By Melissa Skomer-Kafton

The AgForestry Leadership Program has been cultivating leaders in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries for more than 40 years. Through

hands-on, intensive training on issues affecting our livelihoods, the nonprofit program has created more than 1,000 advocates for communities and natural resources throughout the state. AgForestry challenges professional adults to refine their leadership styles, find common ground with people from differing backgrounds and sectors and teaches them to make positive change happen in Washington and throughout the world.

AgForestry is an 18-month program consisting of 11 in-state seminars, one week in Washington, D.C., learning about national government and up to two weeks in a foreign country exploring international policy, trade and culture.

AgForestry participants use their experience to become more active members of their community, take leadership roles in their industry and be better stewards of the land.

AgForestry is excited to announce a scholarship made possible by the Washington Wheat Foundation. This newly formed opportunity for those in the wheat industry was awarded in 2019 to Ben Cochrane of Class 41. Ben is a dryland wheat farmer from Kahlotus, Wash. Learn how to apply for the Washington Wheat Foundation scholarship online at agforestry.org/scholarships.

AgForestry works very hard to make sure classes are diverse, with many points of view represented. Without producer and small farm representation, a very important aspect of Washington agriculture is missing. The application window for class 43 is March 16-April 30, 2020.

NXNW SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN UPDATE

January was extremely busy in communications and social media. Much of the campaign focus was on Snake River dams and the importance of keeping all forms of transportation, including barging, available for wheat farmers.

What's next, you may ask. Let's focus on nutrition. **Craig T. Hunt**, RDN, has worked with the wheat industry for many years. He has authored several articles and filmed accompanying video segments that will be used on our social media outlets and website. The topics include:

- Why wheat is an important part of a healthy food plan;
- The facts about low carb diets;
- Athletes and grains;
- The truth behind gluten;
- The importance of folic acid; and
- Fiber, fiber, fiber.

Be sure and keep an eye out for more exciting topics coming in the near future! ■



Calendar:

Washington Wheat
Foundation Meeting
June 1, 2020,
beginning at 1 p.m. at
the Wheat Foundation
Building in Ritzville,
Wash.

June Shoot, **TBD**

Harvest Classic Golf
Tournament, **TBD**

Reminders:

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

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Call to action

COLUMBIA RIVER SYSTEM DRAFT EIS SCHEDULED TO BE RELEASED; GROWER ACTION NEEDED

As of press time, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration, as co-lead agencies, were scheduled to release the Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on Feb. 28.

This review evaluates the impacts of the long-term, coordinated water management functions for the operation, maintenance and configuration of the 14 federal dam and reservoir projects that comprise the federal Columbia River System. The draft EIS also evaluates alternative spill scenarios for the dams and includes a scenario for breaching of the four lower Snake River dams. The dam breaching scenario has generated the most media and public controversy.

The release of the draft EIS kicks off a 45-day public comment period. A federal Notice of Availability with information on how to view the draft EIS, provide comments and the dates and locations of public comment

meetings can be found at crso.info. Written and verbal public comments will be accepted at the comment meetings, via postal mail and through a web-based comment form. Public comments must be individual. Identical form letters will be collected and counted as only one comment.

The lower Snake River and Columbia River dams are essential to the navigation and transportation of wheat and other cargo. Approximately 60 percent of wheat grown in Eastern Washington is shipped to export markets via the rivers. Your comments are needed in order to protect the viability of the Columbia-Snake River System.

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association has information and support materials on their website (pnwa.net) to help you in your efforts to provide the co-lead agencies with your comments. Don't miss this important opportunity to provide feedback on how the proposed alternative scenarios will impact you, your farms and your families. ■



Lower Granite Lock and Dam on the Snake River. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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FOOD FOR AID

Growers travel to Kenya, Tanzania to see how U.S. commodities are helping feed the world

By Trista Crossley

The idea of food aid is easy to understand. The actual nuts and bolts of food aid, however, are a little more complicated.

Back in November, a group of U.S. farmers and agricultural stakeholders from the wheat, barley, rice and sorghum industries set out on a two-week trip to Kenya and Tanzania to learn how food aid from the U.S., including grain, is sent to recipients in need, and how that food is distributed. Nicole Berg, past president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, treasurer of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and a Benton County farmer, took part in the trip.

“This trip was an effort to educate U.S. farmers as well as policy folks in D.C. to have a better understanding of what food aid is, what it does, where it goes, and what it

looks like,” Berg said.

Molly O'Connor, a trade and food policy advisor for NAWG, helped plan the trip. She said food aid is a policy and a program that is often talked about, and advocacy groups, such as NAWG, have policies and advocate for it, but most people haven't seen it in action.

“This was an educational trip so that not only could growers see the things we talk about in the field, but policy staff and the growers could better understand the nuances of the programs and come back with personalized stories to share why these programs are important and why supporting them in the future continues to be one of our priorities,” she said.

Before taking off for Kenya, the 11-member group gathered in Washington, D.C., for a briefing with USAID, the federal agency that's primarily responsible for admin-



Some of the wheat representatives on the trip in front of bagged wheat donations at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. From left are Chad Weigand, regional director for Sub-Saharan Africa, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW); Denise Conover, director, Montana Wheat and Barley Committee; Nicole Berg, treasurer of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and a Benton County farmer; Elizabeth Westendorf, former assistant director of policy, USW; and Molly O'Connor, trade and food policy advisor, National Association of Wheat Growers.

istering foreign aid and development assistance to other countries, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which administers a few food aid programs and who provided a grant that funded the trip. Once in Nairobi, Kenya, the group met with staff from USAID and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service at the U.S. Embassy to learn how U.S. aid comes into the country and some of the barriers the staff has to work through to get that aid. They also met past Cochran Fellows who are local to Kenya. The Cochran Fellowship Program provides training to agricultural professionals in middle-income and emerging economies to help boost domestic production and build trade capacities.

One of the stops on the trip was at the Kakuma refugee camp in the northwestern part of Kenya, which receives food aid through USAID's Food for Peace program. The refugee camp was established in 1992, and as of August 2019, there were more than 191,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in the camp and a nearby settlement. The group met with camp leaders and the World Food Program staff that oversees the refugee camp before getting a first-hand look at how U.S. aid and aid from other countries is actually being used at the camp.

"All of us farmers talk about the food that we donate, and so one thing I wanted to see was where does it go? What does it do?" Berg said, adding that the difference between life in the U.S. and in the refugee camp was like night and day. "Many of us don't worry about what we are going to eat tomorrow in the U.S., but in Kakuma and other areas of Kenya, they worry every day about what they are going to eat. I was proud of the U.S. for what we do to help refugee camps. In D.C., there's this perception that farmers don't necessarily want to donate to third-world countries, we just want to sell wheat. That's not true. Farmers are here to help the world and feed the world in one manner or another, whether thorough food aid or purchases. We feed the world. We are here to feed the world."

One of the biggest debates in foreign food aid revolves around the idea of sending cash and vouchers instead of food to countries in need. Berg said she came away from the trip understanding that they need both—the food to eat and the money to help them establish a market to buy other goods and services.

"The conversations in this industry are about this idea of do we support the U.S. giving money or a big bag of wheat? I came away realizing it's not an either/or, it's both," she said. "I personally have always thought we could just give the wheat and move on, but if you are going to get a third-world country to a level of sustainability so they can purchase wheat, they are going to need both. I've also heard folks say let's just give food aid, not teach



Benton County grower Nicole Berg proudly displays the colors during a trip to Kenya and Tanzania to learn how food aid from the U.S. is sent to recipients in need.

Africa how to farm because then they'll be self-sustainable and will never buy our products. That statement isn't true. The more self-sufficient they become, the more they'll be able to buy our high quality products."

O'Connor said being able to show growers the different types of U.S. aid—in-kind food aid vs. monetization—was valuable and helped them understand how different kinds of aid helps different segments of the population. The people in the refugee camp needed the food, but by investing in mills and other infrastructure, U.S. aid was laying a foundation for a possible future trading partner.

"(At the) refugee camp, that experience for me and the growers to see people who had to flee their homes for a variety of reasons and figure out what life looks like next...a lot of those people, when told that these were farmers from America, they were very grateful and thankful. It is humbling to see what food security outside of the U.S. looks like," she said.

While in Kenya, the group traveled to Mombasa to visit a port where container ships come in and food is unloaded and stored in a World Food Program warehouse. At the same location, they also visited a grain importer that imports bulk commodities from around the world, including wheat from Canada. One of the biggest barriers Berg saw that U.S. food aid has to navigate is transportation.

"I'm not saying its right or wrong, but all food aid coming from the U.S. has to go on a U.S. flagged ship, and they are more expensive than other ships," she said. "That is one barrier that makes food aid more expensive for the U.S. to get it there."

In Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, the group visited a high-tech mill that processes some monetized wheat from USDA's Food for Progress program, but also mills wheat for commercial sales across Africa. The mill gen-

erally purchases wheat from the Black Sea Region or #2 wheat from Canada because, although they like U.S. wheat, it is too expensive. That day wrapped up with a visit to a commercial bakery where Berg said everything was done by hand all the way through packaging the products.

The final days of the tour involved visiting several animal feed mills and poultry farms that had received monetary assistance through USDA. One extremely high-tech feed mill had received a loan to help expand their facilities to diversify their poultry feed business. Then the group went to another feed mill on the other end of the scale that was still building their capacity and had received assistance to build a new processing site with high-tech equipment. Construction was ongoing during the visit. Berg said she asked the implanting partner why businesses that were struggling or just starting out didn't get prioritized. The answer, she said, was they need to diversify the economic portfolio of who they help as the mills reach different agriculture producers in the country.

O'Connor said when they were putting the group together, they made a point to include as many women as men, because in Africa, most of the small-holder farmers are women, and much of the food chain is administered by women. Having a diverse group (both in gender and age) allowed for different conversations to be had. O'Connor said she hopes the farmers on the trip went home and talked to other farmers about the importance of U.S. food aid, why those programs exist and about the people they impact.

"It's not just statistics on paper. These are people American farmers are having an impact on," she said. "And when they (the farmers) come



Benton County farmer Nicole Berg (left) and Elizabeth Westendorf, former assistant director of policy, U.S. Wheat Associates, help load donated U.S. wheat into a truck for delivery at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

to Washington, D.C., they can now talk about importance of these programs from their personal observations from the field. We saw the difference U.S. commodities made to the people at the refugee camp and how grateful they were to have access to high quality food when they were once unsure when the next meal would come, which is something most Americans cannot relate to. It is important that these programs continue to exist and be funded so that the U.S. can continue to be a leader to help those in need."

Berg said she came away from this trip realizing just how big the world is, and what a great place the U.S. is to live in.

"I was very humbled to be asked to go on this trip," she said. "Hopefully, I can come back as an ambassador to talk about different parts of world, and how food aid has progressed and will continue to progress." ■



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AMMO RECAP

Creating a conversation around mental well-being

By Trista Crossley

The first regular Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO) workshop of 2020 didn't cover the usual weather/marketing/financial topics. Instead, it aimed to break down barriers surrounding mental health in agriculture.

"No one knows what a farmer is going through better than another farmer," explained workshop presenter Lesley Kelly. "Your words matter. Your conversations matter. What you have to say can have an immense impact on somebody around you."

In the past several years, a nationwide conversation has begun taking shape, in both social media and traditional media, around the need to talk about mental health without embarrassment or judgement, especially in agriculture. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, workers in the farming, fishing and forestry industries have some of the highest suicide rates of any professional group, and suicides among farmers are 1.5 times higher than the national average. When the going gets tough—whether it's flooding, wheat prices so low they don't pay the bills or the need to prove one's self to others—even the toughest can find themselves overwhelmed by stress and anxiety. That's some of what set Kelly, part of a farming family in Saskatchewan, on the path to becoming a mental health advocate.

At the workshop, Kelly detailed her experiences with mental health issues in both herself (postpartum depression after the birth of her second son) and mental health illnesses in immediate family members. In



Lesley Kelly (right), a mental health advocate, moderated a panel that answered mental health questions that included (from left) Marci Green, a farmer in Spokane County; John Roll, professor and vice dean for research and associate vice president for health sciences research at Washington State University; and Scott Winkler, relationship manager at Northwest Farm Credit Services.

response to a tweet about farm stress, she and her husband, Matt, who has dealt with overwhelming farm stress, shared an online video in which they detailed their struggles with mental health well-being.

"Our goal was to normalize the conversation that we were an everyday couple with peaks and valleys, and that it does get better. Lot of friends and family didn't know (about their mental health struggles)," she said. The couple worried that revealing that information would risk relationships with lenders and insurers and jeopardize their agreements with landlords. "That's what prevents people from raising their hand and saying 'I need help.'"

Instead, the response to that video, which has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times, revealed that mental health struggles are far more common than most realize. Kelly, who is also a blogger and podcast host, co-founded Do More Ag, a nonprofit organization that focuses on mental health in agriculture, primarily in Canada, by raising awareness, creating a community where people can connect and find resources and supporting research into mental health.

At the workshop, Kelly talked about five ways to break the barriers surrounding mental health illness.

"When we see a burning barn or a burning combine, we run to our neighbors," she said. "We drop everything and we run. My hope is when it comes to mental health challenges and illness, that it's the same. That we run to our neighbors. We run and help them."

1. Mental health is different for all of us, and there's not a one-size-fits-all approach. Kelly recalled a conversation with a former soldier suffering from

PTSD who told her that mental health is not a competition. “You can drown in an ocean, a pool or a bathtub. It isn’t the amount of water you are drowning in, it’s the fact that you are drowning.”

The first step is to recognize the warning signs of somebody suffering mentally. Those warning signs could include withdrawing from activities; avoiding social situations; changes in eating or sleeping; overwhelming anger, worthlessness and sadness; showing no interest; and extreme worry or anxiety.

“Everyone has a baseline,” Kelly said. “When you see them go away from that baseline, that’s when you take note and start to talk to them.”

2. Say what you see. Kelly admitted this can be awkward, but it shouldn’t prevent you from asking how someone is doing “when you can see they can’t breathe.”

3. Show you care. You can do this by showing kindness, empathy and compassion. Watch the tone of your voice; use body language and actions; look them in the eye; lean in; and don’t rush the conversation.

4. Listen. “In stressful conversations, listening can be very, very hard and challenging,” Kelly said. She listed some tips, including:

- Strike a balance between listening, asking questions and sharing experiences;
- Be curious;
- Rephrase, summarize and ask for clarity;
- You don’t need to have the answers or even give advice;
- Help that person feel hope and that they are not alone; and
- Awkward silence is okay.

5. Know your role. Kelly explained that while others can help someone in their journey, they aren’t there to fix them. It’s up to the person struggling with mental health to get the help they need.

“Know your boundaries, and when your boundaries start to get crossed, it’s okay to pull back,” she said. “Boundaries are okay when it comes to determining how much support and what that support looks like.”

She pointed out that it’s important to practice self-care, including making yourself a priority; nourishing your social life; making time for therapeutic activities; and looking after your physical health.

Kelly closed her presentation with what she wanted farmers to take away—three calls to action: talk, ask and listen.

“You can make a huge difference on someone, on yourself, too, if you talk more about mental health with your friends and family and community,” she said. “Ask people how they are doing. Ask them what their world is like. Ask yourself how you are feeling. And listen. Listen more to people as they share with you what’s going on. Listen to those around you and listen to your cues, too.”

Following lunch, Kelly moderated a Q&A with a panel that included Marci Green, a farmer in Spokane County; John Roll, professor and vice dean for research and associate vice president for health sciences research at Washington State University; and Scott Winkler, relationship manager at Northwest Farm Credit Services.

Kelly’s blog is at highheelsandcanolafields.com. ■

Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, there are resources available:

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 provides 24/7, free, confidential support for people in distress.
- By texting HOME to 741741, you can receive a text from a trained crisis counselor who will provide support (but not medical advice) to help you sort through your feelings by asking questions, empathizing and actively listening.

There are also resources available for those who want a better understanding of mental health illness:

- A mental health first aid course teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. mentalhealthfirstaid.org
- Applied suicide intervention skills training at livingworks.net.
- Kelly’s organization, domore.ag. ■

Top of the heap

NRCS COMPILES 10 CONSERVATION PRACTICES THAT WILL RECEIVE ADDITIONAL COST SHARE

By Trista Crossley

A new year is usually ushered in with a multitude of top 10 lists, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is no exception. Thanks to the 2018 Farm Bill, the Washington state NRCS office has compiled a list of top 10 conservation practices that will receive 90 percent cost share.

“We looked at data from practices we had installed and how many we’ve installed. We also looked at the amount of money we spent on each practice. So we tried to take a look at it from not only numbers but the amount of funding,” said NRCS Washington State Conservationist Roylene Comes at Night. She explained that instead of choosing the most popular practices, they chose practices that could have a higher impact on conservation. “We didn’t necessarily choose the most popular ones. By offering 90 percent (cost share), we are hoping to encourage practices that we traditionally struggle to implement.”

The top 10 practices for Washington state are:

- 396 Aquatic Organism Passage;
- 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management;
- 391 Riparian Forest Buffer;
- 666 Forest Stand Improvement;
- 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment;
- 313 Waste Storage Facility;
- 386 Field Border;
- 340 Cover Crop;
- 329 Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till; and
- 327 Conservation Cover.

Traditionally, the 90 percent cost share is only offered to underserved producers.

“What I’m hoping is that when we do an assessment on a producer’s place and say ‘yes, there’s a concern, and here’s a practice we can do,’ that 90 percent will be a nice surprise,” Comes at Night said.

This change was implemented in the 2018 Farm Bill and will run through 2023. Comes at Night said the state didn’t have to choose 10 practices, and the practices that qualify may change in the future. Producers don’t have any special requirements to meet in order to qualify, and what they qualify for will be based on their assessment.

The top 10 practices weren’t the only change for NRCS

in the 2018 Farm Bill. NRCS has also streamlined their process with a new ranking system. Producers will now have one application, one conservation plan and one contract for all the programs and practices they qualify for and take part in. With all the changes, Comes at Night said they just needed to get the top 10 practices in place this year with the idea that next year, the state office can fine tune the program and zero in on the practices that could potentially “change the dial” in conservation.

“This is a place to start. We could come back in two years and say we accomplished this, maybe this practice doesn’t need 90 percent now. Maybe this one does,” she explained. “This farm bill, for us, tweaked programs that made (NRCS’s procedures) more customer friendly. Customers were complaining, but so were we as far as staff because it was taking more time. This farm bill did a good job tweaking for the customer and for us.”

While there aren’t any special requirements for producers to qualify for the top 10 practices, before they make an appointment with NRCS, they need to make sure their Farm Service Agency eligibility is up to date. Comes at Night said that if a producer isn’t eligible at the time they turn in their application, they won’t be considered for this year. In the past, NRCS staff had some flexibility in that they could accept an application before a producer was deemed eligible, but due to the sheer amount of work and being short staffed, that is no longer the case.

“We are finding out that for a chunk of them (producers), we do all this work, do all the planning, do the contract and then the producer is still not eligible. Then we scrambled. We are targeting those that are ready to roll,” she said.

Producers are also encouraged to fill out a conservation planning intake summary, available from NRCS field offices and on the Washington state NRCS website, before submitting an application. The information on that intake form will help streamline the ranking process for NRCS planners.

“Once applicants get screened, we have a tight window to get all their data in our ranking tool. If the office has 20 high-ranked applications, we are going to struggle. That intake form will help us so we don’t have to keep calling producers,” Comes at Night said. “The more they can fill out, the more time it will save all of us. One of the things with the new system, if we have a lot of data ahead of

time, we can start the assessment before we even get out in the field."

Those producers who have already submitted an application will get a letter asking them to fill in the intake form.

"One thing about these new processes is that it will get planners back in the field," Comes at Night said. "If nothing else, I really think this farm bill is taking us in a good direction. As an agency, we are finally going back to the roots of conservation planning and customer service like we used to be. I think we are all excited about that."

The Washington state NRCS website is at nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/wa/home/. ■

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VSP brings opportunities for Spokane producers

By Doug Phelps

Agricultural Liaison, Spokane Conservation District

The Washington State Conservation Commission approved the Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) in November 2018. VSP is an alternative way to comply with a state Supreme Court decision that agriculture cannot be exempt from the critical area requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

Rather than increase regulatory burden, the legislature challenged counties opting into VSP to create a work plan to achieve two goals:

- Utilize a watershed-scale, voluntary and incentive-based approach to protect and enhance critical areas (wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas) intersecting with agricultural lands, and
- Do this in a way that also supports agricultural viability.

With the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) serving as the lead entity, the approved VSP work plan was developed by a diverse group of people representing farming, livestock, environmental and tribal interests. Implementation has now begun with multiple opportunities for agricultural producers.

Technical assistance and stewardship plans. SCD has hired a VSP agricultural liaison to work directly with farmers to develop straight-forward stewardship plans to identify conservation practices such as streamside restoration, upland management and improvements to livestock operations. The SCD will then work with partners to offer technical assistance and possible cost sharing to implement these practices.

Cost sharing. SCD will pair producers engaged with VSP with cost sharing programs such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), direct seed loan program and state grants.

Outreach. VSP has started a web page at sccd.org/voluntary-stewardship-program to highlight best conservation practices in Spokane County and to increase public awareness that farmers are vital stewards of our lands. SCD will work with farmers to highlight their conservation practices online. In addition, VSP participants will receive emails and other types of outreach promoting new opportunities and activities of interest.

Agricultural viability. Farmers and farming are part of our community identity. Part of preserving our farmlands requires a better public understanding of the many stewardship practices already in place. It also requires awareness that installing new conservation practices will



Examples of direct seed and buffer practices in Spokane County. Photo courtesy of the Spokane Conservation District.

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only work if the economic and agricultural viability of farming remains whole.

That is why this new program is a voluntary, incentive-based approach to conservation. In 2019, the Spokane Conservation District paid local growers, including wheat farmers, an average of \$280 per acre for commodity (stream) buffers. SCD is currently working with other local wheat growers on incentivizing conservation tillage, nutrient management and forestry practices for those producers that also manage their own forests.

Jay Cronk, a small grain farmer in Spokane County, said, "I'm involved with the Voluntary Stewardship Program and other conservation district programs. In the last 30 years, we've successfully incorporated and maintained evolving conservation practices. We highly recommend to all producers to dialog with their local conservation district."

Producers should connect with the SCD to learn about technical assistance and cost sharing that may be available. Contact Doug Phelps at doug-phelps@sccd.org or (509) 535-7274. ■



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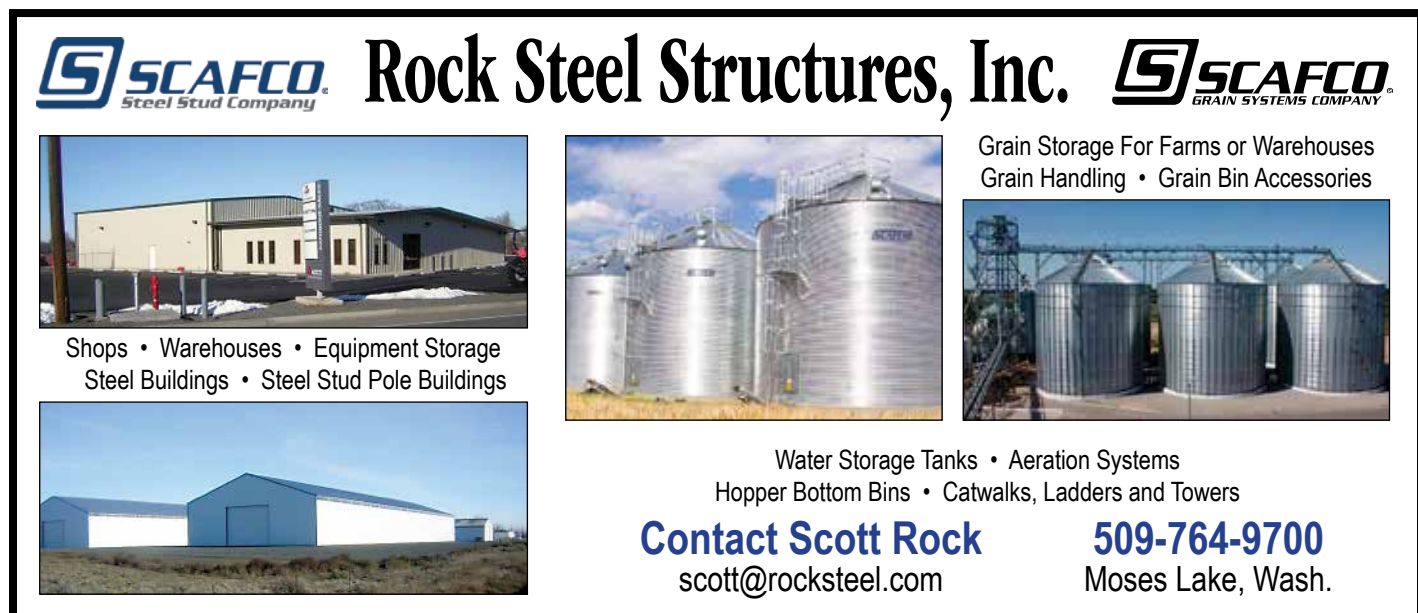


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Crop insurance for acreage coming out of CRP

By Ben Thiel

*Regional Director, Spokane Office,
Risk Management Agency*

Under your current crop insurance policy, there is procedure that states, in part, "...all acreage planted to the insured crop in the county in which you have a share is insurable if the acreage has been planted and harvested or insured in any one of the three previous crop years. Acreage that has not been planted and harvested or insured in at least one of the three previous crop years may still be insurable if such acreage was not planted in at least two of the three previous crop years to comply with any other USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) program."

What does this mean? If you had acreage that was in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), or other USDA programs, for 2019 and prior crop years, it would be insurable if you took the acreage out of CRP and planted an insurable crop in either the 2020 or 2021 crop years.

If the acreage is not planted within two crop years (i.e., 2020 or 2021) after coming out of CRP, it no longer meets the requirements noted above and will require a "new breaking" written agreement (a document that alters designated terms of your

policy) obtained through your crop insurance agent to insure the initial year of terminating your CRP ground. See chart below for an example of this scenario using wheat (other insurable crops can be used as well).

Here's some additional information growers should be aware of. A grower must establish a separate Actual Production History (APH) database during the initial year of planting the acreage coming out of CRP. If available, you must provide acceptable production history for the year(s) the crop was grown prior to the acreage being enrolled in CRP. If the crop was grown on the acreage prior to enrollment in CRP and acceptable production history is not provided, or not enough production history exists to complete an APH database, you are eligible to use what records you do have, if any, and the remaining years will receive 100 percent of the applicable county T-yield. A new producer who has not produced the crop in the county will have an approved APH yield based on 100 percent of the T-yield.

Wheat growers with nonirrigated acreage in certain Eastern Washington counties must insure their crop under either the summerfallow or continuous cropping practice. Acreage coming out of CRP must still meet the qualifications of summerfallow in order to be insured as such. Summerfallow is a production practice utilized to allow soil moisture levels to increase by leaving acreage fallow for a full crop year. To qualify for this practice for the current crop year, the acreage must not have been planted to a crop during the preceding crop year. There are exceptions for cover crops and failed crops. Visit with your crop insurance agent to find out more about these exceptions. Additionally, to maintain the summerfallow practice, any plant growth, including weeds, volunteer crops, existing perennial vegetation (including CRP acreage), must be terminated a full crop year before planting a crop. Any additional plant regrowth must be terminated on or before June 1, and any later plant growth (e.g. weeds, volunteer crop) must be controlled by mechanical or chemical means. Any nonirrigated production practice that does not qualify as a summerfallow practice can be insured under the continuous cropping practice.

Lastly, make sure your CRP acreage is completely terminated, either by mechanical or chemical (or both) methods, regardless of your planned insurable practice of summerfallow or continuous cropping. The wheat policy doesn't allow for coverage if your grain crop is planted into an established grass or legume. ■

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CRP	CRP	Acreage is no longer in CRP after 2019 and no crop is planted. If wheat was planted it could be insurable without a written agreement.	Acreage is no longer in CRP after 2019 and no crop is planted. If wheat was planted it could be insurable without a written agreement.	Acreage is no longer in CRP after 2019, and wheat is planted for the first time since coming out of CRP in 2019. Insurable only via Written Agreement for New Breaking.

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Jim Fitzgerald, Far West Agribusiness Association

By Kevin Gaffney

For someone who officially retired in December 2019, **Jim Fitzgerald** is mighty busy these days. Now in his 12th year as the executive director of the Far West Agribusiness Association (FWAA), Fitzgerald agreed to stay on the job through the 2020 Legislative Session while the search for his successor proceeds.

"I believe the board has held their final interviews," said Fitzgerald. "I'll be anxious to help get the new person up and running."

Born in Lewiston in 1955, Fitzgerald was raised on a wheat farm west of the Clarkston Heights. Their original family farm was homesteaded in Garfield County in 1876 by his great-grandparents. It is quite diverse by soil and rainfall, the farthest east being only 740 feet above sea level, with the elevation of the land at the western end at 4,000 feet. The farm includes several owned and leased parcels in between.

Over the years, they have raised dryland wheat, barley, canola and black Austrian winter peas and run a cow-calf operation. The rainfall varies from 12 inches to 18 inches per year.

Fitzgerald attended school in Clarkston, and after high school, he attended Eastern Washington State College before transferring to Washington State University and earning his degree in ag mechanization in 1978. Agricultural mechanization was then part of the agricultural engineering department. It was during his college years that he met his wife of 42 years, Christine.

"My roommate and I used to go to Lenny's in Cheney. They had excel-



lent burgers. The first time I laid eyes on Christine, she took my order there. I thought she was really beautiful. Not long after that, a group of students, after finals exams, went to the State Line in Idaho and Chris and I met up on the dance floor. We began dating, and the rest is history," he said.

Following graduation, the first employment for Fitzgerald was with the Federal Land Bank (now Northwest Farm Credit Services). He was based in Chehalis and was assigned the entire Olympic Peninsula region. He had the privilege of writing the very first Land Bank loan for a shellfish farm, located in Mason County, where tidelands were secured.

After two years with the Land Bank, Fitzgerald came back home and operated the family farm with his father and brother for 14 years.

By 1994, the brothers had split the farm and have farmed independently since. The farm is still owned by he and Christine, and they added another parcel to their farm in 2001. At that time, Fitzgerald was offered the position of state director of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"My first reaction was noninterest, but upon reflection and discussing it with my wife, I decided to reconsider," recalled Fitzgerald. "I began to make discreet inquiries amongst congressional members and learned that I had overwhelming support. I decided to put my name in, and the White House called with an offer. I accepted the position, which was based in Spokane. I served in that capacity from 2001 to 2006.

"It was very intense at first. I spent many late nights studying reams of manuals of administrative policy and information. There were more than 500 acronyms to learn. It truly was like studying a foreign language in a foreign nation."

Once Fitzgerald settled in, he strived to use his experience and knowledge to help shape farm policy in a positive way for the farmers in Washington state. He

applied common sense in his decision making, something that is not always easy when implementing government policy.

"I had very good district directors, which helped me immensely," noted Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald left the FSA office to enter the pressure-cooker atmosphere in Washington, D.C. He served two years as chief of staff for Tom Dorr, undersecretary of agriculture for rural development.

"This entailed management of more than 7,200 employees in 832 offices across five time zones, which included the United States, Puerto Rico and Guam. There was a budget of \$700 million to administer."

Fitzgerald likened it to jumping from junior high sports to the major leagues. His office was the last stop before problems and issues went to the subcabinet level.

"I became proficient at being a fixer. There were times when you were handed a problem that had no good solution. It simply was a matter of where to take the hit. I did have the opportunity to work with some very good people. It was an experience that I wish more people could have.

"Working with Tom Dorr, a farmer and businessman from Iowa, was wonderful. He and I had a very solid and respectful relationship, and we trusted each other. ►

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"Government can tend to move slowly, and it sometimes struggles to solve problems in a timely manner. But I believe there are a lot of dedicated public employees that work hard at their jobs. Overall, my time in D.C. was a great experience."

Fitzgerald joined the FWAA in August 2008 upon returning to the Pacific Northwest. The administration was changing in D.C., and he wanted to return to his home turf and back to his roots on the family farm.

"Coming back to Washington state, I cut my salary in half, but I doubled my standard of living," Fitzgerald said with a laugh. Having all the connections established during his years of public service made him a natural for the executive director position at FWAA.

The FWAA is comprised of more than 100 agribusiness companies covering the five western states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada and Utah. The organization is guided by a board of 15 members that approves the budgets and determines the priorities for the FWAA.

The mission of the FWAA is to enhance the safety and business environment for the fertilizer and crop protection industry. They have three basic modes of accomplishing their objectives, through work related to legislation, regulation and education/training.

"State legislation has been a high priority over recent years," said Fitzgerald. "Carbon taxation, the proposed banning of needed chemical tools and other issues are

"State legislation has been a high priority over recent years. Carbon taxation, the proposed banning of needed chemical tools and other issues are paramount."

—Jim Fitzgerald, executive director
Far West Agribusiness Association

paramount. Regulation is another part of our work to keep our ag businesses successful. We work with our member businesses on how to operate within the rules established by the state legislature. We also work directly with regulatory agencies on how implementation will be handled. Some agencies are more willing to work with us than others.

"Education is a very critical part of what we do. Proper transport and handling of products is of monumental importance. The farmers are generally working with a diluted product. Conversely, our businesses usually handle concentrated products.

"Our companies need to know how to avoid any spills, or if a spill happens, how to handle containment, what a reportable quantity is, who to call within the correct time frame, and how best to protect yourself and the environment during cleanup. We

hold regular training sessions to keep our industry workers properly trained and permitted."

The FWAA collaborates with other industry organizations, including the Ag Retailers Association, The Fertilizer Institute, CropLife America, BIO and ASTA. They also partner with the Asmark Institute.

One of the toughest challenges Fitzgerald has dealt with over the years is educating legislators about agriculture. People skills developed over his years in government work have helped immensely.

"Legislators are people, too," said Fitzgerald. "They



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have triggers that make them happy and that make them unhappy. Some just don't seem friendly to agriculture, so we have our work cut out for us."

The FWAA is a lean organization with only two, full-time employees working under Fitzgerald and three contract lobbyists. Once his replacement is hired and Fitzgerald can retire from FWAA, he plans to spend a few months doing whatever Christine would like to do, and then see what comes next. He hopes it will include putting miles on their Harley-Davidson motorcycle and visiting family.

The FWAA can be found online at fwaa.org. ■



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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



I think I speak for most Washington wheat farmers when I say that what we most desire from state government is to be left alone to do our jobs. State government has other ideas, of course, which is why the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) employs Jim Jesernig as our lobbyist.

Jesernig, a Democrat, served for four years in the state House and four years in the state Senate before he was appointed by two Democratic governors to oversee the Washington State Department of Agriculture between 1993 to 2001. Given that most Eastern Washington wheat farmers lean Republican, that information may come as a surprise, but Jesernig has a reputation of working effectively on both sides of the aisle.

The WGC rarely introduces legislation, but the commission does work with the legislature for funding which aids research at Washington State University (WSU) and coordinates with other agricultural groups to ensure our voice is heard. Most of Jesernig's time is spent monitoring bills that have been introduced that will have an impact on farmers. The low carbon fuel standard, which agriculture views as another tax, is one such example.

Jesernig regularly updates the WGC during board meetings, either in person or by conference call, and I'm continually impressed by his political and agricultural industry awareness. I would expect nothing less from a man who has, in one position or another, spent 34 sessions monitoring legislation that comes through the Senate and House. His deep knowledge of the political machine and how it works makes him very effective at what he does.

One might wonder why the WGC employs a lobbyist when the industry has an effective lobbying group in the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). The reason is because the WGC lobbies for issues related to its core missions of marketing, research and education.

Each year, the WGC comes up with a list of legislative priorities. Without going into the complete list here, examples include backing for agricultural research; supporting market-related issues of wheat and barley with state and government agencies; and addressing education issues that affect wheat and barley producers.

Since the start of this year's legislative session on Jan. 13, more than 1,200 pieces of legislation have been submitted for action. From this list, Jesernig provided the WGC an account of 58 high priority bills and 28 lower priority bills with the potential to impact various agricultural industries, including wheat. All bills are noted

by Jesernig with a comment that includes "support," "neutral" or "concerns."

WAWG and the WGC work closely together. Diana Carlen, who serves as WAWG's lobbyist, and Jesernig often combine forces to ensure a positive outcome. This session the push is on to fund the Soil Health Initiative. Jesernig spoke in support of the bill before committee, and while it has many backers, including WSU, it's unclear whether it will be funded fully. Another bill on wheat growers' radar screen would require the Department of Natural Resources to compensate growers for early termination of leases.

For many years during the tenure of Speaker of the House Frank Chopp, agriculture felt they had an ally in that powerful position. But Chopp retired as speaker last year, replaced by Laurie Jenkins of Tacoma. With the speaker acting as a legislative traffic cop, Jenkins will have a lot to say about which bills move forward and which do not. Working with the new speaker in the coming year will be a priority to educate her on issues important to Eastern Washington wheat farmers.

I ordinarily attend WAWG's Olympia Days, when Eastern Washington wheat farmers gather in the state capitol to meet with legislators and educate them about issues of importance to agriculture. I missed this year's event, but WGC Commissioner Kevin Klein attended, as well as WGC Vice President Mary Palmer Sullivan and CEO Glen Squires.

They were as complimentary of Jesernig as I am. Klein said, as a result of his long history of legislative scrutiny, Jesernig not only alerts the industry to potential problems, "...he can usually give a pretty close synopsis of how things could play out." Sullivan agrees, calling Jesernig "our institutional memory" and praising his ability to bring distinct agriculture groups together to speak with a common voice.

Squires said Jesernig's expertise will be even more important in this and upcoming sessions of the legislature.

"With a new speaker and with wheat farmer Sen. Mark Schoesler no longer heading a majority coalition, the state's wheat industry will have to depend all that much more on its lobbyists. The WGC is very lucky to have Jim as our man in Olympia," he said.

I couldn't agree more. ■

Listen to Jesernig discuss the 2020 Legislative Session in episode 159 of the WGC sponsored podcast, Wheat All About It!, available at wagrain.org or by subscribing to multiple podcast apps like iTunes or Stitcher.

Expertise fermented in Korean food culture

Editor's note: This is the sixth 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

The roots of Shin Hak "David" Oh's food technology career were literally and figuratively fermented in his childhood home of Seoul, South Korea.

The Korean art of making kimchi fascinated Oh as a child. Everyone in the family pitched in to salt the vegetables and mix them with chili powder, garlic, ginger, red pepper, sugar and fish sauce that fermented in earthenware jars, often buried in the ground. It is an ancient process that was first practiced to provide nutritious food through the cold winters and continues to represent the cultural soul of Korea today.

"I developed a natural interest in fermented food and microorganisms as I helped make our kimchi," Oh said. "That interest stayed with me as a young person, so I chose to study food and biotechnology at Korea University in Seoul and earned a bachelor's degree in 2003."



Name: Shin Hak "David" Oh

Title: Food and Bakery Technologist

Office: USW North Asia Region, Seoul Office

Providing Service to: South Korea

Now armed with the scientific facts behind how kimchi fermentation removes harmful bacteria and enriches gut-healthy lactobacillus bacteria, Oh decided to pursue a graduate degree at the respected Seoul National University. His work focused on improving food safety and included research on a new regulatory system for inhibiting salmonella and other pathogens in food. Along the way through university, Oh found time for other important life experiences, including marriage to his wife, Jiae.

Professional success

Oh's route from food microbiology studies to his current position as food and bakery technologist with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) started in 2005 with his first professional job at SPC Group, the largest bakery company in Korea. As a food safety specialist for two years, Oh helped SPC comply with Korean government food and consumer safety regulations in bakery production, storage and packaging. He also served on a team that implemented hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) food safety management systems.

Based on the advice of SPC's food safety center director, Oh successfully pursued a research and development position with the company.

"In that job, I developed several improvers to enhance the quality of pan breads, sweet buns and frozen dough products," Oh noted. "I also developed a special 'sugar-free pan bread,' which is still sold in some of SPC's Paris Baguette retail bakeries in Korea."

His work at SPC, as well as additional, hands-on training at AIB International baking science and technology and food safety and hygiene courses, caught the attention of USW Country Director C.Y. Kang who was looking for candidates to fill a technical support position to expand U.S. wheat export market development in the Korean market.



David Oh conducting a fresh noodle evaluation using U.S. hard white wheat flour blended with Australian Standard White flour at Daehan Flour Mills in Incheon, South Korea.

“David’s great work over eight years at our country’s biggest and most popular commercial and retail bakery was quite impressive,” Kang said. “It also did not take long to see that he is very friendly and kind to everyone. We agreed he would be a great fit with U.S. Wheat Associates and very helpful to our customers in flour milling, baking and wheat food processing.”

“I went for the position with USW without hesitation, in part, because most of the high-quality flour SPC used for bread products was milled from imported U.S. wheat classes,” Oh said. “I had grown passionate about baking at SPC, and I thought the position would also help me expand my knowledge about producing biscuits (cookies), noodles and other wheat foods.”

Seeking broader knowledge at USW

Oh said his expectations were more than met after he started with USW at the beginning of 2015.

“There are many milling, baking and production experts across our offices, and we often help and learn from each other,” he said. “I am a hands-on person, and a technical sales position like this gives me the opportunity to share all of our experience and skills with our customers to help them improve

their processes, customer satisfaction and income using flour made from U.S. wheat.”

That effort takes many forms. One recent example is a seminar held in Korea for bakers from commercial operations in the Philippines.

“Our market is fairly mature with sophisticated processes and very high standards for ingredient quality,” Kang said. “Our USW colleagues wanted to help introduce these processes and new products to customers in the Philippines, so David and I arranged sessions in Seoul at the Korean Baking School and visits to Korean companies for the bakers.”

In addition, Oh has now conducted several baking, biscuit and noodle production courses at the Korean Baking School in Seoul and in cooperation with the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) in Portland, Ore., for technical managers from flour mills and processors. Oh discusses and demonstrates blended flour from U.S. wheat classes to the participants who then test the blends to identify optimal formulations for their commercial products. Drawing from his research experience at SPC, bakery applications developed at USW courses and the Korean Baking School, Oh has introduced new products including whole wheat baked goods made with



In cooperation with the Wheat Marketing Center, Portland, Ore., Oh (fourth from right) helped plan and conduct a Korea Baking Product Development course in 2019.



At SPC, David Oh developed a sugar-free pan bread product. In 2013, he was on the factory line as the product was packaged for distribution to SPC's retail stores



David Oh's graduate work at Seoul National University focused on developing methods to inhibit Salmonella and other pathogens in food.

U.S. wheat flour in four seminars to approximately 300 commercial bakers.

USW is unique in having strong technical expertise available to customers in their mills and production facilities. This is a key part of Oh's work.

"I am excited to be part of the thriving wheat food industry here in Korea. I enjoy visiting our customers and helping them understand the specific milling and functional characteristics of the U.S. wheat classes available to them, and how to apply that knowledge to get the most value from their own mills and end-product processes," Oh explained. "If they have concerns or need troubleshooting, we can be there with them and that builds a stronger partnership for the future."

Sharing knowledge

Oh's individual efforts in the baking laboratory also come into play as he works to share the results of testing with Korean bakery customers. In 2017 at the Korean Baking School, Oh tested different blends of hard red spring and hard red winter (HRW) flour to make sweet buns, as well as blends of HRW and soft white flour to make Korean-style baguettes. He then provided data on the best formulations to customers.

Differentiating the performance of U.S. wheat in Korean noodles, however, has presented a unique challenge for Oh and for the U.S. farmers he represents.

"Compared to Australia, specifically, there is no single U.S. wheat class with optimal qualities for Korean-style noodles," he said. "So, we have approached that challenge by holding noodle flour blending and quality seminars at the Wheat Marketing Center for as many industry participants as possible. Based on their reports about the seminars, the information we provide has given them reasons to consider blending flour from U.S. wheat. Now, flour from U.S. soft white wheat makes up a 20 percent share of the Korean noodle market."

An excellent balance

No doubt the level of trust Oh is developing across the diverse Korean industry is boosted by his professional training and experience.

"David has in-depth knowledge on the key facts of wheat flour that are very critical to end product quality," said the research and development manager from Korea's largest instant noodle manufacturer. "I assume that comes from his graduate degree work and his experience at SPC Group. He has provided all the

results from short courses, seminars and testing to us and helps us apply that information and U.S. wheat flour formulations effectively in our operation. We very much appreciate his efforts.”

It is said that the five flavors of kimchi (sour, bitter, salty, sweet and spicy) and their balance permeates every facet of Korean life. Oh finds a similar balance between work and pleasure. His colleagues appreciate that in Oh, as those who have seen an exuberant rendition of the dance moves from K-Pop star PSY’s “Gangnam Style,” or seen the pride he takes in his family, can attest.

C.Y. Kang put it best. “David is a great asset to the entire USW organization.” ■



David Oh and his father in 1979.



David Oh and his son.



David Oh in the laboratory at the Korean Baking School testing formulations of blends of hard red winter and soft white flour for Korean-style baguettes and hard red spring and hard red winter flour for sweet buns in 2017.

Speaking of wheat

WHEAT ALL ABOUT IT! PODCAST CONTINUES TO INFORM, EDUCATE, ENTERTAIN

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC)-sponsored podcast, *Wheat All About It!*, nears 20,000 listens as it brings an unfiltered perspective to Pacific Northwest wheat farming with interviews that include farmers, scientists and other newsmakers, as well as audio excerpts from agriculture presentations.

The podcast, which entered its fourth year in 2020, has more than 170 weekly episodes posted. Scott Yates, director of communications and producer relations at the WGC who hosts and produces the podcast, said he's gratified by the response.

"Listeners have been very complementary of the podcast and the information it provides. Particularly popular episodes run the gamut from those that provide farmers with ideas for making their farms more profitable to others which highlight particular challenges or profile a researcher," he said.

The most listened to podcast thus far is episode 99, "Howard Nelson's Hunt: Seeking the Elusive Eastern Washington Alternative Crop." Nelson is the alternative crop expert at HighLine Grain. Other popular episodes include episode 139, an interview with Ty Meyer, executive director of the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association, "Direct Seeding—A System of Change;" episode 130, "Small But Strong: Ben Barstow's Love Affair With Farming;" and episode 138, an interview with Washington State University Professor Michael Neff, "Is Synthetic Biology the Playbook for Playing God?"

Barstow, who serves on the WGC board, said the pod-

casts are always relevant and fun. "I really enjoy listening to them," he said.

As for his own experience being interviewed inside the cab of his D-5 Caterpillar tractor while seeding spring barley, he added, "It went far better than I expected, and it was fun to do, too."

More recent episodes include episode 160, "Name That Wheat Industry Challenge!," assembled from interviews with farmers who attended the 2019 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, and episodes 163 and 164, "The Episodes About the Biggest Threat to PNW Production Agriculture." Episode 154, called "Gut Check—How Bread Boosts the Microbiome," was also recorded during the convention. The interview with Arizona State University professor Corrie Whisner provides a health roadmap that encourages more wheat consumption.

Janet Walthew, a landlord who lives north of Seattle, listens to *Wheat All About It!* every week and says it's just the right length and is very well done.

"I always enjoy the podcast. It is entertaining and educational, and as a landlord on the west side, I feel more connected to my Eastern Washington roots by listening. It's different from reading," she said.

Glen Squires, CEO of the WGC, said the *Wheat All About It!* podcast is unique among commissions around the nation.

"In an age of 'fake news,' the power of the podcast to deliver unfiltered information to our Eastern Washington



Art Bettge



Jim Cook



Trista Crossley



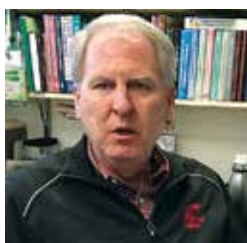
Stephen Delwiche



Sanford Eigenbrode



Rachel Little



Tim Murray



Ty Murray



Michael Neff



Lauren Port

farmers and landlords, as well as others throughout the Pacific Northwest, is incredibly valuable," he said.

But it is not just farmers and landlords who listen to the podcast. Washington State University scientists and students are regular listeners. WSU weed scientist Drew Lyon, who has been the subject of several Wheat All About It! episodes, started his own podcast called The WSU Wheat Beat after hearing Yates' effort.

"I've been surprised by how many listeners have approached me at various meetings to tell me they listen to my podcast," Lyon said. "I'm particularly pleased by the number of young people who have told me this. Podcasts are a new communication strategy we need to pursue to stay on the cutting edge of extension information delivery."


Over the past year, Yates has been using Facebook to provide an additional dimension to the podcast. Each podcast is posted to the WGC Facebook page with a photo of the person interviewed or the individuals speaking at prepared presentations. In addition, Yates takes photos of relevant PowerPoint slides and posts them to the site.

According to Facebook data, podcast listenership extends into Idaho and Oregon, as well as multiple locations overseas. Listenership skews toward the younger generation, with the 18-to-34 age range most well represented. About two thirds are men.

Part of the reason behind the age demographic is because the younger generation is more familiar with podcasts and the technology needed to access them, Yates said.

"Once you're set up to listen to podcasts, it's a no-brainer, but getting set up can be a hurdle for older farmers and landlords. It's also more of a challenge for

Listening is easy!

There are multiple ways to listen to Wheat All About It! If you have a smart phone, you have a podcast in your pocket. iPhones have a podcast app, it's purple and looks like this: . Click on it and type Wheat All About It in the finder. Subscribe.

If you have a Droid phone, download an app like Stitcher from your browser. When the download is complete, type Wheat All About It in the finder and subscribe.

Downloading directly from the Washington Grain Commission website at wagrains.org is also an option, and it is only there that you can find the complete archive of all the episodes produced. ■

those without a low-cost internet connection at home. I'm forever reminding farmers that they can download multiple episodes when they're in town, either at the parts stores, restaurants or at local rural libraries, which have higher speed internet access than most Washington cities," he said.

Although Yates is pleased with the response to the podcast so far, he claims he's like the farmer who wants to spread his costs over more acres. Except, he wants to spread his listenership over more ears.

"There's a lot of work that goes into producing a podcast, so I'm particularly gratified when I see listener numbers rise. However, it costs the same to produce the podcast whether I have 500 listeners a week or 5,000. I'd prefer to have the 5,000," he said. ■



Aaron Esser



Jim Fitzgerald



Jim Jesernig



Steve Joehl



Matt Kloes



Mark Schoesler



Glen Squires



Corrie Whisner



Jeremy Wolf



Zhiwu Zhang

The whys, hows of Ryan waxy wheat

By Mike Pumphrey

One of the long-term goals of the Washington State University (WSU) spring wheat breeding program has been to give Pacific Northwest (PNW) growers the opportunity to compete in the Asian noodle wheat market.

Traditionally, udon noodle wheat has largely been available from Australian producers who export this subclass to Asian markets. Breaking the lock on this market has been the goal of the spring wheat breeding program for more than 20 years.

WSU's newest soft white spring wheat variety "Ryan" hits the noodle mark while also maintaining traditional cookie and cracker quality. Ryan's high-end yield potential and broad adaptation, combined with a multi-purpose end-use quality flour, may enable the creation of a specialty market.

Spring wheat acres are approximately 20 to 25 percent of total wheat acres in Washington. In recent years, more than 60 varieties of winter wheat have been commercially produced annually, compared to about 30 spring wheat varieties. Meanwhile, the split between hard red, soft white and club spring wheat acres also varies significantly based on market conditions from year to year.

Releasing a new wheat variety is a decision that represents years of work selecting for desirable performance by many specialists and testing across many environments. The specific testing depends on performance in the intended production area, prevalent pests, diseases and abiotic stressors, as well as grain traits and intended end use.

Recognizing these limitations, my program strives to release broadly adapted spring wheat varieties that perform well across different precipitation zones and seasons. Varieties that require minimal inputs are emphasized in order to make spring wheat a lower-risk rotation crop.

Ryan is what I consider a value-added wheat. It is "partial waxy," which means its amylose-to-amylopectin ratios in grain starch have been altered, providing unique end-product texture and a spongy bite in noodles. This naturally occurring trait has been used in wheat variety development for decades. Some of our Asian customers prefer the chewy noodle texture along with a bright and creamy color.

Ryan has a mutation that confers the partial waxiness. It's also very low in polyphenol oxidase enzyme



Overseas visitors to the Western Wheat Quality Lab (WWQL) have lately been taking part in noodle taste tests made with the new variety Ryan. The partial waxy wheat provides the spongy "bite" that Asian customers demand in their udon noodles. Here, Craig Morris (left), director of the WWQL, hosts a team of millers from Japan as they taste and observe the new entry's performance as compared to other varieties.

activity, which limits discoloration of hydrated dough products. In other words, Ryan has the texture and color to make a good udon noodle. It also doesn't compromise traditional soft wheat quality. Ryan is ranked "most desirable" for cookie and cracker qualities in the Washington, Oregon and North Idaho Preferred Wheat Varieties guide.

In addition to top-end yield potential, I believe spring wheat varieties need to have traits which confer good stripe rust resistance, Hessian fly resistance, aluminum tolerance, high test weight, appropriate protein concentration, standability, threshability, variable maturity, stable falling numbers and good-to-excellent end-use quality. Ryan does well in all categories.

It has early maturity and durable stripe rust resistance that is highly effective in adult plants, providing the backbone for broad adaptation. It also has resistance to predominant populations of Hessian fly, average-to-lower grain protein concentration, good test weight and tolerance to aluminum toxicity. For the past five years, Ryan (also known as experimental line WA8214) has been among the most consistent soft white spring wheat varieties for higher falling numbers based on tests conducted by the Steber lab with project funding from the Washington Grain Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In WSU's spring wheat trials, Ryan had the highest three and five-year grain yield averages in the 12-to-16-inch, 16-to-20-inch, and greater-than-20-inch precipitation regions of Eastern Washington. This stability and broad adaptation is consistent with performance we measured between 2012 and 2015 while Ryan was being tested in my breeding program trials. Of note,



How a product tastes is only part of the battle. Gaining udon acceptance in Asia also depends on appearance, and a creamy-colored noodle is the goal. It's easy to see that Ryan wins this competition.

2012 and 2013 were cooler and wetter, with variable planting dates, while 2014 and 2015 trended dryer and warmer. Ryan yields have been at the top in dryland production trials since testing began in 2012.

Since Ryan's release last year, significant interest has been expressed by domestic and international grain buyers in the partial waxy soft white spring wheat. In the Pacific Northwest, Ryan is already being sold as identity preserved for domestic milling and noodle production. The biggest challenge seems to be establishing a reliable international demand and supply chain of noodle wheat.

While in Japan for U.S. Wheat Associates Crop Quality and Buyer's conferences in November 2019, Washington Grain Commissioners were alerted to the need to address partial waxy wheat's potential to impact sponge cake texture. A significant portion of our soft white wheat is exported as Western white wheat, a blend with approximately 20 percent club wheat that primarily goes into making sponge cakes.

At present, the volume of partial waxy soft white wheat is very small as a percentage of the overall PNW soft white and club wheat crop, and its presence in the grain stream is not a concern. However, research is being pursued by Craig Morris, director of the USDA Western Wheat Quality Laboratory, to better understand the impact of partial waxiness on soft white wheat and Western white wheat quality.

The Pacific Northwest has a track record of producing at least four different high-quality wheat market classes annually that are handled and marketed separately. In the future, partial waxy soft white wheat may also need to be handled separately to help maintain its production value as a noodle wheat. Ryan has already proven to be a potent sire based on performance of new lines crossed with it as a parent.

The WSU spring wheat breeding program will continue to develop high quality, dual-purpose soft white spring wheat varieties with low polyphenol oxidase activity to sustain this market opportunity. Packaging these in germplasm with excellent yield, pest and disease resistance and desirable agronomic traits is a win-win for growers and customers. ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Positive news yields marketing ho-hum



By T. Randall Fortenbery

The export picture for U.S. wheat has continued to improve through the second and third quarters of the marketing year (the third quarter ended Feb. 29).

For the first time in several years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has steadily increased its export projection as we have moved through the marketing year (Figure 1). In the February 2020 World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), the U.S. wheat export forecast for the 2019/20 marketing year was increased to 1 billion bushels, an increase of 11 percent from the initial marketing year forecast. If realized, this will be the first time U.S. wheat exports have been equal or greater than 1 billion bushels since the 2016/17 marketing year, and only the second time since 2013/14.

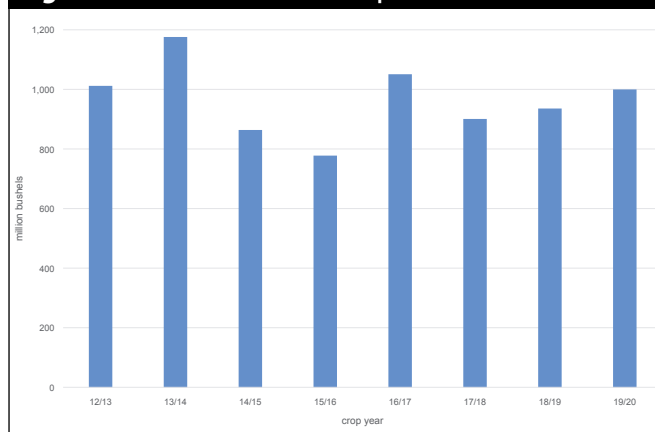
After losing Mexico as our No. 1 wheat export market in the 2018/19 marketing year due to trade friction, Mexico has re-emerged as our most important customer this year. Through mid-February 2020, Mexico had imported 2.5 million metric tons of U.S. wheat, accounting for 12 percent of all exports. Mexico's U.S. wheat purchases were up about 62 percent on a year-over-year basis through mid-February.

Last year (2018/19), the biggest U.S. wheat customer was the Philippines. Even though Mexico has overtaken them in terms of total wheat purchased this year, the Philippines continues to be an important customer. They have increased their purchases of U.S. wheat through mid-February by almost 20 percent compared to last year. Figure 2 shows export pace this year compared to year ago levels for several of our major wheat buyers.

The export picture for white wheat has also improved this year compared to last, but the year-over-year growth in white wheat exports is not as robust as that for all wheat classes combined. U.S. exports of all wheat for 2019/20 are up just more than 33 percent from the 2018/19 marketing year, but U.S. white wheat exports are only up about 7 percent.

A major factor holding down the year-over-year growth in white wheat exports are sales to Japan. Japanese purchases of U.S. white wheat are down about

Figure 1: Annual U.S. wheat exports



7 percent year-over-year through mid-February. Most other markets are out-performing year ago levels, including shipments of 131,000 metric tons of white wheat to China. Through February last year, China had purchased no U.S. white wheat.

The largest purchaser of U.S. white wheat so far this year is the Philippines. Their volume through February 2020 exceeded last year by about 24 percent. Shipments to Taiwan have also increased this year by about 28 percent and to Nigeria by 188 percent.

Despite excellent improvement in overall U.S. wheat exports this year, domestic prices are being held down by the overall global wheat balance sheet. After a reduction in global ending stocks at the end of the 2018/19 wheat marketing year, ending stocks are expected to increase this year (Figure 3). Aggregate ending stocks for the non-U.S. major wheat exporting countries (Argentina, Australia, Canada, European Union, Russia and Ukraine) are expected to fall slightly relative to last year, but ending stocks for the major wheat importing countries are expected to increase more than 5 percent relative to the 2018/19 marketing year.

Aggregate wheat production among the major exports is estimated to be up for the 2019/20 marketing year by about 7 percent, but the distribution of year-over-year production changes is quite variable. The most recent WASDE estimate is that Australian wheat production this year will be down about 10 percent compared to last. This is due less to the fire crisis that engulfed Australia (much of the agricultural fire damage is in

livestock-producing areas) and more related to severe drought conditions. However, the reduction in Australian wheat production is more than offset by increases in the European Union, Russia and the Ukraine. In addition, aggregate production among all major wheat importers is expected to increase this year compared to last.

Because global ending wheat stocks this year are expected to exceed last year's levels, the current market year average price for U.S. wheat producers is estimated to be \$4.55 per bushel. This is the price that will be used to determine whether payments are made under the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill. While the final market year average price will not be announced until the marketing year ends on May 31, 2020, it is likely the final price will be within 10 or 15 cents per bushel of the current projection. We have had some positive price improvement in most markets since December, but the market year average price is the monthly USDA discovered price weighted by the volume of wheat sold each month.

A significant amount of U.S. wheat production has already been sold at the farm level, so even if futures or local cash prices continue to improve through the rest of the year the volume of wheat available for sale at the improved prices will likely prove insufficient to move the market year average much above its current estimate. Further, unless there is a major supply disruption next year, it is unlikely next year's market average price will be near the \$5.50 trigger price. Thus, there will likely be PLC payments in the 2020/21 marketing year as well.

Based on current price projections, it is likely that farm program sign-ups this year will be the

Figure 2: Purchases from selected U.S. wheat customers

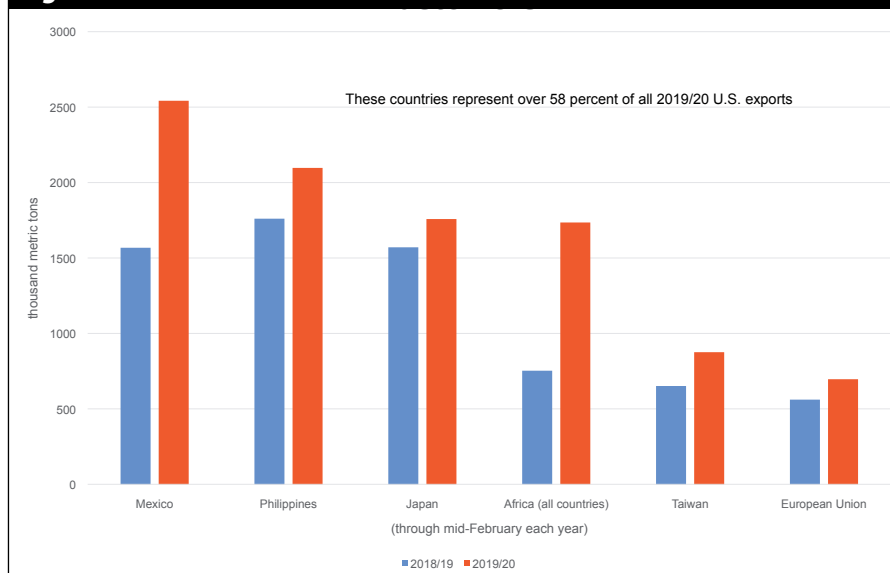
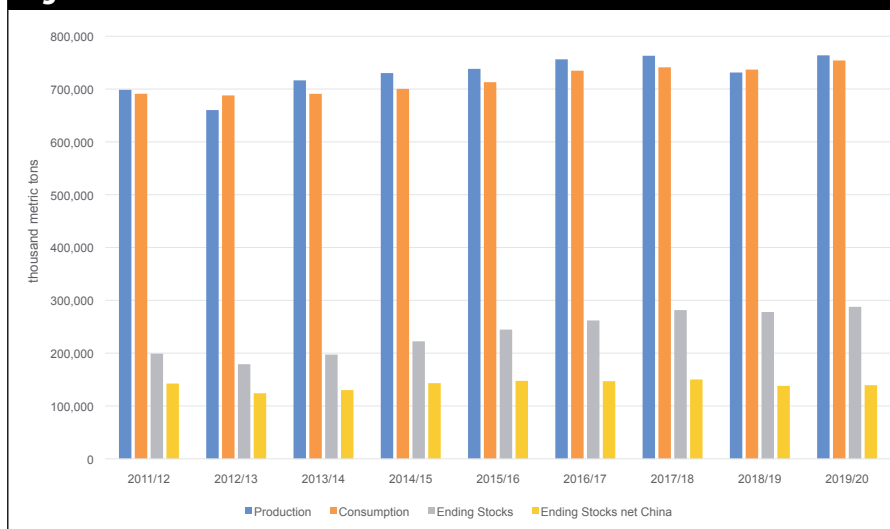


Figure 3: World wheat



mirror image of sign-ups under the 2014 Farm Bill. Because prices were well above the PLC trigger price when sign-ups occurred under the last farm bill, most Pacific Northwest wheat producers chose the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) provision that focused on revenue protection. ARC can pay with a market year average price above \$5.50 per bushel if yields end up significantly lower than historic yields. However, with the market year price almost certain to be well below \$5.50 per bushel for 2019/20, and the likelihood that, without a production disaster somewhere, it will also be below the trigger price in 2020/21, it is anticipated that most producers will elect PLC this time around. The good news is the decision is only binding for the first two years (2019/20 and 2020/21), and the choice can be changed on an annual basis in subsequent years if market year average prices exceed the \$5.50 per bushel trigger. ■

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.

A CALL TO ARMS!

HORSE INTERESTS GO TO WAR OVER NEW-FANGLED INVENTION | BY HEIDI SCOTT

History shows that human beings are usually suspicious of anything new.

"Airplanes are interesting scientific toys, but they are of no military value," said World War I Allied Commander Ferdinand Fock. The light bulb was deemed by British Parliament to be "unworthy of the attention of practical or scientific men." Coffee was banned in Mecca, the Ottoman Empire and Sweden. The umbrella was ridiculed for decades before becoming mainstream.

During the turn of the 20th century, American inventors put great effort into finding ways to make farming more efficient. One of the most influential developments during this time was the farm tractor, built in 1903 by Charles W. Hart and Charles H. Parr in Charles City, Iowa. Many in the farming industry celebrated this advancement and eagerly worked to improve and adapt the design for a variety of uses. By 1922, more than 100 companies were selling tractors in the U.S.

The tractor took the country by storm. As opposed to a horse or mule, the tractor could work in any season. It did not tire on hot days or get bothered by flies. It was more maneuverable than a steam engine. Not everyone was thrilled with this innovation, however. Every tractor purchased by a farmer meant fewer horses were required for farm work. Professionals working in horse-centered industries faced a new threat to their livelihood.

Less than two decades after Hart and Parr revealed their new machine, horses started disappearing from the American landscape. In 1920, professionals and investors from horse-related industries in Chicago, Ill., formed an official prohorse (and consequently antitractor) organization called the American Horse Association (AHA). The first annual AHA meeting was called to order on Dec. 1, 1920, by President Wirth S. Dunham. According to the minutes, this meeting was "organized for the purpose of encouraging the use and production of horses and mules."

Nearly 500 attendees joined, including horseshoe makers, horse traders, stockyard superintendents and representatives from the National Hay Association, the Grain Dealers' National Association and the American Steel and Wire Company. They even invited an army general to speak on equine use in the military.

At the meeting, Dunham said that, "the decrease in the number of horses and mules which has occurred in the last 10 years has destroyed an annual market for more than 113 million bushels of oats, 70 million bushels of corn and 4 ¾ million tons of hay, greater by far than our annual exports of these products. Is it wise for farmers to destroy their own markets?"

The AHA resolved to contact every obvious horse interest in the agricultural sector, including breeders; manufacturers and merchants of leather goods; wagon and car-



A seeding crew (operating Superior seeders) on Victor Young's homestead ranch south of Prosser in the Horse Heaven Hills in 1906. Photo courtesy of the Benton County Museum and Historical Society and Mid-Columbia Libraries, Prosser Branch. (PRH0079, washingtongruralheritage.org)

riage interests; state fair boards; and farm bureau officers. They also reached out to leaders in ancillary industries such as grocers; coal dealers; miners; gravel and sand companies; bakeries; equestrian and polo clubs; and ice deliverers. Bankers and lenders were given special attention. The AHA tried to influence lending decisions in favor of horse interests over motor purchases.

Publicists for the AHA composed leaflets with titles such as, "A Case for Discrimination," "When You Know the Truth," "The Noble Foundation, Limited," "The Horse and the Labor Shortage," "Breed and Raise More Horses," "Mules as Money Makers," and "Horse Sense." They also ran news stories, mailed letters and distributed flyers. In 1920 alone, they published more than a million documents aimed at "Everybody, everywhere who is interested in the horse."

To fund a marketing campaign in 1921, the AHA recruited members from five main groups: 1) direct horse/mule interests; 2) saddlery, harness, and leatherwork interests; 3) carriage and wagon manufacturers and dealers; 4) hay, grain, and feed interests; and 5) horseshoe manufacturers and heavy hardware interests. Shares were sold at \$5 with a goal of raising \$250,000 a year, with a promise that every dollar would go toward ensuring "universal demand for the continuation of the work...to keep horses and mules in their proper places."

In contrast, that same year, motor companies spent \$18 million placing ads and articles with headlines like "Tractor in Demand on American Farms; Horse Losing Out."

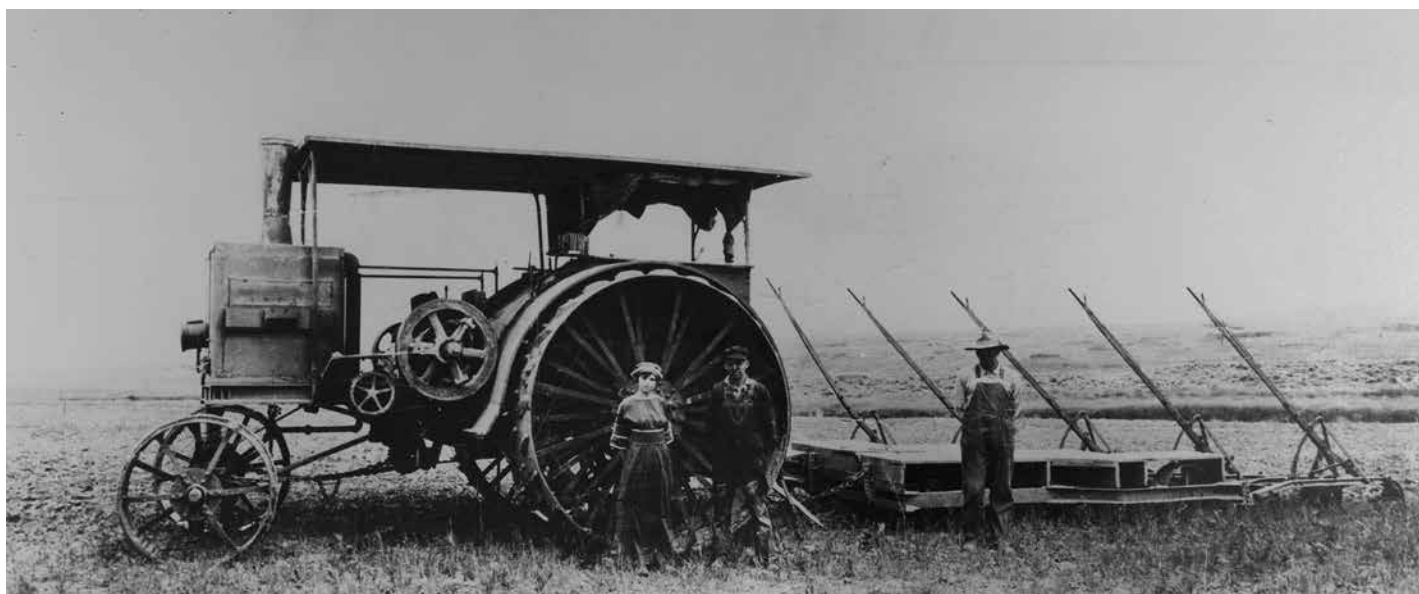
By the end of 1920, the AHA had more than 1,400 members. A chapter appeared in Bloomington, Ill., in March and one in Omaha, Neb., in May. The new chapters of AHA optimistically published, "the horse and mule industry has never faced a brighter future than it does today."

As part of the continued marketing plan, the AHA offered prizes for the best horses and teams of horses at county and state fairs. They funded articles that celebrated the horse and mule in local newspapers and brought back beloved articles from decades earlier, such as this one from 1914:

"[The] mule...is bullyragged, he is blasphemed, he is belabored, but he is always on hand when needed and he is always needed...He was perhaps 7,000 years old when the automobile was invented. He is built on the original model, he has the same tendency to backfire that made it risky to start him when Alexander set out across the Ganges, when Hannibal crossed the Alps, when Charles Martel double-crossed the Moors, when Washington crossed the Delaware, and when a farmer boy tried to cross a swollen creek in the last freshet. Although he is sometimes infernal the mule is eternal."

They also financed news coverage with headlines like, "Wisconsin laundrymen may go on record as favoring rehabilitation of the old-fashioned horse, over the modern auto truck," and, "Horse Motive Power: Old Dobbin is in Big Demand in Horse Centers of the East."

Efforts to draft and introduce AHA legislation that promoted horses failed to pass at state and federal levels. Undaunted, they eagerly spread the word that an



Two unidentified men and one woman standing in front of a Hashagen Bros. tractor and plowing outfit on June 8, 1915. Photo taken by Joshua Elmer, 1867-1943. Photo courtesy of the Odessa Historisches Museum and the Odessa Public Library. (OHM0066, washingtonruralheritage.org)



Tractor and combine near Colfax, Wash., circa 1930. Adolf Harder drove one of the tractors; the other men are unidentified. Two tractors were needed to pull one combine. They had to turn in unison because if they didn't, the tracks would come off the tractor causing a delay of several hours. The tractor is a Cletrac 20. Creator is unknown. Photo courtesy of the Whitman County Library. (WCLCF222, washingtonruralheritage.org)

opposing bill to ban horses from the city of Denver, Colo., had been overturned due to a blizzard. A short time later, they zealously printed, "The craze for motors has been such a constantly increasing cry during the last decade that the approaching funeral of the horse was accepted by many as a certain future event. On Feb. 4, Mother Nature made men realize how indispensable horses are by sending to New York City and a large part of the Atlantic coast, a rousing good blizzard of the old-fashioned kind. Under trying conditions such as these, the horses won out, and the motor laid right down on the job."

Motor manufacturers trained salesmen to tell urban clients that farmers were not breeding horses anymore, so businesses were wise to invest in motorized vehicles rather than horse-drawn equipment. Those same companies then sent salesmen to rural areas to tell farmers to stop breeding their horses because city businesses were not using them anymore.

AHA Secretary Wayne Dinsmore said, "It is the nefarious, lying propaganda that is being broadcast against the use of the horses and mules that is crippling the industry." He was not incorrect. He announced that *Scientific American Magazine* had carried out a three-column editorial that declared the horse was practically wiped off the

map. But AHA was not innocent of stretching the facts themselves. "We have proven conclusively that small grain fields worked over with tractors will not produce as big yields as horse-worked fields," they said in a June 1920 issue of *Flour & Feed*.

After a year of work, the AHA doubled down on their mission to promote horses as the only logical source of power for farming and hauling. They continued appealing to the financial sector. "Even the banker is affected, and no longer do they give extensive loans on autos and tractors. Here's the reason: A farmer buys a tractor for \$4,000 and also invests \$2,000 in some horses. Two years later he has a sale and the tractor brings him \$400, while the horses net a sum of \$3,300. There's your answer," said Secretary Dinsmore at the first meeting of AHA's second branch in Omaha, Neb.

In the end, the AHA appears to have only lasted a few years. After the minutes from their fourth annual meeting was published in 1923, little can be found in print about their efforts or the inevitable decision to discontinue. Ironically, after dedicating so much time and energy to saving horses, AHA President Wirth was killed in an automobile accident on July 18, 1931.

One lasting impact that the AHA had on American



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Spring cultivating on the Henning farm near Thornton, Wash., with a horse-drawn cultivator circa 1920. They used six-horse teams for each piece of equipment. Names read as subjects appear, front to back, left to right. Henning, Arvel, 1872-1971; _; Henning, Frederick (Fred) S., 1881-1959; Henning, Therod F., 1874-1936. Photo courtesy of the Whitman County Library. (WCLR186, washingtonruralheritage.org)

agriculture was their support of the work of Mr. E.V. Collins of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Iowa State College. The AHA sought a way to dispute the commonly held belief that the term “horsepower” meant the number of horses displaced. Most people at the time believed that a tractor with 18 horsepower could do the work of 18 horses. As a direct result of support from the AHA, Collins invented a dynamometer that could accurately determine the work capacity of horses by measuring how many horses it took to start a load into motion and to keep that load in motion over various terrains. The first pulling competition was held at the Iowa State Fair and proved a team of two horses could perform at 21 horsepower. The dynamometer is still in use today at many county and state fairs.

No matter the time and money AHA invested to convince people otherwise, the advantages of tractors were simply too obvious. Not only were horses expensive to purchase, they were costly to maintain. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that every working horse required five acres of oats, hay and fodder every year. In contrast, if a tractor did not work, it did not require fuel. Lands that had been used for raising animal feeds could be seeded with more profitable cash crops. Additionally, tractors could be operated day and night in any season and any weather, while horses and mules had to be rested or changed during the day.

Based on data collected by the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, horse and mule use in agriculture peaked between 1915-1922, with more than 25 million animals in use. Their decline began around 1921, and as the AHA feared, tractor use increased in popularity at the same time. Tractors permanently displaced horses in 1945. See chart next page.

While the AHA may not have succeeded in keeping the horse at the forefront of agriculture, their work was not in vain. Dr. George H. Conn, professor at the State University of Iowa and an AHA member, summarized the

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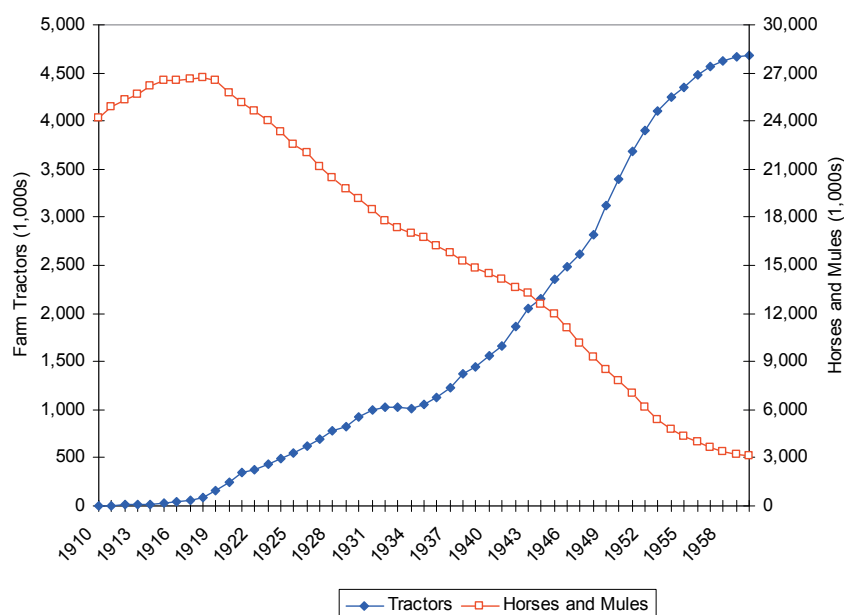
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AHA's sentiments. "For centuries, the horse has been the companion and servant of man. He came with him to the new world when man selected it for his future home; across the treeless prairie and the desert the horse went with man into the far west, and out of a vast wilderness, the most wonderful nation that history has ever known has sprung up. That never could have been accomplished without the aid of the horse."

In a way, the AHA achieved its mission. America has an estimated 9.2 million horses and 1.4 million full-time jobs in the horse industry today. It appears the horse will never fade from the American landscape. ■

Replacement of Horses by Tractors on U.S. Farms—1910 to 1960



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Series K184, K570, K572.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Financial checkup for the new decade

Dr. David M. Kohl

The decade of the 2020s will be one that is fast paced with extreme financial and economic volatility. Understanding the condition of business and personal financials will be critical so that one can accurately respond to financial needs. Significant financial decisions, whether it is purchasing machinery, livestock, land or financing operating needs, become a high priority in an environment where proactive management is often a difference maker.

Before a financial analysis is conducted in your checkup, develop your family and personal goals for the next year and five years. Goal setting is an important step in analyzing the overall situation of your business and planning for the future.

The basic financial statements are a powerful tool that can increase the probability of obtaining credit and help you to better manage your business finances. An accurate balance sheet including the documentation of inventories, machinery, equipment serial numbers and livestock identification is now being required by many agricultural lenders.

A projected cash flow, preferably quarterly or monthly, comprises 80 percent of a business plan. In developing a cash flow, one must think through the production, marketing, expenses and debt service schedules which can assist in determining operating money needs and payment schedules.

Your financial checkup needs to include a financial sensitivity analysis. Also known as a what-if analysis, a sensitivity analysis examines the effects of changes in price, cost, interest rates and production to provide the boundaries of possibilities.

Financial benchmarking basics include developing an accrual-adjusted income statement with adjustments for inventory, accounts payable, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses and accrued expenses. Accrual adjustments provide more accuracy and a clearer picture of the actual net income.

Your checkup includes calculating key financial ratios that measure per-

formance. These ratios identify symptoms, not the actual problem. Financial ratios can be placed on a dashboard that can be analyzed over a three-to-five-year period for a trend analysis. The farm and ranch financial results can then be compared to available peer benchmarking data. Peer databases are often maintained by agricultural lenders or state commodity groups as a value-added service.

What are some of the key ratios to examine in your financial checkup? The top half of the balance sheet is the first step in examining working capital position. Working capital is calculated by subtracting current liabilities from current assets. One of the favorite liquidity ratios is working capital to expenses, including depreciation. Working capital to expenses indicates what percent of the expenses can be covered by the owner versus the lender. A stoplight analysis can be used to determine risk. If this ratio exceeds 25 percent, this operation would be a “green light,” or low risk. A ratio of 10 to 25 percent would be a yellow light. Working capital to total expenses of less than 10 percent is a red light. As a part of financial benchmarking, one also has to examine the marketing and risk management plan, the accounts payable payment structure and the quality of current assets, such as grain in storage, to determine the need for quickness to cash of these current assets.

One of the key benchmarks or metrics on the financial dashboard is operating expenses, excluding interest and depreciation expenses, divided into operating revenue. This ratio is sometimes called the net margin ratio. The

operating expense ratio determines how much it costs to generate a dollar’s worth of revenue. Historical analysis finds if this ratio is less than 75 percent, the business is in the green light or low risk area. When this ratio exceeds 90 percent with little or no nonfarm income, this would equate to a red light or high risk. Between 75 and 90 percent is the yellow light territory which indicates medium risk. In recent years, producers who execute marketing and risk management plans and know their cost of production are generating increased net margin.

A simple ratio is to divide total term debt by EBITDA (EBITDA is earnings

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before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). EBITDA is calculated using before-tax net income plus interest and depreciation expenses. Analyze a three to five-year average of this ratio. If this ratio is under three to one, you are positioned for growth. If the ratio is above six to one, this indicates high risk. Mismanagement or an adverse external event could result in a high probability of financial issues.

The debt to asset ratio is an old favorite used in the agriculture industry to measure solvency. When this ratio

is above 60 to 70 percent, it indicates high risk, particularly for grain operations. A debt to asset ratio less than 30 percent indicates a lower degree of risk.

When well prepared and maintained with a few key dashboard ratios, the basic financial statements can go a long way in obtaining credit and also better managing the business. ■

Dr. David Kohl received his Ph.D. degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University. For 25 years, he was professor of agricultural finance and small business management and entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech. He has published four books and more than 2,100 articles on financial and business-related topics. Dr. Kohl is currently president of AgriVisions, LLC, a knowledge-based consulting business providing cutting-edge programs to leading agricultural organizations worldwide. He is also a business coach and part owner of Homestead Creamery, a value-added dairy business in the Blue Ridge Mountains. This content was provided by  **Northwest**
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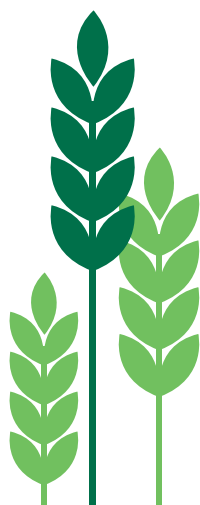
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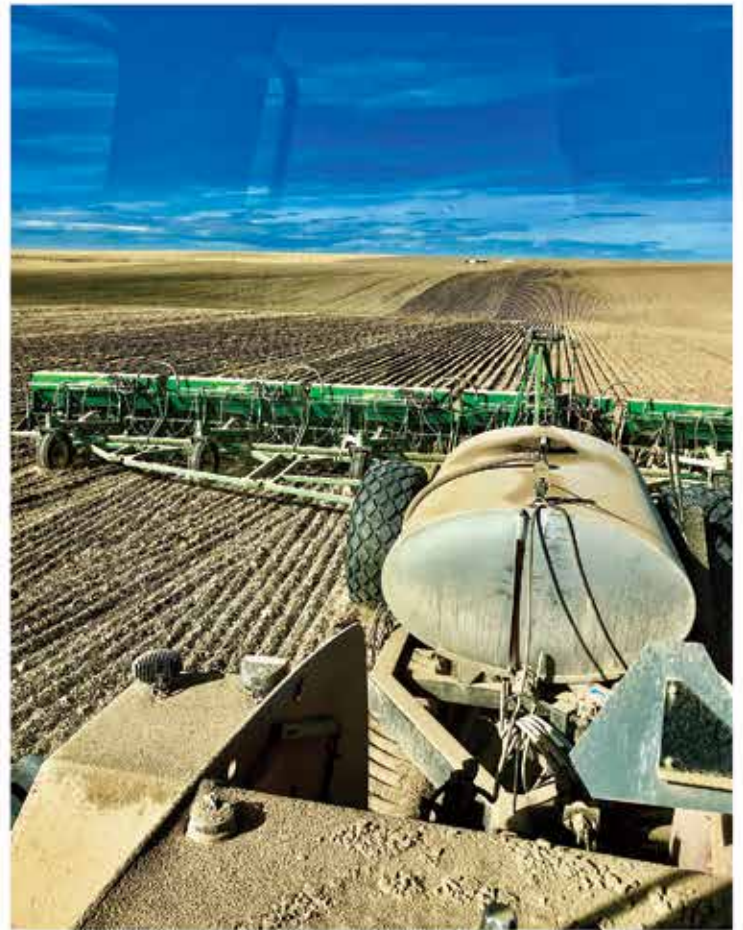
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Fueling up at the end of a long harvest day in Whitman County.
Photo by Ben Barstow.



All-American farm boy, Rhett Larson (5), near
Rosalia. Photo by Terry Larson.



Seeding some wheat at Schorzman Farms JV in Marlin.
Photo by Kaedin Schorzman.



Robin Irving Dormaier with son, Riley Dormaier (19 months), during harvest in Hartline.
Picture by Jerry Dormaier.



Harlan James Appel (13 months), future 6th generation farmer, helping papa Jim Hughes with some fieldwork near Winona. Photo by Jaimie Hughes Appel.



Harvest on the Lauren and Bob Venera farm, which is located between St. John and Steptoe. Don Dodge is driving.
Picture by Steve Venera.

HAPPENINGS

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

MARCH 2020

1 SAUSAGE FEED. All you can eat from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Menu includes home-made sausage, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, green beans, roll, applesauce, pie and beverage. Beer garden. Uniontown Community Center, Uniontown, Wash. uniontownwa.org/events/

6-8 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW. Features 300 professional artists and crafters from across the U.S. Spokane Fair and Expo Center, Spokane, Wash. custershows.com

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

20-22 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW. Features 150 professional artists and crafters from across the U.S. HAPO Center, Pasco, Wash. custershows.com

APRIL 2020

4-5 SPRING FARMING DAYS. Horse, mule and antique tractor farming on 13 acres. Activities starts at 9 a.m. both days. Hot lunch available. Limited camping available. Eastern Washington Agricultural Museum will be open. Garfield County Fairgrounds east of Pomeroy, Wash.

11 EASTER EGG HUNT. Kids should

bring their own baskets and enjoy an Easter egg hunt dash from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Holzer Park in Uniontown, Wash. uniontownwa.org/events/

16-19 WASHINGTON STATE SPRING FAIR. Baby animal exhibits, food, entertainment, demolition derby and monster truck show. Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup, Wash. thefair.com/spring-fair

18 LEAVENWORTH ALE-FEST. Brews, food and music. 12 to 4 p.m. leavenworth.org/event

23-MAY 3 WASHINGTON STATE APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL. Parade, carnival, golf tournament, apple pie and dessert bake-off, live entertainment, auction. Wenatchee, Wash. appleblossom.org

MAY 2020

2 LIONS CLUB RIB FEED. All-you-can-eat rib feed annual fundraiser. 5-9 p.m. at the fairgrounds. Waitsburg, Wash. cityofwaitsburg.com

3 RENAISSANCE FAIR. Music, entertainment, food, arts and crafts and maypole dances. East City Park, Moscow, Idaho. moscowrenfair.org

3 BLOOMSDAY. Spokane, Wash. bloomsdayrun.org

5-9 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW OF SPOKANE. Spokane County Fair and Expo Center. juniorshow.org

8-10 WINTHROP '49ER DAYS. Parade,

rendezvous party, Saturday dinner, Sunday cowboy breakfast, live music, crafts. Winthrop, Wash. winthropwashington.com/old-west-festival/

8-10 MAIFEST. Chainsaw carving, traditional Maipole dancing, music, entertainment. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org

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

15-17 WAITSBURG CELEBRATION DAYS. Parade, auto show, brewfest, carnival. Waitsburg, Wash. cityofwaitsburg.com

22-24 TOUCHET RIVER ROUNDUP. Woody's world famous pig roast, Chili feed, camping, dancing, kids games. Registration required. This is a clean and sober event. Fairgrounds in Waitsburg, Wash. snafubar.com/pigroast/

22-24 LAST STAND RODEO. Cowboy breakfast, 5k run, rodeos. Coulee City, Wash. laststandrodeo.com

23-26 MOSES LAKE SPRING FESTIVAL. Three on three basketball tournament, 5k and 10k run, car show, parade, carnival, beer garden. Moses Lake, Wash. moseslakespringfestival.com

25-27 WAITSBURG MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION. Local veterans give a presentation at the City Cemetery honoring all veterans. Waitsburg, Wash. cityofwaitsburg.com ■



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