

# WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

MAY | 2020

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

Fieldwork continues across Eastern Washington wheat country despite stay-at-home orders



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

# WHEAT LIFE

Volume 63 • Number 05  
www.wheatlife.org

The official publication of



**WASHINGTON  
ASSOCIATION OF  
WHEAT GROWERS**

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*Wheat Life* (ISSN 0043-4701) is published by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG):  
109 E. First Avenue • Ritzville, WA 99169-2394

Eleven issues per year with a combined August/September issue. Standard (A) postage paid at Ritzville, Wash., and additional entry offices.

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# President's Perspective



## Adjusting to the new 'normal'

By Ryan Poe

As I write this, we are settling into our fifth week under the state's stay-at-home order. Farming, which is considered an essential business, is going full blast all around me. My routine hasn't changed too much, with one major exception. I now have a daily co-pilot, a very energetic 8-year-old who loves all things farming. Our 9-year-old daughter goes to the vet clinic with my wife every day, and we feel very fortunate to have the ability to take our kids

to work with us and that they can get their schoolwork done at the same time.

My son and I both agree that we like getting homework done best during long autosteer runs on the self-propelled sprayer rather than at home.

We are lucky that we have adequate internet access that allows us to get these things done. That's not the case for everyone, and I feel terrible for those families that don't. This pandemic is exposing the holes in rural broadband infrastructure, and I hope it leads to some serious infrastructure investment across the country.

Grant County PUD has done a lot with fiber internet, and I think it's really been a great thing for our county. The build-out is not to my house yet, so I have to use wireless internet equipment to shoot to my neighbor's house a mile away and then hop another six or seven miles to a house that is on the fiber network. Even with all that, it is still pretty fast, reliable service, but I know others are not nearly as fortunate. Another issue for many people is the lack in cell coverage, which is almost as important as internet service.

Just this past week, I was able to do a Zoom meeting on my phone while on a sprayer. I got about 150 acres sprayed during the course of a National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) committee meeting and was able to share Washington growers' concerns with NAWG staff and others across the country. I felt much better about my own situation after hearing from a grower in South Dakota who was harvesting his last field of corn from last year!

In this *Wheat Life* issue, we are talking about no-till and direct seeding benefits, and the role glyphosate plays in those cropping systems. On our farm, we direct seed about a third of our ground, while the rest is in conventional tillage. We use glyphosate as part of both systems, along with other chemistries and precision ag equipment, to help us control weeds while conserving fuel and reducing runoff and erosion. Glyphosate is a vital component on many farms, and until there is a comparable product available, to lose it would be a staggering blow to many.

I hope you all are weathering this pandemic in good health and spirits. My hat is off to those other "essential" workers, especially in healthcare, for continuing to do their job with dedication and bravery. Here's to flattening the curve enough that we can all get back to our regular routines. ■

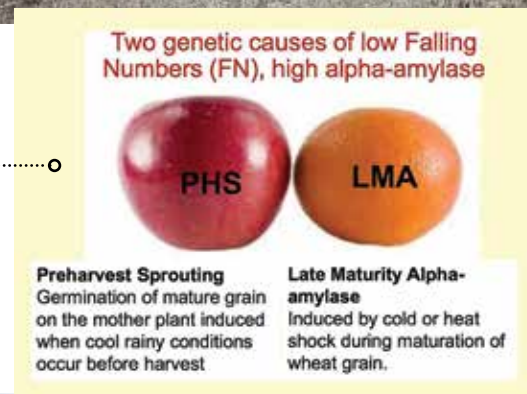


**Cover photo:** Agriculture has been deemed "essential" in Washington, so work has been proceeding mostly as normal. We asked Eastern Washington wheat farmers to send in photos of their "business as usual." See page 22. Photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.



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

## WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

## More member benefits:

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



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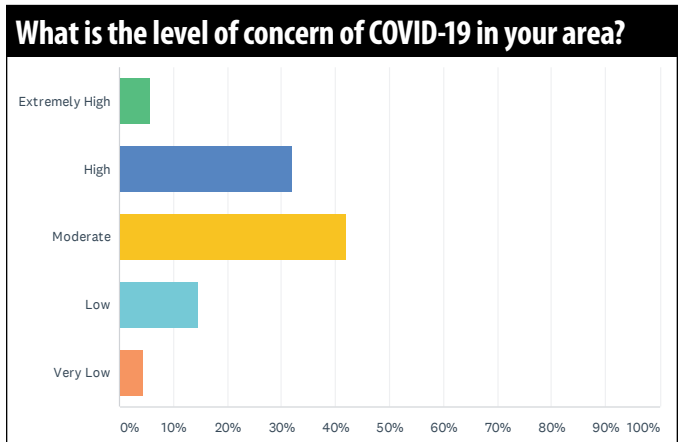
## Survey shows moderate to high concern among farmers

According to a March survey done by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) about the impacts members are seeing due to COVID-19 and the social distancing measures currently in place, 80 percent of wheat growers are moderately to highly concerned. Possible disruptions to labor appear to be the largest concern at this point, with 59 percent of respondents saying they've had no issues or disruptions with U.S. Department of Agriculture offices and programs.

"WAWG worked alongside the National Association of Wheat Growers to gather grower feedback relating to the pandemic in order to better serve our members and rural communities, especially in light of the federal COVID-19 relief bills being passed," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. "We are also monitoring the situation at the state level where agriculture has been deemed 'essential.' We want to make sure that all the moving parts of the industry continue running smoothly, with as little disruption as possible. We want to anticipate any potential issues or processes that might need extra attention down the road."

Other interesting tidbits from the survey include:

- Respondents are concerned with the possible impacts of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures on the rural economy and rural businesses.
- 85 percent said access to credit has not yet been an issue but business is being conducted differently.
- 77 percent have not had any transportation challenges yet, but respondents are concerned about future uncertainty that could impact their ability to receive inputs, such as fertilizer and supplies.
- 65 percent said they were able to sign up for ARC/PLC with no issue but question if signing up for the 2020 crop year will be challenging.
- 85 percent said they've had no issues with crop insurance. However, some respondents noted that growing conditions have not been ideal, so this may become an issue in the future if claims need to be filed.
- Growers are concerned that the availability of parts, especially if this stretches into harvest, will become a major issue. Some growers commented that they were required to pay cash, rather than charging to their accounts, for parts and service.



- Another potential harvest issue that growers are concerned about is the ability to find help or the need to pay higher wages for workers who feel they are at risk.
- With the increased reliance on the internet and cell phones, growers in areas where service is slow or unreliable are concerned about their ability to conduct business as normal.
- Growers are concerned about cash flow.

WAWG will be doing another survey in the near future to see if growers have new concerns or if the situation in rural areas has changed. ■

## Federal, state agencies continue work, distantly

It's not only farmers who need to get on with the business of growing their crops during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many state and federal agencies that farmers rely on are also still doing business, albeit from a distance. We reached out to some of those agencies to find out what's going on.

**Farm Service Agency (FSA).** Like most U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, FSA closed its doors to the public in late March. However, FSA service centers are still conducting business by phone and using email and online tools whenever possible.

The state FSA office is working on 2020 ARC/PLC enrollment and gearing up for their annual acreage reporting, said Rod Hamilton, Washington State FSA



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farm programs chief. That reporting effort traditionally involves working very closely with producers as they gather information on approximately 10 million acres of crop and pasture land. FSA has reviewed their policies on acceptable types of signatures and determined there are only a handful of forms where they legally must obtain an original producer signature; they will be able to accept faxed, scanned or electronic signatures on most forms.

Other changes to FSA as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 include giving producers more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities. The maturity extension applies to nonre-course loans for crop years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Eligible open loans must be in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020, or later or new crop year (2019 or 2020) loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020. All new loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020, will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval. The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional 3 months.

FSA is also accepting applications for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands sign-up through May 15. Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed, from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds. Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land; threat of conversion or development; existing grassland and predominance of native species cover; and cost.

FSA has relaxed their loan-making process by extending the deadline for applicants to complete farm loan applications; preparing direct loans documents even if FSA is unable to complete lien and record searches because of closed government buildings; and closing loans if the required lien position on the primary security is perfected, even for loans that require additional security and those lien searches, filings and recordings cannot be obtained because of closed government buildings. They are extending deadlines for producers to respond to loan servicing actions, including loan deferral consideration for financially distressed and delinquent borrowers.

FSA will temporarily suspend loan accelerations, nonjudicial foreclosures and referring foreclosures to the Department of Justice. The U.S. Attorney's Office will

## Office closed until further notice

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers' office in Ritzville is currently closed until further notice. However, the staff is working remotely and will continue to conduct business as usual on weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone calls and emails will be answered during these hours as normal. Grower communications and work on behalf of the wheat industry will continue and in-person meetings will resume as soon as possible. ■

make the determination whether to stop foreclosures and evictions on accounts under its jurisdiction.

More information on USDA's response to COVID-19 can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

NRCS is continuing to provide the best customer service they can while also prioritizing the health of their employees, the health of their customers and the health of their partners. Like other USDA agencies, they are open for business by phone appointment only, and will be working with customers by phone, by email and using other online tools whenever possible.

NRCS just announced May 29, 2020, as the next deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications to be considered for funding this fiscal year.

CSP helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners earn payments for expanding conservation activities while maintaining agricultural production on their land. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

"CSP continues to be a very effective tool for private landowners working to achieve their conservation and management goals," said Roylene Comes At Night, NRCS Washington state conservationist. "It is the largest conservation program in the United States with more than 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled."

Changes in the 2018 Farm Bill authorize NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023 and makes some improvements to the program including:

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high-ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres;
- Higher payment rates are now available for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations; and
- Provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers



who have maintained cropland base acres.

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by the deadline to ensure their applications are considered for 2020 funding.

**Risk Management Agency (RMA).** Although the public can't visit the RMA regional office in Spokane Valley, the staff continues to do important work like answering program questions; reviewing and issuing written agreements; and reviewing crop insurance yields, rates and prices in the actuarial documents. Producers can contact their crop insurance agents about questions and information, and the insurance providers are doing inspections and processing any claims for loss.

Ben Thiel, director of the Spokane regional office, has been working with Washington Association of Wheat Grower staff and producers in Whitman County to modify the spring wheat final planting date map boundary line in Whitman county for potential implementation for the 2021 crop year.

More information on RMA's response to COVID-19 can be found at [rma.usda.gov/en](http://rma.usda.gov/en).

**Washington State Conservation Districts (CDs).** All local conservation district offices are closed to walk-in visitors. Most staff are teleworking, and landowner assistance is happening by phone, email and video chat. Fieldwork is limited to those activities deemed essential by each local CD and where they can abide by the CDC and Washington State Department of Health guidelines. Currently, there are no changes to enrollment processes for local and/or state financial assistance programs.

**Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).** Despite closing all offices statewide to the



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Control Varieties	lbs/ac (rank)		
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Dwarf Essex Rapeseed	3,678 (20)	3,413 (28)	—
Ericka	3,716 (18)	2,865 (30)	3,829 (25)
Rubisco Seeds' Hybrids			
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)
<b>PNWVT Mean</b>	3,910	3,956	4,470
<b>LSD (p=0.05)</b>	285	326	287
<b>C.V. (%)</b>	15.0	14.7	12.4

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public, WSDA intends to continue providing high quality inspections and other crucial services necessary to support commerce and maintain the viability of Washington's food supply chain.

"This is an extraordinary measure, but a necessary step to help protect both our staff and the public," WSDA Director Derek Sandison said. "WSDA remains open for business and will continue to fulfill its mission of supporting our state's agriculture industry. I would encourage the public to call, email or use our website to connect with us for the time being."

The public can still reach WSDA staff for regular business and assistance. All WSDA divisions are accessible by phone and email. You can reach the agency at (360) 902-1800 or find specific program contact information on their website at [agr.wa.gov/contact-us](http://agr.wa.gov/contact-us).

For more information on WSDA's response to COVID-19, visit [agr.wa.gov/about-wsda/news-and-media-relations/covid-19](http://agr.wa.gov/about-wsda/news-and-media-relations/covid-19)

**Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).** Although Ecology is closed to walk-in service at least through May 4, staff is available by telephone and email. Routine inspections have been suspended, but the agency continues to respond to spills, provide technical assistance, ensure permit coverage for regulated activities and enforce the laws that protect the environment.

Ecology's ag burn team is also still active and making daily burn decisions. They are, however, asking people to consider the potential impacts on neighbors and local emergency responders before starting an outdoor burn of any type and to postpone or cancel if at all possible.

For more information on Ecology's response to COVID-19, visit [ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/Coronavirus-Updates/Compliance-assistance](http://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/Coronavirus-Updates/Compliance-assistance) ■

## USDA releases another \$19 billion for agriculture aid

In mid-April, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced \$16 billion in direct support to farmers based on actual losses where prices and market supply chains have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will also spend \$3 billion in purchasing fresh produce, dairy and meat products and distributing the supplies to food banks, community and faith-based organizations and other nonprofits serving Americans in need.

During this time of national crisis, Perdue said in a press

release, "...the American food supply chain had to adapt, and it remains safe, secure, and strong, and we all know that starts with America's farmers and ranchers. This program will not only provide immediate relief for our farmers and ranchers, but it will also allow for the purchase and distribution of our agricultural abundance to help our fellow Americans in need."

Further details of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will be released later. The National Association of Wheat Growers expects that the initial round of aid will prioritize assistance for livestock, dairy and specialty crop producers. USDA will also have an additional \$14 billion through the CCC available in July. ■

## Wheat acres planted in PNW down 1 percent from 2019

From the National Agricultural Statistics Service

Washington is estimated to have 2.22 million total acres planted to wheat in 2020, down 2 percent from last year. Winter wheat planted acres are expected to total 1.70 million acres for this year, down 3 percent from 2019. Spring wheat acres planted are estimated at 520,000 acres, up 2 percent from last year.

Wheat producers in Idaho expect to plant 1.21 million acres of wheat for harvest this year, up 1 percent from 2019. Winter wheat acres planted are estimated at 730,000 acres, unchanged from last year. Planted acres of Durum wheat in Idaho, are estimated at 5,000 for 2020, unchanged from the previous year. Spring wheat planted acres, excluding Durum, are expected to total 470,000 acres, up 2 percent from last year.

Total acres planted to winter wheat in Oregon are estimated at 740,000 acres for 2020, unchanged from 2019.

Nationally, all planted wheat acres are expected to total 44.7 million acres, down 1 percent from 2019. Winter wheat acres are estimated at 30.8 million acres, down 1 percent from 2019. Durum wheat planted acres in the U.S. for 2020 are estimated at 1.29 million acres, down 4 percent from

## How are we doing?

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



the previous year. All other spring wheat is estimated at 12.6 million planted acres, down 1 percent from 2019. ■

## More than 3.4 million acres selected for CRP sign-up

The 2020 general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up closed on Feb. 28. In March, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced they were accepting more than 3.4 million acres into the program. In Washington state, more than 283,000 acres were offered with 277,533 accepted, a 98 percent acceptance rate.

“The Conservation Reserve Program is one of our nation’s largest conservation endeavors and is critical in helping producers better manage their operations while conserving valuable natural resources,” Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue said in a press release. “The program marked its 35th anniversary this year, and we were quite pleased to see one of our largest sign-ups in many years.”

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers receive an annual rental payment for establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees,

to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Farmers and ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to the nation’s environment and economy.

This general sign-up included offers for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), which allows producers to install practices that benefit high-priority, locally developed wildlife conservation objectives using targeted restoration of vital habitat. Over 95 percent of SAFE offers submitted were accepted under this general sign-up representing more than 487,500 acres. Washington state had 100 percent of its offered 7,747 SAFE acres accepted.

The 2018 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for CRP, with the total number of acres that may be enrolled capped at 24.5 million acres in 2020 and growing to 27 million by 2023. Sign-ups for continuous CRP, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, CRP Grasslands and the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) are ongoing. The CRP Grasslands deadline is May 15, and the SHIPP sign-up ends Aug. 21, 2020. Continuous and Grasslands enrollments are available nationwide. All counties in the Prairie Pothole region states of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota are eligible for SHIPP. ■



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# POLICY MATTERS

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## Despite funding cut, Soil Health Initiative moving forward

By Trista Crossley

At the end of March, Gov. Inslee vetoed 147 new spending items when signing the supplemental operating budget, reducing the state's spending by nearly \$445 million to help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Included in those vetoes was \$788,000 to Washington State University (WSU) as part of the Soil Health Initiative (SHI). Two other SHI spending items, however, were left in the budget: \$200,000 to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and \$55,000 to the State Conservation Commission (SCC).

The purpose of the SHI (otherwise known as **SB 6306**, sponsored by Sen. Marko Liias (D-Lynwood)) is to support and improve agricultural viability by improving farm profitability and to help ag producers implement good soil health practices that build soil organic matter, reduce soil erosion and improve nutrient management, all leading to more accessible, more nutritious crops. WSU's primary responsibility will be to establish soil health research and demonstration sites across the state. WSDA is responsible for compiling soil health data to establish a "state of the soils" assessment for the state, while the SCC will work with farmers and ranchers to implement any practices that come from the research.

According to Kelly McLain, WSDA policy advisor to the director/legislative liaison, some of the reasoning behind the veto was that WSU got initial seed money for the SHI last year, but neither WSDA or the SCC got any funding. WSDA will be using the money to hire a senior scientist to coordinate soil health activities with WSU and the SCC; the agency is currently drafting the job description and hopes to fill the position by July.

McLain said the first task of the new hire will be to complete an assessment of the state's soil and work with WSU to evaluate the available data. Although some parts of the state's agricultural industry, such as dryland wheat, has decades of cropping systems research available, that's not the case for many of the state's other crops.

"Where do we have gaps, and where do we need information to set a baseline? Without a baseline, we can't move forward very easily," McLain said. "Really, it's a matter of pulling in all that great information from dryland agriculture and looking at what we have from other crop-

ping systems and figuring out where to prioritize getting information first."

The money WSU received last year was targeted for regions where soil health information was scarce, primarily on the west side of the state. That little bit of a head start means the vetoed funding for WSU shouldn't set the SHI back too far but still it slows the process. The university has the option to ask for the rest of the funding next year. McLain said the SHI received almost unanimous support from legislators across the state.

"That's a huge credit for the legwork done by agriculture, agencies and the university to explain that healthy soils are a resource and a public benefit," she said, especially in this period of uncertainty where the importance of agriculture is becoming more obvious. "This is the perfect time for us to be moving forward on something that is really substantial. Not only will it be great for farmers, but will be great for the people of Washington." ■

## WAWG submits comments on Columbia River draft EIS

*In mid-April, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) President Ryan Poe submitted the following comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in response to the Columbia River System Operations draft EIS for the organization.*

On behalf of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on the Columbia River System Operations. We applaud the efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation and others who put forth research and encourage movement forward with science-based decisions.

WAWG represent thousands of farmers across Eastern Washington and farm landowners throughout the region. We strongly support the Congressionally mandated multi-use functions of the Columbia-Snake River System and the preferred alternative brought forth in the EIS that rejects



dam breaching measures as part of Multiple Objective Alternative 3. Maintaining a balance between the economy and the environment is critical to Pacific Northwest life and culture.

Regional wheat producers rely on a complex system of rivers, rail and highways to transport our product. Of the nearly 143 million bushels of wheat produced in Washington, about 60 percent of it is transported via the Columbia-Snake River System. Barging is proven to be the most efficient and least carbon-intensive mode of cargo transportation available to us. Our economies are not prepared to function without the availability of barging. Our highway, rail and grain elevator networks would need more than \$1.1 billion in capital investments to adapt. This includes the cost to rehab hundreds of miles of shortline rail track that has been abandoned; new rail that would need to be built; major highway improvements that would be necessary; and retrofits required for grain elevators that do not have rail-loading capabilities. But that is only the tip of the iceberg. There will be additional safety costs, wear and tear on our county roads, etc., all of which will have financial repercussions to my farm and other farm operations. ▶



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In addition, having competing transportation options helps keep the overall cost of transporting grain in check. Without barging, the EIS estimates a 33 percent transportation cost increase. But with many factors at play, such as additional truck purchases that might be required in order to move grain further; freight rate increases; fuel, rail and road improvement expenses; and more that will assuredly be passed on to the farmer, we contend the increased cost to be much higher and request that the final EIS be updated to include these specific costs, including transition costs, that would be associated with no navigation on the lower Snake River. The current market price for a bushel of wheat is at or near the cost of growing that bushel. Any additional expenses, like increased transportation costs, could push farmers into the red and make farming an unviable livelihood.

Even though I move most of my wheat on the rails, not on the river, the loss of barging as a transportation option will still impact my bottom line. Without the competition, rail rates are likely to rise, making it more expensive for me to ship my wheat. And as more wheat is pushed onto the rails, availability may become an issue, leaving me with no way to ship my wheat or having to deal with significant shipping delays that will incur additional storage expenses.

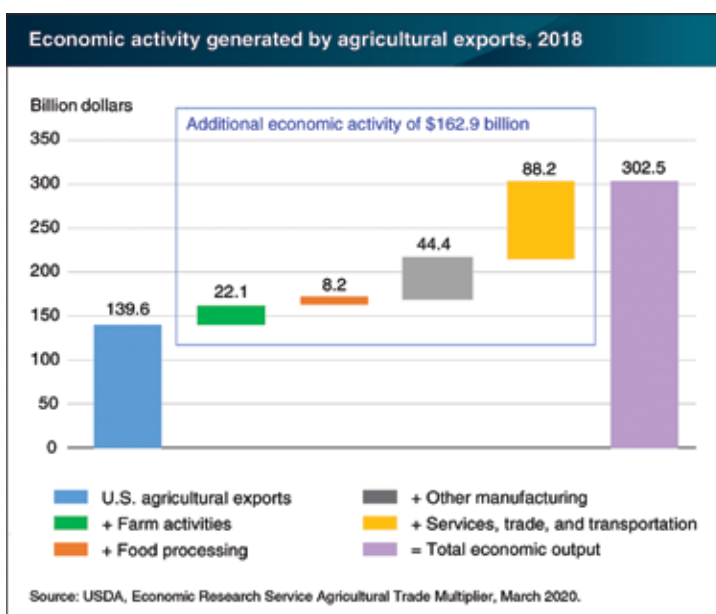
Not only is the river system essential to transport commodities to market, but farmers and others rely on barges to transport fuel, fertilizer and other inputs upriver. Nearly 7.3 million gallons of liquid nitrogen alone were

barged upriver in 2019 to just two river terminals, which equates to 516 rail cars or an additional 1,548 truckload deliveries. In the case of transportation, the river truly does flow in two directions. We request that the final EIS include the costs of lost barge service on all of the freight moving on the river, not just wheat moving downriver. At the same time, it must be recognized and accounted for in the final EIS, that rail rates throughout the Northwest for all commodities will rise as capacity is constrained. It will not only be the wheat that would have to transition from the river.

Our membership base largely resides, and industry partners are based, in rural communities. Communities that depend on power generated by river dams. If the dams on the lower Snake River, for example, were replaced by a combination of other energy sources, rates could increase as much as 19 percent as referenced in the EIS. The role of dams to produce affordable, reliable, clean and renewable energy cannot be easily dismissed or replaced.

We do have some concern with some of the analysis contained in the EIS regarding dam breaching and believe many of the costs associated with dam breaching and thus lack of navigation are understated. WAWG maintains our strong opposition to any attempt to breach the lower Snake River dams and considers such a possible disruption to the river system to be an extreme—and unnecessary—measure. Dam breaching would have devastating and long-lasting impacts on our industry and many

**EXPORTS OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 2018 CREATED AN ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL \$162.9 BILLION IN THE U.S. ECONOMY.** Exports constitute a large market for U.S. farm and food products and send ripples of activity through the nation's economy. For instance, farm purchases of fuel and fertilizer to produce agricultural commodities for export spur economic activity in the manufacturing, trade and transportation sectors, and the movement of these exports requires data processing, financial, legal, managerial and administrative services. This additional economic activity is estimated annually by the Economic Research Service (ERS) using an agricultural trade multiplier that measures the employment and output effects of trade in farm and food products on the U.S. economy. Similarly, the agricultural trade multiplier can be utilized to evaluate impacts of shocks such as COVID-19 on the agricultural sector. In 2018, U.S. agricultural exports valued at \$139.6 billion generated an additional \$162.9 billion in economic activity, for a total of \$302.5 billion in economic output; thus, on average, every dollar of U.S. agricultural product exported generated \$1.17 of additional domestic economic activity. No sector outside of crop and livestock production benefited more than the services, trade and transportation sector, which generated \$88.2 billion worth of additional economic activity due to U.S. agricultural exports. On the farm, agricultural exports supported an additional \$22.1 billion of business activity beyond the value of the agricultural exports themselves. This chart is drawn from ERS's Effects of Trade on the U.S. Economy, released March 2020.



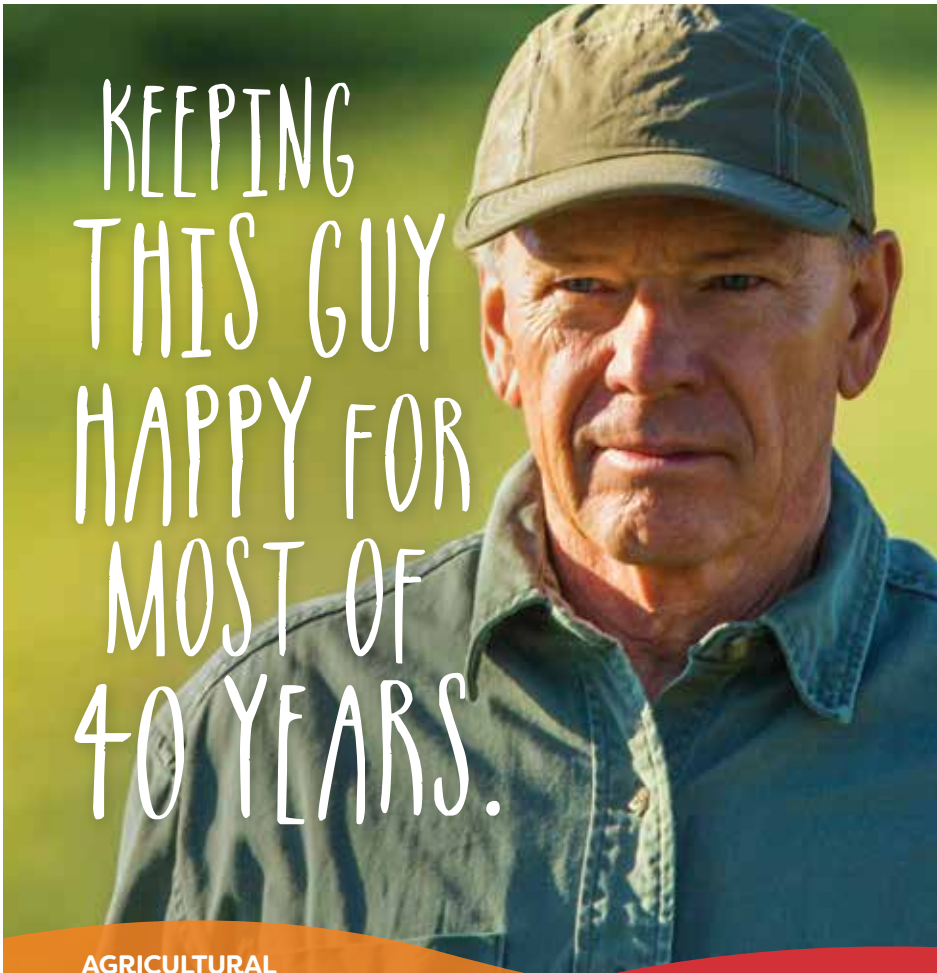


Northwest communities that rely on the clean power, irrigation supply and navigable waters made possible by our federal system of locks and dams. Breaching would not only negatively affect agriculture, but also manufacturing, transportation, trade and tourism businesses.

Fish and dams with fish by-pass systems can, and do, coexist. By using water management measures, fish recovery can continue while meeting the region's needs for water, power, navigation and trade. Fish passage facilities have benefited from large-scale investments in recent years. These facilities now allow more than 95 percent of fish to pass each of the federal dams safely. Investments to improve fish passage results should continue, rather than taking extreme actions like breaching the dams, which would create substantial environmental and infrastructure challenges.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, ocean conditions continue to have the greatest impact on salmon survival—whether they pass through dams or not. Ocean conditions need to improve for fish numbers to substantially increase. We agree with the EIS when it calls for further action outside the scope of the Columbia-Snake River System to accelerate the recovery of anadromous fish like salmon. We need to consider the whole ecosystem and not limit our focus to the dams on the Columbia-Snake River System.

For decades, the benefits of the Columbia-Snake River System have contributed to thriving communities in the Pacific Northwest. 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 in order to transport inputs and move our commodities to the rest of the world. We encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to finalize its report and support the Preferred Alternative as outlined in the draft EIS. ■



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## NORTH BY NORTHWEST SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUTREACH UPDATE

The second half of March saw a huge improvement on our social networks. After working through the Facebook ads roadblocks, we got back on track to spread key messages. We also revamped the nutrition section of the website and started uploading the new Craig Hunt blogs and videos (see blog example below), which helped to increase traffic to the mobile-friendly site. We have launched a new strategy and implementation calendar to increase our impact on social media with specific messages. We have also been making plans for a booth at the Brewers Festival in June in Redmond.

Still aligning with the key takeaways from our 2019 consumer survey, we are now focusing on consistent messaging around the following topics:

- Agronomics/How Farms Work;
- Climate/Non-GMO/Dams;
- History/Heritage;
- Video of Farmers/Meet a Farmer; and
- Nutrition/Food.

Our top social media posts of the month featured an Almira-area farmer, Todd Bodeau, historic photo of seeding and a repost of a Columbia River bar pilot's video.

## THE LOW CARB DIET MERRY-GO-ROUND

By Craig T. Hunt, RDN

Low carb, good carb, net carb, bad carb—it's a confusing mix of diet terms that makes people want to throw in the kitchen towel. And maybe that's not such a bad thing, except each diet has been helpful to someone. Very low carb diets are medically therapeutic for people with certain types of epilepsy, and low carb diets have helped people lose weight and improve blood sugars.

Most diets have been repackaged on the diet merry-go-round for decades under various names; Atkins and Protein Power are cousins to Keto and Paleo. But for as many people as diets have helped, there are far more people that have experienced the "yo-yo." To radically alter food intake for a month or even a year and then return to old habits beckons the question, were any sustainable health benefits achieved?

The evidence is clear that most Americans would benefit from making food and lifestyle changes, but that doesn't mean a wholesale makeover is warranted. The Japanese word for taking small steps is Kaizen, and instead of launching a new diet, how about adding more vegetables to lunch or dinner? How about substituting a whole grain food for a refined one? Instead of skipping most meals, how about eating enough during the day to avoid overfeeding just before bedtime?

The determination of starting a new diet can be alluring, but many small steps over time can add up to a significant and sustainable lifestyle shift—and there's no need to throw in the kitchen towel. ■



### Calendar:

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

June Shoot, **TBD**

Harvest Classic Golf  
Tournament, **TBD**

### Reminders:

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

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# Aiming for 2021

## LEGISLATOR HOPES DNR LEGISLATION FINDS ITS FOOTING NEXT YEAR

By Trista Crossley

**Rep. Chris Corry** (R-Yakima) is hoping third time's the charm for his bill that would require the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to compensate growers when some leases are terminated early.

The 2020 Legislative Session was the second time Corry has sponsored legislation seeking to change the way DNR handles early termination of agricultural leases, especially under their "higher and better use" clause.

The bill, **HB 2498**, passed the House unanimously, but failed to get out of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks before the policy cutoff deadline. The bill was almost universally supported, including by DNR. Corry is planning to reintroduce the bill next year.



"Stuff dies all the time. Some stuff you have to fight three to five years to get through," Corry said. "I'm thankful that DNR is on the back end implementing policy, and I'm hopeful next year we will have no roadblocks getting this through."

The bill's genesis was in 2018, when Corry heard from a rancher in Goldendale whose lease had been terminated five years early by DNR. As a result, the lessee was forced to move livestock and remove improvements even though the department had not leased the land at a higher rate. The rancher was left with no way to protest, much less recoup his or her costs. Under their current lease contracts, DNR is required to give growers 180 days notice if they intend to invoke the higher and better use clause, but they are not required to compensate growers for any improvements that have been made to the land or pay any penalties for terminating a lease early. That struck Corry as very wrong.

"That didn't seem like the fair thing to do. We have all sort of tenant rights when it comes to renters, why wouldn't farmers have the same rights?" Corry said.

His first bill, introduced in the 2019 Legislative Session, would have banned DNR's ability to terminate leases early without the written consent of the lessee. The department pushed back, testifying against the bill. DNR's argument was that they have a fiduciary responsibility to get as much money off of state lands as possible and need to be able to move quickly when a better rental opportunity presents itself. Those monies are used to help fund public school construction across the state. Corry said he understood DNR's position but still felt like the situation needed to be fixed. That first bill died in committee.

"My comment to DNR and to stakeholders was, 'I'm not done. This is wrong and we need to figure out a solution,'" he recalled. Surprisingly, DNR agreed.

Throughout the summer of 2019, Corry, representatives from the department and agricultural stakeholders met to figure out a solution that would protect the statutory requirements of DNR while at the same time, providing some security to farmers and ranchers who entered into lease agreements with them. The resulting plan required DNR to:

- Provide written documentation that DNR has included the leased land in a plan for higher and better use, land exchange or sale;
- For grazing leases, pay the lessee the annual rent for the leased land, multiplied by six, for the years remaining on the lease;
- For agricultural leases, pay the lessee the expected return from crops raised on the land, less expenses, for the years remaining on the lease;
- Compensate lessees for any improvements made to the land; and
- Reimburse lessees for any penalties resulting from early withdrawal from a natural resources conservation service program.

Initially, DNR advocated for putting the requirements into the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), which regulates how state agencies work. Corry disagreed, saying that although he trusted the DNR staff he was working with, he didn't necessarily trust who would come after—WACs were too easy to change. Instead, Corry wanted to put the requirements into the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), meaning they become law.

"If they want to change (those requirements), they'll have to come to the Legislature to ask for that so stake-



holders would be involved,” Corry said. All interested parties agreed to that course of action, and HB 2498 was introduced. “When I say everybody was on board, everybody was on board. I jokingly told people, ‘We will walk into that meeting holding hands and singing Kumbaya,’ and we did. The department liked it. They knew it was the right thing to do.”

The bill was sailing along with no opposition until it stalled in the Senate Ag Committee at the end of the 2020 Legislative Session due to what Corry called a “misunderstanding.” A senator mistakenly thought the money that would be used to compensate lessees was going to come out of the school trust fund. In reality, DNR would use money from their annual budget. The good news, however, is that DNR is moving forward with the plan, implementing it as a policy for all new leases. Existing leases will be considered for the new policy on a case-by-case basis. Corry said the support of DNR has been crucial.

“I think they (DNR) were starting to have a more human approach, and this was an evolution of that. I knew if I couldn’t get the department’s support on this, it wouldn’t go through the Legislature. I did everything I could to respect their needs and balancing our needs. I think we had

a good piece of legislation that did both. Now, we need them to come along with me next year,” Corry said.

**Duane Emmons**, DNR product sales and leasing division manager, has been working with Corry on this legislation from the beginning. Emmons said DNR has been hearing from lessees that the fact that leases can be terminated early with no compensation is influencing how and what kind of investments are being made on the leased land.

“We said we do need to recognize that,” Emmons said.

“We reached out to Rep. Corry and said let’s all get together and talk about this. Let’s try to work on this together so it does both things. It protects (the school) trust and our fiduciary responsibility and is also fair to the lessee and helps with



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that rural economic development as much as it can."

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), along with other ag industry stakeholders such as the Farm Bureau and the Washington Cattlemen's Association, provided input on the legislation. WAWG took special interest in this bill, thanks to a situation in 2016 where five dryland wheat farmers in the Horse Heaven Hills in Benton County abruptly lost their DNR leases with only 60 days notice. Although the department eventually agreed to provide some compensation to those farmers and made some changes to their procedures regarding terminating leases early, many growers felt DNR handled the situation poorly. Emmons said DNR has only used the early termination clause 12 times in the last 20 years, with most of those being in that Horse Heaven Hills situation.

"In those discussions, we came to realize that people are making investments (based on the lease terms), and knowing 'oh hey, DNR could take that lease from you any time,' people aren't going to bid as much," Emmons said, adding that the department hopes that by offering compensation, potential lessees will be willing to bid more for the leases and will be willing to make improvements to the land. "It's kind of a win-win for us. It's just a good business decision."

Both Corry and Emmons were very disappointed when they learned the fate of the bill.

"It's very rare that all parties agree (on a piece of legislation), and that we all supported it. There was no opposition from anyone," Emmons said. "Even the trust beneficiaries supported it."

WAWG lobbyist Diana Carlen

and several wheat growers testified in support of the bill during a public hearing of the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources. Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director, said while wheat growers were frustrated that the bill didn't pass, they were encouraged by DNR's support of the legislation and the department's recognition that growers should be fairly compensated when leases are terminated early.

"We've worked before with DNR on their lease language, so when Rep. Corry approached us to get involved, we were more than happy to help," Hennings said. "We feel like the resulting legislation adequately compensates growers but still adheres to DNR's responsibility to generate funds for the school trust. We want to recognize the department for their willingness to work with the ag industry, and we want to thank Rep. Corry for all his efforts in trying to make this situation right."

Ryan Poe, WAWG president and a farmer in Hartline, Wash., said that his family currently has two DNR leases, and he understands how devastating it can be for a farmer to suddenly lose a big chunk of leased land and to be left holding the check for any improvements or input investments.

"Many farmers rely on leased land, including DNR land, for a good portion of their income, so it can be unsettling to know that at any time, that land could be pulled out from under you," Poe said. "We applaud the work done by Rep. Corry and DNR and have every confidence that the bill will be successful next year."

Recently, there has been increasing interest from solar companies in leasing DNR land, especially in Eastern Washington. Emmons said the department is making an effort to communicate more openly with its lessees. DNR has sent letters to farmers who are leasing land that has been identified as being of interest for future solar development.

"We don't do these early terminations lightly," he said "We don't want to say, 'hey, here's a 10-year lease, and now we are taking it away.' Areas are seeing increased interest in solar development and wind development, and we recognize that there is that competing interest." ■



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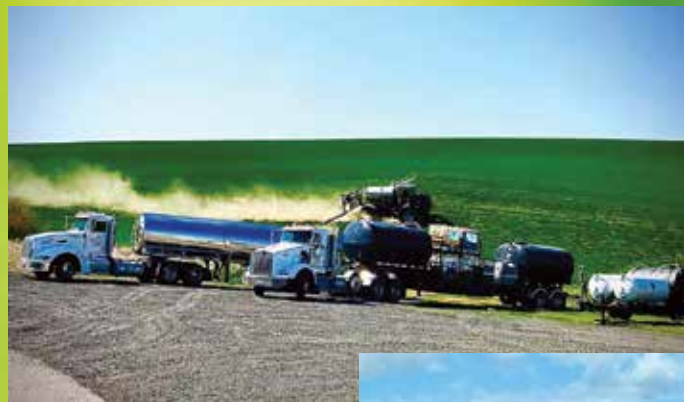
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Spring fieldwork waits for no one. Despite social distancing and stay-at-home orders, life for farmers in Eastern Washington has essentially continued as normal. Fields still need seeding, and crops still need spraying. Thanks to all those who sent photos in: Jennifer Camp, Markus Fletcher, Marci Green, Stephanie Heitstuman, Taylor Hof, Ryan Houston, Tyler Kincaid, Benay Lyman, Alicyn Moon, Ryan Poe, Max Polson, Jeff Reinhardt, Jacob Smith, Kristi Smith, Alison Viebrock Steveson, Owen Viebrock, Nathan Wall, Brad Walter and Kristin Alme Zeimer. ■



# BUSINESS AS USUAL IN EASTERN WASHINGTON WHEAT COUNTRY



# Rounding up the gains of conservation tillage

NO-TILL, DIRECT SEEDING HAVE MANY BENEFITS, BUT ONE IMPORTANT TOOL IS CAUSING CONFLICT

By Trista Crossley

There's very little disagreement that no-till and direct seed cropping systems are responsible for dramatic improvements in soil health and a reduction in erosion in Eastern Washington. There is, however, lots of disagreement over one of the main tools that makes those cropping systems viable—herbicides, especially glyphosate (also known commercially as Roundup).

Both no-till and direct seeding are considered low-disturbance systems where farmers don't plow their fields but instead fertilize and seed through the previous year's crop residue. According to Ty Meyer, executive director of the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (PNDSA), direct seeding usually involves up to two passes over a field and causes a little more disturbance than does no-till, which generally only involves a single pass. That's compared to three or more passes in a conventional tillage operation.

One of the main obstacles growers face when practicing

no-till and direct seeding is the management of weeds, volunteer crops and disease, which in conventional farming is done, at least in part, by more tillage. If a farmer doesn't want to till their fields, they have to turn to other methods.

"Where other people sometimes have the capacity to take care of weeds and other challenges with tillage, in direct seed and no-till operations, we utilize glyphosate to keep from doing a lot of tillage on the ground," Meyer explained. "There's multiple benefits to that. One being that we are not disturbing the ground enough to have to deal with heavy erosion during critical periods around the region."

Another reason farmers need to kill any plants in a field before seeding is to prevent the "green bridge." That term refers to the ability of plants, usually weeds or volunteer crops from the previous year, to harbor pests and diseases and pass them onto the new crop. So herbicides provide



Direct seeding spring wheat in Lincoln County.





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both weed control and disease control for no-till and direct seed farmers.

"I think glyphosate has really enabled producers to advance these systems and become successful in conservation-based systems," Meyer said. "Without tillage, you need another tool to be able to manage (weeds and disease). That's been glyphosate, which up to this point, has been one of the main tools."

That's certainly true for Larry Cochran, a Whitman County wheat farmer who transitioned to 100 percent direct seeding about 15 years ago after experimenting with the practice since the 1970s. As a child, he recalled seeing erosion ditches so big a combine couldn't cross them.

"Erosion in the Palouse area was always horrendous," Cochran said. "My analogy when talking about no-till/direct seeding is it is a puzzle, and glyphosate was the final piece to complete the puzzle. We had farmers trying no-till before Roundup came out, and they could get by one year, but then it would be a disaster. They couldn't get rid of volunteer."

In a paper printed in a 2008 issue of *Scientific American*, David R. Huggins, a soil scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service in Pullman, Wash., and John P. Reganold, regents professor of soil science at Washington State University, estimated that by the late 1970s in the Palouse, soil erosion had removed 100 percent of the topsoil from 10 percent of the cropland, along with another 25 to 75 percent of the topsoil from another 60 percent of that land.

Up in Douglas County, Howard McDonald and his son, Travis, started transitioning some of their ground to direct seeding five years ago and use glyphosate to help control weeds. McDonald has also seen huge improvements in wind and water erosion but admits there's a learning curve as he figures out how to deal with crop residue.

"We don't have big dust storms like we used to," he said. "Glyphosate is a tool, and we use it on both our conventional ground and direct-seeded ground."

Today, Meyer estimates that more than 50 percent of the cropland in Eastern Washington is either in no-till or direct seed systems. PNDSA estimates that reduced soil disturbance and increased crop residue on the soil's surface can reduce water

and wind erosion by at least 90 percent, improving air and water quality. Other benefits of conservation-based tillage systems include increased water retention in the soil; improved soil health; reduced soil compaction; reduced fuel costs and greenhouse gas emissions; and better wildlife habitat.

Cochran said since moving to 100 percent direct seeding, he's increased his production while decreasing expenses, mainly in the amount of fuel he uses. He also says his soil structure is much better.

"I've got these clay ridges that used to turn to marbles after plowing them. I couldn't do anything to them after that. Now, after Rounduping those hills and seeding them, the ground is mellower and works better. My organic matter is increasing, and yields are increasing. The erosion is almost gone," he said.

McDonald has also seen an improvement in the soil he direct seeds.

"I'm gradually seeing places that didn't grow wheat or had no straw now getting some straw and micro-organisms," he said.

The use of glyphosate isn't without criticism. While the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that glyphosate does not cause cancer when used according to label instructions, that hasn't stopped consumers from filing lawsuits against Monsanto, which originally produced Roundup, and then Bayer AG, which acquired Monsanto in June 2018. Some states and other countries have either banned the use of glyphosate or are attempting to ban it.

Any producer who applies glyphosate is required to have an applicator's license and be trained on the proper use of the chemical. If glyphosate is banned, growers will need to find other ways to control weeds and volunteer plants. Meyer suggests those methods might not necessarily be chemical in nature. He pointed to research showing that cover crops and more diverse crops can help in limiting unwanted growth.

"Certainly, I think we will see successful operations without glyphosate in the future, but it's dependent on what alternatives there are, and what we will do to manage some of the issues that will pop up if we don't have a tool like that," Meyer said. "Glyphosate is just one tool, and there are other tools in the toolbox in the form of chemicals that could potentially be used, but they may be more expensive and have different impacts on

*"There's a lot of young farmers who are very good farmers and passionate about what they do (direct seeding and no-till). But unless we have another tool like Roundup, kids wouldn't know how to run this older equipment. Glyphosate is only a tool. If there's a better mousetrap out there, tell us what it is, and let us use it."*

*—Howard McDonald  
Douglas County farmer*



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the system. I'm not going to judge one or another. The challenge I see for us, maybe it's not just a glyphosate issue. Maybe it's a chemical or pesticide issue we are dealing with overall. The focus is on glyphosate, but what else can we do? What can we change on our farms that's under our own control to have an impact on reducing the use of some of these inputs to manage diseases and weeds?"

Without glyphosate as a tool to control weeds, McDonald said he'd have no other choice but to till his ground. He pointed out that there's a generation of farmers who haven't raised wheat any other way but no-till or direct seeding, and many of them don't even have the right equipment for conventional tillage.

"There's a lot of young farmers who are very good farmers and passionate about what they do

(direct seeding and no-till)," he said. "But unless we have another tool like Roundup, kids wouldn't know how to run this older equipment. Glyphosate is only a tool. If there's a better mousetrap out there, tell us what it is, and let us use it."

Cochran isn't sure what he'd do.

"I wrack my brain trying to think what I would do (without glyphosate)," he said. "I still have the tillage equipment to go back to the old way, but I don't want to destroy what I've spent the last 40 years building." ■

## WAWG's stance regarding the use of glyphosate

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) supports the continued use of glyphosate for all applications and believes it is the choice of individual growers whether to utilize glyphosate or not. WAWG also opposes canceling crop protection product labels or uses unless equivalent replacement products are available. ■

## Herbicide resistance BMPs

Wherever and whenever herbicides are used, the potential for developing herbicide-resistant weeds exists, and it is a growing problem across the Pacific Northwest, not only to glyphosate, but to other chemicals as well. Washington State University (WSU) has compiled a list of best management practices (BMPs) to help growers manage herbicide-resistant weeds. According to WSU, BMPs are critical to the long-term sustainability of wheat production in the Pacific Northwest. Using BMPs is the most effective way to address herbicide-resistant weeds, especially when they are incorporated into a long-term weed management plan. To download a copy of the BMPs, visit WAWG at [wawg.org/herbicide-bmps/](http://wawg.org/herbicide-bmps/). ■



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## Forming responsible adults as an FFA chapter leader

Steve Braun, Liberty High School ag instructor

By Kevin Gaffney

**Steve Braun** was destined to be an ag educator, but he didn't recognize his calling until he was working his way through college.

Braun was raised in the small agricultural community of Cambridge, Idaho, in a family with several generations of farmers and ranchers. His grandfather, his father and three uncles raised wheat, barley, alfalfa and grass hay and beef cattle on their diversified farm. He was actively involved with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) during his high school years. Their Cambridge chapter was very competitive, and it paid off in a big way in 1989, when they took on a project that was part of the Building Our American Communities, a program to promote volunteerism.

The FFA group designed a plan to place new street signs throughout Cambridge. Their application was accepted, and the city agreed to fund the cost of the new street signs. The group did all the labor of installing the signs throughout town. Their project won the Idaho state award, beating all the larger schools. The award included a paid-in-full trip to Washington, D.C., for their ag instructor and for Braun, the FFA project leader.

"It was an unforgettable experience seeing the sights of our nation's capital and actually having the opportunity, with our group, to briefly meet with George H.W. Bush, the president of the United States," recalled Braun.

Another indelible impression was made when the group was taken to an elegant restaurant for dinner with an à la carte menu.

"Thank goodness RJR Nabisco was paying for the trip and the meals," said Braun. "The Idaho potato was listed on the menu for \$22. I couldn't believe it."

While Braun was still in high school, the family sold the farm and began a construction business. His father and uncles built several homes, barns and outbuildings on their family properties. Braun added to his farm work knowledge and experience by gaining many construction skills.

"I feel very privileged to have grown up in a family that was so skilled at so many trades," Braun said. "They were true craftsmen."

While in high school and during summers in college, Braun worked on farms and in the construction business with his father and other contractors. He also worked at his uncle's hardware store where he learned valuable



customer service skills that helped make him successful in the classroom.

Coming from a family with no four-year college graduates, Braun assumed he would stay in the Cambridge area and have a career in the construction business. Two of his teachers had other ideas about his career path potential, though. His fifth grade teacher and his high school ag instructor both strongly encouraged Braun to attend a university.

"I think everyone has had at least one teacher that motivated them to find their correct career path. I was fortunate enough to have two teachers who really believed in me and helped me gain the confidence I needed to succeed."

Braun attended the University of Idaho (UofI), earning his degree in ag education. He earned some scholarships, which strengthened his motivation to succeed in his studies. Braun added some extra classes in welding and plant science to round out his degree work.

"My degree is officially in agriculture education and career and technical education, qualifying me to be ag science and technology certified," explained Braun. "My classes include ag technology, ag leadership, robotics and ag mechanics. These classes encompass instruction in plant science, woodworking, welding, small engines and other subjects."





The Liberty High School FFA members who competed at the 2019 District 5 FFA Leadership competition. At far left on the first row is the group's Washington State University student teacher, Mellisa Rauch. Steve Braun is on the far right in the first row.

While at the UofI, Braun was involved with the collegiate FFA, and they helped sponsor the North Idaho District High School FFA contests. He got to know many of the regional FFA leaders and ag instructors at the area high schools.

Braun had originally planned to move back to the west-central Idaho region where he grew up, but fate stepped in when the ag teacher at nearby Troy, Idaho, was hired to take over as the school principal. Braun applied for the opening, was interviewed and was hired for the position.

"Troy High School is not an impressive new building," said Braun. "But my principal, Mr. Underdahl, shared his great wisdom. He explained to me that it's not the building that matters, it's how the students get instruction. It's the interaction between the teacher and the students that makes a consequential difference in their lives. That was a lesson I've never forgotten."

The Troy community fit Braun perfectly. He taught there for 20 years, leading numerous FFA teams to Idaho state competitions. Several teams and individuals advanced to compete at the national FFA level.

"FFA is an intracurricular organization for students interested in agriculture and leadership. It is one of the three components of agricultural education. Students must be enrolled in ag education classes to be a member of the FFA. They receive classroom instruction to develop competence in conducting research, the capacity for public speaking and other proficiencies. This prepares them for the second component, which entails personal growth and leadership development in FFA programs. Finally, they

participate in service or work-based learning to implement everything they have learned.

"We want them to be able to use the skills developed in FFA later in life for employable skills and also for critical thinking abilities they will need.

"My bottom line is that I want them to become good people and productive adults. I want them to care about themselves and care about their neighbors and to invest that care into their community."

The time to make a move from Troy came when state legislation complicated school levy scheduling, and Braun's contract was in jeopardy. He made some discreet inquiries and received several offers, including one from Liberty High School (LHS) near Spangle, Wash.

"My wife and I were invited to stop by Liberty on a Saturday, just to look it over and visit," remembered Braun. "We were very impressed by the principal, the superintendent and the overall facilities. To my surprise, before we left there that day, I was offered the position."

Braun joined the LHS staff in 2015. They have since built their home on some property between Spangle and Fairfield. He and his wife, Mandi, have three sons, Broc, Bryce and Blake.

More than 80 students are participating in Braun's ag education program, nearly half of the entire LHS student body of about 165 students. Braun said that one of the greatest rewards of his work is seeing a new freshman come in who can't put two sentences together in front of a group of his fellow students at the start of the year, then



being able to effectively deliver a speech and calmly respond to difficult questions by the end of the school year.

"Having a good ag program doesn't mean much without a supportive school administration and local community," noted Braun. "I have been blessed to have had that kind of support in Troy and now here at Liberty."

Over the years, Braun has had many teams and individuals win state competitions. He has also led teams and individuals to compete in the national FFA competitions.

In 2019, LHS had 41 students participate at state FFA competitions, either as part of a team or as individuals. They had 18 students show animals at the Junior Livestock Show in Spokane last year.

One complaint Braun has about his work is the excessive amount of paperwork required of teachers. He spends nearly half of each day simply filling out paperwork required by either state or federal regulations and guidelines.

"It is counterproductive. Time spent on paperwork is time not spent with my students. It has become ridiculous," he said.

"I am an ag teacher by choice, not by chance," is a career motto for Braun.

"I want to provide the students with an experience they can grow from," noted Braun. "To be competitive in life, you have to be willing to get invested and to put in the hard work that is necessary to accomplish your goals. I feel tremendously blessed that I have been provided with the opportunity to teach the students of the Liberty School District and to work in such a supportive community." ■

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# CHAIRMAN

## WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



As I write this near the beginning of April, the world continues to grapple with the fallout from COVID-19. The disease is making its presence felt even in farm country with companies issuing new protocols urging farmers picking up spring seed to communicate over the phone, stay inside their trucks and let elevator staff do their work without the usual banter all of us engage in.

I understand the rationale. This is not a time to take chances, and even though we live in rural Washington, we have gotten the message. The other day, an agronomist came to the farm and met with me, my brother and niece. Without a word, the four of us formed a large circle, standing six feet apart from one another, and nobody moved to shake hands. Nowadays, everyone understands that being polite takes a backseat to being considerate.

Although my children are grown, my heart goes out to parents and children who have seen school canceled, as well as sports and other end-of-the-year activities that are stitched firmly into the fabric of rural life. Those of us who have aged out of parenting still look forward to cheering on our favorite teams and athletes, and canceling these events is a profound loss to small communities and their residents. Even our community fair has been canceled, which is the one time of the year that everyone gathers to support our young people as they show their animals and exhibit their crafts.

All of us understand why these dramatic actions have been taken. COVID-19 is a new disease that currently has no cure and which can kill indiscriminately. It is particularly lethal to those in my age group and above, so I'm appreciative of the social distancing we've embraced to slow its spread.

Farmers exist in a sort of self-quarantine much of the time, so life is not so much different for many of us. Our offices, which consist of our pickups, trucks and tractors this time of year, don't have large staffs. But they do include smart phones, and we know how to use them!

When it comes to Eastern Washington wheat farming, I'm not anticipating any more than the usual challenges getting our spring crops seeded and our crops sprayed. But we are still in early days as I write this.

My biggest concern for agriculture right now centers around our transportation system. It is critical for delivering the inputs and repair parts we need this time of year, and it is also vital for transporting our products

to our customers and for food delivery to grocery stores. Our state's agricultural industry has communicated this fact to government officials, and I'm certain Washington will continue its role as a dominant agricultural exporter to countries around the world.

I feel sorry for the restaurants and small businesses in our communities that have had to close their doors to their walk-in patrons. It has been fascinating to watch how businesses have adopted marketing strategies to stay open by using take-out or delivery options. I'm sure everyone is making the extra effort to support the affected businesses during these trying times.

Although we are dealing with a pandemic, there are many things to be optimistic about. Conditions of the winter wheat crop looks good in most places. Although I was concerned about winter kill with the low temperatures we had in early March, it appears we dodged that bullet. It is still a long way from the field to the bin, but judging from comments made by my fellow commissioners at our March 12 grain commission meeting, winter wheat is starting the spring on a good footing, and conditions for spring planting are adequate too.

I continue to be cautiously optimistic that the four lower Snake River dams will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The recent environmental impact statement that came out with a preferred alternative against dam breaching is not the end of the story, but it is at least another inning in the game with runs scored.

Despite shifting world markets, I'm optimistic that U.S. Wheat Associates and its staff will continue to benefit American wheat farmers by emphasizing the value of our high-quality wheat. Closer to home, I'm optimistic the leadership of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers will persist in making our farmers' voices heard in Congressional hallways and caucus rooms.

I'm confident about the resiliency of the U.S. and believe that, while there will be wounds to lick on account of the COVID-19 pandemic both medically and economically, our nation will pick itself up as it always has and recover.

This is not a time to panic. This is a time to take stock and for the vast majority of us, it is a time to count our blessings. This too shall pass. Let's hope that soon we will once again be visiting face to face with our neighbors and friends. ■



## Falling Number Summit round 3

More answers to phenomenon, more questions, too

By Scott A. Yates



Alex McGregor, Chairman,  
The McGregor Company

With so many problems for farmers to keep track of every season, challenges which don't occur tend to drop off their radar screens. To some extent, that has been the story with falling numbers.

The absence of problems can also impact researchers who thrive on the challenge of solving ongoing problems, the emphasis being "ongoing." With reports of low falling numbers more limited after 2016 when farmers across the state lost millions of dollars to the discount, scientists may also feel the effects of its absence in terms of reduced funding.

That may have been one reason organizers of the third Falling Number Summit, held in Spokane on Jan. 28-29, 2020, invited Alex McGregor to be the event's opening speaker. McGregor, who is chairman of the McGregor Co., the largest family-owned agricultural input company in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), is well positioned to know exactly how 2016 impacted farmers and his message at the meeting was that farmers can't stand another falling number "punch in the gut."

There are two mechanisms that can create low falling numbers in wheat. The one that is well-known to wheat farmers is called preharvest sprout, or PHS, and is caused by rain on a mature crop before it can be harvested. The low falling number in such cases is attributed to the seed beginning to germinate while still in the head. The other mechanism causing low falling numbers is referred to as late maturity alpha-amylase, or LMA.

LMA is of a more recent vintage in the PNW. It is caused by low temperatures in the spring at a specific moment in the wheat plant's development, during the soft dough stage around 20 to 28 days after anthesis or pollen shedding. It doesn't manifest the same as PHS, and there is debate over whether it affects end-use product functionality as strongly as PHS. The fact farmers don't know whether they have suffered from it until harvest when they get their grades back makes it a particularly woeful discount.

Researchers are evaluating methods to deal with both PHS and LMA, but it's fair to say farmers are mostly concerned about the latter. Work at the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has identified varieties that are particularly susceptible to LMA, which appears to have a genetic trigger as well as an environmental one.

A PowerPoint slide used at the Falling Number Summit showed that other regions of the country have wheat varieties with less or greater LMA susceptibility. Washington State University ranks in the middle of the pack for now. The University of Minnesota has been particularly effective at releasing LMA-resistant cultivars.

As anyone who has heard Alex McGregor speak knows, his presentations include historical context, passion for farm families and straight talk. He did not disappoint in his Falling Number Summit presentation, reminding his audience of mostly scientists that as the PNW was being opened to farming, the U.S. Senate sponsored an investigation into obviously inflated wheat yields of 40 bushels an acre from "the rainless regions of Washington and Oregon."

"A USDA scientist came out and reported glowingly that here we raise huge crops without a



Ty Jessup,  
Grain Merchandiser,  
HighLine Grain

drop of rain from seed time to harvest—which may have pushed it a little bit,” McGregor said.

Today’s farmers, McGregor told his audience of wheat breeders, plant pathologists, research and molecular geneticists, industry representatives and overseas customers, are at economic risk with cautious bankers, negative cash flow and eroding equity. But he said some are running short of the most vital commodity of all—hope.

“Low falling number and late maturity alpha-amylase are risky stuff in tough times. Few can afford a repeat of 2016 when 40 percent of soft white wheat was clobbered, and farm losses were \$30 million, and according to some estimates, much higher than that,” he said.

McGregor, who has become an agribusiness liaison with the region’s scientific community on the subject of falling numbers, remarked about the various efforts underway to help navigate the discount’s minefield. Ultimately, he said, it will come down to genetics, but that is over the long haul.

“I think of growers when I give them my Alex-optimistic view about how better days are ahead, and how in the long term there is great hope. I’ve had people say, ‘Geez that’s great, Alex, but I have to get through the short haul to get to the long haul.’ So that is a reason it is so important to keep moving forward and identify a test that can be used in a practical sense to help people isolate and segregate problem areas,” he said.

Since the 2016 outbreak, LMA impact has been limited geographically. HighLine Grain, which has a draw area that runs from Spokane to Wenatchee, north of Interstate 90, has been ground zero for the phenomenon. The region has been hit with areas of low falling numbers 14 out of the last 17 years, which means the cooperative has created something of a brain trust on how to deal with it.

Ty Jessup, grain merchandiser at HighLine Grain,

## Summit chronicled in podcast

Learn more about the 2020 Falling Number Summit by listening to four Wheat All About It! podcast episodes devoted to the meeting. Hear Alex McGregor’s presentation in episode 167 and Ty Jessup’s in episode 168. Episode 169 is devoted to Agricultural Research Service molecular geneticist Camille Steber and research geneticist Kim Campbell discussing scientific progress and roadblocks. Episode 170 includes four experts in their fields discussing what has become an intractable problem. Listen to Wheat All About It! at the WGC website at [wagrains.org](http://wagrains.org) or by subscribing to the podcast through an app like iTunes for iPhones or Stitcher for Android phones. ■

## New hire to help with FN issue

Although the current rank of researchers investigating the falling number phenomenon have been doing a superlative job, their number will increase when a new Agricultural Research Service scientist is hired soon in Pullman. Funding for the new hire was secured by a \$1 million appropriation in the 2018 Congress, thanks in part to efforts by the Washington Grain Commission. As of press time, interviews have been conducted and an individual has been identified, according to Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission. “Everyone involved with the falling number challenge is eagerly awaiting the announcement of the individual who we believe will bring new energy to the effort,” he said. ■

spoke at the Falling Number Summit as the person in charge of ensuring that every cargo that leaves his facilities is above 300 falling numbers. He and his staff have developed a degree of expertise, but mistakes can and do happen—which cost thousands of dollars. Jessup, who also serves as an industry representative on the Washington Grain Commission, used the word “angst” several times during his talk, referring to the anxious worry that now comes with the job.

From the point of view of grain warehouses, there is now no way to differentiate between LMA-affected wheat and good wheat when it’s delivered at harvest.

“It looks the same, test weights are good, protein is good. Every year you might find little things that tip it off, but they are different every year,” Jessup said, adding that while sprout is one thing, with LMA “you have no idea until after it is in the bin” and in Davenport, the cooperative has a million bushel bin.

Jessup has become an expert at blending wheat according to a nonlinear “liquefaction” calculation. Wheat that has come in with a 250 falling number can be blended up into a 300 second cargo, he said, but anything below 250 needs to go for feed “because it just takes too much horse power to blend that up.”

Part of the frustration felt over LMA-affected wheat is because of the extreme variability field to field, load to load, sample to sample, he said.

“One of the major frustrations with producers is they planted their field, everything looks good, they go into harvest, they bring the sample—‘Ha, you have low falling numbers.’ They go to the next field, we get a sample, ‘Oh that’s good!’ Side by side, harvested within days of each other, same process, same procedures. That’s farmers’ frustration. Why wouldn’t it be?” he asked. ■



# Winter wheat yields down in 2019

By Clark Neely

What a year to start as the new leader of the Washington State University (WSU) Variety Testing Program (VTP)!

I arrived in Washington from Texas and began my appointment in early August—right in the middle of what turned out to be a hectic harvest and planting season due to unusually wet weather.

Now, like everyone else in the country and around the world, we are feeling the effects of COVID-19. Fortunately, the VTP has been recognized as a critical research activity, and spring trials continue to be planted on time while adhering to social distancing recommendations as much as possible.

Because of the many difficulties we are facing, I am particularly thankful we were able to make a vital hire before all of the major disruptions hit in mid-March. On March 1, Brandon Gerrish was hired as the new lead technician for the VTP. Gerrish, who has his Ph.D. in agronomy, was the program specialist for my small grains extension program at Texas A&M University. I'm excited with his decision as he brings multiple years of experience with implementing and maintaining small grains and oilseed research trials. This is the exact skill set needed to succeed and take the VTP to the next level.

The 2019 soft white winter trials consisted of 54 total entries in the greater-than-16 inch zone and 48 entries in the less-than-16 inch zone. Hard winter wheat trials consisted of 18 entries in both precipitation zones. The irrigated nurseries were made up of 54 soft and 18 hard entries. Depending on precipitation zone, 56 to 65 percent of soft white and 28 to 44 percent of hard winter wheat entries came out of public breeding programs in the Pacific Northwest, with the remaining entries provided by private companies.

Only results from named varieties are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Results from the 16-to-20 inch zone are unique because the Dayton and Walla Walla trials are done in cooperation with Oregon State University Extension. Due to the large number of entries, Clearfield varieties are separated into a unique trial at these locations. To view the results from these nurseries go to [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/variety-2019-data/](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/variety-2019-data/).

In most cases in 2019, yield was down a little more than 20 percent for the less-than-12 inch, 12-to-16 inch, and 16-to-20 inch precipitation zones compared to last year. We had a wide range in yields for the greater-



Shortly after arriving in the Pacific Northwest from his previous post at Texas A & M, Clark Neely (left) visited the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) office to visit with CEO Glen Squires and other Commission staff to talk about his plans for the Variety Testing Program, which is funded in part by the WGC.

than-20 inch zone, anywhere from 42 percent lower in Farmington to 35 percent higher in Fairfield. Likewise, we had mixed results on our two irrigated sites. Pasco (yield up 53 percent) received full irrigation while Moses Lake (yield down 44 percent) only received enough supplemental irrigation to get the crop established in the fall and top-dressed in the spring before diverting water to more valuable crops.

In the tables provided, you will find information on yield, test weight and grain protein summarized by precipitation zone for both soft white and hard winter wheats. In addition to the 2019 yield summary, a two-year yield average is also provided to give a more robust comparison among varieties.

For the newest entries, a “—” may appear in this column if it was not tested in 2018. When possible, it is

always preferable to use multiple years and locations within a region to better gauge the adaptation and yield stability of a particular variety. Every year brings its unique challenges, and a cultivar must be able to adapt to each and every one of them, not just one or two.

For more information, readers should visit the Washington State University (WSU) Small Grains website at [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety). Here you can view advanced breeding material in the trials, and how they compare to current varieties. This site also provides three- and five-year yield averages, and individual location data for test weight, protein, plant height and heading date.

This site also includes the Variety Selection Tool—an interactive spreadsheet that allows you to sort and select varieties by precipitation zone based on any characteristic that we measure. In addition to yield (two-year average), test weight and protein, this data includes winter hardiness, emergence, grain quality and the resistance level to several diseases.

Grain quality ratings are derived from the 2020 Preferred Wheat Varieties brochure available on multiple websites including the WSU Small Grains website and the Washington Grain Commission's website at [wagrains.org](http://wagrains.org). End-use grain quality is very important for Pacific Northwest (PNW) wheat due to strict market demands and should factor into growers' variety selection decisions. When possible, varieties with a "Least Desirable" rating should be avoided, and if two varieties are comparable in agronomic performance, pick the one with a higher grain quality rating to ensure PNW wheat maintains its reputation as a region that produces superior wheat quality.

Falling numbers have been of great interest in recent years. A rating for this characteristic has been developed and will be added to the Variety Selection Tool in 2020. For now, growers can compare falling numbers data among varieties at [steberlab.org/](http://steberlab.org/), which is provided by Dr. Camille Steber. In years when late maturity alpha-amylase develops due to a cold shock in the spring, this information is particularly valuable.

A copy of the 2020 Wheat Field Day Tour schedule has been posted to our website, but if social distancing does not permit public gatherings by June or July, a virtual tour will be posted on our website to walk growers through each variety. With that said, I am hopeful we can hold these scheduled field days, and I look forward to meeting many of you in person this spring. ■

*Acknowledgments: Funding for the WSU Extension Uniform Cereal Variety Testing Program is provided by the Washington Grain Commission. Variety trials are made possible by the contribution of land and time from farmer cooperators where the trials are located.*

**Table 1. 2019 WSU Extension Soft White Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

IRRIGATED						
	MOSES LAKE	PASCO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Blackjack (LWW15-71945)	57	150	104	101	55.7	12.2
ARS-Castella (ARS20060123-31C)	58	145	102	--	57.8	12.4
SY Dayton	51	148	100	92	56.9	12.8
LCS Hulk	55	144	100	96	59.5	12.9
Rosalyn	48	151	100	93	55.8	12.4
Xerpha	51	147	99	--	58.0	12.5
PNW Hailey	55	143	99	96	59.5	12.3
Resilience CL+	51	145	98	93	58.6	13.3
LCS Ghost (LWW14-74143)	45	151	98	98	54.6	11.9
Nixon (OR2121086)	52	142	97	90	57.7	13.1
LCS Shark	54	137	96	95	57.4	12.8
ORCF-102	51	140	96	--	58.9	12.8
LCS Artdeco	51	140	96	96	56.6	12.5
LCS Drive	49	141	95	97	56.7	12.5
Norwest Tandem	60	130	95	95	58.8	11.8
UI Sparrow	49	141	95	--	57.2	12.1
Stingray CL+ (WA 8275 CL+)	54	135	95	91	57.9	13.5
SY Ovation	58	129	94	92	57.8	13.0
Norwest Duet	54	132	93	92	57.5	12.5
WB1529	47	139	93	93	59.0	12.6
VI Frost (UIL 09-15702A)	52	134	93	--	57.3	14.2
Appleby CL+ (ORI2161250 CL+)	50	133	92	--	57.4	13.8
Purl (WA 8234)	48	135	92	91	57.5	13.3
SY Raptor	44	139	91	94	54.9	13.0
M-press	55	127	91	--	58.0	12.5
Madsen	45	136	91	--	57.6	13.6
Dyna-Gro Impact	53	128	91	90	58.7	12.6
UI Castle CL+	44	137	90	85	56.9	13.7
WB1783	50	130	90	92	59.3	13.7
Bobtail	45	135	90	90	54.9	11.9
VI Bulldog (UIL 07-28017B)	51	129	90	93	57.0	13.6
WB1604	44	135	89	91	57.6	12.8
Puma	53	126	89	89	58.0	13.4
UI Magic CL+	49	130	89	89	58.7	13.3
Jasper	52	121	87	87	55.6	13.2
YS-201	45	128	86	--	55.0	13.3
SY Assure	41	132	86	93	56.7	13.0
ARS-Crescent	48	114	81	--	57.5	12.8
OR2x2 CL+ (ORI2150031 CL+)	51	106	79	79	57.8	13.9
WB1376CLP	38	118	78	79	57	15
C.V. %	7	7	8	8	3	6
LSD (0.05)	5	13	7	5	1	1
Average	50	136	93	92	57	13



**Table 1. 2019 WSU Extension Soft White Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=>20"									Precipitation Zone=16-20"								
	COLTON	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		DAYTON	MAYVIEW	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD <sup>1</sup>	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%	
LCS Ghost (LWW14-74143)	149	105	87	103	111	126	57.4	8.7	Bobtail	87	73	109	118	97	112	58.8	9.9
Rosalyn	136	95	80	126	109	125	58.5	8.7	LCS Blackjack (LWW15-71945)	92	68	117	110	97	114	58.5	10.1
LCS Blackjack (LWW15-71945)	138	99	76	119	108	125	57.7	9.6	Xerpha	92	70	107	112	95	106	61.1	10.3
UI Sparrow	131	106	82	104	106	117	59.2	9.5	LCS Ghost (LWW14-74143)	91	59	120	110	95	111	58.6	9.3
Purl (WA 8234)	136	97	80	106	105	113	60.5	9.6	PNW Hailey	85	72	106	116	94	106	61.7	10.8
M-press	137	96	76	110	105	114	59.7	9.4	M-press	89	72	99	115	94	106	60.4	10.3
LCS Hulk	137	92	80	108	104	116	60.9	9.9	SY Dayton	84	72	100	117	94	104	60.4	10.2
ARS-Crescent	132	100	81	102	104	115	59.4	9.2	UI Sparrow	85	73	100	115	93	104	59.6	9.9
Jasper	134	99	80	99	103	118	58.6	9.5	Rosalyn	89	70	104	111	93	110	59.2	9.8
Norwest Tandem	137	97	73	105	103	113	59.2	9.7	ARS-Crescent	75	81	96	118	93	104	59.7	10.2
Bobtail	139	92	77	102	103	119	56.8	8.9	SY Raptor	80	69	106	114	92	105	59.9	10.3
Xerpha	137	96	76	101	103	114	59.8	9.5	Norwest Tandem	81	72	103	110	92	105	60.4	10.6
SY Raptor	133	93	77	107	102	114	58.8	9.4	Jasper	78	76	103	108	91	106	59.1	11.0
ARS-Castella (ARS20060123-31C)	131	94	78	105	102	113	59.5	9.5	SY Ovation	82	70	105	107	91	105	60.6	10.5
VI Bulldog (UIL 07-28017B)	135	90	80	100	101	116	59.1	9.8	Nixon (OR2121086)	85	67	98	110	90	101	59.9	10.6
WB1783	126	85	79	115	101	110	62.1	10.5	Purl (WA 8234)	81	64	98	114	89	101	60.6	10.7
UI Magic CL+	132	88	78	106	101	111	60.8	10.1	Puma	83	68	97	109	89	104	60.6	10.7
Stingray CL+ (WA 8275 CL+)	133	95	72	104	101	112	59.8	10.3	WB1783	79	65	103	109	89	97	62.7	11.2
Puma	133	86	85	99	101	112	59.9	9.6	ARS-Castella (ARS20060123-31C)	80	56	103	117	89	100	59.9	10.3
Dyna-Gro Impact	130	93	79	100	101	112	60.6	9.9	LCS Hulk	87	68	100	100	89	102	61.5	10.6
Nixon (OR2121086)	127	97	80	98	100	110	60.0	9.9	Norwest Duet	83	65	100	106	88	102	60.6	10.8
Resilience CL+	129	89	75	107	100	107	60.7	10.0	LCS Artdeco	86	59	102	102	87	103	59.3	10.1
PNW Hailey	133	88	73	105	100	114	61.5	9.7	VI Bulldog (UIL 07-28017B)	84	54	109	99	87	102	60.9	10.5
SY Dayton	131	92	76	98	99	112	59.3	9.8	Dyna-Gro Impact	72	69	97	109	87	102	61.0	10.7
Norwest Duet	131	95	84	87	99	115	59.7	9.7	VI Frost (UIL 09-15702A)	74	67	91	112	86	--	60.5	10.8
Madsen	125	89	77	102	98	105	60.4	10.1	Madsen	75	70	85	105	84	93	60.8	11.0
ORCF-102	127	95	73	96	98	108	60.6	10.0	SY Assure	78	51	101	105	84	99	61.2	11.0
VI Frost (UIL 09-15702A)	125	95	77	96	98	--	60.1	10.2	WB1529	74	56	97	103	82	95	62.1	10.9
UI Castle CL+	127	88	74	101	97	112	60.9	10.3	LCS Shark	82	60	91	96	82	98	59.2	10.6
YS-201	125	87	73	102	97	--	59.3	10.0	LCS Drive	81	56	100	86	81	97	59.1	10.6
SY Ovation	127	83	71	99	95	115	59.2	9.8	YS-201	74	55	94	96	80	--	59.6	10.9
LCS Artdeco	131	82	73	91	94	111	58.3	9.8	WB1604	68	47	93	99	77	95	60.4	11.1
SY Assure	119	86	77	94	94	106	60.4	10.4	SY Command	86	--	--	105	95	--	59.7	9.2
OR2x2 CL+ (ORI2150031 CL+)	116	90	72	92	93	100	60.0	10.6	Mary	79	--	--	107	93	--	60.9	10.6
LCS Shark	130	79	67	93	92	105	58.8	10.2	ORCF-101	81	--	--	103	92	--	61.5	10.7
WB1604	120	88	69	92	92	107	60.3	9.9	Pritchett	78	--	--	102	90	--	59.9	10.4
Appleby CL+ (ORI2161250 CL+)	114	75	75	89	88	--	59.9	10.2	LCS Shine (LWW14-72916)	82	--	--	97	89	--	60.8	9.6
WB1529	114	81	65	93	88	102	61.3	10.4	WB1532	77	--	--	100	88	--	61.3	10.6
LCS Drive	115	75	72	88	87	104	58.2	10.2	Stephens	72	--	--	103	88	--	60	10.7
WB1376CLP	102	74	69	89	84	96	61.4	11.1	SY Candor (09PN008#72)	80	--	--	92	86	--	61.1	10.9
C.V. %	4	5	7	8	6	6	1	3	LCS Biancor	70	--	--	95	82	--	60	9.9
LSD (0.05)	7.4	7	7	10	4	3	0	0.2	Kaseberg	73	--	--	87	80	--	60.5	10.3
Average	129	92	77	102	100	112	60	9.8	C.V. %	7	9	9	7	8	7	1	6
									LSD (0.05)	7.78	8	13	10	5	3	0	0.4
									Average	80	65	101	106	89	103	60	10.5

<sup>1</sup>2019 yield averages should not be compared among varieties that were not planted at the same locations. Varieties with same number of locations are grouped together.

**Table 1. 2019 WSU Extension Soft White Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=12-16"										
	ALMIRA	ANATONE	CRESTON	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu		%		
ARS-Castella (ARS20060123-31C) <sup>1</sup>	90	--	86	180	98	113	--	59.3	10.2	
LCS Shine (LWW14-72916) <sup>1</sup>	85	--	86	180	102	113	--	58.9	9.6	
Xerpha	91	64	88	194	107	109	110	59.4	10.0	
Jasper	80	67	86	186	113	106	109	58.3	10.2	
ARS-Crescent	95	71	80	182	104	106	108	58.6	9.5	
Norwest Tandem	88	61	87	186	104	105	105	59.0	10.1	
Pritchett	88	62	85	196	91	105	106	58.6	10.0	
Curiosity CL+	100	58	81	174	107	104	101	60.7	9.7	
UI Sparrow	80	59	91	188	102	104	105	58.4	9.9	
Norwest Duet	90	60	87	183	94	103	107.0	59.5	9.7	
Puma	89	61	92	180	87	102	103.0	59.6	10.4	
Nixon (OR2121086)	87	60	85	177	98	101	101	59.1	10.6	
M-press	79	49	102	178	94	100	105	59.7	10.1	
Otto	89	61	79	181	92	100	98	60.4	10.3	
Devote (WA 8271)	93	62	71	169	104	100	97	61.7	10.2	
SY Command	90	53	93	164	99	100	104	58.8	10.0	
LCS Sonic	95	60	83	156	103	99	105	58.9	10.2	
ORCF-102	88	58	87	165	97	99	101	59.8	10.7	
VI Frost (UIL 09-15702A)	88	62	76	176	91	98	104	59.4	10.6	
Mela CL+	92	57	69	168	105	98	97	60.5	10.0	
LCS Hulk	93	64	84	151	95	97	102	60.9	10.3	
Bruehl	79	58	72	183	89	96	98	58.0	10.3	
Eltan	88	56	75	159	99	95	96	60.0	9.6	
WB1529	90	53	77	156	95	94	98	60.9	10.5	
WB1532	77	56	70	170	96	94	95	60.0	11.1	
SY Candor (09PN008#72)	78	57	82	150	98	93	96.0	59.9	10.6	
Dyna-Gro Impact	83	58	73	151	92	92	98.0	60.2	10.5	
UI Castle CL+	75	62	68	159	87	90	95	60.6	11.0	
OR2x2 CL+ (ORI2150031 CL+)	80	44	71	164	88	89	94	59.1	11.0	
UI Magic CL+	85	59	64	150	88	89	94	60.2	10.7	
WB1783	88	48	79	139	87	88	95	61.4	11.1	
Appleby CL+ (ORI2161250 CL+)	83	53	61	145	90	86	--	59.3	10.8	
SY Banks	86	65	78	113	89	86	92	58.6	9.9	
WB1604	86	45	72	135	85	85	91	59.7	10.9	
WB1376CLP	76	57	60	138	83	83	85	61.2	11.8	
AICO101	74	46	63	139	84	81	--	58.1	10.8	
C.V. %	7	10	11	9	6	9	8	1	5	
LSD (0.05)	8.56	7	12	20	8	5	4	0.5	0.3	
Average	86	58	79	165	96	97	100	59.5	10.4	

Precipitation Zone=<12"										
	CONNELL	LIND	RITZVILLE	ST. ANDREWS	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu		%		
Xerpha	74	65	67	50	64	72	59.8	11.0		
LCS Shine (LWW14-72916)	70	69	67	46	63	66	59.9	10.2		
Norwest Tandem	68	64	65	51	62	66	60.0	11.0		
Devote (WA 8271)	72	57	63	48	60	67	61.5	11.3		
ARS-Crescent	62	70	63	45	60	67	58.8	10.9		
Otto	63	63	59	54	60	63	60.5	11.5		
Curiosity CL+	68	53	65	51	59	66	60.9	11.0		
SY Command	69	55	64	48	59	66	58.6	10.5		
M-press	67	59	61	47	59	67	59.8	10.9		
Pritchett	64	60	61	49	59	69	59.3	10.8		
UI Sparrow	65	63	56	50	59	64	59.4	10.8		
Eltan	65	53	62	52	58	62	61.3	10.9		
Norwest Duet	65	57	62	48	58	66	59.9	11.3		
LCS Hulk	69	55	59	47	58	65	60.5	11.6		
LCS Sonic	64	55	61	50	57	67	59.2	11.3		
ORCF-102	66	59	57	46	57	63	60.5	11.7		
SY Banks	70	56	57	46	57	63	58.4	11.0		
Jasper	67	53	61	47	57	66	58.4	11.8		
Mela CL+	66	51	61	47	56	63	60.2	11.2		
ARS-Castella (ARS20060123-31C)	66	57	58	45	56	65	58.8	10.7		
Puma	68	49	62	45	56	63	60.3	11.3		
VI Frost (UIL 09-15702A)	66	58	57	45	56	66	60.1	11.5		
Dyna-Gro Impact <sup>1</sup>	66	--	56	45	56	--	59.3	10.9		
UI Magic CL+	69	48	58	44	55	60	60.9	11.8		
Nixon (OR2121086)	65	53	58	43	55	61	59.1	11.3		
WB1783	66	50	61	41	54	62	61.6	11.6		
Bruehl	58	55	57	48	54	61	58.0	11.3		
WB1529	64	48	57	45	53	62	61.7	12.0		
SY Candor (09PN008#72)	71	43	57	42	53	62	60.1	12.1		
OR2x2 CL+ (ORI2150031 CL+)	61	50	58	43	53	61	59.6	12.2		
Appleby CL+ (ORI2161250 CL+)	65	45	59	41	52	--	60.4	11.9		
WB1604	64	53	51	42	52	60	59.2	12.0		
WB1376CLP	64	43	60	40	52	59	61.8	12.6		
WB1532	63	48	55	42	52	--	59.4	12.1		
AICO101	60	50	53	43	52	--	58.8	11.6		
UI Castle CL+	59	52	51	41	51	60	59.9	11.8		
C.V. %	5	10	7	7	8	8	1	4		
LSD (0.05)	5	7	6	5	3	2	0.6	0.4		
Average	66	55	60	46	57	64	59.8	11.4		

<sup>1</sup>ARS-Castella and LCS Shine were lost at Anatone due to preferential deer grazing. The 2019 yield average for these varieties is inflated due to this missing site.

<sup>1</sup>Dyna-Gro Impact was not planted in Lind due to late seed arrival.



**Table 2. 2019 WSU Extension Hard Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=>16"							
	DAYTON	PULLMAN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD <sup>1</sup>	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%	
Scorpio (WA 8268)	88	120	94	101	112	60.8	11.3
LCS Jet	87	112	100	100	116	61.6	11.1
LCS Rocket	86	110	99	98	120	60.2	10.7
LCS Evina	81	--	106	94	--	62.0	11.8
Keldin	82	110	88	93	109	61.4	11.6
AP Redeye (OSPNO44-20)	81	108	88	92	--	62.0	11.1
LCS Aymeric	80	103	92	92	--	60.5	10.1
SY Touchstone	79	100	94	91	107	62.7	11.5
LCS Zoom (LWW14-73915)	77	101	87	88	105	59.8	11.4
WB4623CLP	73	111	80	88	--	61.5	13.0
SY Clearstone CL2	70	106	82	86	--	61.2	11.7
UI Bronze Jade (IDO 1706)	77	--	94	86	--	61.2	10.7
Millie (OR2130118H) <sup>2</sup>	80	--	88	84	--	63.8	11.3
WB4303	76	90	84	83	106	61.2	11.6
WB4311	76	103	68	82	99	61.4	12.3
Irv (OR2110679) <sup>2</sup>	71	--	87	79	--	62.2	11.5
WB4394	69	--	84	77	--	62.3	11.5
Brawl CL+	58	--	64	61	--	62	12.9
C.V. %	7	8	8	8	8	1	3
LSD (0.05)	8	13	10	6	4	0.7	0.3
Average	79	107	91	89	110	61.4	11.4

<sup>1</sup>2019 yield averages should not be compared among varieties that were not planted at the same locations.

<sup>2</sup>Hard white wheat

Precipitation Zone=<12"									
	BICKLETON	CONNELL	LIND	RITZVILLE	ST. ANDREWS	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----						Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Jet	49	70	63	67	49	60	68	60.0	11.1
LCS Zoom (LWW14-73915)	45	70	67	64	48	59	68	58.1	11.3
Keldin	44	73	48	57	46	54	59	61.5	11.2
LCS Rocket	50	59	49	63	47	54	58	59.2	10.8
WB4303	36	76	52	61	39	53	58	60.4	11.6
AP Redeye (05PN044-20)	41	61	52	57	49	52	--	61.4	10.9
WB4394 <sup>1</sup>	39	70	--	57	43	52	--	61.1	11.0
SY Clearstone CL2	42	63	46	60	42	51	59	60.8	11.7
Sequoia	38	59	50	61	45	51	57	60.3	10.8
WB4311	39	69	42	56	48	51	--	61.8	12.3
SY Touchstone	38	59	45	58	40	48	55	61.2	11.8
Farnum	41	51	50	58	40	48	50	59.3	11.5
Whetstone	34	57	40	50	39	44	53	60.5	12.2
C.V. %	12	5	8	9	9	9	9	1	5
LSD (0.05)	7	5	6	7	6	3	3	0.4	0.3
Average	42	63	52	59	44	52	58	60.4	11.4

<sup>1</sup>WB 4394 was not planted due to late seed arrival.

Precipitation Zone=12-16"								
	ALMIRA	ANATONE	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%	
LCS Jet	90	67	197	90	125	106	61.0	11.5
Keldin	89	57	192	87	122	101	61.7	10.9
WB4394	83	58	190	87	120	--	62.7	11.4
LCS Rocket	85	57	183	82	117	101	59.4	11.1
AP Redeye (05PN044-20)	86	59	172	84	114	--	62.1	10.8
WB4303	83	48	185	71	113	96	60.5	11.8
LCS Zoom (LWW14-73915) <sup>1</sup>	88	--	169	80	113	--	59.3	11.3
SY Clearstone CL2	74	54	168	84	109	92	61.5	12.2
WB4311	85	58	159	81	108	--	61.9	11.9
SY Touchstone	76	50	167	70	104	91.0	62.1	12.1
Sequoia	78	60	160	72	103	83.0	60.0	11.4
Whetstone	66	56	166	62	98	84	61.5	12.4
Farnum	69	59	155	68	97	82	59.8	12.7
C.V. %	7	9	5	9	6	8	1.3	4.2
LSD (0.05)	7	7	11	11	7	4	1	0.5
Average	80	58	174	80	112	93	60.9	11.7

<sup>1</sup>LCS Zoom was lost at Anatone due to preferential deer grazing. The 2019 yield average for this variety is inflated due to this missing site.

IRRIGATED						
	MOSES LAKE	PASCO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Jet	51	161	106	105	59.3	12.9
LCS Evina	52	155	104	--	60.1	14.0
LCS Rocket	46	160	103	105	57.7	12.9
WB4303	50	152	101	101	58.0	13.3
Scorpio (WA 8268)	50	153	101	100	59.1	13.3
Keldin	51	150	101	100	60.4	13.1
SY Clearstone CL2	49	154	101	--	60.1	13.9
LCS Aymeric	49	152	100	100	55.4	11.9
AP Redeye	46	152	99	--	59.1	13.4
SY Touchstone	43	143	93	91	60.1	13.8
WB4623CLP	44	134	89	--	59.7	14.8
WB4311	48	127	88	92	60.2	14.0
C.V. %	6	4	5	6	1.9	2.7
LSD (0.05)	4	9	5	4	1.1	0.4
Average	48	152	100	99	58.6	13.3

# WSU variety testing crop tour schedule 2020

The 2020 crop tour season will soon be starting and provides opportunities to view field trials and interact with Washington State University (WSU) personnel and others about cereal varieties and crop management practices. Cereal breeders, extension agronomists, plant pathologists and other scientists will be presenting information at various events. The small grain variety and research tours, listed below, provide a guide for wheat,

barley and legume tours in Washington and nearby locations. Given COVID-19's impacts, please check with the contact listed prior to the tour to verify the time, location, agenda and ensure a place at the table if food is served. Location maps for the trials are available online at [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety). Washington Grain Commission funds support the trials and the tours, and we look forward to seeing you in the field. ■

Date	Tour	Time	Contact
3-Jun	Western Whitman Co. - LaCrosse	8:30 AM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
3-Jun	Ritzville (variety trial @ 3:30 pm)	1:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
4-Jun	Horse Heaven	9:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
4-Jun	Connell	5:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
9-Jun	Pendleton Field Day	7:30 AM	Stewart Wuest, 541-278-4381
10-Jun	Moro Field Day	7:30 AM	Stewart Wuest, 541-278-4381
11-Jun	Lind Field Day	8:30 AM	Bill Schillinger, 509-235-1933
12-Jun	Harrington	10:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
12-Jun	St. Andrews	4:00 PM	Dale Whaley, 509-745-8531
16-Jun	Fairfield†	8:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
16-Jun	WSU Weed Science - Pullman	1:00 PM	Drew Lyon, 509-335-2961
17-Jun	St. John	10:00 AM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
17-Jun	Lamont	2:00 PM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
22-Jun	Eureka**	3:00 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
23-Jun	Dayton (cereals & legumes)	8:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
23-Jun	Walla Walla**	1:00 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
24-Jun	Wilke Farm Field Day	8:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
24-Jun	Reardan	1:30 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
25-Jun	Mayview	9:00 AM	Mark Heitstuman, 509-243-2009
25-Jun	Anatone	3:30 PM	Mark Heitstuman, 509-243-2009
29-Jun	Moses Lake - irrigated	8:30 AM	Andy McGuire, 509-754-2011 x4323
29-Jun	Almira†	3:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
7-Jul	Farmington	8:00 AM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
7-Jul	Palouse	2:00 PM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
8-Jul	Bickleton†	1:00 PM	Hannah Brause 509-773-5817
**Cooperative trials/tours with Oregon State University and Northwest Grain Growers			
†Tentative date			

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact the coordination person under Contact above at the telephone number listed at least two weeks

prior to the event. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.



# WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

## Strong dollar hinders exports



By T. Randall Fortenbery

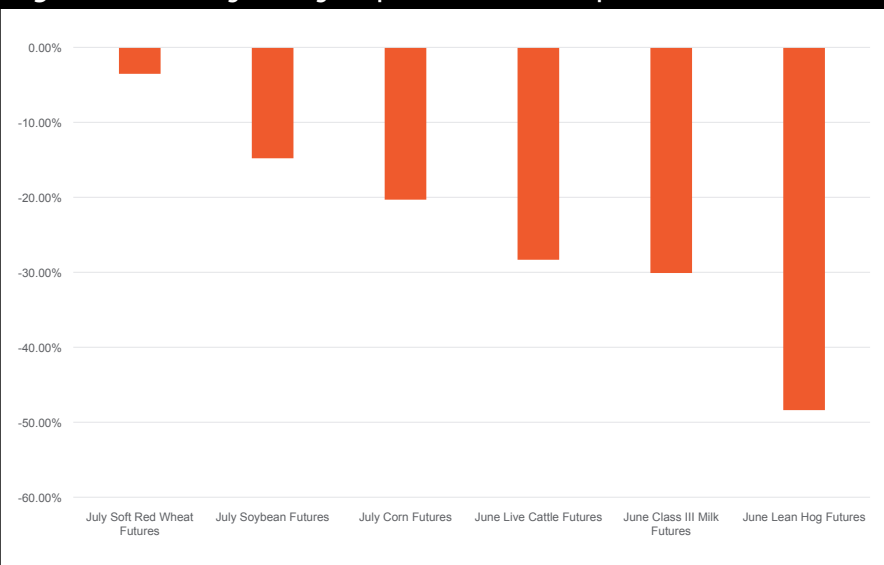
The worldwide health pandemic has impacted U.S. wheat markets as we approach the end of the 2019/20 marketing year.

Wheat prices have held up well compared to prices for many other U.S. produced products, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) did revise the domestic wheat balance sheet in the April World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) to reflect softer demand. Figure 1 shows percentage price changes for various U.S. commodities since Jan. 1, 2020.

Despite the reduction in total demand expectations, the 2019/20 marketing year average price (the price used to calculate Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments) was actually increased by \$0.05 per bushel in the April WASDE to \$4.60. If this is maintained through the end of the marketing year, then PLC payments will total \$0.90 per bushel for producers in that program.

Reductions in U.S. wheat exports, and a corresponding increase in U.S. wheat ending stocks for 2019/20, had been anticipated by analysts prior to the April WASDE release. According to a prereport survey by *Bloomberg*, analysts' expectations for U.S. wheat exports heading into the April WASDE ranged from a low of 960 million bushels to a high of 1,050 million. Actual exports were estimated to be 985 million bushels by USDA, in

Figure 1: Percentage change in price Jan. 1, 2020-April 20, 2020



the bottom half of the range but well within expectations.

Prereport estimates for U.S. wheat-ending stocks ranged from a low of 910 million bushels to a high of 999 million. The actual USDA estimate in the April WASDE came in at 970 million bushels, again well within the range of market expectations.

On the domestic front, USDA did not change the domestic food use of wheat, but did reduce expected feed and residual use by 15 million bushels. This change was made after analyzing the March 31 quarterly grain stocks report issued by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. The grain stocks report revealed that wheat disappearance in both the second and third quarters of the marketing year was less than previously estimated.

USDA also made changes to the international balance sheet for wheat in the April WASDE. These changes resulted in slightly higher global ending stocks (up about 2 percent over earlier estimates). World wheat ending stocks are currently projected to be record large at 292.8 million tons.

Global production for 2019/20 was actually reduced slightly in the April WASDE, but the reduction was more than offset by decreased consumption. Specifically, global exports were reduced by about 0.9 million tons, with aggregate domestic consumption worldwide reduced by about 5.1 million tons. The largest reductions in wheat consumption were accounted for by China (down 2 million tons); India (down 1.9 million tons); and the EU (down 1 million tons). Despite the reduction in consumption, however, wheat ending stocks for the EU were left unchanged. This is because their export estimate was increased to exactly offset the reduction in expected Russian wheat exports.

Even though they were reduced in the most recent WASDE, U.S. wheat exports will still be the highest in three years and the second highest in the last six years. However, we do face some headwinds heading into the 2020/21 marketing year (the next marketing year begins June 1, 2020).

The financial turmoil surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant re-alignments in international currency values. In general, the U.S. dollar, considered a relatively safe haven in times of financial turbulence, gained in value relative to many other currencies through early spring. This makes U.S. wheat less competitive in the world market.

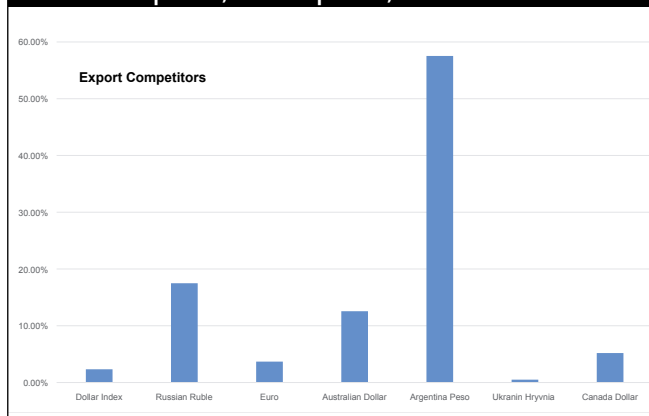
The Dollar Index (the value of the U.S. dollar indexed against a basket of currencies including the Euro, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Canadian Dollar, British Pound and the Swedish Krona) has increased about 5 percent through April 20, 2020, since setting a year-to-date low on March 9. The Dollar Index has begun to show significant volatility, however, with the April 20 value registering 3 percent below the year-to-date high set on March 20. In other words, the year to date low and high were only 11 days apart.

Figure 2 shows the percentage change in the value of the U.S. dollar on an annual basis from April 21, 2019, through April 20, 2020, compared to our major wheat export competitors. In general, the dollar is more expensive now compared to a year ago relative to every other major wheat exporter. This helps explain why the EU has been able to capture all the export activity given up by the Russians in the current marketing year—the Euro is cheaper than the U.S. dollar, thus wheat from Europe is priced more competitively in the international market compared to U.S. wheat. The only major wheat export currency the U.S. has remained competitive with over the last year is the Ukrainian Hryvnia.

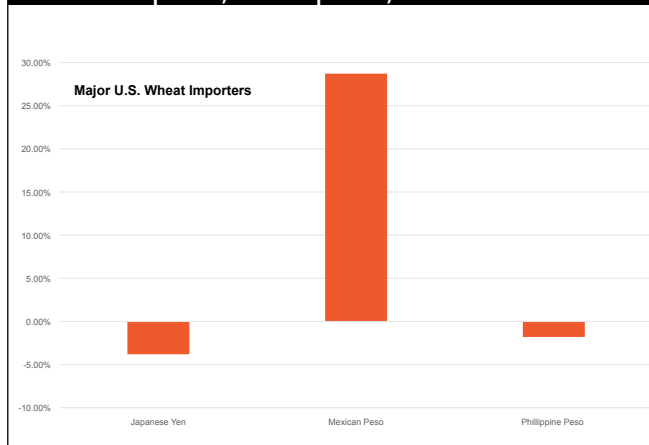
The U.S. dollar has remained much more competitive relative to the currencies of our major wheat import customers (Figure 3). The value of the U.S. dollar has decreased relative to the Philippine Peso and the Japanese Yen on a year-over-year basis. These two countries represent our second and third most important customers, respectively. Unfortunately for wheat exporters, however, the U.S. dollar has gotten significantly more expensive relative to the Mexican Peso over the last year. Mexico is traditionally our largest wheat buyer, including in the 2019/20 marketing year.

On May 12, USDA will release the May 2020 WASDE. This will include their first updates on both U.S. and global wheat balance sheets since their Outlook Forum in

**Figure 2: Increase in U.S. dollar value**  
April 21, 2019–April 20, 2020



**Figure 3: Increase in U.S. dollar value**  
April 21, 2019–April 20, 2020



February. This will also be the last report of the 2019/20 marketing year, although minor revisions to the expiring crop year's balances can sometimes occur in later reports.

At this point, it seems unlikely that there will be much change in the 2019/20 balance sheet projections, thus little change in the expected market year average price for 2019/20. Market participants will most likely be focused on the forecast for the coming 2020/21 marketing year, and even though there can be significant revisions in those forecast as the year progresses, the May projections will provide the initial base from which the next marketing year will be evaluated. ■

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



# Conversation sparks introspection

Wheat ambassador considers political science major after legislative trip to Olympia

By Spencer Miller

2020 Washington Wheat Ambassador

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) Olympia Days trip back in January was packed full to the brim with excitement and commotion. I found that the trip as a whole was very impactful on my life, and it will help me develop into the person I will eventually become. A couple of highlights from the trip were the dinner meeting on the first night to decide on our meeting agendas; sitting in on a Senate Rules Committee meeting with Sen. Mark Schoesler (R-Ritzville); and our very first meeting with Rep. Mary Dye (R-Pomeroy).

One particular moment that stood out to me the most was during the dinner reception on the second night. Gunnar (the other Wheat Ambassador) and I got into a conversation with a young man working for Sen. Judy Warnick (R-Moses Lake). Jacob Clark was a college student at Whitworth and is originally from the Wilbur area. We sat and talked during the dinner reception about the main issues that WAWG wanted to talk about with state legislators. We started to go into depth about one issue in particular, and I surprised myself at how much I was able to talk about it. We talked about the removal of the lower Snake River dams, and how that would negatively affect our state, as well as Idaho and Montana. We discussed economic impacts of the removal of the dams statewide, some possible solutions and talked in depth about how the dams affect both salmon and orca populations. Towards the end of the dinner reception, Jacob told Gunnar and I that he was doing research for a report through Sen. Warnick's office, and he asked us if we could stop by the next day to talk to him and give him any more information that we had.

Now this may seem small, but as a 17-year-old who had never done anything like this trip, it felt as if I had just been asked to run for state office. I felt an overwhelming sense of pride and confidence, and I knew that I had been asked to have a meeting because of how much I had informed myself on the topic, and how I was able to present myself. This moment really made an impression on me because I had found an aspect of my personality that I had never really expressed before. I have always been very interested in politics and government, but I had never been able to express that interest outside of the classroom.

The next day, Gunnar and I had a break from our scheduled meetings and were able to sit down in Sen. Warnick's



office and go into depth with Jacob. Again, I found that it seemed easy for me to talk about political issues in a formal setting, and I got a small taste of what it is like to be a real state congressman or woman, as the meeting was very last minute. We talked about how the Snake and Columbia rivers are beneficial to agriculture, clean energy and the state's economy. Our conversation was mostly about how the Snake River dams affect the salmon population and common misconceptions associated with the dams. Jacob was starting a report on the salmon population, how it relates to the Snake River dams, and how the salmon population affects the orca population. We discussed how in the years that salmon numbers have been at their lowest, the orca population has not suffered, and vice versa. There seemed to be no direct correlation between the salmon population and orca population, which was a major talking point in our meeting.

The entire trip helped me express my love for both agriculture and politics, but this instance in particular stood out to me because it helped me see that I am no longer just a student and am more than capable of being a well-spoken and trusted source in a formal setting.

I would very much like to explore this new found in-

sight into myself and have always considered potentially going into politics. I have dreamed of running for state office as an adult for some time now and am interested in majoring in political science when I go to college at Colorado State University. Going into politics seems very challenging to me, and their labor is worth more than they are paid, but public service isn't about money, it is about doing your best to serve the community you represent.

I am extremely thankful to the Washington Association of Wheat Growers for giving me this opportunity, and I will try my best to take advantage of this amazing program I was selected for. ■

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# Trip highlights meaning of advocacy

Wheat ambassador finds talking to nonagriculture legislators satisfying during Olympia Days

By Gunnar Aune

2020 Washington Wheat Ambassador

My first trip to Olympia was one to remember. Ever since completing my application for the Washington Wheat Ambassador Program and being selected for the position, I have been looking forward to the trip. Earning the opportunity to travel across the state to talk to the Washington Legislature about ag policy was something that I really looked forward to, but at the time, I had no idea how much this trip would impact me and my view on our agricultural industry.

Before our advocacy trip to Olympia, I thought I had a pretty good grasp of the entirety of the ag industry. Growing up on a family farm taught me a lot about the industry at the level of farming and being active in FFA expanded my view on advocacy and the complexity of agriculture. But this trip to Olympia capitalized what agricultural advocacy meant to me. The ability of our group of more than 30 agriculturists to come together for a common goal of supporting our industry and voicing our concerns to our state government showed me exactly what we can do as advocates, and how we can impact the world around us.

Some of the main issues facing the Washington wheat industry that we were to discuss with legislators included preserving the lower Snake River dams; fixing termination policies for department of natural resource lease programs; preserving the economic competitiveness of Washington's agricultural industry; opposing a possible mileage tax; enhancing short-line railway infrastructure; protecting existing tax policy; and promoting broadband infrastructure for rural communities. These are all discussion points chosen by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), as we felt they affected the agricultural industry and wheat farmers across the state.

One of the great opportunities I had during our advocacy trip was to meet with legislators on both sides of the aisle to discuss issues facing WAWG and the wheat industry. I personally met with Sen. Mark Schoesler (R-Ritzville), Rep. Mary Dye (R-Pomeroy) and Rep. Joe Schmick (R-Colfax), along with many other notable politicians. Getting to talk about issues facing wheat farmers across the state was rewarding in many ways. It was encouraging and insightful to talk to some of the legislators that were knowledgeable about our cause, because we already had common ground to discuss, and they have



supported our efforts in the past. But, I found that I really enjoyed talking to some of the politicians that were less knowledgeable about the issues we came to talk about. It was rewarding to inform these people about the wheat industry, and how important these issues are to us. Some of the politicians we talked to never realized how much wheat we produce as a state, how the lower Snake River dams are essential to transport our grain to markets, or how a mileage tax would unfairly tax rural communities. It was gratifying to be able to bring these subjects to light, and after all, the whole purpose of the trip was to be able to show Washington legislators how certain issues will affect our industry and our way of life.

Throughout the Olympia Days trip, WAWG as a whole met with 60 legislators and government staff to promote our views, opinions on current Washington state legislation and how that legislation can impact the lives of wheat farmers across the state. I had a basic knowledge of these issues before I traveled to Olympia with Spencer and the rest of the WAWG team, but over the course of our day-and-a-half of meetings, I quickly learned the complexity of each of the discussion points, and how they can affect

more than just Washington's wheat industry. Wheat is a top-three commodity in Washington state bringing \$1,550,881,296 in total economic output and employing 7,691 people. We produced 153.2 million bushels of wheat in Washington in 2018, and about 60 percent of that was shipped to foreign markets. Learning this demonstrated to me the importance of what we were doing in Olympia. These issues can affect more than just Washington wheat and could have a domino effect of national and international proportions. In Olympia, I was able to advocate for

something bigger than myself and promote the future and well being of our industry.

Looking back at the advocacy trip to Olympia, I am truly able to appreciate the efforts that WAWG invests into it. Uniting more than 30 growers and industry members to fight and support the betterment of the wheat industry and the lives of wheat farmers statewide is monumental. My growth in personal understanding of the complexity of the wheat industry and the issues that we face every year opened my eyes beyond my expectations. But more importantly, I learned what it means to advocate for what you believe in. Meeting with members of the Washington Legislature over the two days in Olympia gave me a new respect for the complicated process and all the hard work that it takes to preserve what we are passionate about. Olympia Days 2020 will be an event that I will look back on fondly, and I anticipate the opportunity to represent the wheat industry again in the near future. ■

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## Kibler sisters keep family heritage, farm alive

By Trista Crossley

Although Pauline Winters still lives next to the Walla Walla farm established by her great-grandfather in 1870, her family isn't actively farming the land. Instead, she and her two sisters, Geraldine Cramer and Sandra Shaub, rely on their tenant to keep the land flourishing.

"Because it was homesteaded by our great-grandfather, it means a lot to us to keep it in the family," Winters said. "We don't want to sell it. It's family. It means mom and dad and all our memories."

Winters' great-grandfather, Jacob Kibler, headed west in 1853 from Virginia, the oldest of nine children. His original destination was the Oregon Territory, but an unfortunate encounter with a pair of thieves derailed that plan. Winters said the thieves stole Kibler's wagon and supplies, including an uncle's military claim for land in Oregon, and headed to the California gold rush. Kibler followed, trying to find them, but was unsuccessful. In 1858, he ended up in Walla Walla County with just a "spotted pack mule, \$20, a bedroll and a rifle." In 1870, he bought 160 acres of land along Mill Creek Road from his future father-in-law, David Buroker. Kibler married Louisa Buroker in 1873 and had four boys and two girls. The youngest boy, Frank, was Winters' grandfather. Frank Kibler also took up farming and passed his land to his two sons, one of which was Winters' father, Robert.

"Dad and my uncle farmed together for awhile, and then they divided the farm up. My dad farmed until he was not able to, then he rented the farm to a cousin in the late 1970s. When dad passed away, we rented it to our neighbor, Mark Blanc," Winters explained.

Winters and her sisters grew up helping out on the farm, where they raised dryland wheat, barley, oats, peas and some Kentucky bluegrass. All the girls were active in 4H and participated in a girls' riding group called the Wagonettes. During harvest, they all drove trucks. Winters remembered how Geraldine, at 14, would drive a flatbed truck that could hold one load of grain from the field to the house. Because Geraldine was too young to drive on the roads, their mother, Margaret, would then drive the truck to the elevator.

The sisters rent the land in a crop share agreement with Blanc. Winters is responsible for the paperwork, tracking and paying the bills and selling their share of



A collage of photos of the Jacob Kibler farm in Walla Walla. Photo courtesy of the Kibler family.

the wheat. She said she relies heavily on their farmer for decisions about what to plant and what tillage methods are used. Blanc also gives her insurance and marketing advice. Currently, they grow dryland wheat and some garbs. Winters' son runs a few head of cattle on some of the family's land. They've also got some acreage in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

As far as their experience as landlords, Winters said they haven't had any issues with the land or their tenant. Most of their problems, she explained, are dealing with the buildings on the farm and trees that her grandmother planted more than 100 years ago that are starting to fall down.

One building that isn't in need of attention is their 1918 barn that is still in use on the farm and has been designated as a "Heritage Barn." ■



# Washington's L&I issues ag industry guidance during pandemic

From the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

Washington's massive agriculture industry is critical to both the state's economy and to the welfare of families across the country. Agriculture is one of the essential industries that continues to work even during Gov. Jay Inslee's stay-at-home order to fight the coronavirus (COVID-19). Thousands of farm workers are on the job, and the season is just getting started.

Many farmworkers are among the state's most vulnerable employees. The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) issued specific coronavirus guidance for the agriculture industry, including a general fact sheet along with guidance specifically for agricultural warehouses and packing houses. Those forms can be found at [lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

## Agriculture safety and health requirements

The L&I guidance contains two types of information: specific requirements for employers to protect workers and recommended strategies to help employers meet those requirements.

Employers are required to maintain social distancing or effective physical barriers; ensure adequate hand washing facilities and frequent employee hand washing; increase regular cleaning and sanitizing of common-touch surfaces; make sure sick employees stay home or go home, and to have procedures in place for workers to report a suspected or confirmed coronavirus case; and, educate workers about coronavirus and how to prevent transmission.

"Washington's agricultural community is helping us all get through these trying times," said Anne Soiza, assistant director in charge of L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH). "Farmworkers are frontline heroes keeping food on the nation's tables, and employers must do everything in their power to keep them safe and healthy on the job."

## Keeping workers safe

L&I's coronavirus prevention guidance includes specific recommendations to help employers meet the requirements and keep employees safe and healthy. To help facilitate social distancing, the agency recommends numerous steps, including staggering work shifts and tasks, providing two-way radios for workers to communicate without gathering in groups, and holding meetings and other gatherings outdoors to allow for more separation among workers.



Employers must require workers to wash hands frequently and effectively throughout the workday. They must confirm workers know the importance of how to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, then dry hands with disposable paper towels and properly dispose of the towels. Portable hand washing stations are required in fields and must contain at least tepid water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and a trash can.

Employers must have practices in place that ensure sick workers stay home or go home if they feel or look ill. Employers are required to have a process if a worker becomes ill while at work or outside of work so workers and supervisors know the appropriate actions to take. Jobsites must also have a process that includes immediate shutdown of areas where the employee was present and must deep clean and sanitize all surfaces the worker touched prior to resuming work in that area.

These and other L&I coronavirus requirements and recommendations for agriculture and other industries are available on the L&I Division of Occupational Safety and Health coronavirus webpage at [lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

## Additional guidance coming

Along with this guidance for agriculture employers and workers, L&I is working on coronavirus guidance for agriculture temporary worker housing.

The nature of the outbreak changes daily, and it's important for the public and employers to stay on top of the most current information. The state coronavirus website at [coronavirus.wa.gov](https://coronavirus.wa.gov) has links to important information and guidance related to the pandemic from numerous state agencies.

L&I is urging employers to stay informed and to take all measures necessary to keep Washington workers safe and healthy. ■

# THE BOTTOM LINE

## Part 1: Death and estate taxes

By William O. Etter  
Attorney, Foster Garvey PC

In my practice as both a tax and estate planning attorney, there is no topic that causes more confusion and worry among clients than estate taxes. The primary cause of this confusion is the media's coverage of estate taxes, which for general audiences is frequently both hyperbolic (the ominous branding of "Death Taxes") and misleading. This creates the false impression among many that the IRS will inevitably take no less than 50 percent of their assets upon death.

If you fall into this category of confused and worried citizen, rest assured, you are not an outlier. My hope is that the following two-part article will provide you with a better understanding of how estate taxes may apply to your estate, and what estate planning issues you should discuss in more detail with your professional advisors. In Part I, I will provide a summary of the estate tax systems that all Washington residents should be aware of and explain in basic terms how the federal and state estate tax systems operate. In Part II, I will discuss some basic estate planning tools used by attorneys to minimize estate taxes, as well as provide real world examples of how such planning tools may be implemented into your estate plan. (Editor's note: Part two is scheduled to appear in the October issue of *Wheat Life*.)

### What are estate taxes?

Contrary to popular belief, the estate tax is not a tax on your death, but rather a tax on your right to transfer property at your death. For Washington residents, there are two estate tax systems you must consider: (1) the federal estate and gift tax system; and (2) the Washington state estate tax system. Unfortunately, Washington is one of only 12 states that maintain a separate state estate tax system. Although the federal and state estate tax systems are similar, there are subtle differences between each system that should be analyzed by a professional advisor. Also, please note that if your estate is required to pay both federal and state taxes upon your

death, you will receive a tax deduction (unfortunately, not a tax credit) on the federal estate tax return for estate taxes paid to the state of Washington.

### How is the estate tax determined?

At the time of your death, the executor of your estate (called a "personal representative" under Washington law) or the trustee of your revocable living trust is required to make an accounting of all assets you own at the time of your death. The total value of your assets under the estate tax law is known as your "gross estate." Once your gross estate is calculated, your executor is permitted to take certain deductions in order to calculate your "taxable estate." These deductions are composed of any debts that were owed at the time of your death (most common is mortgage and credit card debt); expenses incurred in the administration of your estate (funeral and burial costs, attorney and accounting fees); and gifts made to certain charitable organizations under the terms of your will or revocable living trust.

In addition to the above deductions, and importantly for married couples, upon the death of the first spouse there is an unlimited marital deduction for transfers of property made to the surviving spouse. Practically speaking, this means that both federal and state estate taxes can be avoided on the death of the first spouse so long as the surviving spouse is the sole beneficiary under the deceased spouse's will or living trust. However, as will be discussed in Part II, in order to ensure that estate taxes are being

minimized as much as possible for a married couple, it is often advisable not to leave all property outright to the surviving spouse upon the death of the first spouse.

For federal estate tax purposes, once the proper deductions are applied to your gross estate and your net taxable estate is computed, your personal representative will determine whether you previously made any lifetime taxable gifts, which are then added back to your net taxable estate to determine the final amount of property that may be subject to federal estate tax. Under current law, you are permitted to gift up to \$11.68 million of property during

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your lifetime prior to a “taxable gift” being made. Since the state of Washington has an estate tax but no gift tax, this step is not necessary to complete the Washington estate tax return.

### Application of the credit amount and current estate tax law

Once your estate tax liability has been computed, it is then reduced by the available credit amount for both federal and state estate tax purposes. The credit amount is a set dollar amount determined at the federal level

by Congress and at the state level by the Washington Legislature that decreases the tax bill of the estate, dollar to dollar. It’s important to remember that the credit amount is specific to each individual, not the marital community.

Given the current tax credit amounts, a person dying in 2020 may have up to \$11.68 million of assets before their estate is subject to federal estate tax. For Washington estate tax purposes, a person dying in 2020 may have up to \$2.193 million in assets before their estate is subject to state estate tax. For married couples, with proper estate planning, these amounts can effectively be combined so that they may shield \$23.36 million of combined marital assets from federal estate tax and \$4.386 million of combined marital assets from state estate tax. ■

**William O. Etter** is a tax attorney that specializes in estate planning, probate, and trust administration in the Spokane office of Foster Garvey PC, one of the largest law firms in the Northwest region. He works regularly with families to preserve and transition assets and businesses to successive generations. He has previously served on the executive committee of the Real Property, Probate, and Trust section of the Washington State Bar Association and can be reached at (509) 777-1600 or at [william.etter@foster.com](mailto:william.etter@foster.com).

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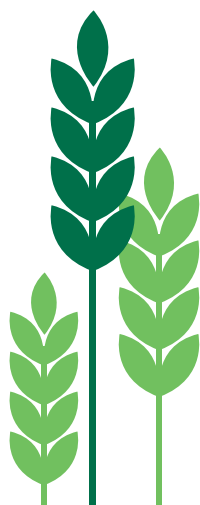
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# Your wheat life...

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Please include location  
of picture, names of all  
people appearing in the  
picture and ages of all  
children.



Clara Plucker (4) from New York and cousin Hartley Laning (4) from Texas love Washington wheat, especially when it's from Clara's great-grandpa Robert Plucker's farm in Touchet. Photo by Nick Plucker.



Michelle (3) and Shaun (6) Bingman during spring wheat harvest in Garfield County. Photo by Brian Bingman.



Carson Koller (2) on the last day of harvest 2019 in Pomeroy. Photo by Ashley Koller.





Harvest 2019 in Waterville. Photo by Max Polson.



That's going to make harvest 2019 outside Ritzville a little more complicated. Photo by Mark Schoesler.



Winter hit the Horse Heaven Hills hard last November. Thanks to a little snow and a lot of wind, drifts closed down country roads. Photo by Jason Wiley



Early morning rain shower during fall 2019 seeding in Prescott. Photo by Kevin Chabre.



# HAPPENINGS

Thanks to the COVID-19 social distancing and stay-at-home orders, pretty much all events in May have been canceled or rescheduled. So far, June events are still on the calendar, but please keep checking back with the contact information listed. According to Washington State University, the variety testing crop tours will go forward as virtual events if necessary.

## 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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/)

### 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](http://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](http://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/](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/)

### 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/](http://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/](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/)

### 12-14 DEMOLITION DERBY

**EXTRAVAGANZA.** Combine demolition derby, parade. Lind, Wash. [lindwa.com](http://lindwa.com)

**13 FLAG DAY CELEBRATION.** Parade, fun run, vendors. Fairfield, Wash. [fairfieldflagday.com](http://fairfieldflagday.com)

**13 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW.** Area youth show off their prized animals at the fairgrounds. Waitsburg, Wash. [cityofwaitsburg.com/events-calendar](http://cityofwaitsburg.com/events-calendar)

**16 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. Admittance is free of charge. [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/) or [lori@wawg.org](mailto:lori@wawg.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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://allwheelsweekend.com/)

**20 SLIPPERY GULCH DAYS.** Chamber breakfast, fun run, tractor show, parade, fishing derby, fireworks. Tekoa, Wash. [slipperygulch.com](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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.cahmrs.wsu.edu](http://wilkefarm.cahmrs.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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/)

### 29 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR.

Irrigated plot at Moses Lake, Wash., at 8:30 a.m. For information, please call Andy McGuire at (509) 754-2011 or [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/](http://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/](http://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](mailto:editor@wawg.org). Include date, time and location of event, contact info and a short description.



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"I believe we should dedicate some of our harvest to help hungry people. That's what my family is doing."

*Bruce Nelson, Whitman County Farmer*

For more information about the program and an authorization form, see your local elevator, e-mail [WGGAH@2-harvest.org](mailto:WGGAH@2-harvest.org) or call Second Harvest at (509)252-6273.

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**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.

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