

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

APRIL | 2020

FEDERAL REPORT REJECTS DAM-BREACHING ALTERNATIVE GROWERS URGED TO COMMENT

Washington Association of Wheat Growers
109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, WA 99169

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Meet Ecology's new director, Laura Watson

A wild ride through weather, markets,
QuickBooks at AMMO workshops

Dams are already a model
of fish recovery success

The future is malting barley

WHEAT LIFE

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WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



Tying up loose ends before fieldwork starts

By Ryan Poe

We've sprung ahead, and, according to the calendar, spring is finally here, although at the time I'm writing this, we've endured a late season snowstorm and several nights of very cold temperatures. I'm hopeful my winter wheat escaped serious damage, but I'll be watching my fields closely. I'm also in the middle of calving. Like other farmers, I worked a lot of extra hours during the storm, putting extra feed and bedding out. I lucked out that I didn't have

any calves born during the night or lose any. Hopefully, all the other growers who have cows made it through as easily as I did.

As a reminder, we are nearing the end of the comment period for the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Columbia River System Operations. Even though the EIS didn't find that breaching the lower Snake River dams was the optimal way forward, the fight isn't over. Growers still need to submit comments emphasizing the importance of the river system to their operations and local communities. See more on page 12.

Last month, the 2020 Legislative Session ended with some wins and some losses for agriculture. The Soil Health Initiative that the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) supported was funded, and no major carbon regulations were passed, like a cap and trade program or a low carbon fuel standard. Unfortunately, one bill we supported, a bill that would have required the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to compensate growers when DNR leases are terminated early, didn't pass. According to our lobbyist, it seems like the reason for the legislation not passing was due to some misinformation, and the bill stands a good chance of passing next year. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima) and supported by DNR. WAWG appreciates the efforts of Rep. Corry to make sure farmers are made as sound as possible when these leases are terminated early, and we applaud DNR for standing behind the bill. See more about the legislative session on page 14.

Speaking of our lobbyist, Diana Carlen, I want to acknowledge her efforts during this short, but intense legislative session. She has done a great job keeping tabs on bills that might impact wheat growers and updating us through weekly conference calls, attending or calling into our monthly board meetings and sending emails asking if we support or oppose bills as they pop up.

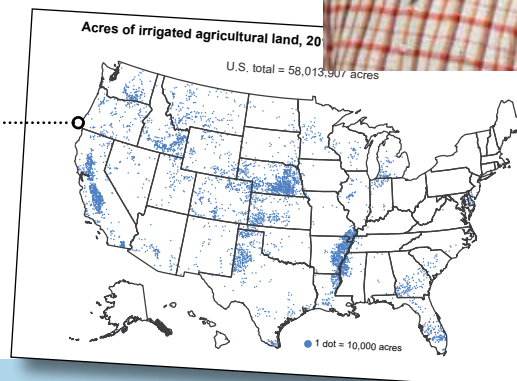
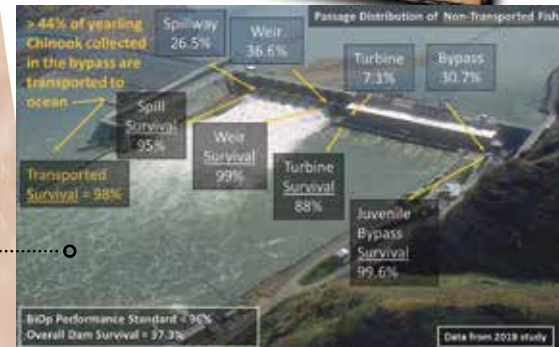
When this year started, I wasn't expecting to have to worry about a pandemic impacting both my family's health and my financial health. The coronavirus has had a huge impact on markets, including commodities. We had some wheat left to market, and now we are scratching our heads, wondering if we should get out now and cut our losses or if we should wait it out and hope the market comes back to a level it was trading at before all the bad news. We've had a lot of market uncertainty for an extended period of time, thanks to all the trade and tariff news, and just when we felt we were past that, we got hit with this.

Like many places, our Ritzville office has been closed for the past few weeks, but business hours have been the same as our staff worked from home. The office number, (509) 659-0610, is being answered as normal, as are emails. The situation is fluid and likely to change at a moment's notice, so if you are planning on stopping by the WAWG office, please call first to see if it has re-opened. Stay safe, wash your hands and don't hoard toilet paper. ■

Cover photo: The draft EIS on the Columbia River System Operations was released last month. Grower comments are needed. See page 12. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

Inside This Issue

WAWG President's Perspective	2
Dialogue	4
Membership Form	5
WAWG at Work	6
Policy Matters	12
Washington Wheat Foundation	20
Meet Ecology's new director Laura Watson takes over the reins	22
A wild ride AMMO workshop tackles weather, markets	26
Checks and balances AMMO workshop on QuickBooks	30
Profiles Jeff Emtman, WAWG past president	34
WGC Chairman's Column	39
EIS decides against breaching Dams already a model of fish recovery success	40
Quality takes center stage 2020 Preferred Wheat Variety Brochure out	42
Technically speaking Support allows industry to thrive	44
The future is malting barley WSU breeder to focus on value-added industry	46
Wheat Watch	48
What the numbers say ERS charts shed light on state of U.S. ag	50
On Lease	54
The Bottom Line	56
Your Wheat Life	58
Happenings	60
Advertiser Index	62



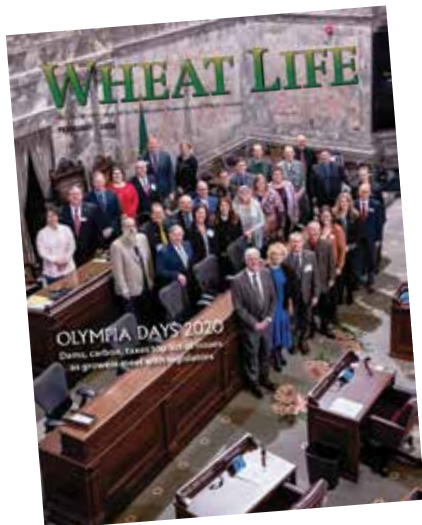
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Dialogue

Share your comments with us via email at editor@wawg.org or mail them to 109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, WA 99169-2394. Please keep your submissions less than 300 words.



Editor,

Ryan Poe makes some very excellent points about communicating the farming story (February 2020 issue of *Wheat Life*, page 2); the facts just don't matter anymore. As an advocate for the "Salad Bowl of the World" where we have some of the most progressive, sustainable farming of vegetables and berries, I am constantly challenged by the emotional arguments about crop protection tools, worker safety and natural resource conservation. Farmers are the original environmentalists, and we, as the farming and ranching community, need to take that label back for our own use. As a passive wheat farmer in Grant County, it is challenging to convey the risks of dryland wheat farming to the uninformed public without getting into a conversation about environmental impacts. Ryan is right; we need to figure out the emotional element of farming's story and convey that message better about our safe, affordable domestic food production and how American dinner tables enjoy the bounty of our efforts. Until then, the facts will be just noise in the public arena.

Norm Groot, executive director, Monterey County Farm Bureau in Salinas, Calif., and Grant County landowner



2020 NRCS INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

A program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Topics to include NRCS program timelines, the new Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART), changes to CSP & EQIP, eligibility requirements, payment schedules, and more.

For more information:

Call: 1-877-740-AMMO (2666)
or Email: lori@wawg.org

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2020 Workshop Schedule:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| APR 28 | Pasco, WA (9 am -noon)
Red Lion Hotel, 2525 N 20th Avenue |
| APR 29 | Davenport, WA (9 am-noon)
Memorial Hall, 511 Park Street |
| APR 30 | Waterville, WA (9 am-noon)
601 N Monroe Street |



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- ✓ 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 that would raise prices on fuel and fertilizer.
- ✓ Advocating for quick implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill.

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

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Budgets, agency news on agenda at March board meeting

The March Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) state board meeting was a grab-bag of topics, including budgets, research trips to Australia and agency updates. There will be no April meeting as growers jump head first into spring fieldwork.

In preparation for the proposed 2020/21 budget request to the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), board members reviewed WAWG's financials and approved the request, which cuts approximately 5 percent from last year's budget. The WGC will make a decision on WAWG's request at its May board meeting.

Roylene Comes at Night, Washington state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), told the board the agency is going through a significant transition period that is causing her staff a lot of tight deadlines. The agency is implementing new practices from the 2018 Farm Bill; they've recently moved to a new office; and they are bringing a new customer service program online. She asked growers to "hang tight" this year and said that growers who apply for an NRCS program must already be eligible at the time they submit the application and have all of their Farm Service Agency paperwork up to date. If they don't, that application will be rolled over to next year. The state office is also instituting an "intake" form that growers will be required to fill out prior to submitting their application. That form, Comes at Night explained, will ensure her staff has all the information they need up front.

Comes at Night touched on the temporary fix for growers in Douglas County who were ineligible for the latest Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up due to the county's CRP acreage cap. She has requested additional funds to further protect the sage grouse practices that have already been put in place.

"We are trying our best to come up with a temporary fix. Too much has been done," she said, referring to the thousands of practices that have been put in place in the area and are threatened by not being able to be enrolled in CRP. "We are seeing populations and species return. There's a lot of investment that's been made."

Ben Thiel, regional director of the Risk Management Agency's Spokane office, reviewed options for insuring land coming out of CRP. He also answered questions from growers concerning final plant date maps.

The state legislation report from WAWG lobbyist Diana Carlen also included talk about budgets as both legislative chambers were hard at work reconciling and passing supplemental budgets. The coronavirus was dominating discussions in Olympia, and the legislature was setting aside \$200 million to fight the virus.

In carbon legislation, Carlen said the only bill really left on the table was legislation that would allow the Washington State Department of Ecology to circumvent a court decision that said the agency didn't have the authority to regulate carbon emissions from indirect emitters. The business community was actively campaigning against the bill, and Carlen didn't think the Senate had the votes to pass it. Cap and trade and a low carbon fuel standard also failed to gain enough traction this session to make it to the governor's desk. See page 14.

Another piece of legislation that WAWG was actively supporting also failed to get out of committee in the final weeks of the session. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima), would have required the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to compensate growers when the agency terminates a lease

AMMO to host NRCS grower meetings this month

The Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization is teaming up with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to hold three informational grower meetings later this month. The meetings will cover NRCS program timelines; the new Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART); changes to the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program; eligibility requirements; payment schedules; and more.

The meetings will be held on April 28 in Pasco, April 29 in Davenport and April 30 in Waterville. There's no registration fee, and you don't need to be a Washington Association of Wheat Growers member to attend. For info, visit wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ or see the ad on page 4. ■

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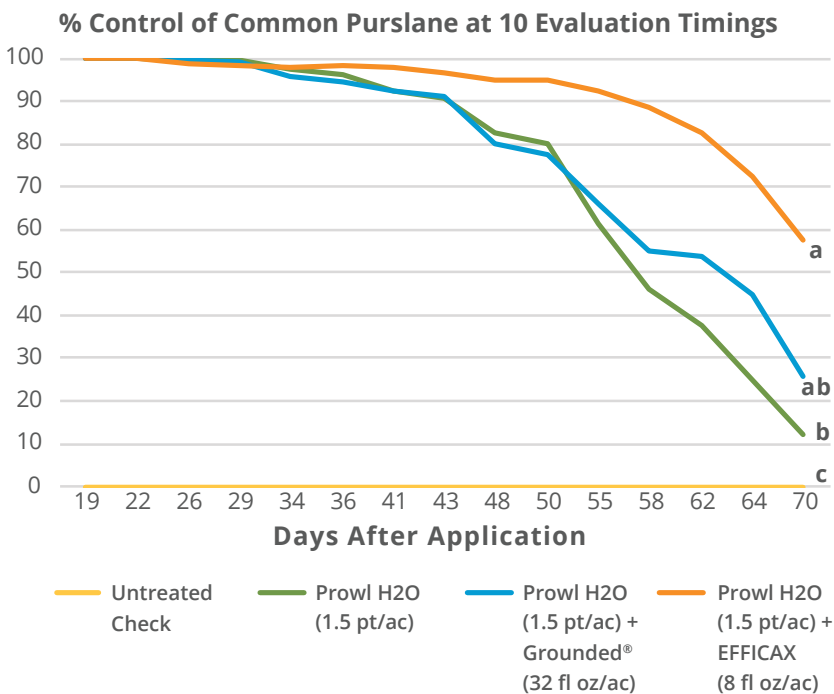
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early under their “higher and better use clause.” For more on the 2020 Legislative Session, see page 14.

In the WGC report, chairman Gary Bailey and CEO Glen Squires talked about their recent trip to Australia to learn more about how researchers Down Under are fighting herbicide resistance in weeds. Several Washington State University researchers also made the journey.

WAWG leaders had recently returned from Commodity Classic where they took part in National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) annual meetings, during which NAWG reviews and updates its resolutions. The Washington delegation submitted several resolutions that were passed, including a resolution to oppose any action that threatens the viability of the transportation capabilities of the Columbia-Snake River System. Marci Green, a Spokane county grower and WAWG past president, was also elected to NAWG’s budget committee. ■

Governor’s final dam report released

The final draft of the Lower Snake River Dams Stakeholder Engagement report has been released by the Governor’s Office. It can be viewed at governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Final%20Draft%20LSRD%20Report.pdf.

The final report follows the release of a draft report in December 2019. The public was able to submit comments on the draft, and three public workshops were held in Clarkston, Vancouver and the Tri-Cities. The report found some common themes emerged from the studies, interviews and public engagement process:

COUNTY MEETINGS

Franklin County

Taking a short break from spring work, Franklin County growers met at the Kahlotus Grange Hall last month.

Franklin County Commissioner Clint Didier and Franklin County Auditor Matt Beaton were guests at the meeting to talk about county affairs, including potential redistricting changes that could negatively impact rural growers by shifting representation more to urban areas.

“Farmers are one against 99 others,” explained Leonard Van Buren, county president. “We are concerned, and it has happened in the past, that we are going to be forgotten out here except for April 15, which is tax day. It seems like taxes are going up, and we are getting less and less.”

Didier also invited veterans and growers to attend the Franklin County Republican Party’s Lincoln Day dinner at the Pasco Red Lion on April 18. More information can be found at franklinrepublicans.com/lddshop/.

Growers talked to Beaton about the state of the county’s rural roads, and where their tax money is being spent. They also discussed how outside investors are buying farmland at a premium and inflating property values.

Washington Grain Commissioner Brian Cochrane talked about his recent trip to the International Grain Program Institute in Manhattan, Kans., to learn about wheat milling quality.

The next Franklin County wheat growers meeting is scheduled for April 16, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Star School. Clark Neely, Washington State University’s new director of the variety testing program has been invited.

Whitman County

February’s meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers had a good turnout to hear from Washington State University economist, Randy Fortenberry.

Fortenberry talked about supply and demand, telling growers that there’s still a big supply of wheat in the world, and that the coronavirus, at that point, wasn’t affecting commodity markets like it was stock and bonds. That could change, however, if the shipping industry starts to see impacts. He also touched on prices. The U.S. Department of Agriculture had just released a 10-year projection on wheat prices and predicted the average of all wheat classes would be \$5.15. Fortenberry added that he didn’t see that price changing much unless another major exporter experiences a crop catastrophe.

Growers also heard state legislative updates and discussed the various carbon bills floating around Olympia. The recently released draft environmental impact statement on the Columbia-Snake River System was also a topic of discussion, with growers encouraged to submit comments on the draft.

In financial matters, growers voted to contribute funds towards the purchase and maintenance of an AgWeatherNet station in Whitman County.

There will be no meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers in April. The May meeting is tentative and will depend on how spring fieldwork is progressing. ■

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- There are significantly different views of the impacts from breaching the dams on salmon, orca, agriculture, transportation and economics. More information is needed to create opportunities for greater understanding.
- Energy, transportation, agriculture, salmon and orca are complex issues, and decisions about the lower Snake River dams need to consider the broader systems and context for each. Each issue is dynamic, and future changes may provide more options as well as more challenges.
- People across the diversity of interests expressed the desire to have more informed and respectful conversations. Given that issues around the lower Snake River dams have long been in litigation, the ability for shared learning, collaborative problem-solving and a new dialogue has so far been limited. Many of those interviewed are hopeful about the significant benefits a collaborative dialogue could offer to a process that has so far been stuck in a cycle of study, legal actions and court decisions.

The intent of the report was to summarize the views of Washingtonians on retaining or breaching the dams. It does not recommend whether the dams should be removed or breached. Gov. Inslee will use this information to inform his perspective on the dams and determine if and how to participate in ongoing federal environmental evaluations of the Columbia-Snake River System, including the draft Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement that was released in February 2020.

Background

In the fall of 2018, the Governor's Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force identified the need to further investigate the impacts of removing or breaching the lower Snake River dams as a way to provide more salmon for Southern Resident orcas to eat. They recommended a separate engagement process, and the Washington State Legislature provided funding to the governor's office in the 2019-21 operating budget to contract with a neutral third party to establish a process for local, state, tribal and federal leaders and stakeholders to address issues associated with the possible breaching or removal of the lower Snake River dams. ■

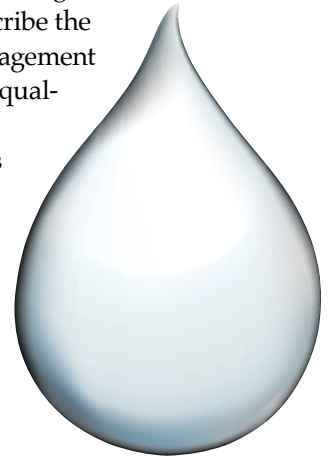
How are we doing?

Like something you read in *Wheat Life*? Disagree with something you read in *Wheat Life*? Let us know by emailing your comments and suggestions to editor@wawg.org

or mail them to 109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, Wash., 99169-2394. Please keep submissions less than 350 words. Submissions may be edited for length. ■

Grower comments needed on Ecology's clean water guidance

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is developing a voluntary clean water guidance for agriculture that will describe the agency's recommended best management practices (BMPs) to protect water quality. The guidance will be released over the next few years in a series of 13 chapters. The first chapter, which focuses on crop tillage and residue management, has been released and is open for comment. Other chapters will cover nutrient management, sediment control, water management, livestock management and riparian buffers. Growers can find more information at ecology.wa.gov/Events/WQ/Voluntary-clean-water-Ag-Guidance/Voluntary-Clean-Water-Guidance-for-Agriculture.

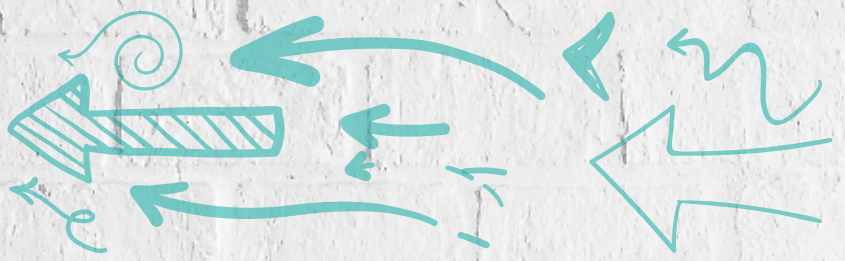


According to information released by Ecology, the guidance will be used in funding decisions for grant programs; to inform watershed cleanup plans; to provide certainty and predictability to producers; and to provide technical assistance, education and outreach. This guidance can also be used by other natural resource programs to support their recommendations to landowners when developing projects to protect water quality.

The guidance is being developed in collaboration with an advisory group that includes representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation districts, the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the State Conservation Commission, Washington State University, farmers, dairies, cattle groups, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and other agricultural and conservation experts.

Ecology's website states that agricultural producers will not be required to use the specific BMPs recommended in the guidance. Those BMPs are intended to present options for producers to help ensure compliance with state water quality laws (which are not voluntary). ■

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POLICY MATTERS

Grower comments needed on river operations EIS

The Columbia River System Operations draft environment impact statement (EIS), which was released on Feb. 28, reviewed and rejected breaching the four lower Snake River dams as the best alternative to restoring endangered salmon runs. Despite the apparent victory for agriculture, growers are still strongly encouraged to submit comments on the EIS concerning the importance of the dams to their life and livelihood.

The EIS and a link to submit comments are available at nwd.usace.army.mil/CRSO/

Released jointly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration and the Bureau of Reclamation, the report argued that modest changes to the Columbia River System would increase salmon survival while providing the least impact to electrical generation, transportation, greenhouse gas emissions and farmers' production costs.

"Despite the major benefits to fish expected from (breaching the lower Snake River dams), this alternative was not identified as the Preferred Alternative due to the adverse impacts to other resources such as transportation, power reliability and affordability and greenhouse gas emissions," the report said.

The Preferred Alternative comprises operational and structural measures that allow federal agencies to operate the integrated system to meet congressionally authorized purposes and EIS objectives, including those that benefit Endangered Species Act-listed species. In the



executive summary, the preferred alternative calls for "... a flexible spill operation that spills more for fish passage when power generation is less valuable and spills less when power generation is more valuable."

The comment period runs from Feb. 28 to April 13. Responses to substantive comments will be included in the final EIS, expected in summer 2020. Records of decision documenting final recommended actions will be issued in September 2020.

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) has published a guide to help growers submit their comments. It recommends comments be:

- **Substantive.** Comments should clearly explain how this issue directly affects you and/or your organization; identify what in the draft EIS is incorrect and/or incomplete; and provide information that allows the agencies to correct/complete it.
- **Original.** Comments must be unique to be counted in the EIS process. Identical form letters or petitions are grouped and considered and treated as one single comment.
- **Shared publicly.** While providing information during agencies' decision-making process is important, it is equally important that growers influence the public conversation about the value of the Northwest river system and the role the dams play in creating that value. We need to show that river system supporters are a broad and inclusive set of the electorate. To that end, growers are encouraged to post comments on websites and social media; share them with customers and constituents; write letters to the editor; and

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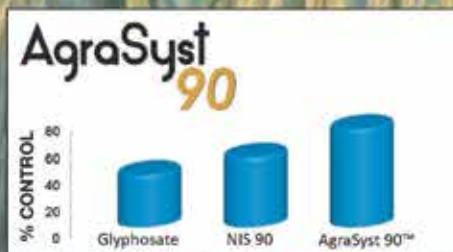


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The PNWA guide also provides talking points that growers can incorporate into their comments, including:

- The system's hydroelectric dams and locks provide us with clean affordable energy for our homes and businesses, irrigation water for agriculture and navigable waterways that ship goods to and from the farthest inland port in the country. The environmental effects of these economic benefits are managed with world-class investments that help maintain salmon populations and other ecological benefits.
- One barge with tow can ship the equivalent goods of 1.4 100-unit freight trains or 538 semi-trucks. These trains and trucks would congest our communities, increase greenhouse gas emissions and decrease air quality if we lose the system of dams and locks that enable barge shipments.
- Our economies are not prepared to function with the loss of barging on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Our highway, rail and grain elevator networks would need more than \$1.1 billion in capital investments to adapt. This includes hundreds of miles of shortline rail track that have been abandoned; new rail; major highway improvements; and retrofits for grain elevators that do not have rail-loading capabilities.
- Our system of affordable and renewable hydroelectric power is the backbone that will support our new clean energy economy—providing reliable energy for our communities when wind and solar cannot. Ninety percent of the Northwest's renewable energy comes from hydroelectric dams.

To access PNWA's guide, visit pnwa.net/rivervalues/. ■

Carbon, DNR legislation fails to pass during 2020 session

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

The 2020 Legislative Session wrapped up on March 12, concluding its intense, 60-day session on time for the third year in a row.

Legislators began the 2020 session primarily focused on homelessness, housing and figuring out transportation funding in light of voter-approved \$30 car tabs. Democratic lawmakers also hoped to use their large majorities in the legislature to pass new laws on climate change and gun control. Republicans hoped to restore \$30

car tabs after a King County judge granted an injunction preventing the law from going into effect and for property tax relief given larger-than-expected revenues to the state.

On the final day of the session, the Legislature approved the supplemental operating budget. However, fears about the potential economic fallout from COVID-19 led lawmakers to cut spending they had originally proposed for the state supplemental operating budget. The final budget adds just more than \$1 billion in new spending to the \$52.4 billion, two-year budget passed by lawmakers last April and includes no new taxes. Earlier proposals had also left little in reserves, but the final budget leaves \$3 billion in total reserves at the end of the biennium.

In one of their final acts before they adjourned, lawmakers increased emergency coronavirus funding from \$100 million to \$200 million. Of that amount, \$175 million will be directed to state and local public health agencies, and the remaining \$25 million will be transferred into the newly created COVID-19 unemployment account to help businesses and workers disrupted by the pandemic. While the Legislature passed the supplemental budget mostly along party lines, funding for the coronavirus was approved in both houses unanimously.

Some other highlights of the supplemental operating budget include:

- Homelessness and housing-\$160 million to address housing and homelessness.
- Climate change-\$50 million to address the climate crisis by investing in communities and projects to enhance mitigation and resilience.
- Fire suppression-\$25 million is provided for the costs of fire suppression for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Climate change risks-\$2,339,000 is provided for the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to adopt rules to strengthen and standardize the consideration of climate change risks, vulnerability and greenhouse gas emissions in environmental assessments for major projects with significant environmental impacts.
- Statewide emissions reduction strategies-\$600,000 is provided to the Washington State Department of Commerce to develop a comprehensive analysis of statewide emissions reduction strategies.
- Pesticide investigation report-\$87,000 for the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to work with other state agencies, local health jurisdictions, the state poison center and stakeholders to evaluate pesticide investigation rules and processes. ►

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Requires a report to the Legislature by June 30, 2021.

- Chlorpyrifos-\$299,000 is provided to WSDA and \$280,000 to Washington State University (WSU) to implement the provisions of **E2SSB 6518** (see below).
- Growth management workgroup-\$350,000 is provided for a workgroup to review and make recommendations for legislation to update the Growth Management Act. The workgroup must report on its activities and recommendations by Dec. 1, 2020.
- Water banking workgroup-Funding is provided for Ecology to convene a workgroup of affected entities to study the design and use of the state water trust, water banking and water transfers. Ecology must present its findings by Dec. 1, 2020.
- Conservation district support-\$332,000 is provided for the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to increase the capacity of conservation districts to assist land-owners in environmental stewardship and achieving agricultural sustainability.
- Soil Health Initiative-\$55,000 is provided to the SCC, \$200,00 to WSDA and \$788,000 to implement the provisions of **SSB 6306** (Soil Health Initiative).
- DNR land sales/transfers-Requires DNR to report to the Legislature by July 2020 on those parcels currently used for commercial or nonresource-use purposes and those identified by the department as transition lands likely to be sold or redeveloped for nonresource use.
- Net ecological gain-\$256,000 is provided to the Office of Financial Management to submit a report to the Legislature on how to incorporate a net ecological gain standard into state land use, development and environmental laws.

Supplemental transportation budget passed

Heading into the 2020 Legislative Session, lawmakers were concerned how they would deal with the impacts of the passage of \$30 car tab initiative (**I-976**) last November, but were able to pass a supplemental transportation budget (**HB 2322**) almost unanimously that avoids significant cuts to road projects or transit service. They did this without adding new revenue, instead choosing to address the \$453 million shortfall left by the initiative by targeting anticipated underspending for the current biennium.

The \$10.4 billion transportation budget fully funds the paused project list and maintains current funding levels for the maintenance and preservation programs. It does not utilize general fund dollars, but it does assume a higher rate of cost underruns on projects than what was originally contemplated. Gov. Inslee is directing the Department of Transportation to move forward on projects that have been paused.

DNR bill fails to pass Senate

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) was closely watching a bill sponsored by Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima) that would have required the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to compensate lessees in the event that the agency terminates agricultural or grazing leases early. The bill, **SHB 2498**, was supported by the wheat growers and DNR. The bill passed out of the House unanimously on Feb. 17 and headed to the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee. Unfortunately, in a hearing on Feb. 28, the bill failed to get out of the Senate committee.

In an attempt to save the bill, industry stakeholders, again with the support of DNR, attached the bill to another piece of legislation. But in another strike, that second piece of legislation also failed to pass out of committee before the deadline.

During the March state board meeting, Carlen told growers that she is confident that the bill will pass next legislative session and that DNR is committed to standing behind the bill.

"We are disappointed that the bill didn't pass this session," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "We are grateful that Rep. Corry recognized there was a problem when DNR leases are terminated early, and we are appreciative of the work he did to come up with a solution. We applaud DNR for supporting this bill and look forward to working with them next session to get it passed."

DNR leases contain a clause that allows them to unilaterally terminate the contract when they find a "higher and better use" for the land. In the event the lease is terminated early, DNR is not currently required to compensate the lessee for the remainder of the lease or for any improvements the lessee has undertaken. ■

Notable legislation that passed

Chlorpyrifos Regulation (E2SSB 6518). This bill originally banned most chlorpyrifos use unless it was exempted and also created an emergency permit process. It was amended in the House to remove the ban, exemptions and emergency permit process on chlorpyrifos in favor of giving WSDA emergency rulemaking authority for controls on chlorpyrifos to prevent public exposures (rules to take effect by Jan. 1, 2022). ►

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Minimum Crew Size (HB 1841). This bill establishes minimum crew size requirements on trains transporting hazardous and nonhazardous material. The bill would require a minimum crew size of two for common carrier and passenger trains. The final legislation exempted shortline railroads (Class III railroads) from the crew size requirement when traveling under 25 miles per hour. This issue is likely to get litigated over federal preemption issues.

Sustainable Farms and Fields (2SSB 5947). This bill requires the SCC to create a sustainable farming grants program and sets guidelines for how the program should be administered. It requires that certain activities be eligible for grants, including on-farm fossil fuel input efficiency measures, agroforestry and carbon farming. It also requires WSDA to report biennially to the Legislature on the performance of the program.

Drought Preparedness and Response (ESHB 1622). This bill authorizes Ecology to issue drought advisories when there is a risk of drought conditions and directs it to start a pilot program to explore cost, feasibility and benefits of entering into long term water right lease agreements. It also changes Ecology's responsibilities when a drought order is issued, including requiring consultation with tribes prior to a drought order; considering undue hardship to local water users as a result of an order; and listing other requirements for Ecology to consider when considering an order. It also prioritizes survival of irrigated crops, fisheries and small community water resources in emergency drought orders.

State Greenhouse Gas Targets (E2SHB 2311). This bill changes the state's greenhouse gas emissions limits to reduce state emissions to 45 percent of 1990 levels by 2030 (changed from 25 percent reduction by 2035), and adds limits of 70 percent emissions reduction by 2040 and 95 percent reduction by 2050. It also establishes an additional "net zero" emissions standard for state agencies by 2050. It also requires state government to achieve net zero emissions by 2050; includes reporting requirements for agencies; and requires agencies to take all practicable opportunities to maximize carbon sequestration in their nonland management activities.

Soil Health Initiative (SSB 6306). The bill creates the Soil Health Initiative as a jointly administered project by WSU, SCC and WSDA in order to improve agricultural viability, food nutrition and environmental functions by better focusing research on soil health and soil biology. It requires a progress report to the Legislature by Oct. 1, 2020.

Food Policy Forum (SSB 6091). The bill continues the Washington Food Policy Forum as a public-private part-

nership to develop recommendations for improving the state's food system.

Boeing B&O Tax Preference. Lawmakers passed legislation that for now ends the state's Business & Occupation (B&O) tax preference for aerospace manufacturers. **SB 6690** was brought by Boeing as a way to resolve a dispute at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and avoid retaliatory trade tariffs. Legislators have worried that WTO tariffs could ripple out far beyond aerospace, hurting Washington products like agricultural exports.

Notable legislation that failed to pass

Low Carbon Fuel Standard. Senate lawmakers for the second year failed to act on legislation (**E2SHB 1110**) authorizing Ecology to enact a low carbon fuel standard despite similar legislation passing the House two years in a row.

Cap and Trade (SB 5981). This legislation would have required Ecology to implement a greenhouse gas emissions cap and trade program to achieve the state's greenhouse gas emission reduction limits. The bill states that Ecology would adopt rules for giving emission allowances to suppliers of electricity at no cost.

Regulation of Indirect Emitters (SSB 6628) would have amended the state Clean Air Act to authorize Ecology to regulate both direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions in response to the Washington Supreme Court partially invalidating the Clean Air Rule.

Special Purpose District Elections (SHB 2415). The bill would have changed qualified electors from landowners in the district to registered voters residing in the district. This would have disenfranchised landowners and farmers who do not reside in the district or have organized their farms as a partnership, LLC or other corporate entity. ■

Northwest wheat states unite in response to draft EIS

Editor's note: Last month, the wheat industry associations and commissions of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington released a joint statement on the Columbia River System Operations draft environmental impact statement.

On behalf of the Northwest wheat producing states, we strongly support the findings in the Columbia River System Operations draft environmental impact statement (EIS), specifically the Preferred Alternative for the operations, maintenance and configuration of the Columbia River System.

Together, our four states produce more than 500 million

bushels of wheat annually. Much of that wheat is bound for export markets. Pacific Northwest wheat growers are uniquely positioned to access the global marketplace by moving grain through the Columbia-Snake River System to Portland or Vancouver, then onto foreign customers.

The draft EIS evaluated the 14 federal dam and reservoir projects that comprise the federal Columbia River System. It has taken nearly four years of analysis by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration to put the draft EIS together. The federal agencies identified their Preferred Alternative in the draft EIS, which focuses on fish recovery using water management measures, including flexible spill, while balancing the need for hydropower production and water supply. The Preferred Alternative does not include dam breaching.

Our organizations applaud the approach taken in this comprehensive study and support the recommendations put forth. Continued improvements to fish passage at the four Snake River dams enable fish to pass the dams with remarkable success. Dams with navigation locks provid-

ing barge transportation can in fact coexist with fish.

Meanwhile, the ability to barge wheat is a pillar of our industry—it is also the most environmentally friendly mode of transportation available. Over a period of just nine months in 2017, more than 3.5 million tons of cargo were barged on the Snake River; it would have taken more than 35,140 rail cars to carry this cargo, or more than 135,000 semi-trucks.

The four lower Snake River dams alone provide enough clean energy to power 1.87 million homes. Eliminating the clean power and efficient transportation provided by the lower Snake River dams would increase CO₂ and other harmful emissions by more than 1.25 million tons per year, the equivalent of adding more than 101,000 vehicles to the road.

We are pleased the draft EIS recognizes the congressionally authorized uses of the river system for power generation, navigation, recreation, irrigation and a measure of flood control, all while working to bring the greatest benefit to fish through strategic operation of the system. ■



This Judy von Borstel photo, "Storm Clouds Just Before the Downpour," was the winning photo in the 2019 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention photo contest. Judy and her husband, Alan, live near Grass Valley, Ore., on a wheat and cattle ranch.

NATIONAL WHEAT FOUNDATION NAMES NEW BOARD OFFICERS AT THE 2020 COMMODITY CLASSIC

The National Wheat Foundation welcomes Texas wheat farmer David Cleavinger as its new chairman. David Cleavinger is a fifth-generation Texas farmer/rancher operating his 3,500-acre irrigated family farm and ranch in Wildorado, Texas. The Foundation also nominated Gary Broyles from Rapelje, Mont., to its board.

“NWF also appreciates Idaho wheat farmer Wayne Hurst’s time as board chairman and congratulates David Cleavinger on his new role as chairman,” said Chandler Goule, executive director of the National Wheat Foundation. “We also welcome Montana wheat grower Gary Broyles to the board and know that he will be a great addition and help the Foundation grow.”

WHEAT SITES EXPAND, DIVERSIFYING SHP PROGRAM

By Maddy Rabenhorst and Keith Byerly

As the third largest cash crop in the US, wheat farmers have a major influence on our farm economy and our environment. That’s why the Soil Health Partnership (SHP) partnered with the National Wheat Foundation, made possible by the generous support of General Mills, to establish three additional wheat-focused sites across Kansas and Minnesota for the 2020 growing season, giving SHP a total of six wheat-focused sites in our network. This represents growers who have spring wheat or winter wheat as part of their farms’ crop rotation. These operations often have an extended cropping rotation, meaning it is typical for a crop to be planted every three to five years.

SHP is dedicated to understanding how growers with a wheat cash crop can impact their soil health and productivity. Areas with a significant amount of wheat grown as a cash crop often have a different growing season length or annual rainfall when compared to the heart of the corn belt, which is where a bulk of the soil health research has been traditionally conducted.

Establishing wheat sites allows SHP to start evaluating the impacts of diversified crop rotations and how wheat can benefit the soil and other environmental indicators. Often, the wheat growers we work with have wheat in their rotation but also other crops such as sorghum, sunflowers and peas. We will start collecting data to evaluate the impact on soil health as a result of these very diverse crop rotations.

There are many management benefits to having wheat as a part of the crop rotation. One benefit is having an early season window to plant cover crops after wheat harvest. For example, in a standard corn and soybean rotation, harvest is in early to late fall, making fall cover crop establishment a challenge. If a late harvest occurs, the cover crop planting window is even smaller. Harvesting wheat in mid to late summer opens up new opportunities for cover crop establishment.

In 2020, SHP field managers will work together to use learnings from these initial research sites to create a wheat specific SHP strategy. This will include expert advice from a working group made up of leaders in wheat science to help our program evolve to provide the most valuable data back to our wheat growers. ■



Calendar:

Washington Wheat
Foundation Meeting
June 1, 2020,
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June Shoot, **TBD**

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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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Introducing Laura Watson!

MEET THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY'S NEW DIRECTOR

At the tail end of 2019, Gov. Jay Inslee named **Laura Watson** to the director's position at the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). Previously, Watson had served as the senior assistant attorney general in the Ecology Division of the Attorney General's Office. In that position, she provided advice and representation to Ecology's 10 environmental programs and to the agency's administration.

According to a press release from the Governor's Office, Watson has advised on a wide array of environmental issues including cleanup at the Hanford nuclear site; toxics reduction strategies; protection of the state's Clean Water Act authority against federal intrusion; and options for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Watson earned her law degree from the University of Washington School of Law. She lives in West Olympia with her husband, Dan, who is a professor of mechanical engineering at St. Martin's University, and a daughter.

Watson replaced Maia Bellon who was appointed in 2013.

During their annual Olympia Days trip in January, wheat growers were able to meet with Watson and talk to her about wheat industry issues and priorities. *Wheat Life* reached out to Watson and asked her to answer some questions so readers could get to know her a little better. Here are her answers with very minor editing.

Your legal background seems to be more in social justice, not agriculture. How does that translate into leading a state regulating agency that works closely with the state's growers and producers?

People across Washington—farmers, residents, visitors—deserve clean air, water and land, which is why I see environmental protection as an important component of social justice. In order to solve social justice or environmental problems, we need to bring together a broad range of partners and ensure that we have as many minds as possible at the table coming up with solutions.

I was an assistant attorney general for the past 21 years and spent 16 of those supporting the Department of



Ecology. During that time, I worked with every environmental program and was trained well by Ecology staff on all kinds of things, including the issues affecting our agriculture community.

As I become more grounded in my role, I'll be eager to get out there and see for myself how Washington's agriculture industry operates.

What are some of the most pressing issues facing Ecology right now?

There are so many issues and ongoing needs, and the answer depends in part on what region of the state we're in. Water availability for all uses continues to be a big focus east of the Cascades, although water availability is also an issue in Western Washington. And prevention of air and water pollution is something we're always working on.

We can't face down any of these issues on our own.

As part of our effort to identify and apply practices that support healthy farms while meeting clean water standards, we've been working with the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture Advisory Group.

One key component of the guidance we're creating is to provide flexibility for growers, because we've learned from our agricultural partners that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work. Our first chapter focuses on tillage practices and residue management. Once complete, we'll use this guidance to make funding decisions and inform cleanup plans, as well as provide technical assistance, education, and outreach.

Another pressing issue, of course, is climate change. In Washington, climate change will cause increasingly significant environmental and economic destruction to our water supplies, water quality, forests and industries across the state. We need to take bold, scientifically based and economically grounded action to reduce our impact.

Climate change resiliency is also an important component of this, whether it's drought or flooding or wildfires. The recent floods in several Washington communities demonstrate the need to help prevent damage from happening, as well as provide assistance when it does occur. One way we do this is through our Floodplains by Design

program, which partners with the Nature Conservancy to fund projects that reduce flood hazards while restoring the natural functions of state rivers and their floodplains.

This program is only successful because of collaboration between tribal agencies, government agencies and private landowners. One of my top priorities is to continue supporting alliances like this.

What are your long-term goals for the agency?

Just a couple months into the position, I'm continuing to get out there and listen to industry groups and different organizations about what my focus should be. That said, here are a few areas I plan to emphasize in my role:

- Maintaining our strong existing partnerships and forming new ones.
- Communicating effectively about our work—not just what we do but why it matters in a way that everyone can understand.
- Making sure that Ecology remains a workplace of choice for environmental professionals.
- Making measurable progress on our biggest environmental challenges, including the challenges identified above.

As the leader of an agency that is tasked with enforcing regulations that can sometimes seem overly burdensome to the ag community, how do you plan to reach out and interact with the industry?

First, know that I'm here to listen. I'm fortunate to have already met with lots of farmers, ranchers and producers during my first few weeks on the job—including wheat growers—and I'm learning about the biggest issues and opportunities



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Mercedes	4,427 (1)	4,933 (1)	5,145 (1)
Plurax CL	4,397 (2)	4,708 (2)	4,959 (2)
Phoenix CL	—	4,636 (4)	4,900 (4)
PNWVT Mean	3,910	3,956	4,470
LSD (p=0.05)	285	326	287
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We approach our regulatory duty thoughtfully and carefully, because our agency's core mission isn't to enforce regulations. It's to protect, preserve and enhance the environment for current and future generations. We stand the best chance of accomplishing that mission if we all work together, and we have the technical expertise and funding to help.

I plan to get out to Walla Walla in early June for the all ag legislative tour and will have many other opportunities to interact with the agriculture community between then and now.

Do you think the Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee has achieved its goals, or is there more work to do?

It's a big priority of mine to continue with the Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee. This group provides a place for us to share and be transparent about our work at Ecology. I really believe it is helping us learn to speak each other's language, but of course, there's always more work to be done to further improve communication.

Agriculture as a whole is tremendously important to our state economy, and—as you're well aware—family wheat farms are one of the largest drivers of Eastern Washington jobs. Not to mention that all Washingtonians benefit from being able to purchase fresh, locally produced agricultural products at our grocery stores and farmers' markets. We want to continue hearing your ideas on how we can maintain this strong economy that's supported and enhanced by a beautiful, clean environment.

What do you want wheat growers to know about yourself?

I grew up in Pittsburgh and spent my early years in an urban environment, but I love the outdoors and Washington is my home. I've lived my adult life here—getting my law degree from the University of Washington and spending my entire legal career in public service.

Our daughter, Violet, who recently became a teenager, was born here. She and her generation provide me with very personal reminders of why we do what we do at Ecology. On a side note, she's also an avid baker, so we go through a lot of wheat in our household.

I look forward to getting out of Olympia to tour some of the projects unique to your regions and seeing more of the diverse landscape across our state. Know that I'm dedicated to doing all I can to maintain the positive relationships our staff has already formed with folks. We couldn't be successful in our work without these bonds. ■



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AMMO RECAP

A wild ride through weather, markets

By Trista Crossley

In February, the 2020 Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO) series continued with more traditional topics. Forty growers took advantage of the lull before spring work kicks off to attend a workshop focusing on the wild side of weather and markets.

Eric Snodgrass

Over the past century, technology has made it possible for weather forecasters to make more accurate predictions earlier, but according to Eric Snodgrass, anything beyond 20 days is just a best guess.

Snodgrass is the principal atmospheric scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, where he develops predictive, analytical software solutions to manage weather risk for global production agriculture. He kicked off his presentation by outlining what he sees as the three biggest sources of risks in agriculture: unexpected news stories that can change the trajectory of the market with no warning; the markets themselves, because they always behave in a nonlinear, chaotic way; and finally, the weather, which can change rapidly and unexpectedly, despite having tools that earlier forecasters didn't, such as satellites and computer models.

Snodgrass said that numerous studies have shown that the limits of predictability in weather forecasting are about 20 days out.

"In other words, the best observation systems, the best computing systems giving you a backyard or a field forecast with any sort of accuracy will have a limitation of about 20 days no matter what, simply because the system we are observing is a nonlinear, chaotic one," he explained.

Turning to the current weather forecast (as of mid-February) for Washington state, Snodgrass said he was initially concerned because it was very dry through December, but then the jet stream trajectory changed at the beginning of January and "hasn't let go." A large high pressure cell in the Pacific has pushed storms into the Pacific Northwest (PNW) or down through Mexico, leaving California dry for this time of the year, while Washington state is sitting at close to 100 percent of its normal snowpack.

"California is desperate. There's some good news for those folks in March, but it will not likely make up for huge deficits in rain/snow in February," Snodgrass said.



Eric Snodgrass is the principal atmospheric scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, where he develops predictive, analytical software solutions to manage weather risk for global production agriculture.

"Technically, right now on the lee side of the Cascades, we are in a first-stage drought. I'm not overly concerned about it because of how much snow we currently have in the mountains, and reservoir health looks good across the Northwest."

Expanding his view towards the north central Plains, Snodgrass said he was amazed at how much crop is still in the field, which could result in a lot of prevented planting this year if they can't get last year's crop out in time. The Midwest is likely facing compaction issues, thanks to fieldwork that took place on extremely wet soils and a lack of freezing weather to break the soil up. The southeast has been exceptionally warm and isn't getting any early fieldwork done because they've gotten so much rain.

"What that does to our markets, we'll have to wait and see," he said.

Snodgrass is working on a system, using some of the same algorithms used by Netflix and Amazon to suggest user recommendations, that will allow him to identify and weight weather features around the world to know how the weather here will change beyond 10 days. He believes

one of the most important global features to pay attention to is how fast the atmosphere is rotating relative to the earth's rotation. That speed determines how "wavy" the jet stream is. He said the atmosphere's rotation was very fast through January, which brought moisture-laden storms across the PNW, but has been slowing down, resulting in drier weather at the beginning of March.

Looking farther into the year, Snodgrass says one of the things limiting projections is that there are no indications of either an El Niño or a La Niña.

"We've been jokingly calling it La Nada this year," he said. "There's an argument to be made that even through early summer, we won't have a strong signal either way. I would love it if there was a big El Niño or La Niña. It's this massive disrupter that I can use as the main thing to change the pattern."

Snodgrass said the Midwest is already set up to have spring flooding problems, and he's been telling Midwestern farmers to watch Alaska, watch weather in the PNW and watch temperatures in the Pacific Ocean.

"If the Midwest is going to have heat, you are not, which means we are going to watch ocean temperatures up into the Gulf of Alaska. If they are cool, we (the Midwest) are baking, and you are having a cool summer. That is the pattern we are going to watch," he explained.



Kevin Duling is co-founder and manager of KD Investors, a consulting firm dealing with the marketing of grain. While KD Investors is based in Oregon, Duling works with clients throughout the U.S., Canada and Australia.

Snodgrass produces a daily weather forecast for Nutrien Ag Solutions, which can be accessed at youtube.com/channel/UCU48qpBvX4mJAvZ1Hmi9rCw. He also does a weekly special report for Northwest Farm Credit Services at northwestfcs.com/en/Resources/weather-insights.

Kevin Duling

Kevin Duling's AMMO take-home message for growers was simple: prediction in the markets isn't possible, so why try? Instead, he recommended talking to buyers and developing flexible tools to be able to move when/if information becomes available.

Duling is co-founder and manager of KD Investors, a consulting firm dealing with the marketing of grain. While KD Investors is based in Oregon, Duling works with clients throughout the U.S., Canada and Australia.

Duling began his presentation by inventorying world wheat stocks. Leaving China out of the picture, he said, things look tight. Besides the U.S., the other major wheat exporters—Canada, Australia, Argentina, EU, Black Sea Region—are all likely to run out of wheat to export in June. The U.S. (at the time of his presentation) is projected to have approximately 25.6 million metric tons left in June.

"That just leaves us. Out of all the six exporters, we are the only one left with any stocks to export," he said, adding that when broken down by variety, Dark Northern Spring and hard red winter will be most plentiful, while white wheat will be fairly snug and soft red wheat will be almost nonexistent.

Some of the bearish forces impacting the market are the strength of the dollar; the possibility that India may become a wheat exporter; fear headlines; and the coronavirus. Bullish forces include the China Phase One trade deal and the cash basis in wheat/corn.

"The dollar is one of the biggest headwinds we have. This means more to us than all the supply and demand stuff we like to talk about," Duling said, showing a dollar index chart. "Technically it looks bearish, but in the meantime, we have a record strong dollar against a lot of our competing currencies, and that's killing us."

For growers who need to get rid of old crop, Duling said there is really only two potential windows left—one in March when importers book final 2019 crop shipments and one in late spring as Portland fills boats for final 2019 shipments. He believes that if China moves forward with buying commodities as outlined in the Phase One deal, they will be buying new crop.

Looking forward to new crop implications, Duling pointed out that:

- Russian wheat acreage is up slightly;

- EU acreage is down;
- Argentina acreage will drop;
- Australia is due for a normal-to-large crop;
- U.S. acreage is down in hard red winter areas; and
- India is on track to become an exporter of 10 to 15 million metric tons.

For positioning on new crop, Duling recommended that growers consider hedge-to-arrive (HTA) contracts, especially if China becomes a buyer of soft white wheat; work with your buyers to understand what tools they have available; and look for a sales window between harvest and late January. However, growers should keep an eye on the Russian wheat crop. Their wheat forecast is for a record 85 million metric tons, but they are sitting at 30 percent of their normal soil moisture. Wheat prices will depend on that Russian crop.

"Unless Russia has a drought, there won't be a good sales window from August to January," Duling said. "Now, they are dry. They are going to be living on the edge of rain, and if they get it, we are going lower. If they don't, I think we can go \$3 up based on all those exporters and what stocks they have left. There's no room for error."

Duling's final advice to growers included:

- Use HTAs, cash sales and put options to establish a long-term, multicrop year, flexible floor when the market presents a profitable outcome;
- Learn your buyer's tools so when the time comes, you know what you can do;
- Set profit targets so you know when to act; and
- Know the computer/algorithm trade is not going away.

More information on KD Investors can be found at kdinvestors.com. ■

The 2020 Wheat College is currently scheduled for June 16 at the Wheat Land Community Fairgrounds in Ritzville. "Real Agriculture" agronomist and podcast host Peter Johnson, also known as Wheat Pete, is scheduled to talk about maximizing yields. Corteva Agriscience will be discussing nitrogen stabilization and WSU Extension will present on topics yet to be determined. Watch wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ for information.

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AMMO RECAP

A quick trip through QuickBooks

By Trista Crossley

The last Agricultural Marketing and Management session of the 2020 winter series was an accounting of the popular financial software program, QuickBooks.

Presenter Cassi Johnson, a financial consultant and QuickBooks super user, gave growers tips and tricks to increase their productivity when using the software and answered growers' questions. Everyone, no matter their level of experience with QuickBooks, walked away with something useful. Johnson has practical experience using QuickBooks in an agricultural setting—she is part of a multigeneration ranching family in Oregon.

"In all my classes and sessions, people will see I share a lot of family stories and struggles and real life experiences because I find people generally don't want to talk about private things, and I want my participants to know that their struggles aren't unique, and they are not alone," she said after the session. "Not everybody is experienced in bookkeeping and QuickBooks, and nobody loves to do bookkeeping. We didn't get in this business to do that. We got in it to raise crops and livestock and be outdoors. I hope growers get out of my session that somebody like me who may know a little more about QuickBooks still isn't perfect and still has the same struggles they have. It's all a work in progress."

For beginners, Johnson had three recommendations. First, start with the basics: writing checks, entering deposits and setting up a chart of accounts. Next use any and all tools available to learn more, from taking classes to watching YouTube videos, and finally, don't be afraid to reach out to someone for a little help.

For more advanced users, Johnson said it's possible to get so detailed that tracking financials becomes hard to keep up with and accuracy can become compromised.

"You are never too old to learn something new," she said. "Don't be afraid to do continuing education. QuickBooks is always adding new features. There's always tips and tricks we can pick up to make life easier."

Here are some of the QuickBooks tips Johnson shared in her presentation.

Setting up the home screen. Users can customize their shortcuts bar so the items they use most are quickly available, even reports. Users can also rearrange the shortcuts bar so the most accessed items are at the top.

Chart of accounts. The basis to any good reporting and



Cassi Johnson is a financial consultant and QuickBooks super user. During her Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization workshop, she gave growers tips and tricks to increase their productivity when using the software.

retrieval of useful information is figuring out an effective chart of accounts, which should mirror main sales points and expenses, such as crop sales and crop expenses. You can also use subaccounts.

"All of these are going to differ between everybody because it depends on what you want out of it. Are you going to go back and look at exactly how much you spent on protein tubs? How much you spent on hay? How much you spent on minerals? Or are you going to just look at total supplements?" she asked. "It's completely dependent on what you are going to do. If you aren't going to go back and look at that, don't do it. It's just making more work for yourself."

Classes. Johnson uses classes and subclasses to help segregate her family's enterprises and more easily track expenses and income. For example, in a wheat and cow operation, a user could set up wheat and cows as separate classes, and then subclasses under cows, such as cow/calf and finishing. But Johnson cautioned against overusing subclasses. ▶

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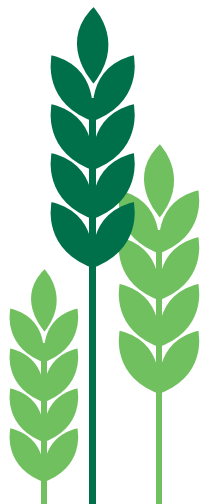
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“At some point, it can get so detailed that it’s not even accurate, and you’re going to sit there and beat your head against the wall. Don’t make it harder than it has to be,” she said. “My end product and goal is that I can do a profit and loss by class. I can get the information out to make better choices. Always think very practically. Money in and money out. Keep it basic.”

If a user has too many classes or old classes they wish to remove, they should be marked as inactive rather than deleted. That way, the information from the past is still available, but going forward, that class won’t be an option to use or include in reports.

Custom fields. These can be added to accounts so users can track additional information. Custom fields can be included in reports.

Notes. Notes can be attached to just about anything. Some of the examples Johnson gave were to scan a receipt and attach it to a check, attach a contract to a vendor or attach an annual review or updated W-4 to an employee’s account.

Transfers. Johnson recommended using the transfer function to transfer funds between accounts, such as when drawing funds from your operating loan to your checking account, so it doesn’t mess up the profit and loss statement.

Invoicing. Users can use invoicing to track payments received and outstanding balances for customers. QuickBooks provides invoice templates that can be easily customized. Most versions of QuickBooks can also talk to a user’s email program and email invoices directly from the software.

Reports. Johnson gave a list of the QuickBooks reports she finds most useful:

- Standard profit and loss report;
- Standard balance sheet report;
- Budget vs. actual report;
- Payroll summary; and
- If using classes, profit and loss by class.

Besides offering QuickBooks consulting services, Johnson is also a loan officer for Pacific Intermountain Mortgage Company. Her company, 3 Bar Consulting, can be found at 3barconsulting.com. ■

The 2020 Wheat College is currently scheduled for June 16 at the Wheat Land Community Fairgrounds in Ritzville. “Real Agriculture” agronomist and podcast host Peter Johnson, also known as Wheat Pete, is scheduled to talk about maximizing yields. Corteva Agriscience will be discussing nitrogen stabilization and WSU Extension will present on topics yet to be determined. Watch wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ for more information.



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National wheat yield contest opens for grower enrollment

The National Wheat Foundation (NWF) is pleased to announce that it is accepting grower enrollment for the 2020 National Wheat Yield Contest! The contest is divided into two primary competition categories: winter wheat and spring wheat, and two subcategories: dryland and irrigated.

The Foundation is accepting entries for winter and spring wheat. The deadline for winter wheat entries is May 15. The spring wheat entry deadline is Aug. 1, with an early registration deadline of June 15.

"Now in its fifth year, we hope to make the National Wheat Yield Contest its most successful yet. We anticipate breaking our record of eligible entries and for the quality criteria to continue to make the contest more competitive," stated NWF board president and Idaho wheat grower Wayne Hurst. "Again,

the National Wheat Foundation would like to thank our sponsors for helping to make the contest available to all wheat growers across the U.S."

The 2020 National Wheat Yield Contest sponsors include AgriMaxx, Ardent Mills, BASF, Corteva Agriscience, CROPLAN® by WinField United, Grain Craft, John Deere, Miller Milling, Syngenta and WestBred. ■

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Six generations of wheat farming

Jeff Emtman, WAWG past president 2004/05

By Kevin Gaffney

One thing all wheat farmers have in common is that Mother Nature is always in charge. Some years it is more evident than others, but it is an immutable fact of farm life.

So why do farmers choose this lifelong challenge?

"I love working with my family," explained **Jeff Emtman**. "Farming allows you to try new methods or different crops and see what will happen. You can adopt practices to better conserve your soil resources. You can make changes to increase productivity and profitability. The main drawback is that you have to wait a whole year before you really find out whether something new will work out well or not."

The farm operation currently employs three generations of Emtmans. Jeff's father, Roy, now in his eighties, brothers Jeff and Randy and Jeff's nephew, Greg, all share duties. The farm was homesteaded in 1887 by Roy's grandfather who came to southeastern Spokane County via New York and California.

Jeff Emtman was raised near Valleyford and attended Freeman schools. After graduating from Freeman High School, he earned his ag economics degree at Washington State University in 1992. He returned to the family farm after college.

Their farm operation is a combination of minimum tillage and direct seeding. They began experimenting with no-till farming in the 1970s, converting more fully in the 1990s.

Like most farm operations, they farm their own land and have several farm leases. They farm within a 20-mile radius from the home place, located west of Valleyford. They



farm ground near Waverly and have acreage in Idaho. With moisture ranging from 18 to 26 inches, they have the latitude to raise a variety of crops.

Before burning became impracticable, they raised a lot of bluegrass. They now raise Timothy hay, alfalfa and some bluegrass. Rounding out their crops are wheat, canola and winter green peas. They usually begin their fall seeding in late September, sometimes dusting it in and waiting for fall rains to germinate the seed.

Their farm has been affected by urban growth.

"We are careful with all ground spraying and very rarely use aerial application on the farm," said Emtman. "We are very cognizant of being good stewards of the land for our nonfarming neighbors.

"Population growth and outside investors making land purchases have increased farmland values in our area," he said. "Another challenge is moving equipment from farm to farm. So many folks on the road are in a big hurry and seem to lack patience with the movement of farm machinery."

The Emtmans utilize precision ag in their operation, including GPS auto-steer for seeding, spraying and fertilizing. Their farms are divided into fertility zones to help determine seeding and fertilizing rates. Yield monitor data from their combines provides precise calculations for each field unit.

They run CaseIH red on their farm with two 8250 combines with 40-foot headers. Their tractor fleet includes one Quad-Trac and wheel tractors. During

harvest, they use a grain cart and semitrucks to haul in the crops.

Having several years of experience with the Farm Bureau, Emtman was a natural to be drafted into the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) leadership. He was encouraged by WAWG leaders Perry Dozier and Bruce Nelson.

"I think they looked at me as a single guy who would be able to put in the time, and as someone with the skills to effectively handle the job," said Emtman. "They put in my name, and suddenly, I was the secretary-treasurer."

Ironically, two of the biggest issues facing WAWG during Emtman's run through the chairs are familiar today: the farm bill and saving the Snake River dams.

"As WAWG is still doing effectively, we lobbied in Olympia and Washington, D.C. Some things never seem to change. Other big issues now include the potential loss of important herbicides and fungicides. Again, state and national legislators need to be educated and informed about agriculture. It seems to be a never-ending cycle.

"Education of the general public about what farmers do to produce the food we all need is an ongoing effort. There is a real lack of knowl-



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edge about how we raise food for our people and for the world. It just seems as though our society has become complacent about where their food comes from."

Looking to the future, Emtman believes rising costs of equipment and input costs will continue to be a hardship.

"Over the past decade, the price of a combine has nearly doubled, but the productivity of the machine has not increased proportionately," noted Emtman. "At the same time, we are still looking at \$5 wheat. We all look to cut costs where we can. Using minimum tillage helps, but at some point, we need the price of wheat to increase."

Emtman and his wife, Jessica, have three sons, ages 12, 9 and 5. Family life keeps him plenty busy when he's not on the tractor or in the shop. And if all that is not enough, they also have a 100-head cow-calf operation on the farm.

"It's a good thing I served as WAWG president when I did, because I wouldn't have the time to put into the job like I did back then," he said. ■

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

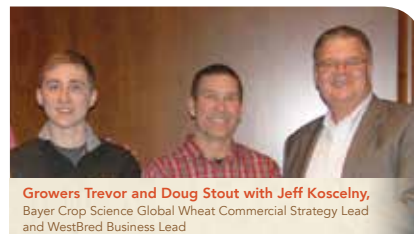
When it comes to growing wheat, Doug and Trevor Stout have the resilience to get the job done right. The father-son duo have taken top honors in the National Wheat Foundation's National Wheat Yield Contest three years in a row — and they've done so with WestBred® wheat varieties.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Overcoming Challenges

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

WestBred

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Bruce Nelson, Whitman County Farmer

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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



On Feb. 28, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) released the draft environmental impact statement covering the 14 federal dams and reservoirs in Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington known as the Columbia River System. More than 30 entities from across the region, including tribes, federal agencies and state and local governments, participated in the study. After six alternatives were studied, basically ranging from do nothing to tearing out the lower Snake River dams, a preferred alternative was developed.

Coming four years after Portland District Judge Michael Simon ordered the review and following months of anxiety about what it would say, I was pleased that the same arguments used by Eastern Washington's wheat industry in support of the dams correlated with the preferred alternative cited in the report.

But then I read the comments of those who advocate breaching, and I realized that we may have won another battle, but the war goes on. Hopefully, you're reading this before the April 13, 2020, deadline to submit comments concerning the study. I urge all of you to take 15 minutes out of your life to compose a letter about what our river system means to you.

That includes those Eastern Washington farmers who never ship on the river. Losing our river mode of transportation would mean higher shipping rates for everyone—a raise of 10-33 percent. But based on what happens to captive shippers elsewhere, I'm guessing it would be towards the higher end. Comments can be submitted online at comments.crso.info. Letters can be addressed to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn CRSO EIS, PO Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870.

It's not just me that's skeptical that this latest EIS won't be the last word on river operations. The authors of the report said themselves it "is not expected to end the regional debate on the future of the four lower Snake River dams. On the contrary, (it) provides information and analysis to inform that future dialog."

From reading comments from the pro-breaching community, I don't think they're waving the white flag. Giulia Good Stefani, a Natural Resources Defense Council attorney, said, "Modest tweaks to dam operations will leave Columbia Basin salmon and orcas at serious risk of extinction." Tom France, Pacific Northwest regional director of the National Wildlife Federation, also brought up the specter of extinction. The Center for Biological Diversity is seeking a million signatures from

supporters of removing the dams.

I'm pleased to discover that when all is said and done, science really does prevail. Advocates pro and con can say what they want, but the decision in this report came down to what scientists discovered through months of what I'm sure was tedious analysis of every aspect of the river system and its impact on endangered salmon.

After all that work, the authors recommended against breaching the four dams on the lower Snake River because it would cost too much and do more harm than good. Specifically, it said breaching would make the Northwest more vulnerable to power blackouts, raise electric rates and hike farmers' production costs, all while increasing greenhouse gases due to the loss of barge transportation.

The report did make suggestions for improving salmon runs including modifying fish-passage structures at some locations. It also said that spilling more water over dams could benefit salmon and steelhead in the Lower Columbia and Snake rivers, while only marginally increasing BPA's operating costs.

If there is common ground between dam breachers and supporters of the Snake River dams, it is that we all want to save our iconic Northwest salmon, as well as the orca whales. I just happen to believe the dams and the salmon can co-exist. We support efforts to improve fish passage, increase hatchery production, reduce predation by seals and terns and clean up environmental problems that exist in the Puget Sound region. The extensive EIS lays the groundwork for better fish returns while maintaining the transportation system so important to the wheat industry.

The latest report represents a lot of hard work, and certainly the result that shows dam breaching is not the preferred alternative is welcome news. It is appropriate to pause and thank the three federal agencies and the dedicated people who impartially evaluated the facts in the report. I'd also like to acknowledge the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association and its director, Kristin Meira, not to mention our own CEO, Glen Squires, who has pursued this issue relentlessly from Portland to Washington, D.C.

This is not the time, however, to become complacent. It is clear that our adversaries will never give up, and neither should we. Please, take some time and write out a message about your support for our river system and submit it online or mail it to the address above. ■

Dams already a model of fish recovery success

By Joe Bippert

After years of study and millions of dollars spent, a draft federal environment impact statement (EIS) on hydroelectric dam operations in the Columbia Basin is being debated. Public comments addressing the draft will be received until April 13.

The latest iteration is the sixth time federal agencies have attempted to come up with an operations plan that meets the requirements of the Endangered Species Act to protect salmon, first listed in the early 1990s. Each plan has been met with litigation from groups that want to remove dams. With comments emerging from the pro-breacher community that the current report is “wholly inadequate” and “the same meal with more garnish,” it is expected the same litany of lawsuits will be forthcoming when the report is finalized in September.

The authors of the report, which included staff from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration and the Bureau of Reclamation, expect as much. Far from resolving the issue of dam breaching on the lower Snake River, the EIS is expected to “inform future dialog.”

Although the report concludes that dam breaching would have long-term benefits to fish in the Snake River because of improved rearing and migration

conditions, the number of salmon that would survive and return to spawn is difficult to estimate because of the close correlation between ocean conditions and salmon survival.

What caused the decline?

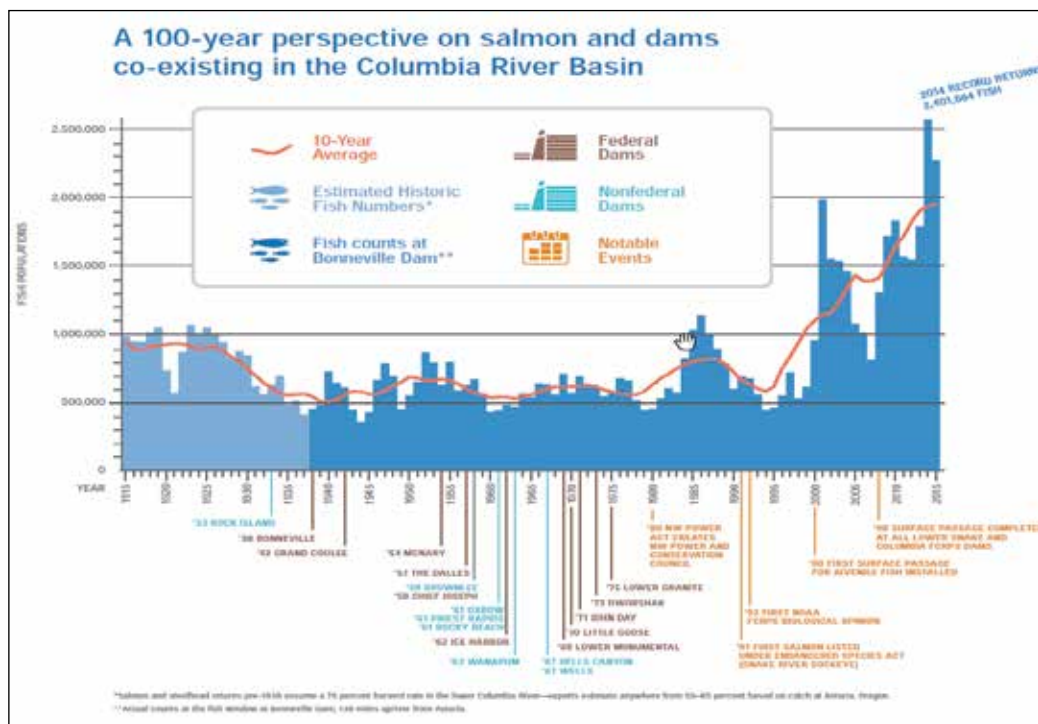
During the 1800s, several manmade factors began to decimate Northwest fish runs including:

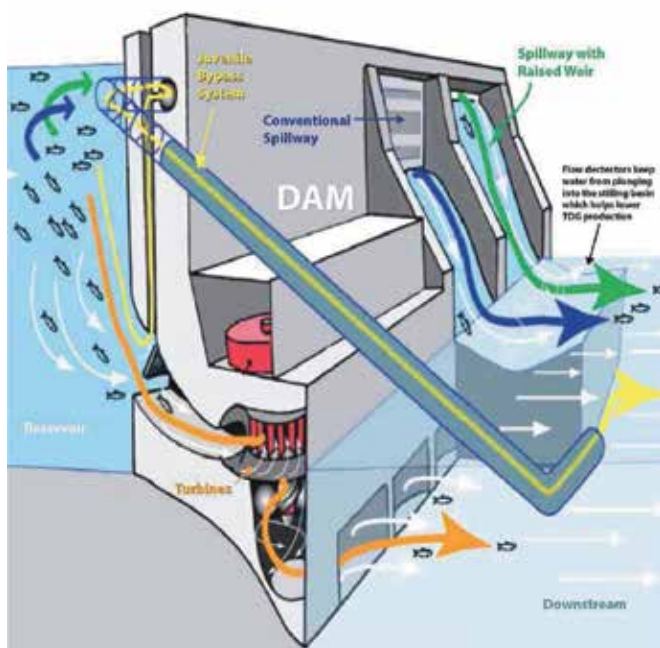
- Overfishing. Columbia River cannery operations grew from one cannery in 1866 to more than 50 by 1900;
- Pollution and silting from mining operations;
- Habitat destruction from logging; and
- Numerous private and public dams that cut access to traditional fish spawning grounds, none of which had fish ladders to help with passage to spawning grounds

It is also acknowledged that construction of federal dams from 1938 to 1975 contributed to the decline of Northwest fish populations. In 1991, the Snake River Sockeye salmon was listed under the Endangered Species Act with more species to follow.

The four “H”s of fish survival

Biologists use four broad categories to define human impacts on wild fish.





and their environment. Specifically, they are harvest, habitat, hydro and hatcheries. While the specific details vary, the bottom line is that wherever there is overharvest, habitat degradation, hydroelectric dams and the widespread use of production hatcheries, wild fish populations will be impacted.

Efforts to improve fish populations throughout their native range must look at all four Hs in order to determine how to best support fish survival.

While human activities caused significant declines in salmon abundance starting in the 1800s, particularly salmon habitat loss, the last 50 years have seen huge gains in salmon numbers due to supplemental hatchery production, enhanced fish passage, habitat restoration and harvest limits.

A turning point

In 1995, a turning point for fish survival in the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) occurred when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a Biological Opinion for the 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. In 2000, the first surface passage for juvenile fish was installed, which immediately saw significant increases in fish populations.

By 2008, surface passage was completed at all lower Snake River and Columbia FCRPS dams with 2.4 million fish returning in 2014, the largest return in 100 years. While good news, this is still a long way from 6 million fish of the 1800s.

The way forward

The preferred alternative of the draft EIS released Feb.

28, 2020, seeks to balance the river system's goals while testing whether increased spills would improve fish runs. Improving fish habitat is also a focus, such as the water-cooling systems developed by district scientists, biologists and engineers at Lower Granite and Little Goose dams.

While only 7 percent of fish move through the dam turbines that generate electricity, manufacturing and installation of new "fish-friendly" turbines are underway. Each improvement at the dams incrementally increases the survival rate of fish. Taken together, the accumulation of improvements result in a larger overall gain.

Modified spillway weirs, which provide passage for about 37 percent of the fish moving downriver, are from a shallower portion of the watercourse, which the fish prefer as it is less turbulent, thus reducing fish disorientation and susceptibility to predation and injury. As a result, fish survival rates past each of the eight federal dams on the system are between 95 and 97 percent.

Today, the Columbia and Snake rivers produce most of the wild and hatchery Chinook salmon on the West Coast with the highest survival rate thanks to the dams' focus on fish passage. While Snake/Columbia River salmon populations are increasing (even with dams), salmon in other critical areas such as the Puget Sound and even the Frazer River in Canada, which has no dams, are slowly declining over time according to NOAA. The difference? Dedicated fish passage on dams along the Snake and Columbia rivers.

The Independent Scientific Advisory Board, a panel of scientists that advises the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, concluded in 2015 that the Columbia and Snake rivers may now produce more juvenile salmon than occurred prior to dams and human development, if hatchery fish are included.

While ocean conditions impact salmon survival to adulthood, data indicates that improved passage methods through dams have resulted in more juvenile fish getting to the ocean. All this while still providing clean, reliable energy for 5 million homes; flood risk management for millions of residents across the state; irrigation for agricultural land vital to our state's economy; and 500 miles of fuel-efficient, lowest carbon-emission transportation for hard-working farmers.

The Washington Grain Commission supports the Pacific Northwest's congressionally mandated multi-use river systems benefits of the Columbia-Snake River System. Further, the commission endorses practices and technologies that will continue to increase the population and survival rate of fish passing through the system. ■

Quality takes center stage

PREFERRED VARIETY BROCHURE RANKINGS SEND MESSAGE

Eight new soft white wheat varieties made their debut in the 2020 Preferred Wheat Variety Brochure (PVB), all ranking in the most desirable or desirable categories.

Doug Engle, cultivar development manager at the Western Wheat Quality Lab in Pullman, said it's clear that private companies, which entered the state beginning in the early 2000s, have gotten the message that "quality is important and sells wheat in our region."

The most desirable ranking characterizes varieties which have milling and baking quality profiles that are much better than the average wheat crop delivered in the region. For mills, that may mean better extraction rates increasing profit margins and for bakeries, higher value, consistent products that customers seek.

The genesis of the Preferred Wheat Variety Brochure started more than 20 years ago when what was then the Washington Wheat Commission (WGC) began funding the G & E study, short for Genotype and the Environment. Most of the quality differences found in a particular variety are the result of genes, but the environment, that is, the wheat plant's growing conditions, also matter.

Putting out a list of quality cultivars came next. Washington was the first state in the U.S. to rank varieties for quality. Oregon later joined the effort, and Idaho varieties released in the panhandle of the state are also included.

Six components are used in evaluating quality. Ten percent of the score is assigned to a variety's test weight and protein, while milling attributes receive 30 percent of the focus. The heavy hitter is end-use functionality, where 60 percent of a variety's score is assigned. But there is a political message involved in the rankings as well.

Scott Yates, director of communications and producer relations at the WGC, helps wrangle the quality information into the brochure. He said the PVB is an unsurpassed marketing tool for the Pacific Northwest.

"During the trade team season, hundreds of these quality brochures are distributed to visiting millers, bakers and government officials. For those receiving it for the first time, the brochure is a revelation. They are amazed to discover the Northwest doesn't just talk wheat quality, we actually do something about it," Yates said.

While only a handful of varieties are grown on the majority of PNW wheat ground, Engle argues that in a region with such diverse growing seasons and microclimates, having a wide palate of varieties available is valuable. First, because there is always the need to look for the next lead actor in the play, and second, because the current lead actor will always succumb to something during its run.

"While other states are working to create PVBs for their state or region, we have an historic track record and a message in the Pacific Northwest that resonates with our customers," Yates said. "Private breeding companies and even university programs pushed back at first, but now, they understand that to release varieties here, quality has to be part of the package." ■

Copies of the 2020 Preferred Variety Brochure are available at seed dealers, elevator companies and at the Washington Grain Commission website at wagains.org.

2020 Quality Rankings

Varieties are listed by statistical quality rankings by class. When making a decision between varieties with similar agronomic characteristics and grain yield potential, choose the variety with the higher quality ranking. This will help to increase the overall quality and desirability of Pacific Northwest (PNW) wheat.

Most Desirable (MD)—These varieties generally have high test weights, appropriate protein content (kernel properties), and excellent milling and end-use properties.

Desirable (D)—The kernel, milling, and end-use qualities of these varieties range from good to very good. The quality attributes of these varieties are desirable in international trade.

Acceptable (A)—The kernel, milling, and end-use qualities of these varieties range from acceptable to good. Individual varieties may possess minor flaws. The quality attributes of these varieties are acceptable in international trade.

Least Desirable (LD)—These varieties have displayed low quality characteristics for this class of wheat. The intrinsic quality of PNW wheat will be improved if these varieties are not planted.

Unacceptable Except Customer-Specific Uses (UCS)—One or more critical flaws in quality are present in these varieties and will not make suitable products for this class of wheat. Production of these varieties should be targeted to specific end-uses and kept strictly segregated from general commercial channels.

SOFT WHITE WINTER

VI Frost	LCS/UI	MD
Bobtail	OSU	MD
UI Castle CL+	UI	MD
Brundage96	UI	MD
Kaseberg	OSU	MD
LCS Shine	LCS	MD
Jasper	WSU	MD
Bruneau	UI	MD
LCS Ghost	LCS	MD
UI Palouse CL+	UI	MD
Nixon	OSU	MD
Puma	WSU	MD
UI WSU Huffman	UI	MD
ARS-Selbu	ARS	D
VI Bulldog	LCS/UI	D
SY Command	AP/SY	D
LCS Biancor	LCS	D

UI Magic CL+	UI	D
Devote	WSU	D
Mary	OSU	D
LCS Shark	LCS	D
SY Ovation	AP/SY	D
LCS Drive	LCS	D
Skiles	OSU	D
WB 523	WB	D
UI Sparrow	UI	D
Eltan	WSU	D
SY Dayton	AP/SY	D
SY Raptor	AP/SY	D
Norwest Duet	OSU/LCS	D
Otto	WSU	D
WB-528	WB	D
Resilience CL+	WSU	D
Stephens	OSU	D
ORCF101	OSU	D
LCS Hulk	LCS	A
SY Assure	AP/SY	A
Purl	WSU	A
ORCF103	OSU	A
LCS Artdeco	LCS	A
Madsen	ARS	A
WB1604	WB	A
Mela CL+	WSU	A
Curiosity CL+	WSU	A
WB-1070CL	WB	A
Rosalyn	OSU	A
Norwest Tandem	OSU/LCS	A
ORCF102	OSU	A
WB1529	WB	A
WB-1066CL	WB	A
WB 456	WB	A
WB1376CLP	WB	LD
Xerpha	WSU	LD
SY Banks	AP/SY	LD
WB1783	WB	LD

HARD RED WINTER

WB4623CLP	WB	MD
Whetstone	AP/SY	MD
UI SRG	UI	MD
Norwest 553	OSU	D
LCS Rocket	LCS	D
SY Clearstone	AP/SY	D
AP503 CL2	AP/SY	D
Farnum	WSU	D
LCS Evina	LCS	D
Sequoia	WSU	D
LCS Jet	LCS	A
Keldin	WB	A
LCS Zoom	LCS	A
Esperia	Societa Produttori Sementi Spa	A
SY Touchstone	AP/SY	LD
Residence	Cebeco	UCS
Estica	Cebeco	UCS
Symphony	Tanio Tech	UCS

HARD RED SPRING

Hollis	WSU	MD
SY605 CL	AP/SY	MD
Alum	WSU	MD
SY Coho	AP/SY	MD
SY Selway	AP/SY	MD
Glee	WSU	MD
Chet	WSU	MD
LCS Luna	LCS	MD
Net CL+	WSU	D
LCS Iron	LCS	D
WB9411	WB	D
WB9668	WB	D
WB9229	WB	D
Kelse	WSU	D
Jefferson	UI	D
AP Renegade	AP/SY	D
SY Gunsight	AP/SY	D
WB9518	WB	D
WB9879CLP	WB	A
Buck Pronto	LCS	A

SOFT WHITE SPRING

Tekoa	WSU	MD
UI Stone	UI	MD
Diva	WSU	MD
WB6341	WB	MD
Louise	WSU	MD
SY Saltese	AP/SY	MD
Alturas	UI	MD
Ryan	WSU	MD
Whit	WSU	MD
Seahawk	WSU	MD
Babe	WSU	MD
WB6121	WB	D
WB-1035CL+	WB	UCS

HARD WHITE WINTER¹

UI Silver	UI	MD
Earl	WSU	A

HARD WHITE SPRING¹

UI Platinum	UI	MD
WB Hartline	WB	D
Dayn	WSU	D

CLUB

ARS Castella	ARS	MD
ARS Crescent	ARS	MD
Cara	ARS	MD
ARS Pritchett	ARS	D
Bruehl	WSU	D

SPRING CLUB

Melba	WSU	MD
JD	WSU	MD

AP/SY AgriPro/Syngenta
ARS Agricultural Research Service
LCS Limagrain Cereal Seeds

OSU Oregon State University
UI University of Idaho
WB WestBred/Bayer

WSU Washington State University

¹Hard white wheats are scored for export quality requirements such as bread quality and potential noodle quality.

Technically speaking

SUPPORT IS THE LODE STAR OF PNW WHEAT PROMOTION

By Joe Bippert

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and if you haven't already, visit their commemorative website at ourstory.uswheat.org. There, you'll learn more about the legacy of USW's commitment to the industry and our customers—and find a feature on Washington Grain Commission (WGC) Chairman Gary Bailey's farm.

At the beginning of USW's 40th anniversary page is the statement, "A story of partnership, commitment and service for 40 years." We often use an image of a puzzle in presentations to our customers in order to illustrate how the quality of our relationships is part of the success of our industry. Over the years, the WGC has been a leader in our industry's efforts to contribute to the "story of partnership, commitment and service."

In 2017, USW surveyed its employees to identify opportunities for increased funding. This initiative came at a time when there was little hope of that happening as federal Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) funds, the lifeblood of USW, were at their lowest point in 12 years.

USW staff agreed that the top category for investment was to increase technical staff and programs. Another top category was more end-product seminars or "short courses." This emphasis on technical support is strongly supported by the states. In fact, the three Pacific Northwest (PNW) states earmarked shared funding for additional technical assistance in 2013 and again during a 2018 meeting at the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention.

For years, the WGC, along with the other member-states, have been advocating for a doubling of MAP and FMD funds in order to give USW the resources they need to help our industry continue to thrive in a highly competitive marketplace. Although funding earmarked for those programs has remained static, President Trump's decision to aid U.S. agriculture during the recent tariff war with China made an additional \$10.9 million available to USW over



Overseas bakers regularly attend soft white wheat cracker courses sponsored by U.S. Wheat Associates at the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Ore.

four years. The Agricultural Trade Promotion program funds began flowing to USW in 2019 for various marketing initiatives, a portion of which went to strengthen the organization's technical team.

Technical staff and programs

U.S. Wheat's Vice President of Global Technical Services, Mark Fowler, has said, "Technical support adds differential value to the reliable supply of U.S. wheat. 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."

The value of technical staff and programs has been especially noteworthy in South Asian countries, where the Philippines and Thailand have emerged among the top markets for PNW wheat. The WGC has partnered with USW to fund courses that help customers gain value from U.S. wheat by identifying grain grades and



specification on purchasing contracts, as well as milling and baking training designed to highlight wheat classes grown by American farmers.

As Latin America has emerged as a growing region for PNW wheat, the same kind of long-term investment is needed in order to capture additional market share from our competitors. To accomplish the gains necessary, PNW commissions jointly funded activities for a milling technician in South America. USW was able to leverage our grower dollars to hire Andrés Saturno, who has already made waves in the region.

In the short time that Saturno has been on board, he has provided technical services in key markets, which has accelerated gains in the region. He has also been working with Marcelo Mitre, USW's technical specialist in Mexico, on a cross-regional project that utilized two containers of soft white wheat purchased by the WGC and sent to Costa Rica. There, Mitre and Saturno helped a mill and bakery adjust their production processes to utilize soft white in their bread and cracker production.

This summer, the WGC will follow up, funding a team of exporters to Latin America to introduce them to buyers now looking at long-term purchases of PNW wheat.

End-product seminars

While on-the-ground technical support is essential, it is not feasible to address every technical issue two containers at a time. That is where the Portland-based Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) comes in.

The WMC provides scientific expertise that answers questions, solves problems and increases the profitability of the U.S. wheat industry. Both the WGC and USW support the WMC to provide technical training to key customers. Examples of courses include:

- Cracker training;
- Asian noodle technology;
- Contracting for wheat value workshops; and
- Whole wheat baking study team.

Courses such as these and others provide value for key customers and create demand for our wheat. These courses have been successful in the adoption of new flour blends for Asian noodles, as well as proving the viability of soft white wheat in crackers for Latin America.

Beyond leveraging federal dollars

The WGC believes that our relationship with USW and other partners such as the WMC goes beyond using grower assessment dollars to leverage federal funding through MAP and FMD. If we are to continue to capture market share from our competitors, our industry needs to be out in front in

Meet USW's technical staff

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) has been highlighting its technical prowess with articles on the team of experts it employs around the world. *Wheat Life* has been publishing the articles as they become available.

You can find the most recent article on Shin Hak "David" Oh, who serves the North Asian region of USW in the March edition of *Wheat Life*. A feature on Tarik Gahi, who serves the Middle East North Africa region, appeared in the December 2019 issue. An article featuring Marcelo Mitre, who serves Latin America from a Mexico City base, can be found in the July 2019 issue. Peter Lloyd's contribution to the industry from his Morocco base can be found in the May 2019 issue. And background and interests on the Malaysian born Kong Song "Ivan" Goh, can be found in the March 2019 issue.

All previous issues of *Wheat Life* can be found at the website, wheatlife.org. ■

the level of service we provide to our customers. For that, the WGC continues to put a priority on long-term investments that will provide increased profitability for our growers for years to come. ■



New barley breeder touts malt barley

WSU Malt Quality Lab established with WGC funds

By Bob Brueggeman

Barley was an important small grain cereal crop grown on large acreage in Washington state until just over a decade ago. The grain back then was targeted for domestic and overseas feed markets, hence the barley breeding program at Washington State University (WSU) has historically been focused on high yielding feed varieties.

As advanced breeding and biotech corn varieties were developed by private industry (coupled by the end of U.S. export programs), corn acreage exploded in the Midwest, supplanting the need and the market for barley as an animal feed. Thus, feed barley prices dropped, and acreage in Washington declined as prices of more profitable alternative crops were grown or farmers went to wheat after wheat rotations.

An important class of barley that can never be displaced and brings the producer a premium price is malting barley. Used in beer and spirits production, malt barley is a multibillion, value-added industry in the U.S.

That's why, as the new Robert A. Nilan endowed chair of barley research and the barley breeder at WSU, the main focus of my program will be the development of malting barley varieties that are adapted to Eastern Washington's diverse dryland growing conditions. But I'm not starting from ground zero.

More than a decade ago, Steve Ulrich and Kevin Murphy, who held the barley breeding position before me, started making crosses from Canadian and Midwestern



Bob Brueggeman, who was recently hired as the R.A. Nilan Endowed Chair in Barley at Washington State University (WSU), has worked with barley in various capacities for 22 years. In that time he has done his share of crossing lines to create new varieties, as he is seen doing here in a WSU greenhouse. Brueggeman plans to enhance breeding for malt type barleys, and the Washington Grain Commission has helped in the effort by purchasing equipment to establish a Malt Barley Lab on the Pullman campus.

breeding programs with feed barley lines adapted to Washington. Using Washington Grain Commission funding, as well as Robert A. Nilan endowed research funds, Ulrich began making crosses with malt barley lines in the early 2000s. After Ulrich's retirement in 2011, Murphy continued the work by developing populations and making selections from this material.

Developing a breeding program that releases adapted material that can meet malt barley quality standards is not an easy task, and 10 years is a short time to do so, considering that Midwestern U.S., Canadian and European breeding programs have been focused on selecting for adapted malt quality varieties for nearly a century.

Last year, Murphy released the first WSU malting variety named "Palmer" after Mary Palmer Sullivan. Sullivan has been a strong advocate for barley in Washington as one-time administrator of the Washington Barley Commission and now vice president at the Washington Grain Commission. Palmer is targeted towards the craft malting industry and is gaining attention from craft maltsters and brewers in the state.

As I take the helm of the WSU barley breeding program, I will continue the trajectory of developing malt barley varieties that meet the specifications for the still-burgeoning craft beer and distilling industries. Another objective will be to meet the quality standards required of the big beer players as that segment still commands a larger market share.

To meet both these demand centers, we are taking a close look at material coming down the WSU barley breeding pipeline. We are identifying experi-

mental lines that meet quality parameters and focusing on making new crosses to develop varieties that meet the specifications needed to be selected as an American Malting Barley Association (AMBA) recommended variety.

To make the AMBA list, which had 37 varieties in 2020, experimental lines are put under high scrutiny and must pass each of the strict malt quality standards. Currently, WSU experimental lines are not quite meeting the mark. Barley lines in the pipeline, however, are meeting all the AMBA quality parameters except for low beta-glucan.

I believe I'm well positioned to tackle the challenge of selecting varieties that meet AMBA specifications based on my expertise in barley molecular genetics. I received all three of my degrees at WSU while working in the barley molecular genetics lab of Andris Kleinhofs. I took this expertise with me to North Dakota State University (NDSU) as the barley pathologist/molecular geneticist. There, I started the first DNA sequencing lab in North Dakota and used it to genotype NDSU's two-row malt barley breeding material with genetic markers to select for barley malt quality and disease resistance.

The NDSU barley breeding program, headed by Rich Horsley, was having trouble bringing down beta-glucan levels, but as a testament to the success of the DNA marker selection lab, we wound up being able to identify many more lower beta-glucan alternatives.

We are currently developing a similar DNA marker panel in collaboration with Deven See, a research geneticist with the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA-ARS) who leads the Cereal Genotyping Lab in Pullman. With this technology, we intend to screen a large number of lines already in the pipeline, as well as those from new crosses, in order to expedite the process of identifying high quality malting lines—which will in turn expedite the release of WSU varieties that can meet AMBA standards.

Another bottleneck for WSU and other U.S. malt barley breeding programs is evaluating experimental lines for malt quality data. All breeding programs currently rely on the USDA-ARS malt quality testing lab in Madison, Wis. Each program is allowed a quota of about 400 lines per year which is insufficient.

To break this bottleneck at WSU, I am happy to announce the start of the WSU Malt Quality Lab (WMQL) on the Pullman Campus in the summer of 2020. Establishment of the WMQL was made possible through equipment funding from the Washington Grain Commission. The WMQL will allow the WSU breeding program to screen our own material, but will also serve as a service lab, offering malt quality testing to third



It takes a village, or at least a large family, to make a barley breeding program, and Bob Brueggeman has assembled a team of diverse students to pass along the knowledge he has gained to the next generation of breeders.

parties, filling a need in the craft malting, brewing and distilling industry in Washington and the Western U.S.

The grand vision for the program is to one day see WSU spring and winter malting varieties as an option to fallow winter wheat in a rotation, significantly increasing barley acreage in the state and region. Farmers like barley in rotations due to its soil ecosystem services.

I would like to see WSU barley varieties fill the demand for locally sourced malt in the craft brewing and distilling industry with attributes and flavor profiles the industry desires. Additionally, due to the quality of grain produced by farmers in Washington, our barley varieties should be targeted for the international market. Again, this means they must make AMBA and adjunct malting specifications.

We are well positioned to make this move as Eastern Washington has a lack of barley diseases such as Fusarium Head Blight, which is pushing barley production out of areas of the Midwestern U.S. that were traditionally known for malt barley production. In the past two years, there have been studies predicting that the world will experience malt barley shortages due to drought and disease in major barley growing regions around the world. Wouldn't it be great to have WSU malt barley varieties grown in Washington help fill the void?

It is always encouraging when I quaff a beer to see "Brewed with Washington-sourced barley" on the bottle. But it would be even more promising to see Washington barley being used to brew beer in Japan or Mexico, wouldn't it? ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Too many black swans



By Mike Krueger

The markets seemed to be picking up some bullish momentum a few months ago, following the signing of the Phase One trade deal with China after nearly two years of stop-and-go negotiations, tariffs, threats, etc.

But there were other reasons for optimism too. Declining wheat ending supplies among the major wheat exporting countries—and in the U.S.—helped. So did the initial U.S. winter wheat acreage estimate, which came in a bit below expectations. Finally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) appeared to be running out of bearish supply and demand reports.

Then came the first black swan event. Black swans are not dark-colored birds. Rather, they are unpredictable or unforeseen events, typically those with extreme consequences. The first black swan came with the coronavirus (COVID-19) eruption in China that has clearly put most aspects of the Phase One deal on hold as China's economy has ground to a near halt.

Travel in and out of China is on hold, and supply chain disruptions are expected until the virus is controlled. This has meant that the expected surge in soybean export sales to China hasn't happened. More importantly, it has also meant hoped-for corn and wheat export sales to China haven't happened. This has cast another shadow over world demand. But there is good news as China is now getting back to work.

The next black swan event happened the second week of March when a crude oil price war exploded between Russia and Saudi Arabia. Instead of cooperating by reducing oil extraction to maintain prices, the two countries have gone on a tear trying to out-compete one another. In one day, crude oil prices sunk nearly 30 percent. See Chart 1.

This breakdown, coupled with the expanding spread of the coronavirus across the

Chart 1: Crude oil

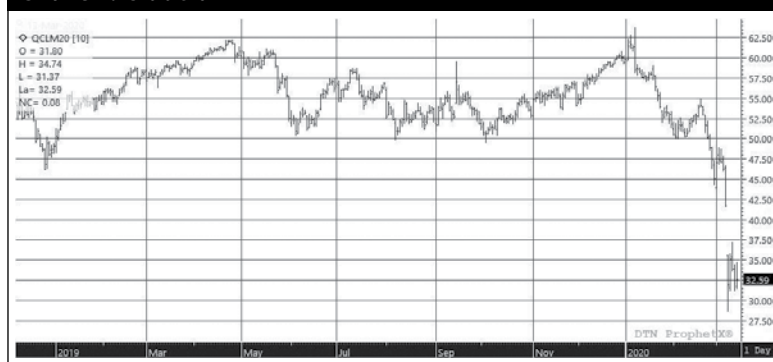
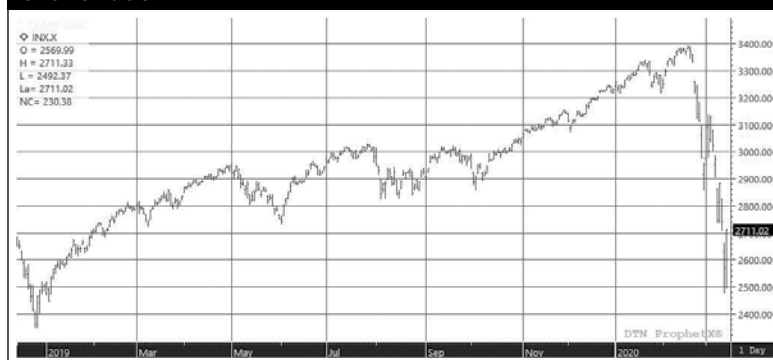


Chart 2: S&P



Northern Hemisphere, created enough uncertainty for U.S. equity markets to crash nearly 8 percent the same day oil collapsed. See Chart 2.

Grain and oilseed markets managed to survive crashing at the same time. This was likely due to the fact prices were already trading at the low end of their respective ranges. Funds were short everything except Chicago wheat futures.

The USDA released their March WASDE (supply/demand report) the same week as equities and crude oil collapsed. Fortunately, the USDA made only a few meaningless changes to their numbers, and the report was a nonevent.

There is so much uncertainty and worry around the world today that markets of every sort will remain on edge until the virus stabilizes and the Saudi/Russian oil story plays out. It is doubtful many entities will be willing to step into long positions until and unless the impact of these major issues is clarified. The total collapse of crude oil and equities has already forced people and companies to liquidate positions in many markets to meet margin calls.

There has been nothing fundamentally bullish happening

around grain and oilseed markets. World winter wheat crops are mostly still dormant, and there is no indication of any major problems today. The most important part of the winter wheat growing season is still ahead of us. Soybean and corn production in Brazil and Argentina are again on a path to be at record, or near record, levels, although late season dryness has caused Argentina to reduce their corn and soybean levels slightly.

The USDA's Risk Management Agency released the initial (and minimum) prices for 2020 crop revenue insurance products. Table 1 shows the history of these initial prices since 2014. These prices were the daily average new crop futures during the month of February. The bad news is the prices are slightly lower than last year and continue the downward trend of the past several years.

The good news is that prices were calculated before the carnage in equities and crude oil in March. The wheat price is the spring wheat price. The initial winter wheat price was calculated last fall and that price for Washington state stands at \$5.73.

The USDA will release some very important reports on March 31 that will have an impact on the markets. These include planting intentions and quarterly stocks estimates.

The planting intentions report will be very important. Most analysts are forecasting as much as a 10 million acre increase in corn plantings and a 5 million acre increase in soybean plantings. They will also update their winter wheat acres estimate. There will also be estimates of spring wheat acres (and all other spring planted crops like barley, oats, sunflowers, etc.).

I expect that spring wheat acres will be lower than last year if corn and soybeans show a big increase in acreage. These acreage estimates will be the starting point for supply and demand estimates for the 2020/21 marketing years. Analysts will use these acreage numbers and undoubtedly use big yield guesses to project production.

The trade will also take a close look at the quarterly stocks report. They will be used to try to measure the accuracy of the final 2019 production estimates, especially for corn and soybeans. Smaller quarterly stocks than expected would mean either 2019 production was smaller than expected or demand has been greater than anticipated.

We are in a period of unprecedented uncertainty around the world when it comes to economic activity and price volatility in most markets. This is different from 9-11 or the financial crisis. No one knows the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic or to what degree world economies will be negatively affected.

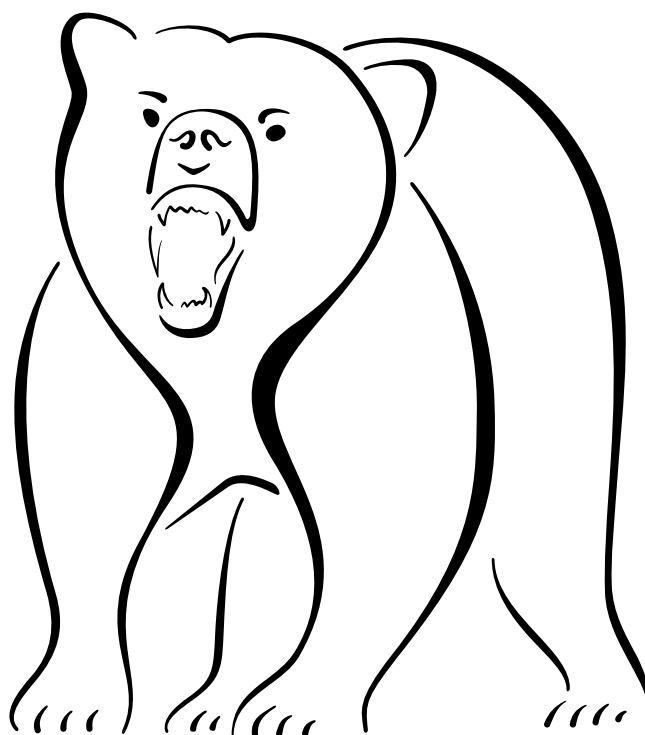
Table 1: USDA/RMA crop insurance prices per bushel

	Spring Wheat	Corn	Soybeans
2014	\$6.51	\$4.62	\$11.36
2015	\$5.85	\$4.15	\$9.73
2016	\$5.13	\$3.86	\$8.85
2017	\$5.65	\$3.96	\$10.19
2018	\$6.31	\$3.96	\$10.16
2019	\$5.77	\$4.00	\$9.54
2020	\$5.56	\$3.88	\$9.17

Much of the extreme volatility in the markets during March was the result of the lack of any clarity about this world health crises. As I write this the second week of March, I hope that some level of calm and normalcy will have returned by the time you read this.

If that's the case, then we'll be back to talking about more boring issues like grain and oilseed market fundamentals. It might also mean that China will start to fulfill its obligation to purchase U.S. commodities under the Phase One agreement and that Phase Two discussions with China will be underway. ■

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

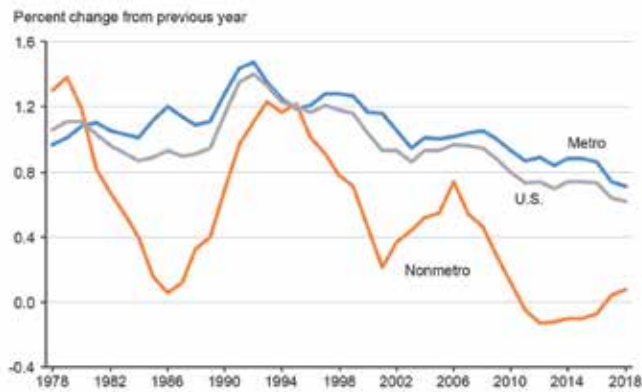


What the numbers say

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service publishes numerous food- and farming-related charts every month. In February, they released a collection of charts and maps that looked at key statistics on the farm sector; food spending and prices; food security; rural communities; agricultural production and trade; the interaction of agriculture and natural resources; and more. Here's some of those charts. To see all of them, visit ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=96956. ■

Losses to rural population have begun to reverse...

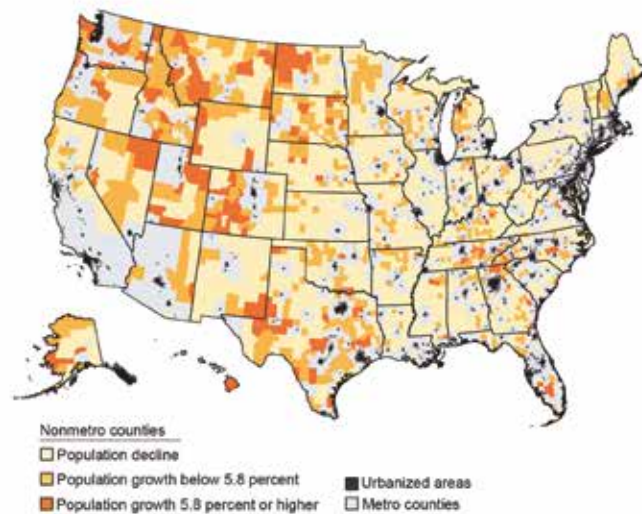
Population change by metro/nonmetro residence, 1978-2018



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau, county population estimates.

...But it varies across the country

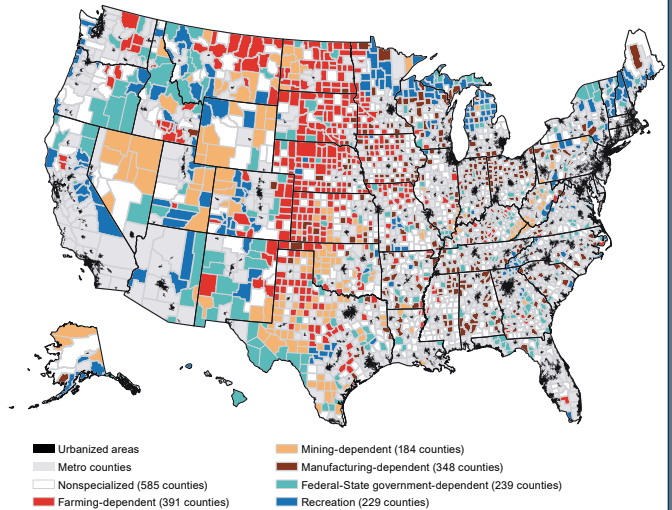
Nonmetro county population change, 2010-18



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau.

ERS county economic typology, 2015

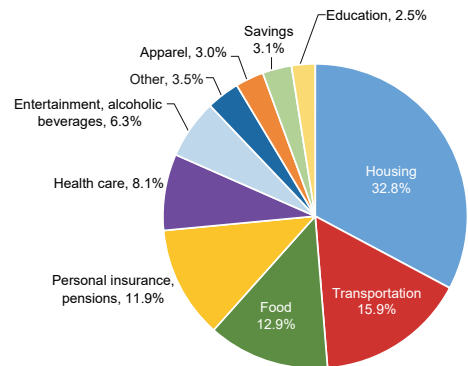
Rural areas vary in the industries that underpin their economies.



Note: The 2015 county typologies use data from 2010-12. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Share of U.S. household consumer expenditures, 2018

Food ranked third behind housing and transportation in U.S. households' expenditures by major category.



Note: "Other" includes personal care products, tobacco, and miscellaneous expenditures. "Education" includes education and reading. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2018.

How a food dollar is divided, 2017

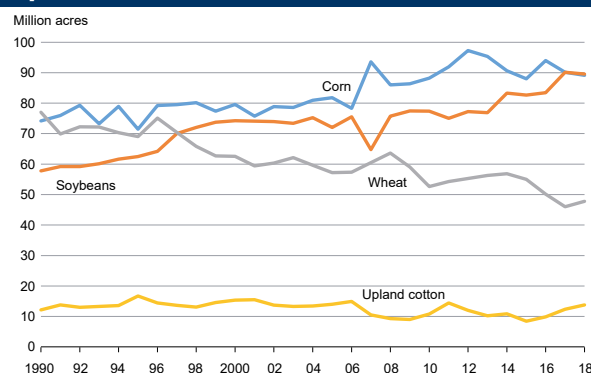


Note: "Other" includes two industry groups: Agribusiness plus Legal & Accounting. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Food Dollar Series.

Acres of irrigated agricultural land, 2017

Five states—Nebraska, California, Arkansas, Texas and Idaho—account for half of the nation's irrigated agricultural land.

U.S. planted area, 1990-2018



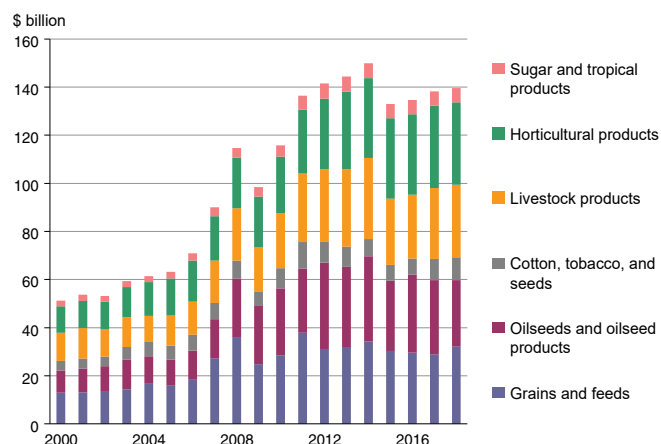
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Baseline Related Historical Data.

Major USDA conservation program expenditures, 1996-2018

USDA's mix of conservation efforts has shifted from removing environmentally sensitive land from production (primarily through CRP) toward programs that target working land.

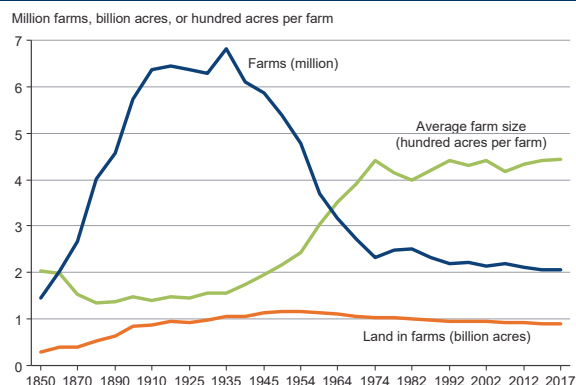
U.S. agricultural exports, 2000-18

The value of U.S. ag exports grew slightly in 2018, driven by gains in all major commodity groups except oilseeds and oilseed products.



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Database.

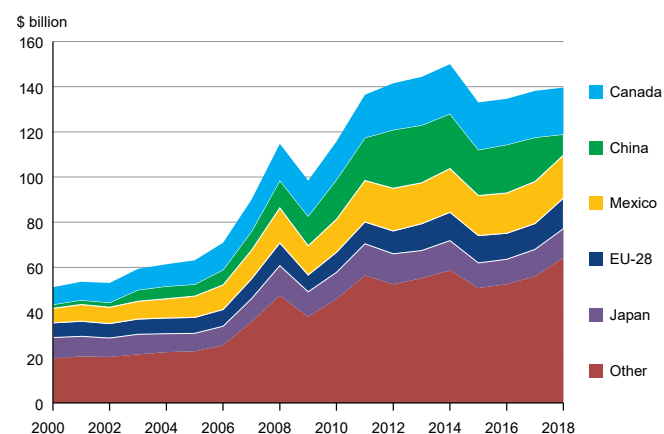
Farms, land in farms, average acres per farm, 1850-2017



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture (various years).

Top five markets for U.S. agricultural exports, 2000-18

Canada, Mexico and the European Union were the top destinations for U.S. ag exports in 2018.



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Database.

QUOTE WORTHY

“America’s farmers are resilient and continue to produce a bountiful harvest. Our food supply chains remain strong. No need to hoard—respect the needs of your fellow neighbors and buy only what’s necessary.”

—Sonny Perdue, U.S. agriculture secretary, in a Tweet (@SecretarySonny)



“This is a demand issue, not a supply issue. The supply chain isn’t broken. The warehouses are pushing out as much inventory as possible in a 24-hour period.”

—Heather Garlich, vice president of media and public relations at FMI, the food industry association formerly known as the Food Marketing Institute, on the stability of the nation’s food supply. (politico.com)



“This is bigger than all of us. All of us have to recognize for the next several weeks, normal is not in our game plan.”

—Washington Gov. Jay Inslee regarding statewide measures that ban gatherings of more than 50 people and close down restaurants, bars, clubs and gyms. (Seattle Times)

“Knock on wood, I haven’t heard about supply lines for fertilizer and seed (being disrupted), but that can change in the next 10 minutes. I hope that fertilizer doesn’t become the toilet paper of agriculture.”

—Aaron Esser, director of Washington State University Extension in Adams County, on how the coronavirus is impacting Eastern Washington wheat farmers. (Capital Press)

“It obviously is going to have some ramifications economy-wide, which we hope will not inhibit the purchase goal that we have for this year.”

—Sonny Perdue, U.S. agriculture secretary, on how the coronavirus might upset Beijing’s promise to increase purchases of American farm goods. (reuters.com)

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture is rising to meet the challenges associated with the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19. As leaders of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Agricultural Marketing Service, we can assure you that the agencies are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our employees while still providing the timely delivery of the services to maintain the movement of America’s food supply from farm to fork.

These agencies are prepared to utilize their authority and all administrative means and flexibilities to address staffing considerations. Field personnel will be working closely with establishment management and state and local health authorities to handle situations as they arise in your community. As always, communication between industry and government will be key. We are all relying on early and frequent communication with one another to overcome challenges as they arise.”

—From a USDA press release on March 17.



These dollars will be used to support candidates that understand what is critical to our industry and the livelihood of our members

Political advocacy is something many of us think we can never get involved in; the Washington Wheat PAC is out to change that.

The Washington Wheat PAC is a nonpartisan political action committee that is dedicated to supporting ag-friendly candidates.

The Washington Wheat PAC pledges to promote and support elected officials from all parts of the state that positively influence agriculture.

Why Support the Washington Wheat PAC?

Washington farmers are losing ground politically! The ability to protect our interests is slowly dwindling. Washington wheat producers need elected officials who know and understand the industry. Without these relationships our ability to remain competitive is at risk. During the legislative session, thousands of bills are introduced; many not favorable to farming. Now is the time for the industry to join together and proactively influence legislation that directly impacts the Washington wheat producer.

Please join our efforts by financially supporting the Washington Wheat PAC. Your contribution will strengthen the network of elected officials who understand the wheat industry's goals and objectives by fighting for what is critical to the livelihood of our members.

Protect your interests by supporting farm-friendly candidates who can make a difference in Olympia.

DONATION PROMISE

Yes, I would like to join with the Washington Wheat PAC's vision and support their actions with my donation.

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Phone: _____

Email: _____

Donation amount: _____

When you make a donation to the Washington Wheat PAC, you are investing in the future of agriculture in Washington State.

Leasing farmland into an uncertain future

By Tim Cobb

Farmland Company

As farmland owners cast their gaze into uncertain times, the view is made even more clear that proper leasing fundamentals are an important hedge against investment risk. The speed of change continues to accelerate, and principles of economics, which were once reliable, are now influenced by global events that can cause violent changes to overall value.

Owning and operating farmland effectively is no small task, and proper planning and overall perspective will keep the land prosperous and returning well no matter the challenges.

Farmland and other property-based investments remain consistent in providing stability in a nation that continues to progress agriculturally. Owning and operating farmland effectively is no small task, and proper planning and overall

perspective will keep the land prosperous and returning well no matter the challenges.

Let's look at three opportunities the thoughtful owner of farmland can consider to help ensure vitality:

- Long-term perspective;
- Keep an eye on the land; and
- Build a great team.

First, a key to realizing long-term value is having long-term perspective. This is true regardless of whether you are new to farmland ownership or have many years of possession and regardless of obtaining ownership through generational transfer or purchase investment. Looking long term in a world of instant messaging, overnight markets and success that is measured by the speed of response or action can be difficult and demanding. In contrast, a three-to-five-year range should be taken into consideration for leasing activities, crop rotation and room for expansion or contraction of markets for ultimate profitability.

Many decisions made in year one regarding leasing will not return full value until year two, three or four, and at the same time, if decisions are made in haste based only on a "today" mentality, they will create mistakes and recession to the land and leasing activities that come with that same speed. There is no substitute for always seeking to do right by the land, and that takes time and patience.

Second, it continues to be of utmost importance to

ensure that there is sufficient monitoring of farmland by owners to protect the value and productivity of your farmland. This monitoring can take many forms, but beginning with the fundamentals of knowing and understanding the "cultural practices" that are being implemented on the land will provide a great baseline.

Practices such as tillage methods, organic matter levels, general soil health, chemical application, conservation methods and crop rotation will give a basic sense of the practicality of annual regeneration of the land. Soil health is key to short- and long-term success, and minor changes to how the soil is cared for can make a huge difference in its longevity and production levels. Having progressive lease arrangements that allow a farm tenant to look forward and build up the land will ensure that potentially damaging short cuts to profitability won't be taken and will yield real dividends to your investment.

Third, it never ceases to amaze me the amount of trust that exists in a farmland leasing arrangement and the importance of having quality people involved in the production aspects. This continues to be a hallmark of farmland ownership and operation as both parties go beyond basic details of a lease and is built over years and years of working together for the best outcome despite annual challenges.

Every relationship between a farmland owner and farm operator should have a routine checkup to ensure that all efforts will be exerted to not only make the crop successful but the long-term viability a reality. Here are a few simple questions/conversation starters to help keep transparency and continue to build the relationship:

- What is something I can do as an owner to understand the production challenges you are facing?
- What do you think will be the best thing you will be able to accomplish over the next two to three years to improve your farming operation?
- What can we do together to ensure we position our lease properly to allow for our combined success with our farm?

Showing this level of engagement is refreshing to any landlord/tenant relationship, and if handled in earnest, it will yield additional levels of trust.

As we conclude, let us pause to reflect on the miraculous nature of farmland and its ability to continue to give year after year, even with varying weather patterns or crop

demands. As a farmland owner, you can help keep that trending toward productivity by working together with your farm operator/manager and asking these and other simple questions to understand what is being put back into the land for the future. ■

Tim Cobb is a farm kid from Eastern Washington and is the owner of Farmland Company (formerly Hatley/Cobb Farmland Management), which specializes in farmland management, insurance, real estate brokerage and appraisal across the Pacific Northwest. Visit farmlandcompany.com for more information.

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Ben and Alyson Freeman

"We're kind of boring people," said Alyson with a chuckle. "She's from royalty of Dillon, Montana," Ben quipped.

Ben is from a good farm heritage. He was raised in Fairfield-Teton County. A 4th generation farming family that loves the outdoors, hard work and raising kids, along with barley, canola and wheat.

Ben said, "We needed a little more horsepower and axles to move grain. We are partial to IH equipment."

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Benefits for veterans, beginning farmers, ranchers

By Curtis Evanenko

McGregor Risk Management Services

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized additional benefits for beginning farmers or ranchers (BFR) that began with the 2015 crop year. Congress recognized the aging demographic of the U.S. farmer population and is hopeful this will allow young people an opportunity to return to the farm. The benefits include a reduction in premium and a larger yield adjustment with eligibility up to five years in length.

To be eligible, you must be an individual. Business entities may receive benefits only if all of the substantial beneficial interest (SBI) holders of the business qualify as a BFR. Additionally, you must have not operated a farm or ranch anywhere with an insurable interest in any crop or livestock for more than five years. This includes an insurable interest as an individual or as a SBI holder of another person (entity) who has an insurable interest in any crop or livestock. If married and a spousal policy, both persons must meet BFR eligibility. You may exclude a crop year's insurable interest if at the time you were under 18 years of age, enrolled in post-secondary studies (not to exceed five crop years) or active duty in the U.S. military.

The premium reduction is 10 percentage points of premium subsidy for additional coverage (buy-up); i.e. if the subsidy factor for a particular coverage level is .48, the subsidy increases to .58. BFR benefits also include exemption from paying the administration fee for catastrophic and additional coverage policies. These allow the insured a higher level of coverage while enjoying a reduced premium cost.

Another BFR benefit is an increase in the substitute transitional yield, yield adjustment (YA), from 60 to 80 percent of the applicable transitional yield (t-yield). In the event of a poor yield due to an insurable cause of loss, the YA can replace the yield in the actual production history (APH) database. This allows the BFR a higher yield and corresponding coverage guarantee during their eligibility period.

The use of another person's yield



history is somewhat relaxed with BFR eligibility. To qualify, the BFR must have been previously involved in the farming or ranching operation's decision-making process or physical activities necessary to produce the crop or livestock on the farm. The BFR must provide verifiable evidence indicating the involvement in the farming or ranching operation decision making or physical activities.

The 2018 Farm Bill expanded BFR benefits to include veteran farmers or ranchers (VFR). VFR benefits are the same as BFR:

- Increased subsidy of 10 percentage points;
- 80 percent YA vs. 60 percent YA;
- No policy administration fees; and
- Relaxation of transferring APH procedures.

VFR eligibility is determined the same way as BFR—count the number of years operating a farm or ranch and subtract from five. This is the number of remaining eligible years for VFR benefits. VFR can also qualify based upon the date of first discharge from service. An individual is eligible for five years after the date of discharge. Unlike the BFR, the spouse does not have to qualify for VFR to be eligible for benefits.

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BFR/VFR benefits apply to individuals on a nationwide basis, not by state, county or crop. The deadline to apply for benefits is the sales closing date for the crop(s) to be insured. An insured cannot double dip on BFR/VFR benefits; if the insured qualifies for both, they must choose which program to receive benefits from. In other words, participants can't

receive two, 10 percentage point increases in premium subsidy.

We have several customers that qualify and are taking advantage of the benefits provided under BFR and VFR. I think this is a great benefit for individuals that qualify to aid with getting started in farming or ranching.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions regarding eligibility and enrollment. I wish all a safe spring season and happy Easter! ■

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

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Your wheat life...



It's a "spooky" thing when farmers are still harvesting on Halloween, as was happening here just north of Garfield in Whitman County in 2019. Photo by Kevin Gaffney.



(Right) Evan McDonald (3) is all farm boy. He has quite the fan club in Reardan because of his love for farming, machines and especially the farmers in his life, like grandpa Steve Krupke. Photo by Cheryl Krupke. (Above) Evan is also very discerning in his choice of reading material. His mom says he loves to look at the pictures of the different machinery and people. Photo by Lindsay McDonald.





2019 pea harvest at the Nick Wittman Reisenauer place near Uniontown. Photo by Ed Anegon.



To the small group of us that are UW grads...Here is a tribute to them!!! At JF Munns Farms in Walla Walla County. Photo by Tim Towner.

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

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



Harvest 2019 on Throop Farm north of Davenport. Photo by Darla Throop.

HAPPENINGS

With all that is happening right now, please make sure the listed event hasn't been canceled before making any plans.

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. Features 40 breweries, live music, food and the "Make Ales for Arts" homebrew competition. 12 to 4:30 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

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. Artwork, 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, classic auto show, brewfest, carnival. Waitsburg, Wash. cityofwaitsburg.com

15-17 SELAH COMMUNITY DAYS. Carnival, poker run, potato feed, arts and crafts. Selah, Wash. selahdays.com

16 COMMUNITY YARD SALE. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., includes residents' sales, barn sales. Waterville, Wash. historicwatervillewa.org

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

30 SNAKE RIVER FAMILY FESTIVAL. Free food, kids' activities, live music. Boyer Park & Marina, Colfax, Wash. facebook.com/snakeriverfamilyfestival/

JUNE 2020

3 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Western Whitman County-LaCrosse, Wash., at 8:30 a.m. For information call Steve Van Vleet at (509) 397-6290 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

3 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Ritzville, Wash., at 1 p.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

4 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Horse Heaven, Wash., at 9 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210

or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

4 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Connell, Wash., at 5 p.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

6 REARDAN MULE DAYS. Three on three basketball tournament, craft fair, poker ride, car show, parade. Reardan, Wash. reardanmuledays.net

9 PENDLETON STATION FIELD DAY. Event begins at 7:30 a.m. at Pendleton Station on Tubbs Ranch Road outside Pendleton, Ore. For information call Stewart Wuest at (541) 278-4381 or oregonstate.edu/cpcrc/fieldday.html

10 MORO FIELD DAY. Event begins at 7:30 a.m. at Sherman Station on Lone Rock Road outside Moro, Ore. For information call Stewart Wuest at (541) 278-4381 or oregonstate.edu/cpcrc/sherman.html

11 LIND FIELD DAY. Event begins at 8:30 a.m. at the WSU Dryland Research Center in Lind, Wash. For information call Bill Schillinger at (509) 235-1933 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

11 WHEAT COLLEGE. Presented by AMMO, this event is a mix of indoor and outdoor presentations, providing interactive demonstrations to share information on the latest agronomic research being conducted in the Pacific Northwest. Pesticide credits will be offered. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wheat Land Community Fairgrounds, Ritzville, Wash. Registration required. Free admittance. lori@wawg.org or wawg.org/ammo-workshops/

12 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Harrington, Wash., at 10 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

12 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. St. Andrews, Wash., at 4 p.m. For information call Dale Whaley at (509) 745-8531 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

12-14 DEMOLITION DERBY EXTRAVAGANZA. Combine demolition derby, parade, barbecue. Lind, Wash. lindwa.com

13 FLAG DAY CELEBRATION. Parade, fun run, vendors. Fairfield, Wash. fairfieldflagday.com

13 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW. Area

youth show off their prized animals at the fairgrounds. Waitsburg, Wash.
cityofwaitsburg.com/events-calendar

16 COMMUNITY YARD SALE. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., includes residents' sales, barn sales. Waterville, Wash. historicwatervillewa.org

16 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Fairfield, Wash., at 8 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

16 WSU WEED SCIENCE. Pullman, Wash., at 1 p.m. For information call Drew Lyon at (509) 335-2961 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/events/

17 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. St. John, Wash., at 10 a.m. For information call Steve Van Vleet at (509) 397-6290 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

17 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Lamont, Wash., at 2 p.m. For information call Steve Van Vleet at (509) 397-6290 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

19-21 ALL WHEELS WEEKEND. Car show, golf tournament, fireworks, live music. Dayton, Wash. All Wheels Weekend. Classic Show 'n' Shine, Friday night classic cruise, demolition derby, golf tournament, kid zone and more! Dayton, Wash. allwheelsweekend.com/

19-21 WENATCHEE RIVER BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL. Adult and kids' instrument workshops, slow jam, band scramble, meet and greet luau/potluck. Chelan County Expo Center in Cashmere, Wash.

cashmerecoffeehouse.com/wrbfest.htm

20 SLIPPERY GULCH DAYS. Chamber breakfast, fun run, tractor show, parade, fishing derby, fireworks. Tekoa, Wash. slipperygulch.com

20 SPRINT BOAT RACING. Enjoy 5 grass terraces, two beer gardens and a great atmosphere to watch fantastic racing in St John, Wash. Fun for the entire family! Bring the lawn chairs, sunscreen and blankets. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until racing is finished. webbsslough.com or (509)648-8900.

20-21 UNION GAP OLD TOWN DAYS. Washington state's biggest civil war reenactment. Trading post, blacksmith shop, train rides, games and wagon tours. Fullbright Park in Union Gap, Wash. centralwaagmuseum.org/old-town-days-union-gap.asp

22 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Eureka, Wash., at 3 p.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

23 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Cereals and legumes, Dayton, Wash., at 8 a.m. For info call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

23 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Walla Walla, Wash., at 1 p.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

24 WILKE FARM FIELD DAY. Davenport, Wash., at 8 a.m. For information call

Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or wilkefarm.cahnrs.wsu.edu

24 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Reardan, Wash., at 1:30 p.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

25 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Mayview, Wash., at 9 a.m. For information call Mark Heitstuman at (509) 243-2009 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

25 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Anatone, Wash., at 3:30 p.m. For information call Mark Heitstuman at (509) 243-2009 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

29 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Irrigated plot at Moses Lake, Wash., at 8:30 a.m. For info, Andy McGuire at (509) 754-2011 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

29 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Almira, Wash., at 3 p.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/ ■

Submissions

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

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Advertiser Index

AGPRO	33	Micro Ag.....	32
AgraSyst	13, 37	North Pine Ag Equipment	29, 36
Albaugh LLC	63	Odessa Trading Co	17
Bank of Eastern Washington	38	Perkins & Zlatich PS	21
Blue Mountain Farm & Ranch	31	PNW Farmers Cooperative.....	25
Butch Booker Auction	28	Pomeroy Grain Growers Inc.	31
Byrnes Oil Co	61	RH Machine.....	24
Central Life Sciences	9	RiverBank.....	21
Class 8 Trucks	55	Rock Steel Structures.....	35
CO Energy	29	Rubisco Seeds	23
Coldwell Banker Tomlinson	21	Second Harvest	38
Country Financial	31	Spectrum Crop Development	35
Custom Seed Conditioning	29	State Bank Northwest	57
Edward Jones	55	T & S Sales	25
Eljay Oil.....	32	Tankmax Inc	33
Farm & Home Supply.....	36	The McGregor Co	11
Great Plains Equipment	15	Vantage-PNW.....	17
Jess Auto	62	Walker's Furniture.....	64
Jones Truck & Implement.....	28	Walter Implement.....	57
Kincaid Real Estate	28	WestBred	36
Landmark Native Seed	35	Wilbur-Ellis.....	7

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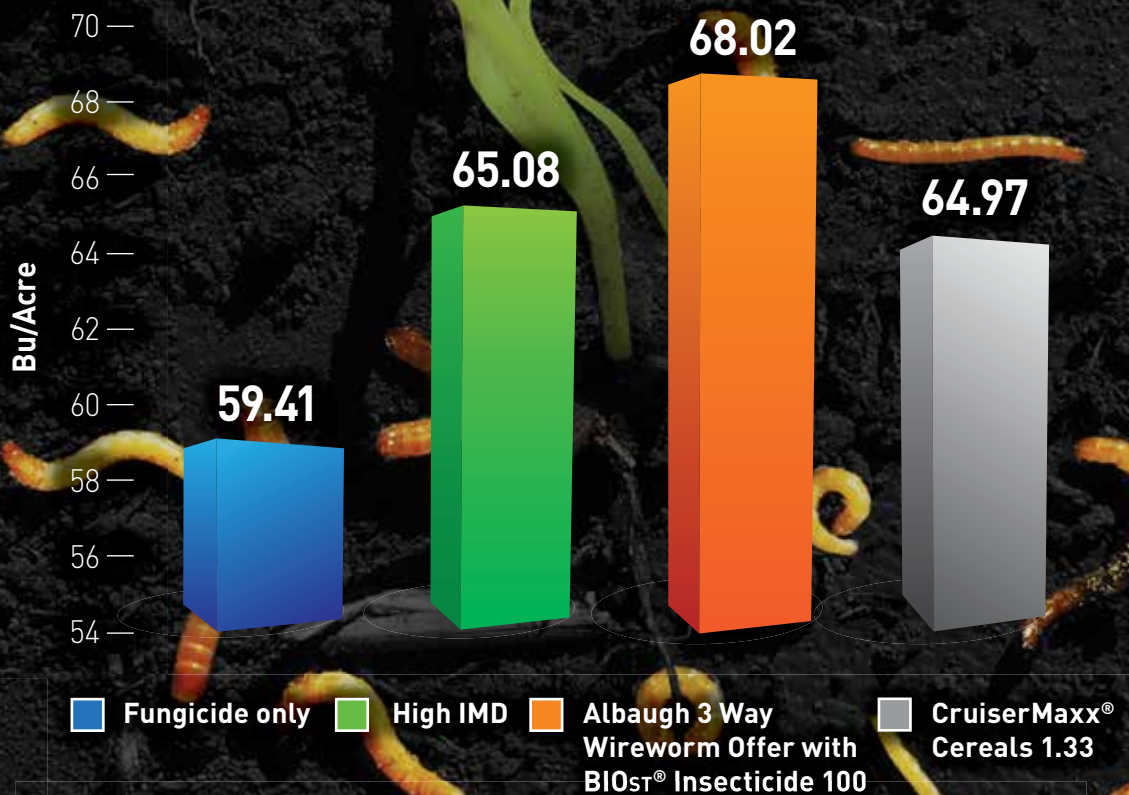
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