

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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President's Perspective



Fires char more than just land

By Ryan Poe

The smoke—and the cause of the smoke—hanging in the air as I write this column (in mid-September) is impossible to ignore.

Labor Day 2020 proved to be devastating for a lot of farmers and ranchers in Washington state. I read an article that described the weather that hit us as being a 100-year wind event, and I couldn't have imagined how the day would play out. It is hard hearing of people that have lost their houses, equipment, pasture, fences, winter feed and livestock, some of which have had to be euthanized, to the fires that sprang up all over the state.

Two of the major fires, the Cold Springs fire near Omak and the Pearl Hill fire that started near Bridgeport, were just north and west of our farm. Another major fire, the Whitney fire, was east of us, in Lincoln County. Myself and other family members volunteer on our local fire department, and we had multiple units involved in these fires. I ended up on a small flare-up on the Whitney fire and saw some of the devastation firsthand.

Wheat growers were somewhat more fortunate as most of the wheat in these impacted regions had already been harvested. In fact, many in our area had just finished seeding, which in itself, is a hard, stressful time. I can't imagine dealing with that and then having to scramble to evacuate your home or hop on a fire truck to go help neighbors.

Besides the obvious impact of lost homes, structures, fencing and livestock, there's another less immediate cost that I don't want to let slip under the radar. Because most of the wheat had already been harvested, it was primarily stubble that burned. Stubble might seem inconsequential, but that crop residue is vital as it helps control erosion and protects soil moisture. A lack of residue makes it much harder to manage fallow land, and it will likely increase costs for those farmers over the next year or two. Unfortunately, stubble that is burnt after the combine leaves the field is not eligible for any crop insurance payment.

The Palouse was also hit by fire, especially Malden and Pine City in Whitman County where a majority of each town's buildings were destroyed. The sadness and heartbreak for everything that has been lost is overwhelming, and residents and producers are going to need help to get back on their feet.

In my area, local organizations have stepped up to assist in the recovery effort, including the Washington Cattlemen's Association, which has set up a donate link on their website (washingtoncattlemen.org), and Okandogs in Okanogan County (facebook.com/OKANDOGS/), which is taking donations and delivering hay. Individuals are also getting involved. I even heard about a group of ranchers in Asotin County who donated a load of hay and sent it up north. This is definitely a good time to consider donating if you can. I also want to put in a good word for our local volunteer fire departments. They play a vital role in helping residents, especially in rural areas, and they can always use more help. I'd challenge every one of you reading this to consider volunteering if you have a volunteer fire department in your area.

See page 18 for more information about initial recovery efforts and U.S. Department of Agriculture programs that might be available to impacted producers. ■

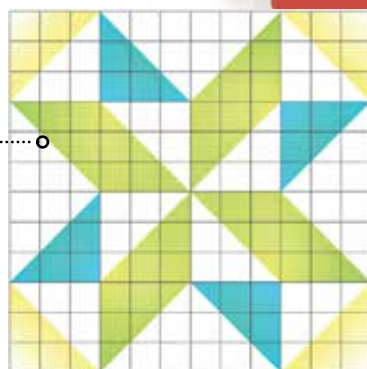
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2020 ELECTIONS



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Board meeting ‘zooms’ in on harvest, fires, legislature

Last month, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) held another virtual board meeting to discuss association business and hear updates on fire impacts, harvest and what’s happening in Olympia.

Harvest yields varied widely across Eastern Washington. In the Palouse, yields were above average with excellent quality. Further west, in Douglas and Grant counties, yields were average to below average. The Labor Day fires in Okanogan, Douglas and Lincoln counties were hitting ranchers hard, and in Whitman county, two small towns, Malden and Pine City, were essentially destroyed. Fortunately for wheat growers, by the time the fires started, harvest was mostly complete and the majority of what was burned was stubble. Growers were well into seeding, and most counties reported dry to extremely dry conditions.

WAWG lobbyist Diana Carlen updated the board on state legislation. The big topic in Olympia concerns the estimated \$9 billion budget shortfall that is predicted over the next four years due to impacts from COVID-19.

“Things will be very tight when legislators come back for the legislative session,” Carlen said, adding that there is still no decision on if legislators will hold a special session, although there’s talk about a possible special session after the November election.

Legislators are looking closely at options for raising revenue. Carlen said carbon pricing and a capital

gains tax are once again at the top of Democrats’ list, as well as cap and trade or a low carbon fuel standard since the transportation budget has been especially hard hit.

Looking ahead to the November elections, Carlen predicted that Democrats will still hold majorities in both the House and Senate. Legislators are also trying to plan for a legislative session that takes into account social distancing, possibly limiting attendance during committee meetings and expanding remote testimony.

“I’m not sure what the session will look like,” Carlen said. “Most people are predicting that it’s not going to be like it has been in the past.”

Representatives from all the major U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies joined the meeting. Jon Wyss, state executive director of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), said his office was busy dealing with impacts from the fires (at the time of the board meeting, there were seven major ones still burning). The agency is working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to get a deadline extension for conservation plan inspections, as they have been delayed by social distancing requirements and the fires. Despite the challenges faced by FSA, Wyss told board members that they hope to have Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments out during the last part of October.

Ben Thiel, director of the Risk Management Agency’s (RMA) Spokane Regional Office, said there could be an opportunity for wheat growers to ask RMA to consider splitting enterprise units into continuous cropping vs. sum-



LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION! Howard McDonald, vice president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and a grower from Coulee City, Wash., films a 30-second video spot for KXLY, a broadcast group that airs in Eastern Washington, for their “Tribute 4 Our Farmers” television spot. You can view the video at youtube.com/watch?v=WVOOMT-tmU0&feature=youtu.be

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mer fallow or by spring vs. winter wheat. He recommended that if board members were interested, WAWG should write a letter of support for the change.

Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS state conservationist, updated the board on staffing, saying that the state office has filled 25 positions, putting them at 146 employees (the state's employee cap is 151), but many of the new hires haven't yet relocated to Washington state. She also reminded growers that the deadline for Environmental Quality Incentives Program applications is Nov. 20.

Moving from state to federal issues, Josh Tonsager, vice president of policy and communications at the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), told board members that NAWG continues to work with USDA on including eligibility for all classes of wheat for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) payments (see page 12 for an update on CFAP). NAWG is also working with Congress on reauthorization of the Grain Standards Act, which was set to expire at the end of September.

Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), said the pandemic has caused at least three buyers' conferences to be cancelled or postponed, and no trade teams have been able to visit Eastern Washington this year. Instead, the WGC is working with commissioners and growers to create videos to show customers so they can visit virtually.

The three Pacific Northwest states are requesting \$3 million from Congress to put together a herbicide weed resistance initiative. The funds would create two new positions, one in Pullman, Wash., and one in Pendleton, Ore., and provide university grants addressing herbicide weed resistance.

The next WAWG state board meeting is scheduled for Oct. 13. ■

Spokane Ag Show exploring a virtual event

Since 1978, the Spokane Ag Show has provided a strong platform for ag professionals to meet, learn and grow. We are proud of our history. Because of this, we regret to announce that due to the health restrictions and safety requirements placed on events due to COVID-19, we are forced to cancel the in-person 2021 Spokane Ag Show. That said, there is hope. We remain committed to providing the industry with the best possible showcase and platform to connect with clients and network with fellow professionals. Currently, we are exploring the latest technology in virtual trade shows. ■

Grower organizations make difficult decision to cancel 2020 convention

Due to the uncertain time frames of current group restrictions and the financial implications of delaying a decision, the small grain grower associations of Idaho, Oregon and Washington regret to announce the cancellation of the 2020 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention. The event was scheduled for Dec. 1-4, 2020, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho.

"This was a very difficult decision to make, but we feel that with the current uncertainty and fluctuating social distancing restrictions, canceling this year's convention was in the best interests of our growers and our organizations," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

The 2021 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention is slated for Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2021, at the Davenport Grand Hotel in Spokane, Wash. Idaho Grain Producers Association, Oregon Wheat Growers League and Washington Association of Wheat Growers hope to see you there! ■

NRCS announces 2021 EQIP Classic sign-up

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reminds growers that application deadlines for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Classic in Washington state are approaching.

Applicants must establish themselves as a USDA customer and obtain all Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility requirements by Nov. 20, 2020. Please note, Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) determination takes an average of three weeks to be processed by the Internal Revenue Service. It is highly recommended that applicants submit their completed AGI form to FSA several weeks prior to the FSA eligibility determination deadline of Nov. 20, 2020. Submitting your AGI form to FSA on the last day of the application period will result in your AGI eligibility not being met within protracts by the deadline for fiscal year 2021.

Although applications are accepted on a year-round basis, eligible applicants interested in EQIP Classic must have completed the following actions by the deadline to be

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considered for funding in fiscal year 2021:

- Obtain all necessary FSA eligibility determinations (AD1026, AGI, FTE) within protracts; and
- Submit their CCC-1200 EQIP application to their local NRCS office.

For more information about the EQIP program or FSA eligibility, please refer to the USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service website at nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wa/programs/financial/.

EQIP is a voluntary, technical and financial assistance program designed to help farmers, ranchers, private forestland owners, tribes and other private landowners/managers with the application of conservation measures, such as forestland health improvements; irrigation efficiency; nutrient run-off and/or animal waste management; improving native plant community health; removing

human-made instream obstructions for fish passage; and reducing soil loss from wind or rain. In most instances, program participants can expect to pay roughly half of the costs associated with implementation of the conservation measures or practices.

“EQIP is a voluntary program to facilitate the adoption and improvement of natural resource management to increase private land resources sustainability,” said Keith Griswold, assistant state conservationist for programs. “Interested participants are encouraged to apply for 2021 funding. Please do not wait until the last day to submit your application or attain FSA eligibility determination. It could reduce your chances to treat your identified resource concerns in 2021.”

To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or your local USDA service center. ■

USW introduces interactive wheat export supply system map

If you like maps, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) has a treat for you!

Last month, USW introduced the first digital map of the U.S. wheat production and supply system so that customers can see what kind of wheat is grown where and the ways that wheat is moved for export. The map was built in cooperation with Heartland GIS using funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service Agricultural Trade Promotion program.

“With six distinct wheat classes grown across many states and delivered by many different routes, the U.S. wheat supply chain truly is driven by geography,” said USW Vice President of Overseas Operations Mike Spier. “The map provides a geographical information system that our team of representatives can use to help the world’s wheat buyers literally see where the wheat they are buying is grown, and how it can be transported to the export elevator.”

The map includes a selection tool that allows viewers to identify, in any combination, U.S. wheat production by class; wheat shuttle loading terminals; Class 1 U.S. rail



lines and spurs; river terminals; major rivers; and export elevator locations.

“Working with U.S. Wheat Associates and its state wheat commissions, we used data from multiple sources, including satellite imagery, to identify wheat planted area between 2013 and 2019,” said Todd Tucky, owner and senior consultant of Heartland GIS. “I believe this is the most accurate representation ever developed of where individual wheat classes have been produced in the United States.”

The USW Wheat Export Supply System map is posted at bit.ly/USWheatExportSupplyChain. ■



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POLICY MATTERS

All classes of wheat eligible for 2nd round of CFAP funding

All wheat is in!

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a second round of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) payments that extends eligibility to all classes of wheat. In the first round of CFAP only hard red spring and durum wheat qualified for payments. The \$14 billion package will provide payments for commodities that saw at least a 5 percent price decline between Jan. 13-17 and July 27-31. Wheat futures prices dropped more than twelve percent in the first seven months of 2020.

Payments will be based on crop year 2020 planted acres, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres.

"We are extremely pleased that the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognized that all classes of wheat have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus," said Ryan Poe, president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and a wheat grower from Hartline, Wash. "WAWG and the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) have worked tirelessly to demonstrate that the parameters used by USDA in the first round of relief fell far short in identifying the marketing losses experienced by all classes of wheat. We appreciate that USDA listened to our feedback, and we will continue to work with NAWG to make sure that our growers have the support they need."

About 80 percent of the wheat grown in Eastern Washington is soft white wheat. The other 20 percent is mostly hard red winter and hard red spring.

According to USDA, in the second round of CFAP, payments for eligible row crop commodities will be the greater of:

- Eligible acres of the crop multiplied by \$15 per acre; OR
- Eligible acres of the crop multiplied by a nationwide crop marketing percentage; multiplied by a crop-specific payment rate; and then by the producer's weighted 2020 Actual Production History (APH) approved yield. If the APH is not available, 85 percent of the weighted 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option benchmark yield for that crop will be used.



For wheat, the crop marketing percentage is 73 percent with a payment rate of \$.54 per bushel. That comes out to an effective payment rate for all classes of wheat of \$.39 per bushel. Sign-ups will run from Sept. 21 through Dec. 11.

"These payments will bring some much-needed certainty to wheat growers as they turn their attention to getting next year's crop in the ground," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. "In addition to depressed prices and rising input costs, many of our producers are struggling with the effects of drought, wildfire and the effects of the coronavirus. We want to recognize the work done by NAWG and by members of Congress to highlight the need of all wheat farmers to be included in CFAP. The bipartisan actions of Sens. Cantwell and Murray and Reps. Newhouse, McMorris Rodgers and Schrier to recognize the market losses our producers have endured are greatly appreciated."

There is a payment limitation of \$250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies or limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits when members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. In addition, this special payment limitation provision has been expanded to include trusts and estates for both CFAP 1 and 2.

Producers will also have to certify that they meet the

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Adjusted Gross Income limitation of \$900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.

More information can be found at farmers.gov/cfap. ■

NAWG urges action on grain standards act in Senate letter

Last month, the National Association of Wheat Growers joined other agricultural industry groups in signing a letter to all U.S. senators on the importance of the Senate taking action on the Grain Standards Reauthorization Act (USGSA).

The USGSA provides a framework for the functioning of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service, which provides certainty to foreign customers that all U.S. grains and oilseeds have been inspected and certified by an independent agency and provides great value to U.S. commodities, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of the U.S. in the world market.

"A properly functioning grain inspection system is

critical, and we urge Congress to reauthorize the Grain Standards Act this year," the letter states. "Despite the significant impacts of tariffs on exports, U.S. commodities have maintained some competitiveness in the international market in part thanks to the premium international buyers place on the U.S. grain inspection system. Given the current uncertainty in trade agreements and many of the bearish factors working against U.S. farmers, it is critical we maintain one of our key advantages."

The USGSA was reported out of the Senate Ag Committee by voice vote earlier this summer. NAWG staff has been doing outreach to Senate offices, as completion of reauthorization is one of NAWG's 2020 priorities.

Besides NAWG, the letter was signed by, among others, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Soybean Association and the National Corn Growers Association. ■

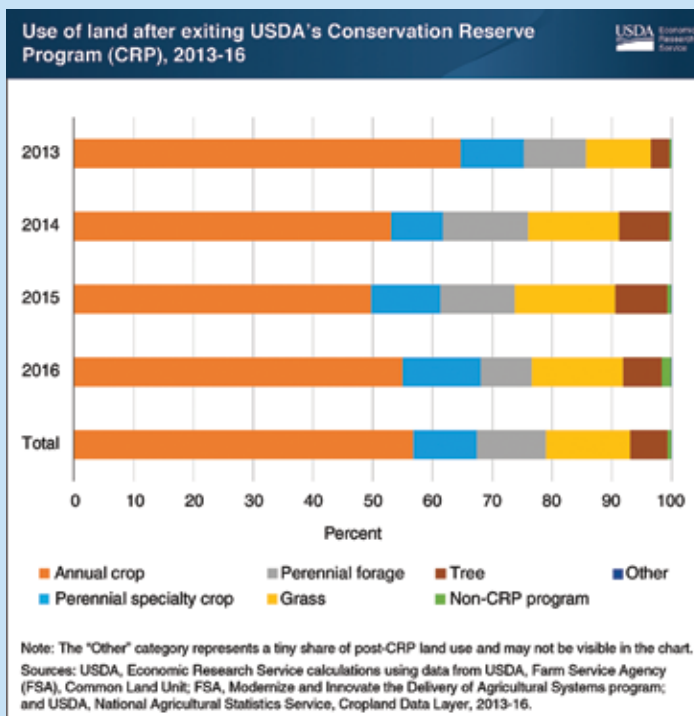
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Most land exiting CRP used for annual crop production

Between 2013 and 2016, contracts for about 7.6 million acres of land enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) expired. About 2.76 million acres of expiring land re-enrolled in the CRP. Of the almost 4.89 million acres that exited the program during the period, 57 percent transitioned to annual crop production. At least half of the exiting CRP land transitioned to annual crop production in each of the four years. The most common annual crops grown on expired CRP land were soybeans (21 percent of the exiting CRP land that went into annual crop production); corn (16 percent); and wheat (16 percent).

Perennial forage (such as alfalfa) and specialty crop (such as pecans) production accounted for 12 and 11 percent, respectively. Taken together, 81 percent of former CRP land was put to some type of crop production after exiting the program. The remaining exiting land was most often used as grass cover (14 percent) or tree cover (4 percent). Post-CRP acreage under grass cover may be used as pastureland or represent acres that are untouched after expiring from a grassland practice in CRP. ■





Who Are Your Beneficiaries? Don't Leave It to Chance

If you want to make sure your assets are distributed according to your wishes when you pass away, it's important to review your beneficiary designations regularly.

Major changes to tax laws or major life events, such as marriage, divorce, birth or adoption of a child, or a death in the family, could mean a change is needed.

Why is it important to designate beneficiaries?

Designating beneficiaries is one of the easiest and most direct ways to get your assets to the people and/or organizations you desire. Beneficiary designations may also help avoid probating your assets upon your death.

Please call or stop by today to schedule an appointment.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.



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Financial Advisor
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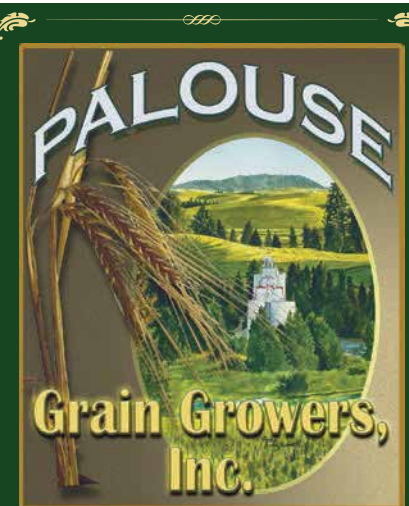
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WASHINGTON WHEAT FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Washington Wheat Foundation board is extremely fortunate to have a diverse group of members with unique interests and backgrounds who all work to foster the common goal of helping the wheat industry thrive. This month, we would like to focus on one of the many things that Stacey Rasmussen brings to the table through her Farmer's Daughter Photography business, telling the farmer's story through pictures. You can see more of Stacey's photos at fdphoto.shootproof.com/. ENJOY! ■



Calendar:

- Washington Wheat Ambassador Program application deadline **Oct. 15, 2020**. Information and an application can be found online at wawg.org/washington-wheat-ambassador-program/. Open to high school seniors.

Reminders:

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

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Deadline: October 15, 2020

This is a program of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Contributions made in part by the Washington Wheat Foundation

Pulling together

EASTERN WASHINGTON GROWERS, RANCHERS STRUGGLE TO RECOVER FROM LABOR DAY FIRES

By Trista Crossley

It was a Labor Day many farmers and ranchers in Eastern Washington aren't going to forget.

On that day, wind-driven fires scorched hundreds of thousands of acres across the region, especially in Okanogan, Douglas and Lincoln counties. In Whitman County, the small towns of Malden and Pine City were almost completely destroyed. Franklin and Ferry counties also saw blazes spring up. According to news reports and information from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, 58 fires started burning on Labor Day and burned more than 330,000 acres in 24 hours. In just 72 hours, the wildfires had consumed more than half of the acreage burned in the record fire year of 2015.

At the time of the fires, most wheat farmers had already finished harvesting the crop. While information is still being collected, it is believed that the majority of what got burned was stubble, not standing wheat. Unfortunately, that's small consolation when livestock, buildings, equipment and fencing did burn.

Almost as soon as news of the fires spread, so did news of organizations coordinating efforts to provide feed and other assistance to farmers and ranchers who were hit. U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies quickly published information on disaster assistance programs and loans.

In Douglas County, the Pearl Hill fire burned more than 220,000 acres, mostly a mixture of rangeland and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) acres. Amanda Ward, district manager of the Foster Creek Conservation District said they are still in the process of trying to figure out what had been lost, saying that the fire left a "60-mile wide swath" through the northern part of the county, and the costs to rebuild will be "astronomical." It is unknown how much of the area's sage grouse habitat was destroyed.

"For miles, the landscape looks like a volcano or a bomb has gone off," Ward said. "I think we are all in a bit of shock, trying to grasp the enormity of the losses."

The conservation district is already working to secure recovery funding for landowners and is gearing up to offer technical assistance. In addition, the conservation district is serving as a point of contact for those who need immediate assistance, as well as those who want to assist.

"Right now, the immediate needs are stock feed," Ward

said. "If anybody wants to help, they can contact us, and we can put them in touch with the appropriate people."

Another place for assistance information in Douglas County, both for those needing it and those wishing to donate, is Manthy Salcido, a Mansfield resident who lost property in 2014 due to wildfire. Using her past experience, Salcido is helping farmers and ranchers bridge the gap between immediate emergency needs and the time when USDA programs can kick in, especially in finding hay and smaller livestock feed. She said she sees herself as sort of a middleman, gathering information and forms for those who need them. While she isn't accepting donations herself, she can help direct people to places where they can donate.

Salcido is available at (509) 449-2151 or by email at manthy.salcido@splitrockauto.com.

As word of the fires spread, the Washington Cattlemen's Association quickly organized relief efforts by setting up the Washington Emergency Wildfire Assistance Fund. All money collected will be used to help ranchers with cattle feed, hay and hay transport and delivery. There is a donate button on their website at washingtoncattlemen.org.

The Lincoln County Cattlemen's Association is also coordinating relief efforts for the Whitney fire, which burned more than 125,000 acres in that county. The group has set up a Facebook page with information available at facebook.com/groups/1028158634293014. Maddi Overmeyer and Alison Viebrock-Steveson are helping coordinate those efforts. Viebrock-Steveson said there's about 30 ranchers and 10,000 head of cattle that were impacted by the fire. They are accepting money and supplies.

"We have guys that are pulling from their winter hay supply because they don't have pasture. We have guys whose winter hay supply burnt down, so they are using donated hay at this time. Hay is really a big thing (we need), especially looking into winter," Viebrock-Steveson said. "We are looking for hay, any size bales; fencing supplies, specifically T-posts; barbwire; clips; fencing for cattle; and donations. We are using those donations to buy pallets of protein tubs and that sort of thing to fill in gaps that we need to."

All donations will be used first for Lincoln County residents. The group has set up a Go Fund Me account (which is linked on the Facebook page), and Viebrock-Steveson said they are in the process of setting up a 501c3 so the donations will be tax deductible.


"It's just amazing to see the responses from fellow ranchers and farmers from across the country. We've got hay coming from Nebraska and Texas," she said. "We've got donations from people and ranchers and farmers from all across the country. I love to see the response from the agriculture community, but more than that, the response from people all across the country. Our ranchers feed America and the world the best quality beef available. This is our chance to give back and that's exactly what people are doing."

The United Way of Whitman County is helping coordinate donations for victims of the Babb-Malden/Manning fire, which is the fire that hit Malden/Pine City. It burned more than 18,000 acres. Money can be donated by going to donorbox.org/whitman-county-fire-relief-fund.

Up in Okanogan, the Cold Springs fire burned almost 190,000 acres. Okandogs, a dog adoption coordination group, is accepting donations to help feed livestock affected by the fire. Donate at their website, okandogs.com/donation. The Community Foundation of North Central Washington also has a fire relief fund that supports long-term recovery efforts. Information is at cfncw.org/ncwfirerelieffund/.

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Washington state office has also jumped into action, publishing information on natural disaster assistance programs. In mid-September, the state office held a webinar to review the programs and their requirements and to answer producers' questions. The webinar powerpoint can be accessed at fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Washington/index.

"Again in 2020, wildfires have struck much of Washington. They have consumed as much acreage as the 2014 Carlton and 2015 Okanogan Complex fires combined," said Jon Wyss, FSA state executive director. "In September, FSA called a meeting of the disaster board, which



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Yes, it was a little different, helping more than 650 local farms and businesses take advantage of the new SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans without shaking a single hand. Still it was some of the most gratifying work we've completed in our 40-year history. The embodiment of what we mean when we say "Relationships you can count on." And we just wanted to say thanks to each of our customers, old and new, for trusting us to deliver during this challenging time. Now if you'll excuse us, we need to put our elbows on ice. Or maybe a bag of frozen peas.

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approved requesting a Secretarial Disaster request for Okanogan, Douglas, Lincoln and Yakima counties. With that in mind, FSA held a webinar with 139 participants to go over all the potential programs FSA has to offer. Producers should contact their local office and provide a notice of loss as soon as possible.”

Many of FSA's disaster programs require an environmental review or a notice of loss to be filed before funds can be approved and restoration work begun. FSA employees emphasized that growers not start any work until they've contacted their local FSA office. More information can be found at the state office's website, fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Washington/index, or at farmers.gov.

FSA has compiled a summary of their disaster programs and to highlight requirements of participation. Producers wishing to file an application should contact their local FSA office for specific eligibility requirements. Additional information on all USDA disaster recovery programs can also be found at farmers.gov/recover.

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP). Available for fire and flooding. The ECP provides cost share assistance up to 75 percent (up to 90 percent for limited resource, socially disadvantaged or beginning farmer/rancher) of the cost of rehabilitation to the farmland and/or conservation structures damaged by a natural disaster. Payment is limited to \$500,000. A 25 percent advance payment may be requested to assist with upfront costs of the restoration. Eligible practices include:

- Debris removal;
- Grading, shaping or leveling of land;
- Fence restoration; and
- Restoration of conservation structures.

Eligible applicants must submit documentation of damage as soon as possible. It is important that no work begins prior to contacting FSA and requesting assistance as completion of an environmental review must be done prior to work beginning.

EMERGENCY HAYING AND GRAZING. This program gives producers the ability to hay or graze CRP contracts in areas that have been impacted by eligible natural disasters. Payment reductions no longer apply under emergency provisions, and counties may be approved when a forage loss of 40 percent or more is seen. Emergency haying is authorized in approved counties for up to 60 days. Emergency grazing is authorized for a single period up to 90 days, but livestock must be removed 30 days prior to the first freeze date established for the county. All requests for emergency haying or grazing must be processed through the FSA committee, and an approved or modified conservation plan must be in place prior to approval.

EMERGENCY FOREST RESTORATION PROGRAM (EFRP). Available for fire and flooding. EFRP provides cost share assistance to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest land to restore forest land damaged by a natural disaster. Up to 75 percent of the cost of restoration may be provided to eligible applicants, with a payment limitation of \$500,000. Eligible practices include, but are not limited to:

- Debris removal;
- Site preparation, planting materials and labor;
- Restoration of roads or erosion control structures; and
- Tree shelters or tubes.

Eligible applicants must submit documentation of damage as soon as possible. It is important that no work begins prior to contacting FSA and requesting assistance as completion of an environmental review must be done prior to work beginning.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR LIVESTOCK, HONEYBEES AND FARM-RAISED FISH PROGRAM (ELAP). Available for fire, except on federally managed land, and flooding. ELAP provides assistance to eligible livestock producers who suffer feed and grazing losses associated to adverse weather events. Eligible land under ELAP must be privately owned. Payments are only issued for the number of days that the grazing land was lost, not to exceed 180 calendar days for grazing losses due to fire. Eligible livestock producers must submit verifiable or reliable documentation including, but not limited to:

- Livestock inventory numbers;
- Documentation of additional feed purchases above normal quantities; and
- Proof of livestock removal from the affected pasture.

In addition to the aforementioned documentation, eligible producers must file a notice of loss on CCC-851.

EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM (EM). Available for fire and flooding when authorized by a disaster declaration. The EM provides emergency loan funds to producers within primary and contiguous counties where a disaster declaration has been issued and typically have a repayment term of one to seven years. Emergency loan funds (up to \$500,000) can be utilized to assist with restoration or replacement of essential property; production costs associated with the disaster year; essential family living expenses; and reorganization or refinancing of certain debts. In addition to the required issuance of a declaration, eligible producers must also:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident;
- Have an acceptable credit history;
- Be unable to obtain credit from commercial sources;

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- Have collateral available to secure the loan; and
- Have the ability to repay the loan.

All applications must be filed within eight months of the disaster declaration date.

LIVESTOCK FORAGE DISASTER PROGRAM

(LFP). Available for fire, but only on federally managed lands impacted by the fire for which the producer is prohibited by the federal managing agency from grazing. Not available for flooding. The LFP provides assistance to eligible livestock producers who have suffered losses due to wildfire on federally managed grazing land (privately owned land is eligible under ELAP). Payments are calculated at 50 percent of the monthly feed cost for the number of days that the eligible producer is prohibited from allowing the livestock to graze the federally managed rangeland, not to exceed 180 days.

Eligible livestock include:

- Only those that would have been grazing the land during the normal grazing period for the specific pastureland.
- Livestock that are owned, leased, purchased, under contract for purchase or those held by a contract grower during the 60 days prior to the disaster event.
- Those maintained for commercial use as part of the farming operation.
- Calves that are weaned and receive their nutrition from forage crops.

Producers must file an application within 30 calendar days following the end of the calendar year in which the grazing loss was suffered. Producers must also provide documentation from the federal agency that they have been prohibited from grazing the leased land; a complete acreage report; copy of the applicable grazing leases; a copy of their grower contract if applicable; and reliable or verifiable inventory records of the livestock.

LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PROGRAM (LIP).

Available for fire and flooding. LIP provides assistance to eligible livestock producers who have suffered losses beyond normal mortality for fire or other eligible loss conditions. Payments are provided at a rate of 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock (determined at the national level) that died as a direct result of the eligible loss condition, minus the adjustments made for normal mortality for the year.

Eligible livestock include:

- Only those that would have been grazing the land during the normal grazing period for the specific pastureland.
- Livestock that are owned, leased, purchased, under contract for purchase or those held by a contract

grower during the 60 days prior to the disaster event.

- Those maintained for commercial use as part of the farming operation.
- Calves that are weaned and receive their nutrition from forage crops.

Producers wishing to file an application must submit a notice of loss within 30 days of when the loss becomes apparent. All applications for payment must be complete within 60 calendar days following the end of the calendar year of which the loss occurs. Eligible producers must provide documentation that they were in possession or control of the livestock; their beginning and ending inventory numbers; and/or documentation of sales that occurred at reduced prices due to injuries.

NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP).

Available for fire if insurance was purchased prior to event and only as a related condition to an eligible disaster. Available for flooding if insurance was purchased prior to event. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Coverage must be purchased prior to a disaster event to be eligible for assistance. The application closing date for 2021 perennial forage crops was Sept. 30, 2020. If 2020 coverage was applied for timely, NAP coverage ends once the crop is harvested. If hay was destroyed by fire after harvest, losses may be eligible for ELAP. For NAP-covered crops, a notice of loss must be filed with your FSA county office the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers programs to producers who have been impacted by natural disasters, including drought assistance and the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM (EWP).

All EWP projects must reduce threats to lives and property; be economically, environmentally and socially defensible; be designed and implemented according to sound technical standards; and conserve natural resources. Eligibility for EWP does not depend upon a presidentially declared emergency. Each NRCS state conservationist is authorized to declare a local disaster emergency, which triggers the same assistance that would be available through a presidentially declared disaster. Through EWP, NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the construction costs of eligible recovery projects. Ninety percent may be paid for projects within limited resource areas as identified by U.S. Census data.

For more information on NRCS programs that may be available in your area, contact your county NRCS office. ■



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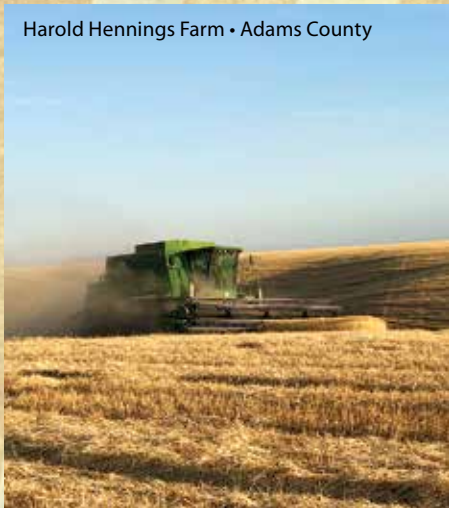
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Thank you to all the Eastern Washington wheat farmers who so graciously allowed *Wheat Life* staff to tag along while they were harvesting. Photos of Pierret Inc. Farm in Franklin County were taken by Martin Pierret. Photos of Harold Hennings Farm in Adams County were taken by Michelle Hennings.

2020 ELECTIONS

CANDIDATES ADDRESS DAMS, BUDGETS AND TRADE

In an effort to get to know some of the candidates running for governor, lieutenant governor and U.S. representative, *Wheat Life* asked them to provide written answers to questions on issues important to wheat growers in Eastern Washington. Presented on the following pages with no editing (other than obvious grammatical errors) are what the candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and Congressional Districts 4 and 5 had to say.

Editor's note: Gubernatorial candidate Loren Culp and Congressional District 4 candidate Doug McKinley failed to provide written answers to Wheat Life's submitted questions despite multiple requests. At the time the questions were submitted to the candidates, not all classes of wheat were eligible for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) payments. In late September, the U.S Department of Agriculture announced a second round of CFAP payments that extended eligibility to all classes of wheat.

GOVERNOR

Focus is on rebuilding lives, economy amid pandemic

If elected governor, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

My focus as governor continues to be on working with health experts and local leaders to fight the coronavirus and support Washingtonians who are struggling. By coming together to wear masks and follow health guidelines we can save lives, reopen our economy, and beat this virus.

As Washington launches our economic recovery by reopening safely in phases, we must engage the same innovative, progressive spirit that Washington state has always espoused to enhance the security and opportunity of all in our state.

We are poised to rebound more quickly thanks to our administration's work to provide stability for Washington families over the last eight years. Our state passed the nation's best Paid Family and Medical Leave, we have expanded health care coverage to nearly 800,000 Washingtonians, and ensured full and partial college tuition scholarships are available to working and middle-class Washingtonians—all of which has better protected and prepared us to rebuild our great state. I am excited to build on that progress, focusing on creating jobs, expanding housing, investing in our children's education, and creating the clean energy economy of tomorrow.

This year has thrown a wrench into the state's budget both in terms of available funding for various sectors such as transportation, education, etc., as well as incoming revenue for the state. What



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do you think is the best way to provide for the funding necessary to deal with COVID-19 as well as the regular needs of the state?

We are facing a pandemic-fueled economic crisis, and our state now must confront tough decisions about how to manage a budget shortfall, support people and businesses when they need it most, and rebuild our economy. I have already made cuts, including vetoing hundreds of millions of dollars in spending, frozen most state hiring, and canceled pay raises. At the same time, I am committed to ensuring that our social safety net is strong for those who need it now more

than ever and that essential services like health care and education remain intact.

It is absolutely critical that the U.S. Senate and White House negotiate with the House of Representative Democrats and deliver a bipartisan package to provide the economic relief we need. The package will help us preserve job training, higher education funding, and other vital programs that will aid in economic recovery while protecting Washington families that rely on food, public safety and health care we provide. Inaction by Congress would be deeply short-sighted and undermine the goal of recovery. We will continue working with our federal partners to secure this necessary aid to avert draconian cuts.

What do you see as the likely long-term effects of COVID-19 on the state's budget?

Until we know what the federal government passes in state and local aid we will not know the scope of what

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YSC-603 (SWS) Awned • Tolerant to foot rot • Average test weight & good protein
• Does well in dryland & irrigation

YSC-604 (SWS) Awned • Does best under irrigation • Low protein

YSC-801 (HRS) Awned • Good test weight • Good performer in high rainfall & irrigation

YSC-802 (HRS) Awned • High protein
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- ✓ Earned the friend of the Farm Bureau Award for her work in Congress.
- ✓ Fighting to stop extreme environmentalists and federal courts from tearing down the Columbia and Snake River dams.

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long-term effects on our budget will be. What I can say is that we can't balance the budget on the backs of those most in need of government support. The preservation of the social safety net is essential to Washingtonians getting through this crisis rebuilding. Austerity and cuts to essential services would only hurt those who are most in need.

Wheat growers rely on the state's transportation system to move their products to market. The short-line rails, especially, are in dire need of maintenance and repairs. As governor, how will you address these needs?

The ability for Washington's wheat farmers to feed the world depends on our ability to move your product to market efficiently. It is critical our three state-owned and privately operated short rail lines comprising the Palouse River and Coulee City system must be able to move agricultural products through the heart of wheat country to Class I railroads. That's why I was proud to secure the largest transportation package in state history that included critical investments in short-line rail, including \$47 million for maintenance and improvements on portions of the PCC rail line. These funds are being provided over the 16-year plan I signed into law in 2015, and in each biennium since I have maintained those designated funds to the PCC in my budget proposals. Still we know there is much more to do. This previous transportation package created 200,000 new jobs and is positioning us well in the global market. By investing in further transportation and public works, we can rebuild our economy, create jobs, open opportunities for our businesses and generate a stimulus effect all across our state.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

I am comfortable supporting safer dam operations — through "flexible spill" of water over the dams during the spring — for the next three to five years. That enhanced spill, combined with dam mitigation measures like tributary and estuary restoration, should measurably improve salmon survival. Whether it will improve survival enough to be a 15-year strategy, as proposed by the EIS, is another question. That's why I support regional efforts to identify what it will take to continue to strengthen Columbia Basin salmon recovery efforts to the point where these fish are restored to healthy, harvestable populations.

Although the preferred alternative of the Columbia River Operations EIS did not recommend dam removal, wheat growers do not see this fight as being over. What do you think needs to happen to put this issue to rest?

Clean, reliable, and affordable energy and transportation systems are critical for the health of Washington's

economy and environment, and so are healthy, harvestable salmon populations. Until we have the latter, there will be well-justified pressure to keep doing more to restore healthy salmon and steelhead runs. I want to find a solution that meets both goals, and I support a regional collaborative approach to identify those steps. The way to put the issue to rest is to ensure that the needs of the environment, including salmon and air quality, and the economy are both met by a long-term river management strategy. The question shouldn't be about whether a particular dam stays in place forever, but what is the best way to meet core economic and environmental principles that move salmon recovery forward and create more, not less, certainty for Eastern Washington farms and communities.

How does Washington meet its stated carbon reduction goals without putting the state's agricultural industry, especially the processing sector, at a price disadvantage with other states that don't levy a tax on carbon emissions?

I have worked to ensure that climate policy proposals in Washington state would create a healthy agricultural sector. I have and will continue supporting policy that aims to grow the already strong supply of affordable, zero carbon electricity, building greater supply of affordable low-carbon fuels, and providing targeted investments in smart new low-carbon practices. Agriculture is a more challenging sector than some others to decarbonize rapidly, and as such deserves careful attention, investment, and innovation.

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. As governor, how will you support and strengthen growers' ability to access those overseas markets and help them develop new markets?

Washington state is one of the most trade-dependent states in the country, where so many of our jobs are either directly or indirectly tied to international trade. We have a long and rich history of establishing "good trade," where Washington workers and businesses and our international partners stand to gain. Since taking office, I have led trade missions to markets around the world, including Japan, China, and South Korea, where our wheat and other agricultural products have been top-of-list in these ventures. We are building real and lasting working relationships with overseas partners, so that in moments where times are tough as they are now, we can work to keep business going. COVID-19 has been especially difficult for all of our families, especially for wheat farmers, where so much of your livelihood is tied to keeping international exports

moving and keeping the world fed. From the onset of this pandemic, we have taken the necessary steps to protect public health while ensuring that our farms can continue to stay open. We cannot compound the struggle that farmers face by allowing the federal government to engage in a trade war with important trading partners around the world. These retaliatory trade measures are proving to be costly to our state's economy, especially our agricultural sector, and it is vital that federal leadership adopt the playbook we've abided by to show how trade can be mutually beneficial for us and partners.

Wheat growers are concerned that they are losing access to chemicals they rely on not only to grow their crops, but chemicals that allow them to conserve Washington's natural resources through conservation tillage. What is your position on state-level legislation that bans the use of these chemicals despite assurances by the EPA that the chemicals are safe when label directions are followed?

Over the years, the wheat industry has made big gains in productivity, while reducing the loss of topsoil through no-till and other conservation methods. These gains have

also helped protect water quality and manage pests. The state recently promulgated voluntary best management practices that encourage conservation tillage and recognize the reduced erosion benefits associated with no-till when using chemicals. I support these proven practices, as they help farmers and help protect our environment.

I have not taken a blanket position on chemical bans. Instead, I support the responsible use of pesticides where environmental benefits outweigh the risks. ■



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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Global warming, income inequality are top priorities

If elected lieutenant governor, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

1) We are currently receiving a deeply painful reminder of the existential threat of global warming. In just one day recently, twice as many acres burned in wildfires as did in ALL of 2019! There can now be no doubt that the globe is warming and that climate is changing. And lives and livelihoods are already being destroyed as a result, as this year's fire season vividly illustrates. Public health is seriously compromised. Homes and businesses are lost. Transportation and educational services are significantly disrupted. Crops are lost. Going forward, our economy will be changed either by climate change itself or by the steps we can take to reverse it. I believe that we'll be better off if we choose the path rather than letting physics dictate it to us, but in order to choose our destiny, we must begin acting urgently.

2) Doing something about the growing income inequality in our nation. When we rebuild our economy now, we must take advantage of the opportunity to do this better and provide for more broadly shared prosperity.

3) Cleaning up the Puget Sound. Derek Kilmer and I co-founded the Puget Sound Recovery caucus and have worked tirelessly to increase funding for it ever since we arrived in Washington, D.C.

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. As lieutenant governor, how will you support and strengthen the wheat industry's overseas trade relationships?

As lieutenant governor, and therefore chair of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations, I will draw upon my deep experience on trade issues. Even before being sworn in as a member of Congress, I convened and chaired the State Road 167 coalition to advocate for completion of the last and missing five miles of that highway into the Port of Tacoma to enable more efficient and cost effective shipment of goods, mostly agricultural products from Eastern Washington. My most difficult fights in Congress were, in 2014 and 2019, securing reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, the federal agency dedicated to financing the



DENNY HECK
Candidate

sale of U.S. exports. And I was intimately involved in 2018 in redesigning the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which, just as its name implies, screens all manner of overseas investments in the U.S. for national security concerns. Those experiences have given me not only a network of contacts but also a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities for U.S. producers. When combined with my past success building a business, I believe I can describe Washington's real opportunity in terms that will resonate with potential investors.

As lieutenant governor I want to see policies put forward that will strengthen our overseas trade agreements, especially for wheat, which is Washington state's third-largest export. I want to support legislation that promotes growth in the farming industry and works toward getting increasing demand for wheat exports.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

The Columbia River is one of Washington's greatest natural resources. I am in support of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS. It is critical that we take responsibility for preserving the natural waterways in the Pacific Northwest, and listen to our tribal brothers and sisters on their perspectives as the original caretakers of the Columbia River. I also recognize the EIS will need to be an ongoing conversation between various stakeholders such as tribal leaders, agriculture professionals, and alternative energy professionals as the uses of the river evolve, and the understanding of the Columbia River grows.

When presiding over the Senate, how will you work with both parties to get things done, especially in the current partisan climate?

We are approaching a moment in our history where we must confront public policy choices that will have a massive impact on peoples' lives. In the coming year, we will simultaneously confront the triple crises of COVID-19, deep recession, and a gaping state budget deficit while also having a once-in-a-generation opportunity to guide our communities through a rethinking of racial disparities. Each of those challenges and opportunities will require legislation ushered through the state House and Senate. I want to help shape those bills—I have strong

ideas on how we should respond—and ensure that our state Senate functions smoothly so that the bills can be passed and delivered to the Governor's Desk.

Olympia should become a leader in committing to improving fairness and decency in our political process, and not be dragged down by the national partisan trends. If elected, I will do exactly that. As president of the state Senate, the lieutenant governor is the ideal position to maintain decorum and to model the virtues of civility, fairness and inclusion, welcoming the different ideas and experiences of all.

If cap and trade legislation is passed in 2021, how will you work to ensure that farmers, who often cannot pass on any additional taxes, aren't put out of business?

First, I have a long-standing commitment to making sure we protect those who are asked to sacrifice for the greater good. As part of my work on trade issues, I have demanded major increases to trade adjustment assistance (TAA), which is meant to provide for those who lose jobs as a result of trade changes but has been underfunded for years. I will fight to protect farmers affected by cap and trade just like I fought to protect the mill workers affected

by trade deals. If elected lieutenant governor and cap and trade legislation is passed in the upcoming session, I would focus on three priorities: 1) a fund to help farmers pay increased costs during implementation; 2) low-cost loans to assist in investments that make farming less carbon intensive; and 3) infrastructure upgrades to spur more wind development so that farmers can generate additional revenue from their land.

A broader and more important point than this specific question about cap and trade is how will I work with farmers in general. I offer myself as someone who has a demonstrated and long-term history of doing just that. While in the state legislature I served on the agriculture committee in part because I had grown up working on a farm my entire childhood and because I had the honor to represent a district that spanned the Cascade mountains. I represented all of Klickitat County including the dryland wheat farms of the Horse Heaven Hills. Eastern Washington, and its considerable agribusiness foundation, will not be an afterthought to me as lieutenant governor. We have business interests on the east side, and my wife's entire family resides there where she grew up. I am there a lot and will continue to be so if I have the honor to serve as your lieutenant governor. ■

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Focus will turn to rebuilding economy from middle out

If elected lieutenant governor, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

The most pressing issue we face is helping our state and our economy recover from COVID-19. This means listening to public health experts and ensuring that we save lives and take all measures to stop the spread of the virus now. It also means tackling the structural flaws in our economy that the pandemic has highlighted. We must rebuild our economy from the middle out, not the top down. That will require making sure everyone has access to a living wage, quality healthcare that doesn't break the bank, and expanding benefits like paid leave. As we rebuild our economy, we must ensure that we are building a resilient and sustainable one that protects our forests, water, and crops for the long run.

As we rebuild our economy, we must preserve critical state services which require new, progressive revenue that fixes our upside-down tax system. We need to make a system where the working class aren't bearing the brunt of the burden, and the millionaires and billionaires are paying their fair share. We must also continue expanding access to quality education, from universal pre-K to fully funded public schools and colleges. Our success and prosperity depends on a well-educated workforce, and our democracy depends on a well-educated society. And in everything we do, we must put equity at the center of our work. We must dismantle systems of oppression and ensure every Washingtonian has the opportunities to succeed and thrive in our state, no matter their background or where they live.

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. As lieutenant governor, how will you support and strengthen the wheat industry's overseas trade relationships?

Washington has the most trade-driven economy in the U.S., with 40 percent of our jobs and billions of dollars of exports tied to international trade, and one of the most vibrant parts of our export market comes from our agricultural sector. The lieutenant governor is, by law, the chair of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations, putting the role in a prime



MARKO LIAS
Candidate

position to connect business leaders and legislators with foreign leaders, to nourish international ties and build stronger trade relationships. It will be the job of the next lieutenant governor to step forward on the international stage to share the message that Washington is a great place to invest, to create jobs, to work and to live so we can recover our economy stronger and faster. I have had the good fortune of attending trade missions with Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib, and look forward to taking on the mantle next, bringing small and medium sized companies and organizations to meet directly with foreign leaders.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

The Snake River dams have long presented a difficult situation pitting economic development against environmentalism. There is no one good fix for the issue, and I imagine the conversations are going to continue on for much longer to find a solution that can best satisfy both sides. The Columbia River Operations EIS put out by the federal agencies with jurisdiction over the dams offers a good place to start the next round of conversations, increasing water flow for salmon runs but recognizing the major economic impact the dams provide for the region and the energy they generate to power our state.

When presiding over the Senate, how will you work with both parties to get things done, especially in the current partisan climate?

One of my greatest assets I am bringing to the role of lieutenant governor is the years I have spent serving in our state Senate and the relationships I have forged on both sides of the aisle. For the past three years, I have served as Senate majority floor leader, working with both Democratic and Republican leadership on ways forward on legislation, including discussing the merits and problems of bills from both perspectives. I am proud of the collaborative work I have done with both parties as a member of Senate leadership, and I intend to approach being president of the Senate the same—ensuring that there can be civil and productive debate on the Senate floor and we pass meaningful bills that benefit all of Washington.

If cap and trade legislation is passed in 2021, how will you work to ensure that farmers, who often


cannot pass on any additional taxes, aren't put out of business?

Farmers and agriculture are integral to reducing our carbon emissions and protecting our climate. The sequestration capabilities of the farms all across Washington create an incredible opportunity to continue producing the best produce in the world while also reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. I would be interested to see how we can wrap soil health credits and other incentives into a cap and trade bill so that we can stay at the cutting edge of fighting climate change, encourage production of our great Washington crops, and make sure our farmers and their communities are healthy and growing. Regardless of the path the legislature chooses, farmers will need to be represented at the discussion table, and I am committed to making sure we have folks from the community as part of the decision-making process. ■

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U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 4

EIS brings us closer to much-needed certainty

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. How will you support and strengthen our growers' ability to access those overseas markets and keep them competitive with other wheat-growing regions like Canada and Australia?

Central and Eastern Washington wheat growers continue to grow the highest quality crop in the world, and because of that, our wheat is highly sought after by many countries in the Pacific Rim and Asian markets. During my time as the Washington State Director of Agriculture to my current position as Congressman for Central Washington, I have and continue to support our growers in every way possible. This year, the United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA) became official on July 1. The agreement retains critical access to Mexico's flour mills and brings reciprocal treatment of wheat landing in Canada. In addition to passage of the USMCA, last year, the United States and Japan announced a critical agreement between the two countries placing U.S. wheat on an even tariff level with wheat from Canada and Australia. Throughout all of the negotiations, I was in constant contact with the United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and the Washington wheat industry to ensure that our wheat is treated fair and remains in these critical markets.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

In Central and Eastern Washington, our dams and river systems are the economic lifeblood of our communities. The final EIS, which was conducted over several years by federal scientists and researchers from a number of federal agencies, stated what we have all known to be true: Dams and fish can coexist. Our dams are an incredible source of clean and renewable energy, which create reliable and affordable electricity for our homes and businesses. They also provide countless other benefits, including—as wheat farmers know well—serving as one of this nation's most significant river highway systems. They have transformed Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest from an arid desert to the productive agriculture region it is today. I am proud that President Trump listened to my recommendation by issuing an executive order to complete this



DAN NEWHOUSE
Incumbent

environmental review a year earlier than scheduled. In doing so, we are now closer to bringing much-needed certainty for our river system.

Although the preferred alternative of the Columbia River Operations EIS did not recommend dam removal, wheat growers do not see this fight as being over. What do you think needs to happen to put this issue to rest?

As we are all aware, this is not a new issue, but over the past few years, these federal dams on the Columbia and lower Snake rivers have been under attack like I have never seen before. Fortunately, it would take an act

of Congress to remove them, and that will not be happening anytime soon—certainly not as long as I still serve in Congress. The most important voices that must be heard by the federal government are those who depend on the river system—including our farmers and river navigators. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress on a bipartisan basis to ensure that decisions to alter their operations are based on science, not politics. I will also continue to work with the federal agencies to ensure they hear the voices of local communities firsthand, which is why I was so proud to welcome Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt to Grand Coulee this summer. Rest assured, I am committed to ensuring our dams remain standing and operating at their full potential.

Recently, there have been efforts to ban the use of pesticides that have been approved by the EPA, pesticides that wheat growers rely on for conservation tillage practices and to protect their crops. What are your thoughts on this issue, and how will you fight for the wheat growers in your district?

Now is not the time to create more uncertainty for our growers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) both have stringent, science-based guidelines to approve and reapprove crop management tools for Washington's growers. Our wheat growers work hard every day to produce a safe and high-quality product and must retain access to every tool available to them. Any effort to take tools away from growers must be based on facts and sci-

ence. I will continue to fight for our growers and ensure that these tools remain available as well as secure funding for critical agricultural research as a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Wheat growers are concerned about potential marketing losses relating to the 2020 crop thanks to COVID-19 and trade issues. In the last round of CFAP, the main classes of wheat grown in Eastern Washington weren't made eligible for relief. How will you address this issue and work to make sure wheat growers aren't overlooked for pandemic relief in the future?

I have been in constant discussions with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with respect to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). As you know, many of Washington's crops were initially left out of the program. Since then, I have worked with USDA and our growers to ensure the program accurately reflects the challenges faced by growers in Washington due to COVID-19. Subsequently, USDA did announce further positive changes for many of our growers to the program, but unfortunately, wheat is still not eligible. I will continue

to work with Washington's wheat growers to ensure their challenges are addressed in the next round of COVID-19 relief. Since the release of the program, I have been in contact with Secretary Perdue and leaders within the agency to help them further understand the challenges of Washington growers. I believe that through our conversations with USDA, we have set up many of Washington's growers to receive assistance in future USDA COVID-19 relief programs.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

Over the August work period, I traveled to Ritzville, Wash., to meet with leaders of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. I expressed to them that I will always work to protect and promote our way of life in Central Washington. I am a third-generation Yakima Valley farmer, so many of the wheat industry's issues are my issues, too. I have experience and knowledge as a grower, former state legislator, former state director of agriculture, and in my current role as a congressman. I will continue working to ensure our federal regulatory and trade practices are in the best interest of Central Washington farmers. ■

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U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 5

Funding for trade program a farm bill priority

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. How will you support and strengthen our growers' ability to access those overseas markets and keep them competitive with other wheat-growing regions like Canada and Australia?

Building new markets abroad is critical to the success of our farmers and ranchers. Especially for our wheat growers, we need to expand markets in Asia and open new opportunities to build strong trade relationships in the region. I have continually urged the administration to move more quickly in negotiating new trade deals that prioritize American agriculture. I also continue to make funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) one of my top priorities in farm bill negotiations. Opening markets for our growers is foundational to their success, and I will always be a partner in that effort.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

This preferred alternative is based on years of research and the best-available science. Its conclusion is one we have known for a long time: our dams are critical to the life and livelihood of the Pacific Northwest. From clean, renewable, low-cost energy to irrigation to transportation, our river system is the lifeblood of our economy, and I will continue to defend and support it locally and in Congress.

Although the preferred alternative of the Columbia River Operations EIS did not recommend dam removal, wheat growers do not see this fight as being over. What do you think needs to happen to put this issue to rest?

It's not over. We need to get this EIS implemented and then get the Biological Opinion codified into law. At the end of the day, we need to continue to tell the positive story of our dams and all that they mean to the Pacific Northwest.

Recently, there have been efforts to ban the use of pesticides that have been approved by the EPA, pesticides that wheat growers rely on for conservation tillage practices and to protect their



**CATHY MCMORRIS
RODGERS**
Incumbent

crops. What are your thoughts on this issue, and how will you fight for the wheat growers in your district?

Despite my work with the Trump administration to cut red tape over the past four years, unnecessary and burdensome regulations continue to impact growers in Eastern Washington. We need smart regulations, ones that focus on the results we want rather than simply checking a box. I will continue to fight for smarter regulations that aren't overly burdensome to our farmers, including allowing for the commonsense use of pesticides that our growers need to be successful and provide food security to the world.

Wheat growers are concerned about potential marketing losses relating to the 2020 crop thanks to COVID-19 and trade issues. In the last round of CFAP, the main classes of wheat grown in Eastern Washington weren't made eligible for relief. How will you address this issue and work to make sure wheat growers aren't overlooked for pandemic relief in the future?

This summer, I sent a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue calling for these main classes of wheat to be included in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). I also spoke with the secretary and his team directly about this issue when he was in Eastern Washington in June. On Sept. 4, I joined in sending another letter to the administration advocating for wheat coverage under the program. I will continue to work to try and get these classes of wheat included and to make sure our wheat growers have the resources they need to make it through this pandemic.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

Agriculture is Eastern Washington's number one industry, and wheat is our number one commodity. My commitment to our ag industry and our wheat growers is one of my top priorities in Congress. I will continue to fight for open markets, defend the Columbia and Snake River dams and everything they mean to our region, and work to reduce the amount of burdensome and unnecessary regulations that hurt our farmers' ability to succeed. ■



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U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 5

Trade, research funding necessary for success

With almost 90 percent of Washington wheat being shipped overseas, trade is extremely important to our growers. How will you support and strengthen our growers' ability to access those overseas markets and keep them competitive with other wheat-growing regions like Canada and Australia?

Generations of Washington state wheat growers have written checks to fund building relationships with millers and bakers in the Pacific Rim and South Asia. Much of this work has been nullified by the disruption of trade relations in the last several years. I support (1) a ramping down of trade tensions to restore mutually beneficial trade relations with our long-standing partners, (2) funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program, and (3) funding for USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) at Washington State University to develop varieties adaptable to changing climate patterns.

What is your opinion of the preferred alternative in the Columbia River Operations EIS?

The preferred alternative is an appropriate response to the multiple demands put on the operation of the Columbia River System. Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) phases out coal generating plants by 2025 and makes retail power sales GHG neutral by 2035. CETA necessarily puts off any radical change to the river system if we are going to avoid regional brown-outs, and California's power outages again this summer puts PNW power back in demand. The region cannot responsibly consider breaching the Lower Snake River dams until we have secured alternate power sources, provided for some cost-neutral alternative to barging grain to Pasco, and compensated ports and irrigators for loss of river system capacity.

Although the preferred alternative of the Columbia River Operations EIS did not recommend dam removal, wheat growers do not see this fight as being over. What do you think needs to happen to put this issue to rest?

Wheat growers are correct that dam removal is not off the agenda, and it will not come off the agenda. Wheat



DAVE WILSON
Candidate

growers and this region need to assess the benefits of the federal dam system, prepare a Plan B to assure those benefits, and insist that Plan B is funded and in place. What does not work is tough rhetoric that is not backed up by tough thinking and political heft. Wheat growers need to hedge their political support just as they hedge their crop prices. Political bluff alone will not work, and even science may prove insufficient to guide the future of the river system. I will work to insist that a science-based plan does prevail, but just in case that is not sufficient, I will work to have a Plan B funded and in place.

Recently, there have been efforts to ban the use of pesticides that have been approved by the EPA, pesticides that wheat growers rely on for conservation tillage practices and to protect their crops. What are your thoughts on this issue, and how will you fight for the wheat growers in your district?

I will blow the whistle on any EPA findings that deviate from the procedures of science. That said, science does develop, and new findings may challenge the safety of time-worn herbicides. The answer must be what drives a re-evaluation of an herbicide is science rather than a shift in social norms, and also that we continue to develop new herbicides with new modes of activity. Herbicide development has slowed in the last 20 years, and we need public sector investment in research to fuel new classes of herbicide. I will call for robust funding of the ARS.

Wheat growers are concerned about potential marketing losses relating to the 2020 crop thanks to COVID-19 and trade issues. In the last round of CFAP, the main classes of wheat grown in Eastern Washington weren't made eligible for relief. How will you address this issue and work to make sure wheat growers aren't overlooked for pandemic relief in the future?

The answer lies in fixing the trade issues more than in fixing the price calculations for SWW (soft white wheat) in CFAP (the Corona Food Assistance Program). CFAP support payments are not an answer to a disrupted international grain market (although they would help tide growers over if SWW qualified). ►

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Beyond the bin

EASTERN WASHINGTON WHEAT GROWERS TURN TO GRAIN BAGS FOR STORAGE FLEXIBILITY

By Trista Crossley

Some Eastern Washington farmers are starting to think outside the bin when it comes to how they handle wheat at harvest.

"We were approaching the year with a lot of uncertainty out there in the grain market, and also the fear that maybe an elevator or two might have employees that contract the coronavirus and get shut down. If that was the case, what was Plan B? Where do we go with our grain if our elevator of choice is not open?" said Randy Emtman. "We always try to forward contract some of our crop, so say that an elevator had a temporary closure—there'd be no place to go with that grain that we are obligated to deliver."

For Emtman Brothers Farms in Valleyford, Wash., the answer turned out to be grain bags, those long, plastic tubes that are more commonly seen in Canadian and Midwest fields than in the Pacific Northwest.

Gary Dible, the Spokane region general manager for Papé Machinery, has some experience with grain bagging systems, having helped a manufacturer with testing and

development work, along with selling and starting up several systems.

"A grain bagging system is inexpensive to get into because if you need to store more bushels, you just buy more bags. You can do that in very short period of time versus building grain bins or some sort of structure. That takes time and is a huge capital investment," Dible said. "Farmers are looking for ways to enhance their bottom line. The marketing options that come with storing your own grain are becoming more and more important. As soon as you haul grain to the elevator, your marketing options become one. By storing grain in a bag or a bin, you have all the marketing options in the world."

The bags used for storing grain are made out of a 3-ply plastic, are highly UV resistant and typically run 10 feet in diameter and hundreds of feet in length. Most bags are designed to store grain for at least a year. While there is an initial investment in the equipment, it is far less expensive—and time consuming—than building additional grain bins, and it can be more flexible, as additional storage is just a bag away. ►



WSU WHEAT ACADEMY

The 2020 WSU Wheat Academy has been cancelled due to COVID-19. We plan to be back in December 2021. In the meantime, visit our website to stay informed on the latest wheat-related research. We hope to see you next year at the WSU Wheat Academy. Stay safe!



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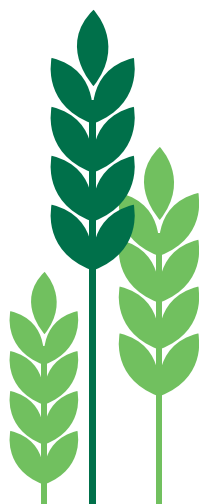
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The Emtman farm does have some grain bins, but Emtman said they date back to the late 70s, early 80s, and just can't handle the volume of grain that comes from today's high capacity combines. The cost of building new grain bins was also a factor in the Emtmans' decision to purchase a used grain bagging system. So far this year, they've filled 8 bags (as of mid-September) and are using them to temporarily store not only wheat, but peas, lentils and Kentucky bluegrass seed as well.

"We are very happy with our decision," Emtman said, adding that the plan is to have the bags emptied before the wet fall weather sets in.

Besides the flexible storage and increased marketing opportunities, Dible said another advantage of bagging grain is that it can help decrease labor costs at harvest.

"There are people that bag everything in the field at harvest and don't have trucks. They just have combines, a bank-out wagon and a bagger. No trucks are involved, so it can cut labor requirements in half at harvest," he explained, pointing out that trucks can often be hired at a lower rate after harvest to move the grain out of the bags.

Saving on transportation costs was one of the main reasons Carl Anderson purchased a grain bagging system this year. Anderson and his family farm several far-flung pieces of land south of Kennewick and around the Prosser area. He said they'd been looking for a solution to on-farm storage, but grain bins were too expensive and stationary.

"We run three combines and have a hard time moving a lot of grain out of the field without a fleet of semis," he said. "The combines would be stopping (while waiting for the trucks to get back), and it's too expensive to let the combines idle. This solved the problem that we were having as far being able to store grain without waiting on trucks. We were able to eliminate a couple of semis we usually had to hire. We'll haul the grain ourselves during the off season."

Dible, who sold the system to Anderson, was on hand to help and answer questions when they started bagging grain in July. Anderson said they ended up using eight, 400-foot long bags that hold approximately 18,000 bushels of wheat each. Once they are done with fall seeding, they'll start hauling the grain down to the river.

"It was surprisingly easy to do, and we have unloaded one bag already," Anderson said.

Besides the storage flexibility, lower transportation costs and increased marketing options, Dible identified several other advantages in a grain bagging system, including:

- No need to treat grain for insects. Dible explained that when the bag is sealed, oxygen is depleted, making



One of the grain bags on Carl Anderson's family farm being filled. Photo by Gary Dible.


the environment inhospitable for pests;

- There's no loss of moisture while grain is stored and no need for fans; and
- Source verification is easier as grain can be stored in the field it came from.

The main disadvantages to a grain bagging system are the initial cost of purchasing the loader and unloader and the need to keep spilled grain minimized so as to not attract wildlife or livestock. The bags are single use. Dible said it typically costs about \$.07 per bushel to store the grain in the bags.

Most grain bagging systems are currently manufactured by small companies and aren't going to be found on local dealers' lots, at least in the Pacific Northwest. When asked why he thought the system hadn't really taken off in Eastern Washington, Dible wondered if it was simply lack of exposure and knowledge of the system.

"In my opinion, for what it is worth, it's such a flexible system, whether you have a small crop or a huge crop, it can flex to your requirements and your needs. The whole goal of the system is to make producers more profitable," Dible said. ■



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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Gary Bailey



"Poppa G, why does your tractor have triangle wheels?" That was a question my granddaughter posed to me a couple years ago. It was a difficult question to answer in a way a little girl could understand.

I've had plenty of time to think about that answer and plenty of other things as I drove our Quad Trac pulling the bank-out wagon this 2020 harvest. I logged more than 500 miles in short trips through the rolling Palouse hills, ferrying 800-to-1,000 bushel loads from the combine to the truck.

The bank-out wagon may be this region's most recent equipment evolution. The first year our operation pulled a bank-out wagon was 2013. As combine capacities got larger, semis and tandem trucks replaced single-axle trucks, and the need for speed increased.

One article I read said farmers are 25 percent more efficient as a result of bank-out wagons. Of course, it's that drive for efficiency that has motivated most changes since wheat farming came to Eastern Washington.

I made a lot more trips between the combine and the trucks with the bank-out wagon this year because my region was blessed with an abundant crop. I would go so far as to say this is the best winter wheat crop we have ever cut where we live south of Ewan.

Farmers tend to keep their yield information tight to the vest, talking in generalities such as average, above average, etc., and I'm not any different. Let me just say that I'm pleased with the crop on my farm, but I know not everyone in the state received above-average yields.

Much of the large summer/fallow area in the north and west areas of our wheat-growing region missed the spring rains those of us further east received in abundance. So, any pleasure I take in my yield needs to be balanced against the unease I feel for those who weren't so fortunate. It is rare that every wheat-growing region in Washington has the same good fortune.

The last crop that rivaled this one occurred in 2016 when state winter wheat yield records were broken. As it turned out, so were our hearts because much of the wheat that was harvested had low falling numbers caused by late maturity alpha-amylase. Millions of dollars were lost to discounts.

But this is not 2016. Although there are reports of low falling numbers in isolated locations, it is neither widespread nor severe. I haven't heard of any warehouses

discounting for low falling numbers.

In fact, the quality of this year's crop is excellent with the range of protein levels our customers desire, and plump kernels weighing out near an average 62 pounds test weight along with lower-than-average dockage. Not to mention those yields! In some cases, they are as much as a third more than average.

The genetic potential of the newer varieties we plant today allowed us to obtain the production we did, but they were not the cause. May, June and even some early July rains, accompanied by cool weather, permitted the wheat to achieve yields nearer its inherent capacity. We all know wheat doesn't like weather extremes, and this year proved it.

And yet, when hot weather was needed to ripen the crop, it came as if on a schedule. Harvest is just finished for us and most in my local area. Other farmers in the eastern and northern regions are still bringing in lentils, garbs and some wheat. So far, it has been a good run, weather wise. We only missed one day from rain, and a couple of days we quit early because of high winds.

As I put the finishing touches on this column, Labor Day winds and tinder-dry conditions resulted in fires that burned thousands of acres and dozens of structures in wheat country. I applaud the firefighters and farmers who helped fight the fires, but my heart goes out to those whose lives were impacted.

There were several years, circa 2008 to 2012, when we had both good yields and good prices, helping farmers heal from a decade of low prices. Those good years provided the capital needed to move into the current decade. How we move through the decade with prices at the current level, however, is an open question.

Most of us can be thankful that we have extra bushels to sell, making it more likely to break even or show a small profit. For those who had less than exceptional yields, I am confident your turn will come. As any Eastern Washington wheat farmer knows, the weather is never the same two years in a row.

Planting for the 2021 crop is well underway for some as I write this, but only beginning for others. At our operation, the tractor with the triangle wheels moves back in the field around Sept. 10—this time with a planting drill attached—and we all begin looking forward to the year ahead. ■

REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

They don't make 'em like that anymore

Released in 1988, the wheat variety, Madsen, was the most widely grown cultivar in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) between 1991 and 2004. In 1994, it was grown on 41 percent of Washington's wheat acres. You might expect that 32 years after its release that the variety has outlived its usefulness, and it's true, Madsen's heyday is in the rearview mirror (in 2019, 7,000 acres were planted). Its impact on the region's wheat industry, however, continues to reverberate. An article written by Washington State University (WSU) winter wheat breeder Arron Carter not only explored what made Madsen special, he also investigated its progeny since introduction. The article in the *Journal of Plant Registrations*, a publication of the Crop Science Society of America, reported that Madsen has been parent to more than 45 released cultivars mainly because of its excellent disease resistance genes, some of which the breeder, Bob Allan, wasn't aware of at the time of its release, but which were only discovered in later research. The breeding goal when the cross was made was to improve resistance to what was then called strawbreaker foot rot, but which is now called eyespot foot rot. Madsen was one of the first resistant varieties available in the PNW. Named for Louis L. Madsen, dean of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at WSU from 1965 to 1973, the release not only proved an excellent variety on its own merits, but a superb parent as well. ■



Too much of a good thing

Wheat prices ordinarily rise or fall based on world wheat ending stocks, and this year's low prices are the result of high ending stocks. China holds the majority of these stocks, but even taking them out of the equation, world ending stocks are anticipated at 25 percent.

In other words, there is plenty of wheat in the world. In the U.S., soft white may be the tightest of the classes, and it's likely farmers looking for higher prices may store their crop. This year's Pacific Northwest soft white crop came in with average protein of 9.7 percent, 61.85 test weight and moisture of 8.7 percent. Falling numbers averaged 324 seconds. Club wheat samples had 9.97 percent protein and 61.5 pound test weight with 8.75 percent moisture. Falling numbers stood at an average 322 seconds. Hard red winter average protein stood at 11.7 percent, 62.1 pound test weight, 8.7 percent moisture and 349 for average falling numbers. Hard red spring results show 14.3 percent protein, 62.2 pound test weight, 8.6 percent moisture, and 373 average falling numbers. ■

Novel traits = novel patents

Arcadia BioSciences, a West Coast-based outfit, now has 22 patents for wheat varieties with novel traits. The two most recent extend the shelf life of whole wheat by more than nine months. Ordinarily, whole wheat flour begins to oxidize immediately after milling and has an average shelf life of 10 to 30 days. The new wheat variety minimizes rancidity by reducing decomposition of fatty acids that can affect smell or flavor. Arcadia also has patents on a reduced gluten variety. That variety is said to have 65 percent less allergenic gluten, but with the same taste and performance as other wheat varieties. ■

Drink your bread

Another approach to extending the life of bread products comes from Singapore, where researchers at the National University have developed a method to turn unsold sandwich bread into a creamy, slightly fizzy sweet drink. The bread is cut into small pieces and mixed with water, creating a bread slurry. At that point, it is pasteurized, and probiotic bacteria and yeast are added. It can be stored at room temperature for up to six weeks while maintaining at least 1 billion probiotic cells per serving. ■



Automatics first, then robots

It takes several trades before today's new semitrucks move into the agricultural market, but in the not distant future, grinding gears will become a thing of the past, even for grain haulers. Manual transmissions in the big rigs are disappearing, replaced by a computer that automates shifting gears. The newfangled transmission is coming in handy for an industry now desperate to find more drivers for whom working through 10 up to 18 gears would otherwise be a hinderance—given that most have never even owned cars with a stick shift. Ninety percent of Peterbilt trucks now come with automated transmissions and about 85 percent of Freightliners. Manual transmissions were once said to be more fuel efficient, but the new transmissions (which differ from those found in pick-ups and cars) has improved significantly over the last 10 years. Some truck drivers, however, maintain manual is better, arguing that automatic transmissions let drivers relax, and when that happens, they might take a nap—all over the road. ■

Pivoting toward the future

In basketball, pivot refers to the ability to keep one foot stationary while the other can move in any direction. In the time of COVID-19, pivot refers to how the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is honing a new approach to trade servicing now that face-to-face interactions with customers are cut off. Glen Squires credits Joe Bippert, program director for the WGC, in helping lead the organization's video efforts, which include drone footage. Along with WGC Vice President Mary Palmer Sullivan, the pair have spent time in the field interviewing commissioners/farmers for reception overseas. A recent video, which can be seen at the WGC's website (wagrains.org, click on News), features Gary Bailey thanking customers and explaining how combines operate while showing panoramic views of farms across Eastern Washington during harvest. Squires said he has received positive reviews about the videos. Additionally, he and other staff members have joined with other states and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) in providing crop updates and supply/demand presentations during several webinars with customers in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. "There are certainly benefits to in-person visits and in-field discussions, but for now, I couldn't be more pleased by the efforts of WGC staff and USW overseas offices, which ensures the story of our region and our wheat continues to be told," he said. ■

Heart healthy salmon lethal to sea lions

Sea lions will find their salmon snacking along a 180-mile Columbia River corridor more dangerous as states and native tribes are authorized to kill 540 California sea lions and 176 Steller sea lions over the next five years from Portland to McNary Dam, as well as in several tributaries. A permit request was heard and approved recently by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's regional administrator. This is the first time the Steller sea lion, which is much larger, has been targeted for elimination. The sea lions congregate at dams where the migrating fish bottleneck as they head up the river to spawn. Less lethal methods have been used in the past, including a fake motorized orca made of fiberglass, rubber bullets, traps and explosives. Relocation was also tried, but sea lions moved hundreds of miles away would return within days. About 238 sea lions have been killed at the Bonneville Dam over the last 13 years under restrictions that, among other things, required sighting the animal five times in the area and observing it eating salmon. ■

Falling short

Products made from whole grains have been shown to be heart healthy and help control an array of chronic illnesses, including obesity, but most Americans have not taken the hint. In the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-20, the goal was for U.S. consumers to increase their total whole grain intake to at least half their diet. It currently stands at around 16 percent for those age 20 or more. Those at 60 plus had the highest whole grain use at nearly 20 percent. ■

Home again

Jane DeMarchi, who served as director of government relations for research and technology for the National Association of Wheat Growers for three years before leaving to join the American Seed Trade Association in 2013, has been named president of the North American Millers' Association (NAMA). It's a homecoming for DeMarchi who served as director of government relations there from 2004 to 2010. "I am excited to be returning to NAMA during a crucial time for the whole food supply chain," DeMarchi said. "NAMA is an organization with a long history of bringing the industry together. I look forward to sharing the joy in the renewed interest in home baking with our members and working with them to address the complex challenges our sector faces as the link between farmers and food." ■





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Washington State University understands the value of farms to our state and its people. For more than a decade, we've worked to steward gifts and investments of farmland made through the WSU Land Legacy Program.

Created by Washington farmers, ranchers, and forest owners who wanted to keep their land in production while passing it on to benefit society, Land Legacy has put more than nine farms, totaling more than 3,850 acres, to work for research benefiting Northwest agriculture, student scholarships, conservation, and community education.

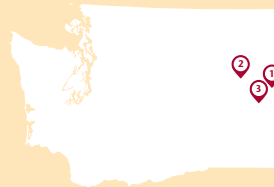
Crucial for Washington wheat growers, the majority of returns for research have powered the Orville A. Vogel Wheat Research Fund and supported the two Vogel Endowed Chairs in Wheat Breeding and Genetics, speeding up development of spring and winter wheat varieties, addressing time-sensitive issues like stripe rust resistance, aluminum and herbicide tolerance, and low falling numbers, and helping make Washington farmers more competitive in global markets.

People choose to donate their land to our university for many reasons—to support research, student scholarships, and education—but all participants see the value of keeping their farm in production to benefit their fellow farmers, students, scientists, and our nation and world. Gifts through the program can be designated to benefit virtually any WSU activity. You decide what impact the proceeds of your land will have.

In the following pages, read how the newest Land Legacy member, Georgia Cross, was inspired to enlist her family's heritage in support of WSU research, and learn how you can become involved as well.

Future Land Legacy Gifts

Washington State University currently benefits from nine operational farms managed through the Land Legacy Program. Three additional farms have been committed as bequests to the university:



① Georgia Cross Farm

- 508 acres near Rockford, Washington
- Will support the O.A. Vogel Wheat Research Fund, advancing the production of wheat in the Pacific Northwest.
- Gifted to WSU in 2020.

② Jim and Nancy Batch Farm

- 1,000 acres near Davenport, Washington
- Creates the Jim & Nancy Batch/Simon & Marvel Reinbold Endowment, providing financial support for CAHNRS students.
- Gifted to WSU in 2018.

③ Glenn Leitz Farm

- 960 acres near Waverly, Washington
- Will support conservation research to improve cropping systems that enhance farm profitability and improve soil quality.
- Gifted to WSU in 2006.

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

The Land Legacy Program continues to provide a consistent revenue stream to support CAHNRS. A snapshot of the portfolio of farms includes:

9 

FARMS VALUED
AT \$5.3 MILLION

+130k 

ANNUAL REVENUE THAT
SUPPORTS CAHNRS

3,850 

TOTAL LAND LEGACY ACRES
WITH 8 FARMER-TENANTS

800 

ACRES IN RESEARCH
OR FALLOW

I love the land

Georgia Cross passes on a personal, family heritage to benefit wheat research

Since she was 10 years old, Georgia Cross has called her family's Rockford, Wash., farm home.

"I've been a farm girl all my life," says Cross, 94. "I never knew what it was to live in town, and I wouldn't want to!"

As a child, then as an adult, Cross helped her parents, Clarence and Emma Cross, run their small, diversified farm, experiencing the great changes that transformed America's agricultural communities. Her heart has always been here in Washington wheat country.

Now, she is passing her farm forward to benefit research programs that help wheat farmers, through Washington State University's Land Legacy Program.

Hard work, changing times

Cross's farm legacy reaches back to her maternal grandparents. Hans and Mary Johnson were immigrants from Denmark and Germany who homesteaded at Valleyford, Wash. Hans walked 20 miles to the county seat in Cheney to file papers for his 160-acre claim. He cleared the land of trees, and he and Mary set about farming and raising eight children.

Emma, their fourth daughter, married Cross's father, a veteran of World War I. Clarence and Emma rented property at first, then bought the land and built the farmhouse where Cross has lived ever since.

Born in 1926, Cross grew up amid the grain fields and timber of Spokane County. Life wasn't necessarily

easy on the farm—cleaning the coops of the family's 500 laying hens was a daily dirty job—but the family always had enough.

"I was never without anything," Cross said. "Back then, a lot of things were hard, but it was hard for everybody."

On the farm, Cross helped her mother cook nourishing meals for farm hands and guests. She grew up surrounded by animals—dogs, cats, livestock, and wildlife from the family woodland, including a young deer, "Buck," who she hand-fed with Holstein milk for three years.

She cried when, in the early 1940s, her father finally sold his team of prized workhorses. The tractor had completely replaced them.

Cross was particularly close to her aunt Esther and uncles Roy and Oscar, who farmed with their parents, and she loved going to cowboy movies and rodeos with her uncles.

"I never missed a rodeo," she said.

Growing up, Cross held a 20-year career with Spokane County's real estate recording division, where she was



fascinated to handle the details of her wider community. She never married, but stayed on the farm, managing tenant farmers after her father's passing and caring for her mother in her later years.

Cross inherited her parents' property, the original Johnson homestead, farmland bought by her uncle Oscar, and her aunt Elsie and uncle George Bower's land. She eventually came to own about 500 acres farmed by trusted tenants, among them Valleyford grower Mike Mahn, and his wife Teresa.

"I've known Georgia for nearly 50 years," Mahn said. "Georgia is very concerned with doing a good job with her land. She wants it to be productive and healthy, but she is also very fair and understanding. She's not all about the money."

Mahn supports Cross's decision to donate her land to support research, which ultimately helps growers like him solve problems and remain competitive.

"All our land has a development price on it," Mahn said. "Georgia wants to keep it as a farm. Her decision accomplishes that, as long as people can keep farming and do a good job of it."

"I've had many chances to sell, but I didn't want to see it go into building houses," Cross said.

Benefactor for wheat discoveries

Wanting to do something more meaningful, she learned about WSU's Land Legacy Program through a 2019 Wheat Life article on supporter Glenn Leitz, a retired farmer from nearby Fairfield, Wash. Cross decided that her farm should support WSU's O.A. Vogel Wheat Research Fund, founded by famed Pullman researcher Orville Vogel.

Photos: Georgia Cross, top, previous page, has cherished her family's farm for nearly her entire life. Far left, prior page, Georgia's mother, Emma Cross, shocks oats. Prior page, right, the family's rolling cookhouse followed threshing operations on the Cross farm. Below, Cross fed her beloved fawn, "Buck," with milk from her family's cows.



Leitz had been inspired by Vogel's work, and in turn, Georgia was moved to dedicate her property as a future memorial. The farm will join dozens of other properties across the state whose proceeds drive research into more productive and sustainable wheat varieties and agricultural practices.

"It is only through the generosity of amazing people like Georgia, that we are able to make such great progress at WSU," said Arron Carter, WSU winter wheat breeder. The Vogel Fund allows Carter and colleagues to release new, Washington-focused cultivars with high grain yield potential, excellent resistance to diseases and other stress, and very high end-use quality. Powered in part by the Land Legacy Program, the fund also helps expand WSU's development of new technology to select lines more efficiently, including using drones to evaluate wheat plants for promising traits.

Cross is still on her farm today, with no plans to leave. This place that has sustained generations of her family remains her home, and she is glad that it will continue to grow good things in support of a worthy cause.

"Those who've farmed it say it's good land," Cross said. "I love the land."

The Landlord-tenant Relationship

For many Washington farmers, tenant farming is part of life, both challenge and necessity.

"To be a farmer, and afford the machinery and supplies, you need the acreage," says Michael Mahn, tenant of WSU Land Legacy supporter Georgia Cross.

A lifelong Valleyford resident, Mahn farms his family's land, and rents additional acres from land owners including Cross.

A diversified farmer, Mahn plants what makes the most economic sense. This year, for the first time, he planted canola on Cross's land, hoping to turn a reasonable profit.

"I'm a firm believer in taking care of your landlord as much as you can, and seeing to it that they have the income they deserve from their land," Mahn said. "I've been very fortunate that my landlords have been great to work with. We have a good, honest relationship."

As small farms are consolidated into larger ones, the industry becomes more challenging for newcomers to enter. Mahn has worked to mentor young farmers, but has had a hard time getting many to stick with it.

Through the Land Legacy Program, WSU works to honor families' longstanding relationships with their tenants, enabling farmers to continue to work the land. Farm revenue supports research and education aimed at helping all farmers stay competitive in a changing, global economy.

WSU Land Legacy Council

WSU's Land Legacy Council manages the land to sustain its value and productivity far into the future.

The council is made up of farmers, ranchers, timber owners, and agribusiness leaders who advise the university on land management practices, keeping land gifts sustainable and productive into the future.

Together, WSU and our Land Legacy supporters sustain research, education, and service for Washington agriculture for generations to come.

Leading the way: Chair Hal Johnson and the Land Legacy Council

Nearly a decade ago, Hal Johnson was tapped by then-WSU President Elson S. Floyd to launch a brand-new endeavor.

Floyd needed a group of knowledgeable, responsible volunteers to guide the varied farms donated to the university.

Johnson, a Reardan wheat farmer and former Washington Grain Commissioner, stepped up. He has led the WSU Land Legacy Council ever since, and is preparing to transition it to the next leader.

"When you start something, you hate to jump ship," said Johnson ('65 BS, '68 MS, Agronomy). "WSU has been wonderful to work with. We have a good group

of growers, and we love to give back to the industry that's given us so much. That's why I'm still doing this."

Johnson has met many of the families who joined the Land Legacy Program. Some have a personal connection with WSU faculty and staff. Others may not have direct heirs, yet they want their land to continue to be farmed. All see the benefit of support for knowledge and discovery.

As a farmer, Johnson wholeheartedly agrees.

"I would dearly love to see more ground go to the university, because it does help an industry that doesn't always have it very good," Johnson said.

WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences thanks Hal Johnson and all current and past members of the Land Legacy Council for their involvement in guiding the use of gifted farms. Their knowledge and dedication ensures families' memorials are used at their greatest potential, helping scholars and scientists of today and the farmers of tomorrow.



Leaving a Land Legacy

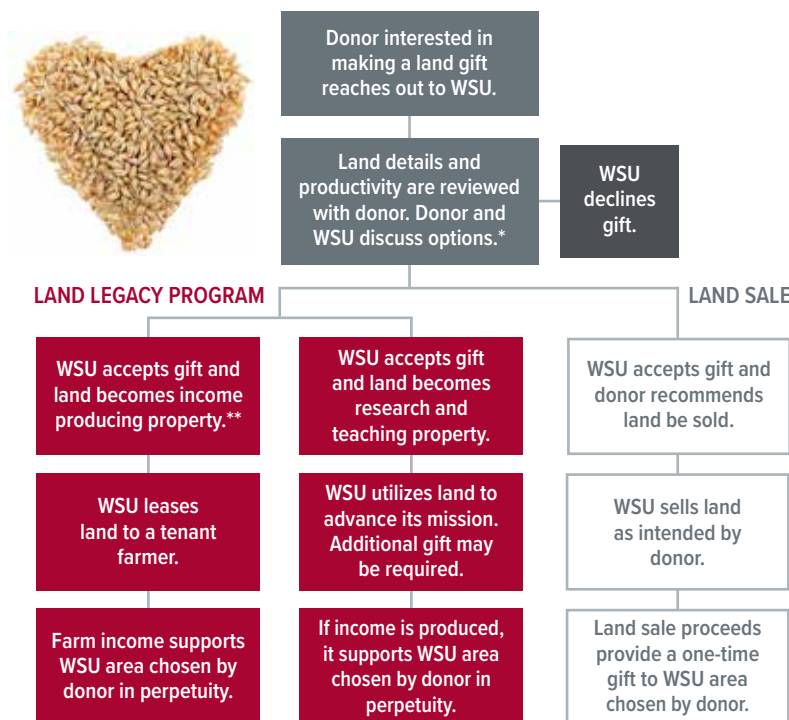
Your land is important to you—it has sustained and rewarded you. It represents years of hard work, dedication, and stewardship.

It's more than just acreage, it's your heritage. It's part of your family. And naturally, you want to make sure it endures.

That's why we're asking you to consider establishing a Land Legacy with Washington State University. A well-planned charitable gift of land can provide tangible benefits to you and to others, now and in the future—and preserve the land that bears your name.

The flow chart at right shows some options available to those wishing to gift their land to WSU.

To learn more about making a gift of land, please visit legacyofland.wsu.edu, or contact CAHNRS Alumni and Development office by emailing Alumni.friends@wsu.edu, or calling 509-335-2243.



* The Land Legacy Council provides recommendations on property acceptance, farm management, and tenant selection. WSU leadership reviews and approves all gifts.

** Each property will be reviewed periodically for profitability and alignment with the WSU's mission and goals.

China emerges as top market for U.S. wheat

By Joe Bippert

Nearly a year ago, U.S. trade negotiators headed by Ambassador Robert Lighthizer finalized the “Phase One” agreement with China, pausing the damaging trade war between the world’s two largest economies and ending months of retaliatory tariffs imposed on billions of dollars’ worth of goods.

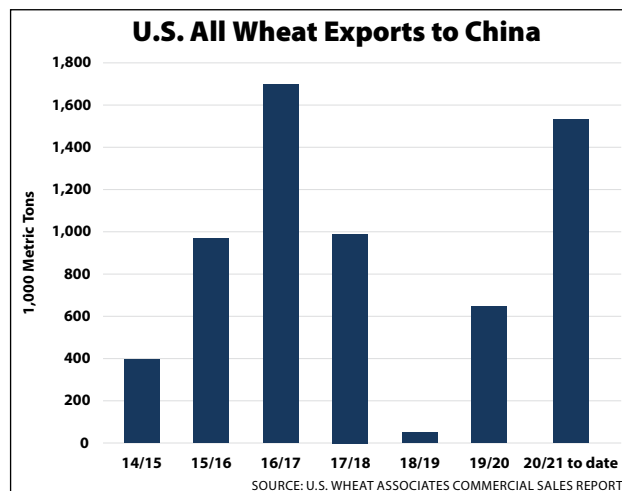
Among other things, the agreement aimed to address long-standing concerns over alleged intellectual property theft and forced technology transfers by China. But at the center of the deal was a commitment from China to buy a minimum of \$200 billion more in U.S. goods and services in excess of the amount of its 2017 purchases—before the trade war began. Of that increase, \$32 billion was earmarked for agricultural purchases. Given that China was the fourth largest market for U.S. wheat sales prior to the trade war, this was welcomed news for our industry.

Reports show that China is behind in their 2020 commitments, but that could be due to the impacts of COVID-19 during the early stages of the agreement. As the world continues to emerge from the global pandemic, however, China is now seen as a potential commodity powerhouse with an eye toward U.S. agriculture.

In marketing year 2020/21, which began last June, China has purchased nearly 1.5 million metric tons of U.S. wheat, making them the country’s second largest wheat buyer. While this is clearly higher than purchases at this time last year, it is also nearly 300 percent higher than wheat purchases at the same time in 2017 prior to the trade war. And wheat sales are just beginning.

Total U.S. agricultural exports from January through June 2020 were down 3 percent, while the same exports to China were up 11 percent. The USDA reported that China is historically responsible for 18 to 20 percent of weekly export sales. But at the beginning of September, China represented 48 percent of all agricultural export sales during the prior five weeks. And during one week, China was the largest buyer of corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton and pork.

This swift uptick in China’s demand for U.S. agriculture goods has limited export elevation capacity out of Gulf of Mexico ports, as well as from Pacific Northwest facilities. A recent article released by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), indicated that for September and October, export elevators are at capacity and cannot add much more business.



USW also reports that the average secondary rate for shuttle trains for delivery in October was nearly three times greater than the previous three-year average due in part to the unexpectedly swift pace of commodity exports to China. These higher rail rates, as well as the limited export elevation capacity, has led to a jump in Gulf and PNW hard red spring (HRS) and hard red winter basis (HRW) values.

So why should Washington wheat farmers care? China is buying HRW and HRS, both wheat classes grown in Washington, although less than half of China’s wheat purchases to date have been shipped out of Portland. There have been no soft white (SW) shipments yet, but keep in mind, that during 10 days in 2019 while the trade war still steamed, China purchased 131,000 metric tons of SW, placing them as a top 10 market in our region. Previously, SW exports to China had grown to more than 300,000 metric tons.

While slower than anticipated, China’s re-emergence as a dominant market for U.S. agriculture is making waves in global trade and will continue to do so as Phase One unfolds. Then the question becomes what Phase Two will hold, and how it will impact our exports from the region over the long term?

Trade agreements are complex and ongoing. Enforcement of agreements will be a main issue for Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and all indications are that they are up to the task. The WGC applauds them for their efforts to enhance the trade of agricultural products. ■

Soil health: A capital investment in farm resilience

By Christina H. Hagerty

Soil health is at the apex of what society expects from the agricultural landscape.

With food production demands intensifying on diminishing arable land resources, soil health has never been so important. While capital investments of a farm (e.g. machinery, buildings) undergo preventative maintenance in order to protect resources, soil health investments remain unclear.

Investing in soil health is not as straightforward as changing the oil in the truck. More research is needed to help define parameters of soil health and define how farmers can make profitable investments in soil health. One hurdle to implementing practices to improve soil health is an abundance of regionally unique soil health indicators, necessitating region-specific soil health research.

In the dryland Pacific Northwest (PNW), soil acidity is an important indicator of soil health, as acid soils have been shown to compromise both soil and crop health and therefore crop production. Soil pH, or soil acidity, is a measure of balance between free hydrogen and free hydroxyl ions. This balance of ions plays a key role in soil health, with imbalances of hydrogen and hydroxyl ions being more chemically active.

While every plant species performs best at an optimal pH, in general, plant health suffers when soil pH deviates too far from neutral. The pH is a critical determinant of soil nutrient availability.

Most nutrients become more or less available as the soil deviates to either more alkaline or more acidic. At low pH, some elements become less bioavailable (e.g. molybdenum, potassium), which can limit the



action of beneficial microbes, while other elements become more bioavailable (e.g. aluminum) resulting in phytotoxicity.

In the dryland PNW, soils have been acidified as a result of nitrogen fertilization since the early 1940s. In a recent survey of commercial wheat fields, Dr. Paul Carter and myself found that 85 of 118 fields sampled were below pH 5.5, the critical pH for wheat production. Other surveys have provided the same or similar critical low pH changes. All forms of synthetic nitrogen reduce soil pH, and nitrogen fertilizer continues to be added annually, further perpetuating soil acidification.

For the past three years, the Oregon Wheat Commission (OWC) and the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) have funded a soil acidity research project. It has been a collaborative effort to establish and monitor soil acidity in research plots across three rainfall zones. The plots were treated with three modest rates of agricultural lime (600, 1,200 and 2,400 pounds per acre) and an untreated control.

We have been monitoring soil chemistry, yield, soilborne disease and weeds. Our research team is led by myself and Carter. Our team includes Drs. Stephen Machado, Judit Barroso, Don Wysocki of Oregon State University (OSU); Drs. Steve Van Vleet and Tim Murray of Washington State University; and Dr. Kurtis Schroeder of the University of Idaho. In collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, plots have been leveraged to conduct fungal and bacterial microbiome work with Drs. Tim Paulitz, Steven Yin and Daniel Schlatter. Dr. Amber Moore of OSU has also been an instrumental sounding board. Our collaborative effort is based on stakeholder request, and our goal is to elucidate the management of soil acidity and understanding soil health as a whole.

Growers are searching for economic options to mitigate soil acidity and improve soil health. The harvest 2020 season will complete the three-year funding cycle from WGC and OWC on the soil acidity plots.

Fall and winter 2020 will be dedicated to data analysis from our three-year trial in three locations. We have collected a mountain of exciting, region-specific data on the plots that will be helpful for us to understand more about soil acidity in our quest to develop profitable solutions for producers. ■

Christina H. Hagerty is an assistant professor of dryland cereal pathology at OSU.

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

China unlikely to reach Phase One goals



By T. Randall Fortenbery

In October 2019, President Trump and representatives from China jointly

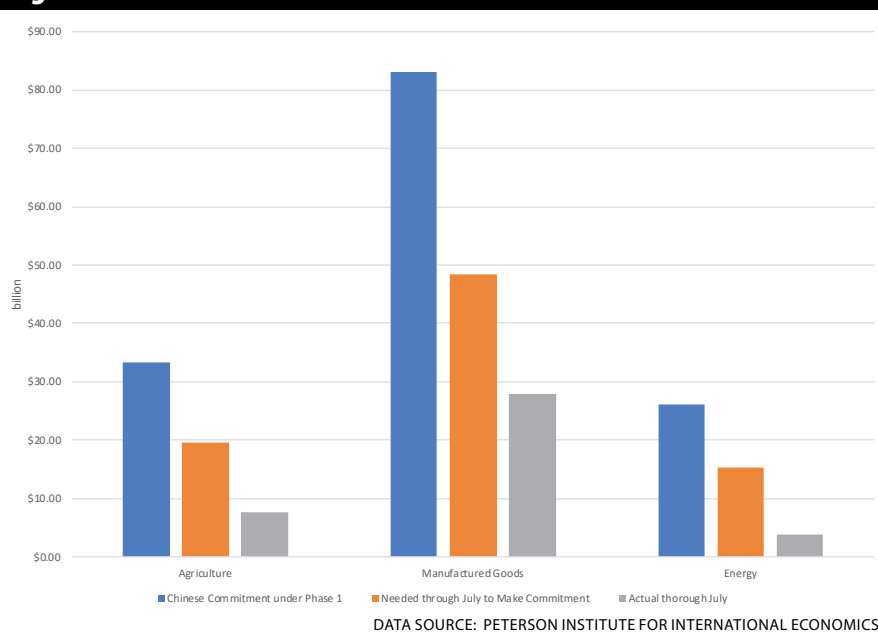
announced they reached terms for Phase One of a trade deal between the two countries. The deal was signed on Jan. 15, 2020, and was heralded as providing a platform for normalizing trade relations between the two countries following a near two-year trade war. It officially went into effect Feb. 14, 2020.

Under the basic terms of the deal, China was to increase purchases of U.S. goods and services by \$200 billion in both 2020 and 2021 compared to 2017 levels. However, translating this to actual purchases is challenging due to issues associated with estimating the 2017 baseline. According to the agreement, the 2017 baseline is estimated using both official data on 2017 Chinese imports from the U.S. (Chinese data), and official data on U.S. exports to China in 2017 (U.S. data).

According to an analysis by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE)¹, there are discrepancies in the two data series, thus there are two different baselines one might measure depending on which data source is used. In general, the Chinese import data shows a greater value of total imports from the U.S. in 2017 compared to the U.S. export data.

If one bases the \$200 billion increase on the lower 2017 U.S. export figure than a lower total value in 2020 would be needed to meet the

Figure 1: 2020 U.S. trade with China—select sectors



\$200 billion-dollar increase, but a higher percentage increase would be needed since the base is smaller. Regardless of which baseline is used, however, purchases are lagging significantly compared to where we might expect them to be at this point to meet the Phase One commitments (Figure 1).

Using the lower U.S. export data to calculate the 2017 baseline, PIIE has estimated that China would need to purchase \$33.4 billion in agricultural commodities from the U.S. in 2020 to meet its Phase One commitments (USDA originally estimated China would purchase about \$40 billion in food, agricultural commodities and seafood from the U.S. under the Phase One agreement).

Through July 2020, PIIE estimates that China had only purchased about \$48.5 billion worth of U.S. goods and services in total, with agriculture representing only a small percentage of that. If China were to purchase an even amount each month to meet their 2020 commitment, they would have needed to purchase almost \$101 billion of goods and services through July.

Based on U.S. data, total Chinese agricultural purchases from the U.S. through July were only \$7.6 billion, compared to a target of \$21.3 billion if they were made consistently each month. Thus, Chinese imports of U.S. agricultural products are running about 42 percent below the monthly average needed to hit the target for 2020. The trade agreement does allow China to take into account seasonality in prices, etc., so one might expect some lag in early purchases in anticipation of lower harvest prices for things like soybeans and grain sorghum (both major exports from the U.S. to China), but it is unlikely

¹<https://www.piie.com/research/piie-charts/us-china-phase-one-tracker-chinas-purchases-us-goods>

Figure 2: Chinese cumulative imports
January-July each year

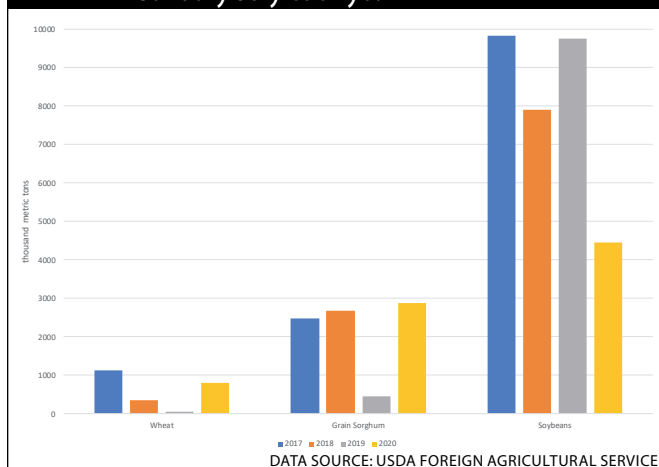
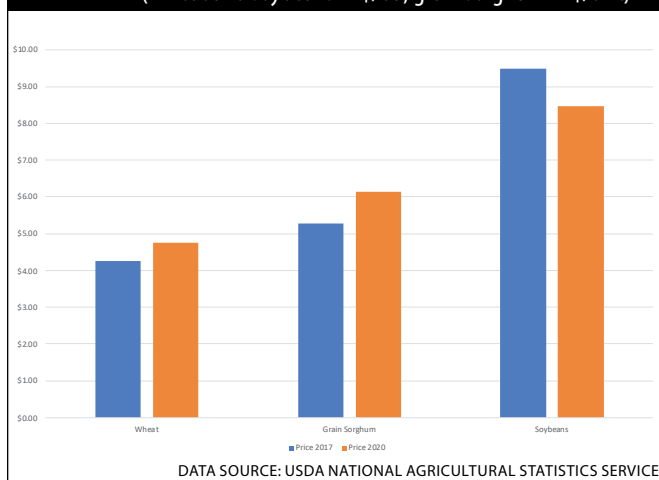


Figure 3: Average U.S. prices January-July each year
(Wheat and soybeans in \$/bu, grain sorghum in \$/cwt)



the current deficit can be made up in the next couple of months based on grain trade during the U.S. fall harvest season.

Figure 2 shows total Chinese imports of wheat, grain sorghum and soybeans from January through July for each year since 2017. Notice that grain sorghum is the only commodity among the three for which total volumes have increased this year compared to the base year. It is important to note that the Phase One trade deal does not specify purchase levels by specific commodity, but Figure 2 is still indicative of the current situation relative to Chinese purchases—they are generally well below levels needed across most commodities to reach the Phase One targets for 2020.

The lag in volumes traded between the U.S. and China really only tells part of the story. The Phase One trade agreement specifies total value of trade—the increase in purchases required is based on trade value not physical

quantity. Prices between 2017 and 2020 have not moved in the same direction for all commodities. For some commodities, increased prices this year compared to 2017 have helped offset some of the decline in trade volume (Figure 3). Wheat is one of those, although the total value of wheat trade between China and the U.S. has still been lower thus far this year compared to 2017. Through July, the total volume of wheat trade with China was down about 28 percent in 2020 compared to 2017, but because U.S. prices for wheat have averaged higher this year, the total value of trade is only off about 19 percent.

For grain sorghum, both trade volume and average prices are higher through July this year compared to 2017. Total trade volume of grain sorghum is up about 16 percent, but the value of the trade through July 2020 exceeds the same period in 2017 by 34 percent. Soybeans face the exact opposite situation—trade volume through July was down 55 percent compared to the first 7 months of 2017, and prices averaged about \$1 per bushel lower this year. The result is that total value of soybean trade with China this year has averaged about 60 percent less than trade values in 2017.

It is likely that increased purchases of fall-harvested crops by Chinese buyers will help close the gap between what has been traded in the agricultural sector thus far and what is needed to meet the Phase One commitments, but it is highly unlikely the entire gap will be covered by the end of the year. The combination of the lagging trade performance in Phase One; frictions over the source and spread of COVID-19; and the administration's attempts to curtail activities of Chinese technology companies may complicate the Phase Two negotiations. President Trump has indicated Phase Two discussions will be initiated after the election if he is re-elected. How Phase Two proceeds could affect trade under Phase One in 2021.

Vice President Joe Biden has been quite critical of the Phase One deal, claiming it is not working as it was supposed to. As one example, he has noted that the June 2020 trade deficit with China had actually increased about 5 percent compared to the previous month. If he were elected, it is unclear whether he would pursue a Phase Two deal or would focus on a re-alignment of Phase One first.

It is probable that managing trade with China will be highlighted by both campaigns as we close out the election cycle. What is less clear is where we go from here regardless of who is elected. ■

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

BARN QUILTS

Art form replaces needle and fabric with wood and paint

By Trista Crossley

If you are driving on Highway 12 a few miles west of Pomeroy, you've probably seen Julie Claassen's art. It's a little hard to miss—big, colorful quilt-block patterns attached to the front or sides of buildings.

"We have this old schoolhouse that my dad went to school in that sits by the side of the highway. People are stopping all the time and taking pictures," Claassen said. "I was looking for something to put on one end to dress it up a little bit. That was my first barn quilt."

That was in 2013. Since then, Claassen has made several more barn quilts for outbuildings on the family's wheat farm, as well as a grain elevator just up the road.

"Then I ran out of places to put them in, and my husband said I need to stop," she said. "Others have been given to other people. I've probably made eight or nine altogether."

The idea caught on with some of Claassen's friends who began making barn quilts of their own. The process is relatively simple. Pick a quilting pattern and paint it on plywood. Claassen's barn quilts are either 8x8 feet or 4x4 feet. Once she has a pattern, she puts a couple coats of primer on the plywood, draws her grid and tapes off each color one at a time.

"I do thin coats until I feel like it's covered well. I do one color at a time, then tape off the next color. It doesn't take very long. The longest part is waiting for the paint to dry," she explained. "It's not hard to find a pattern. If you google barn quilt prints or go on Pinterest, you can find examples. There are a million different directions and designs to pick from."

Once the barn quilt is painted, Claassen protects it with a coat of spar varnish. The bigger pieces have a frame on the back for support.

Barn quilts, as a modern-day decoration, seem to have gotten their start around 2001 in Adams County, Ohio. The idea is widely attributed to Donna Sue Groves who wanted to honor her moth-



The first barn quilt Julie Claassen created hangs on the side of an old schoolhouse that sits on their farm along Highway 12 outside of Pomeroy.

er's quilting prowess by painting a quilt block on their tobacco barn. According to barnquiltinfo.com, Groves worked with her local community to create a "clothesline of quilts." The result is known as a barn quilt trail, a collection of barn quilts that is able to be viewed as a walking or driving tour. The painted blocks aren't found just on barns; they are often mounted on houses, poles and public buildings.

The barn quilts around Pomeroy haven't been organized into a barn quilt trail (according to barnquiltinfo.com, in order to be considered a quilt trail, there needs to be a map made of the



(Above) Another of Julie Claassen's barn quilts hangs on an abandoned grain elevator along Highway 12 outside of Pomeroy, while several (below) hang on outbuildings on her family's wheat farm.



Pomeroy, Wash., resident Barbara Becker created this barn quilt that hangs on one of her outbuildings.



Alice Gwinn also makes barn quilts, including this one hanging on her house in Pomeroy, Wash.

quilt locations), and some of them aren't easily seen from the road. Claassen said she didn't think barn quilts have quite caught on in Garfield County, but that doesn't stop her from watching for them as she travels around.

"I'm a quilter. I've always sewed, so this (making barn quilts) was just a natural thing to do," Claassen said.

On the trail

To find a "proper" barn quilt trail in Washington, one has to head north and west. Conconully in Okanogan County has more than 80 barn quilts, many of which include silhouettes that depict the area's mining, farming and ranching heritage.

Kittitas County also has an official trail with more

than 100 barn quilts scattered throughout the county. Madison Ford, director of tourism and events for the Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce, said she's seen a renewed interest in their barn quilt trail this year as tourists are looking for activities that can be done while social distancing.

"This is something visitors can do from their cars. They can stop at little businesses for coffee and ice cream on the way and make it their own experience. It's great for families. There's no time limit. It's kind of like a scavenger hunt but more customizable in that you can make it your own," Ford said.

The first barn quilt in Kittitas County was installed in 2012 on the oldest barn on the trail, the Dominion Barn, which was built in 1901, but the trail is still growing as new barn quilts are always being added. The county even offers tips and a list of contractors who will help hang a barn quilt.

"Not only is the barn quilt trail a top customizable, self-guided option for travelers year-round, it also is a way for locals and tourists alike to preserve and honor Kittitas County's agricultural industry," Ford added.

For more information on the Conconully and Kittitas



Pomeroy, Wash., resident Julie Claassen shows how she uses graph paper to draw a barn quilt design before breaking out the plywood and paint.

County barn quilt trails, visit their websites at conconully.com/wooden-quilts and centralwashingtonoutdoor.com/barn-quilts/. You can find a map of barn quilt trails in all 50 states at barnquiltinfo.com/map-US.html. ■



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What kind of lease is right for you?

Although the website, aglease101.org, was developed by Extension educators from the north central U.S., it has resources that can be helpful to landlords and tenants in Eastern Washington, especially when it comes to deciding what kind of lease to use.

In general, there are two main types of cropland leases: crop share and cash rent. In a crop share agreement, the landlord and tenant split the cost of raising a crop, as well as the harvested grain, usually one-third to the landlord and two-thirds to the tenant. With a cash rent agreement, the tenant pays a fixed amount to rent the land. The landlord pays no expenses and doesn't receive a share of the crop at harvest.

In Eastern Washington, crop share lease agreements are more common than cash rents.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both types of lease agreements, and landlords, especially landlords with little or no farming experience, should spend time researching both. Here are some of the landlord advantages and disadvantages of crop share and cash rent leases as excerpted from publications available on aglease101.org. ■

Reprinted with permission from the North Central Farm Management Extension Committee. Sample lease forms can be downloaded from aglease101.org. Funding for this project was provided by the North Central Risk Management Education Center and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

CASH LEASES

Advantages to landlords

- Less (perhaps no) managerial input is required than with other leasing arrangements.
- Reduced involvement in management reduces the possibility of friction between the landowner and operator concerning management decisions.
- Concern over accurate division of crops and expenses is eliminated.
- The landowner does not have to handle the marketing of crops.
- Fixed cash rent lessens the landowner's concern over variations in prices and yields. The operator bears all price, cost and production risks.
- Reduced paperwork requirements stemming from the fact that the landowner no longer is required to fulfill crop insurance and Farm Service Agency obligations.

Disadvantages to landlords

- A cash-rent amount acceptable to both parties can be difficult to determine.
- Once a cash-rent rate is set, a change in the rental rate may be difficult to negotiate when changes in prices and costs take place.
- In average or above-average years, the landowner may receive less net income than from crop-share rent.
- There may be an increased danger that the operator will not maintain the fertility of the land, or keep buildings in good repair, especially if the lease is for only one year. However, competition for land and appropriate requirements in a written lease can minimize this problem.
- Owner has financial risk of operator nonpayment unless steps are taken to reduce this risk.

CROP SHARE LEASES

Advantages to landlords

- Management may be shared between an experienced landowner and operator, resulting in more effective decisions.
- Sales of crops may be timed for tax management. Likewise, purchased inputs may be timed to shift expenses for tax purposes.
- Risks due to low yields or prices, as well as profits from high yields or prices, are shared between the two parties.
- A crop-share lease, where the landowner is recognized as providing "material participation" through their involvement in crop production and marketing, has some tax-related benefits

Disadvantages to landlords

- Landowners' income will be variable because of yield and price variation and changes in shared production-input costs. This may be a particularly important concern for landowners in retirement.
- Accounting for shared expenses must be maintained.
- The landowner must make marketing decisions.
- The need for operator and landowner to discuss annual cropping practices and to make joint management decisions is greater.
- Increased paperwork and record-keeping associated with participation in government programs and crop insurance is required.
- As prices or technology change, the lease should be reviewed to determine if changes need to be made as to what is equitable. Sharing arrangements may need to be changed.



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THE BOTTOM LINE

Part 2: Navigating death and estate taxes

By William O. Etter
Attorney, Foster Garvey PC

In Part I, which appeared in the May 2020 issue of *Wheat Life*, I provided a summary of the estate tax systems that all Washington residents should be aware of and explained how the federal and state estate tax systems operate. In Part II, I will discuss predeath gifting, a basic estate planning strategy used by attorneys to minimize estate taxes for both single persons and married couples. In Part III, I will discuss the use of credit shelter trusts, a more advanced estate planning strategy used by attorneys to minimize estate taxes for married couples.

Summary of predeath gifting

One of the simplest strategies for minimizing potential estate taxes upon your death is predeath gifting. This strategy is as simple as it sounds: you simply transfer assets for no consideration (“gift”) prior to your death to the persons who would be entitled to receive such



assets at your death. The estate tax benefit is obvious. Since you have transferred the assets prior to death, the fair market value of such assets is not included in your gross estate at the time you die. There are no immediate income tax consequences to the recipient of the assets because gifts do not count as taxable income to the recipient. As provided below, so long as you gift conservatively so that you don't run out of assets prior to death, this can be a very effective and simple strategy for minimizing estate taxes.

The downside to this strategy is that for the gift to qualify, you must give up control of the asset prior to death. For cash gifts, you must transfer complete control of the funds to the gift recipient. If you put the funds in a joint bank account that you still have access to and utilize, the transfer will not be considered a gift. For real property, you must record a deed transferring title to the real property to the gift recipient. In addition, if you continue to occupy the property, you must pay fair market rent to the new owner.

Examples of predeath gifting

As a refresher, remember that for persons dying in 2020, the federal estate tax credit amount is \$11.68 million, and the Washington estate tax credit amount is \$2.193 million. Please also note that there is a federal gift tax; however, so long as the total amount of gifts you make during your lifetime is less than your lifetime gift tax credit amount (currently \$11.68 million), there will be no federal gift tax owed. Washington state does not have a state gift tax, therefore, this is an especially effective strategy for Washington residents that have a gross estate in excess of the Washington estate tax credit amount, but less than the federal estate tax credit amount.

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For example, let's assume Jane Doe is a Washington resident with no spouse and a gross estate worth \$3.193 million dollars. Jane has two children, and her will provides that each child will receive a 50 percent share of her estate upon her death. If Jane makes no predeath gifts, she would die with a gross estate of \$3.193 million and a Washington estate tax credit amount of \$2.193 million. Assuming no deductions apply, roughly \$1 million of her estate would be subject to Washington estate tax prior to distribution to her children. Under current Washington estate tax rates,

that means Jane's estate would owe \$100,000 in estate taxes before her children receive their inheritance.

As an alternative, let's assume the same above facts, except Jane reviews her estate plan with an attorney prior to her death. Given Jane's age, life expectancy, financial goals and current lifestyle, she determines that she can comfortably live the rest of her life with \$2.193 million in assets. In lieu of waiting until she dies to provide her children with an inheritance, Jane decides to make a predeath gift to each child of \$500,000.

At the time Jane dies, she now has a gross estate of \$2.193 million, which is insulated from Washington estate tax due to her credit amount. Since there is no Washington gift tax, Jane does not pay gift tax on the \$500,000 pre-death gifts made to her children. This strategy effectively saves Jane's estate \$100,000 in estate taxes. When the dust settles, Jane's children have now effectively received all \$3.193 million of her gross estate. ■

William O. Etter is a tax attorney that specializes in estate planning, probate, and trust administration in the Spokane office of Foster Garvey PC. He has previously served on the executive committee of the Real Property, Probate, and Trust section of the Washington State Bar Association and can be reached at (509) 777-1600 or at william.etter@foster.com.

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ashes, and burn

scars on buildings

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amazed by the strength and resiliency
of Mayor Christine Ferrell and the
community. #WaWILDFIRE

—Tweet from Hilary Franz, Washington State Commissioner of
Public Lands, after she toured Malden, Wash.



“The scale of this disaster really can’t
be expressed in words. The fire will be
extinguished but a community has been
changed for a lifetime.”

—Whitman County Sheriff Brett Myers in a statement on the
town of Malden, Wash.

“This has been a
cataclysmic event
in the state of
Washington.”

—Washington Gov. Jay Inslee
the day after Labor Day on
the Washington wildfires
(capitalpress.com)



Washington wildfire facts:

- 58 fires flared up on Labor Day, burning more than 330,000 acres in 24 hours.
- In just 72 hours, the Labor Day wildfires had consumed more than half of the acreage burned in the record fire year of 2015.
- The Cold Springs fire in Okanogan County has burned 189,923 acres (as of Sept. 20).
- The Pearl Hill fire in Douglas County has burned 223,730 (as of Sept. 20).
- The Whitney fire in Lincoln County has burned 127,430 acres (as of Sept. 20).
- The Babb-Malden/Manning fire in Whitman County has burned 18,254 acres (as of Sept. 20).
- The Inchelium Complex fire in Ferry County has burned 19,399 acres (as of Sept. 20).

“The hay’s gone. Our winter pasture is gone. We’re
still trying to find 14 (cows). It took generations to
build this, and it was gone in less than three hours.”

—Chase Hubbard, a third-generation rancher in Lincoln County, on the
Whitney Fire in an interview with Q13 Fox News.

“Once they’re able to get through this winter,
they’re going to need land to graze their cattle on,
and that’s going to be very hard to come by. It’s
devastating when your livelihood can be swept
up by fire and raging windstorms, and you can’t
protect your animals.”

—Patti Brumbach, executive director of the Washington State Beef
Commission, on the Washington wildfires. (q13fox.com)

“Just because we’re getting in towards October and
fall months doesn’t mean we can’t have another dry
snap of offshore flow that can push the fire danger
right back up to extreme really, really quickly.”

—Vaughn Cork, fuels analyst for the Washington State Department of Natural
Resources. (komonews.com)

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Ripening wheat in Pomeroy. Photo by Resa Cox.



Fourth of July in the Horse Heaven Hills. Photo by Jason Wiley.



Braxton (11) and Madelyn (3)
McKeirnan during harvest in
Pomeroy. Photo by Allison McKeirnan.



Scott Ford, a proud Washington State University graduate, flying his Cougar flag on the skyrocket hills north of Prescott during harvest last year. Photo by Chris Oliver.



Brooklyn (7) and Mackinzie (7) Ledgerwood in canola at Ledgerwood Farms in Pomeroy. Photo by Josiah Ledgerwood.



Danny (8) and Felix (3) Van Hollebeke looking at freshly cut stubble on the first day of Harvest 2020 in Connell. Photo by Kendall Mastre.

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