

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

APRIL | 2022

ROLLING UP IN OLYMPIA

*Growers use sweet treat to feed
legislators information
on state's wheat industry*



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Grant program ready to fund
climate-smart farming practices

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Letter from a farmer's wife

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

WHEAT LIFE

Volume 65 • Number 04
www.wheatlife.org

The official publication of



**WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION OF
WHEAT GROWERS**

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

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

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President's Perspective



Planting potential in the midst of concerns

By Howard McDonald

According to the calendar, spring has sprung, but as I write this, we are still freezing up here in Douglas County, so our winter wheat hasn't woken up yet. Even though the crop is still dormant, I'm needing to make decisions that will greatly affect the upcoming growing season. This year is already starting off with a lot of uncertainties. Some of them are normal—do we have

enough moisture? Did the winter wheat get affected by snow mold? But some of them aren't, especially the uncertainty regarding our inputs.

We've already seen a major increase in the cost of glyphosate, and we only have access to a limited amount right now. Our wheat may still be sleeping, but the weeds aren't, and there's no question that we need to be thinking about spraying them. Like most farmers I know, we'll have to find the right balance between using as little glyphosate as we can while still keeping the weeds under control.

Glyphosate isn't the only product that's scarce. We don't know if we'll be able to get our fertilizer or the parts we'll need to keep our machinery running. And if we can get them, how much more will it cost us? And that doesn't even include the fuel we'll need. One of my colleagues looked at just how much more we are paying for inputs, including fuel. In December, farm diesel was \$2.79 per gallon. Today, it's going for \$4 per gallon. NH₃ fertilizer per pound in August was \$.45. Today's price is \$.97. We've budgeted for the price increases (up to a point), but that doesn't mean much if the products aren't even available to buy when we need them.

We've also had to take into account the increased costs in labor for our service calls. When a mechanical problem can bring your operation to a screeching halt, you don't have much choice. You make the call and go with it. And then there's everything that's happening in Ukraine. I don't know how that's going to impact our crop, and so far, we haven't seen a major move on our wheat prices, so we'll just have to wait and watch.

It was about this time last year, when we started to get concerned about the lack of moisture, and we all know how last year turned out. We were fortunate enough not to be as badly affected as others by last year's drought, but it still reduced our yields and tilted our operation a bit. It's not an exaggeration to say that drought is on our minds every single year.

So, yes, I have concerns. But you know what else I have? Fields full of potential, and that gets me excited. I can barely wait to get out there and help my crop grow. After all, in the words of Will Rogers, a farmer has to be an optimist or he wouldn't still be a farmer, right? So, here's to a normal spring and summer with timely rains, access to inputs when we need them and only minor mechanical breakdowns. ■

Cover photo: In late February, wheat growers headed to Olympia to serve legislators and staff information about the Washington wheat industry, alongside cinnamon rolls. See page 6. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Legislative Support Services. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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WAWG's current top priorities are:

- ✓ Preserving the lower Snake River dams.
- ✓ Fighting mandatory climate/carbon regulations.
- ✓ Lobbying the state Legislature for a seasonal overtime exemption.
- ✓ Maintaining a strong, reliable safety net by preserving crop insurance and making sure farm commodity programs work.
- ✓ Maintaining a safe, sound transportation system that includes rail, river and roads.

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WAWG at WORK

ADVOCATING FOR THE WHEAT FARMERS OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

Wheat growers have sweet time advocating in Olympia

For the second year in a row, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has had to modify their traditional, two-day visit to Olympia to meet with legislators.

Thanks to COVID-19 restrictions that kept legislators' offices closed to the public or limited the number of people who could be in those offices, in February, wheat growers opted to host a breakfast off campus, which was well attended, and then move to the steps of the capitol building and hand out cinnamon rolls, coffee and educational materials.

"Last year, we met with legislators remotely, but this year, with the shortened session and legislators' busy schedules, we decided to change things up," explained Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "Because most offices were closed to us, we invited legislators to meet with us, off campus, for breakfast. We were able to have very productive, detailed conversations in a relaxed atmosphere."

At the breakfast, growers discussed salmon recovery efforts, protecting the Snake River dams, funding for voluntary conservation programs, carbon policies, over-time requirements and more. Growers then moved to the capitol building, where, despite a steady rain, more than 350 cinnamon rolls were handed out to legislators and staff. This year's ambassadors, Cadence Zellmer and Tate Nonnemacher, took part in the trip.

"I want to thank the growers who took time out of their schedules to make the trip to Olympia," Hennings



Despite a steady drizzle in Olympia, legislators and their staff lined up to get a freshly baked cinnamon roll and learn more about the Washington wheat industry from Washington Association of Wheat Growers' members.



(Left) Before heading to the capitol, wheat growers hosted a breakfast with legislators. (Right) Sen. Mark Schoesler (middle) was one of the legislators who welcomed this year's wheat ambassadors, Cadence Zellmer and Tate Nonnemacher.

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said. "It's vital that legislators hear directly from farmers about the issues impacting agriculture, especially when so many of those legislators are from urban districts." ■

Producers hold board meeting, prepare for spring

With the prospect of spring fieldwork looming, Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) leaders took time out last month to meet in Ritzville to hear updates from U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, report on WAWG activities and wrap up the 2022 Legislative Session.

Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency's (FSA) state executive director, zoomed into the meeting to report on his office's efforts to address Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental rates (see page 18 for more information). He told growers that he's working with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to include an option on NASS's survey to ask about crop share vs. cash rents in order to make CRP rental rates better reflect Washington state's rental market.

"We believe we've identified a potential solution by adding this extra question," Wyss explained.

Wyss said he is still addressing vacancies in county offices and at the state level, including the state committee. Despite the staffing issues, he reported that the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program signup is almost finalized, adding that the FSA staff "did a good job balancing the workload."

Roylene Comes At Night, state conservationist at the Natural Resources Conservation Service



DAM TALK. Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, took part in a roundtable discussion of the Snake River dams organized by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) on National Agriculture Day. The panel discussed the dams' role in moving products up and down the river, providing competition with the railroads and reducing the wear and tear on the region's roads. The dams also provide clean, emissions-free renewable energy for the Pacific Northwest, a huge benefit as the U.S. looks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Photo courtesy of Dan Newhouse's office.

(NRCS), also zoomed into the meeting. She said her staff has been extremely busy with Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. Normally, there are approximately 500 CSP applications, but this year, there were about 1,000, which "shows a need," she said. Comes At Night encouraged growers to participate in their local workgroups to help decide what conservation and climate-smart practices NRCS will support.

There was good news for irrigators in the Odessa Subarea. Comes At Night said the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program has qualified for the first round of PL-566 (NRCS's Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act) funding. That money will be used to develop a watershed plan, and if the plan is approved, the next step will be to apply for construction funding that would help with the cost of pumping stations and lateral lines out to farms.

Diana Carlen, WAWG's lobbyist, gave her final legislative report of the session (see page 16 for a full report). With billions in surplus revenue plus money from the federal government, the legislature passed a supplemental budget of \$64 billion. Unfortunately, the budget contains no meaningful tax relief, but does provide money for the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Carlen said there will be a number of workgroups during the interim that agriculture needs to be aware of, including one on buffers and a couple on agricultural labor.

"We will need to monitor those and be engaged so they are fair and more inclusive," she said.

In state and national policy updates, Hennings told the group that the dams on the Columbia-Snake River System continue to make headlines. The joint effort by Washington Governor Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) to study the impacts of breaching the dams is reaching its conclusion. A public

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comment period is expected in May, and the final study is due in July. Both Hennings and Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), have been interviewed for the study. There are also efforts in Washington, D.C., to include funding in a federal Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill to analyze the cost/impacts of breaching the dams. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the dams on the river system, gets its authority through WRDA legislation.

"The lower Snake River dams are federal projects, so anything that changes their operation has to come through Congress, not the state," Hennings said to the board. "However, we are hearing more about the dams at the federal level, and that's concerning. We are continuing to work with a number of coalitions dedicated to protecting and advocating for the dams."

Squires said the WGC is currently working on next year's budget, but assessments are down. Exports are also down, primarily because China and Korea's feed wheat demand is down, and Indonesia is turning more to Australian wheat because of price and lower shipping costs. The Pacific Northwest's main customers, such as Taiwan and Japan, are holding steady. Squires also touched on the Columbia-Snake River System, telling the board that breaching advocates are targeting water temperatures in the lower Columbia River pools.

There will be no April state board meeting. The next WAWG state board meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 10. ■

Grower joins WAWG board as Grant County representative

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) recently welcomed **Chuck Erickson** as the new board member from Grant County.

Erickson was born and raised on his family's Hartline, Wash., dryland farm, which was established in 1889. He is the fifth generation and, alongside his father, raises wheat, a bit of barley and canola. Erickson is married to Timi, who also helps out on the farm when needed, and they have two children, Grace and Noah.

Although Erickson and his family have been WAWG members for a long time, he said he wasn't aware just how involved the association is in



advocating for wheat growers, both legislatively and at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). One of the goals he has is making sure that producers are aware of the programs offered by USDA agencies.

"Sometimes producers may not know about these programs. I can tell you from experience that being one of the last people to hear about a program and then missing the deadline because I didn't know about it is really frustrating," he said. "Now that I know how involved WAWG is and how hard we fight to do what's right for producers, it's really incredible."

Erickson feels it's important to be involved in organizations like WAWG because they give producers a voice when it comes to regulations and setting policy. He farms because it's an honor to carry on his family's legacy and to provide food for people. He also just loves to grow things.

"I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to the science. I love to monitor the soil and see what can be grown where and how we can succeed, not only as producers but keepers of the soil," he explained. "I just want to do what's right to make sure we can produce crops in the healthiest soil possible."

Besides his day job growing an outstanding crop, Erickson is also a fire commissioner for the local fire district and is studying to be an EMT. Most of his free time is taken up by his children's sporting activities, which he says keeps him very busy.

"It's all stuff I love to do. It's busy, but it's a great busy," he said. ■

County meeting recaps

Spokane County

Spokane County wheat growers held a short county meeting last month to hear about the recent activities of the industry's organizations and to learn about the necessity of a robust wheat political action committee (PAC).

County president Marci Green talked about the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) recent trip to Olympia to talk to legislators over breakfast and hand out wheat industry information, along with cinnamon rolls, on the steps of the capitol building (see page 6). She said the trip was worthwhile, and the information that was handed out was very well received.

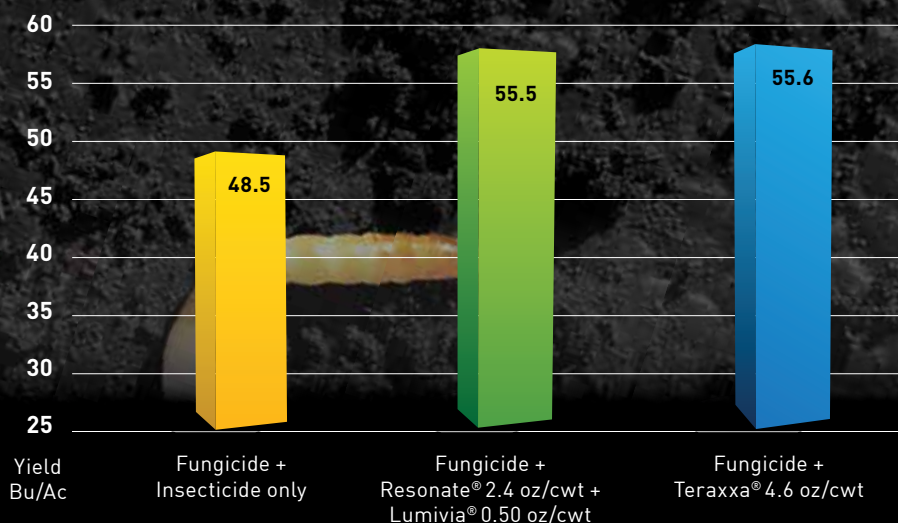
After reviewing the Washington State 2022 Legislative Session, Green said that although the most harmful legislation to agriculture didn't pass this session—think Gov. Inslee's riparian buffer bill—it would likely be back next session, and one of the ways to stop it is by supporting

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moderate, ag-friendly candidates from both sides of the aisle through the wheat industry's PAC, which is funded by donations from individuals or businesses. The money is then donated to election campaigns. The decision on which campaigns to donate to is made by a grower board, with input from WAWG's lobbyist. More information on the Washington Wheat PAC is at wheatpac.org.

Mary Palmer Sullivan, vice president of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), gave an update on research. The WGC is in the process of deciding which research projects they will be funding this year, and Palmer Sullivan told growers the WGC is always looking for ideas.

One bit of good news on the research front is that the Pacific Northwest's federal appropriations request for the Herbicide Resistance Initiative received \$2 million in funding. In collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service, that money will be split across Idaho, Washington and Oregon to identify and overcome herbicide resistance and to address weed management.

Growers also discussed Hangman Creek watershed issues and heard a treasurer's report. ■

Whitman County

At last month's Whitman County wheat growers' meeting, growers heard from several guest speakers about upcoming spring wheat varieties and the staffing shortages at the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

Newly reappointed FSA State Executive Director Jon Wyss and District Directors Travis Martin and Jeremy Nelson called into the meeting. Wyss acknowledged that the past year has been hard on the Colfax office as it is down to just three employees. Wyss said the agency is currently advertising for positions, and he hopes to have it almost fully staffed (minus a county executive director) this summer. In the meantime, the two district directors and a remote staff of 12 are helping the office process applications.

Growers asked Wyss about Conservation Reserve Rentals (CRP) rates, which dropped slightly this year. He explained that the deadline for appealing the rates has already passed, but the office plans to look at the rates in time for next year's CRP sign-up (see page 6).

Martin and Nelson updated growers on CRP and Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage sign-up progress in the county.

Mike Pumphrey, Washington State University (WSU) spring wheat breeder, was also at the meeting. He said spring wheat conditions are dry, but the positive side of that is that drier conditions also mean less stripe rust pressure. Pumphrey also talked about varieties in the pipeline,

including a Hessian fly-resistant spring club and a two-gene Clearfield soft white spring wheat.

Attendees heard updates about a recent trip to Olympia by the wheat growers to visit with legislators and hand out cinnamon rolls (see page 6); updates on hiring a new WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences dean; and the Washington Wheat PAC.

The next Whitman County wheat growers' meeting will be April 5 at noon at Eddy's Restaurant in Colfax. ■

Benton County grower elected as new NAWG president

Last month, **Nicole Berg** was elected as the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) president. She is a 4th generation farmer from Paterson, Wash., where she farms alongside her dad and two brothers. They grow dryland and irrigated wheat, blue grass seed, field corn, sweet corn, sweet peas, green beans and alfalfa. Berg also sits on the board of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and previously served on the board of the Conservation District where she received the NACD/NRCS Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award.



"I am excited for this opportunity to act as NAWG's second woman president. NAWG has a critical purpose when it comes to advocating for all wheat growers around the nation. As we head into this next chapter, I hope to see more inclusion and engagement from farmers as we come together with a unified voice to decide what is best for the agriculture community," said Berg. "I also hope to see further investments in wheat research as we explore additional uses of wheat beyond food and feed."

During Berg's tenure, she will be instrumental in leading conversations about the upcoming farm bill and acting as the voice of the nation's wheat growers.

Along with Berg, the board of directors elected a new slate of officers. Dave Milligan of Cass City, Mich., transitioned to the role of past president. Brent Cheyne, a wheat farmer from Klamath Falls, Ore., became NAWG's new vice president. Keeff Felty of Altus, Okla., will serve as NAWG's new treasurer, and Pat Clements of Springfield, Ky., was elected as the new secretary.

"We greatly appreciate Dave Milligan's service to the National Association of Wheat Growers. Dave was able



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to lead our organization during a global pandemic and started several great conversations about climate and sustainability,” said NAWG CEO Chandler Goule. “We are looking forward to this upcoming year with our new leadership as we continue to unite wheat farmers to promote policy efforts that create an environment that is conducive to the success of wheat farming in the United States.” ■

Farm bill survey seeks grower input

As the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) continues to develop its farm bill priorities, it has created and launched a farm bill survey to gather feedback from growers about what policies are most important to farmers and identify practical policy recommendations that would benefit the grower community. NAWG relies on grower input to be effective advocates before Congress and across the administration. The farm bill survey asks farmers to describe their experiences on a wide variety of programs set to expire or lapse with the 2018 Farm Bill on Sept. 30, 2023. NAWG encourages growers to complete the NAWG farm bill survey and contribute their voices to planning a successful farm bill reauthorization. The survey is 33 questions in length and provides opportunities to comment on a broad array of farm programs. The survey is at wheatworld.org/campaigns/. ■

How are we doing?

Let us know by emailing your comments and suggestions to editor@wawg.org. Keep submissions less than 350 words. Submissions may be edited for length. ■

Growers take part in NAWG conference

Leaders and staff of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers recently took part in the National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) annual conference in New Orleans, where committees discussed issues, passed resolutions and heard from top U.S. Department of Agriculture officials. ■



Douglas County grower and WAWG president, Howard McDonald (left), sits on the NAWG Environmental Research Committee.



Grant County grower, Ryan Poe (third from left), sits on the NAWG Domestic and Trade Policy Committee. The committee met with Zach Ducheneaux, Farm Service Agency administrator, and Marcia Bunger, Risk Management Agency administrator.



Spokane County grower, Marci Green (third from right), sits on the NAWG Budget Committee.

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POLICY MATTERS

Supplemental budget includes millions for salmon recovery

By Diana Carlen

WAWG Lobbyist

The Legislature adjourned on the 60th day of the 2022 Legislative Session on March 10. In the final week of the session, the Legislature adopted the supplemental operating, capital and transportation budgets. Legislators also came to an agreement on the hotly debated transportation revenue package.

Supplemental 2022 Operating Budget

The final supplemental operating budget is based on a level of state revenues that are unprecedented in a supplemental year. In total, the budget appropriates more than \$63 billion. Of that, \$2 billion is shifted to the transportation budget (a key element for implementation of the Move Ahead Washington transportation package) and \$650 million is transferred to the supplemental capital budget. In addition to state resources, the budget appropriates more than \$1 billion in federal coronavirus relief funding.

Major spending items in the supplemental operating budget include significant new investments in K-12 education, long term care and developmental disabilities programs, behavioral health, Paid Family Leave Insurance, higher education and housing. The Legislature also transferred \$1.6 billion in reserves to the Washington Rescue Plan Transition Account (WRTA). WRTA was established last session when all the money from the Rainy Day Fund (Budget Stabilization Account/BSA) was put into WRTA.

Of particular interest to the agricultural industry, the final budget includes:

- Spending on salmon recovery including \$10 million for the Conservation Commission to provide grants for riparian restoration projects with landowners.
- Funding for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to put together an overarching report to the Legislature assessing how to incorporate a net ecological gain standard into state land use, development and environmental laws.
- Funding for the Governor's Office to invite stakeholders, including agricultural producers, to participate in a facilitated process to develop policy and spending priorities to improve riparian habitat.

- Funding for two different studies on the needs of farmworkers in the state.
- Appropriations for the Governor's Office to complete an analysis (that is already underway) on options to replace the benefits of the four lower Snake River dams.

Supplemental 2022 Capital Budget

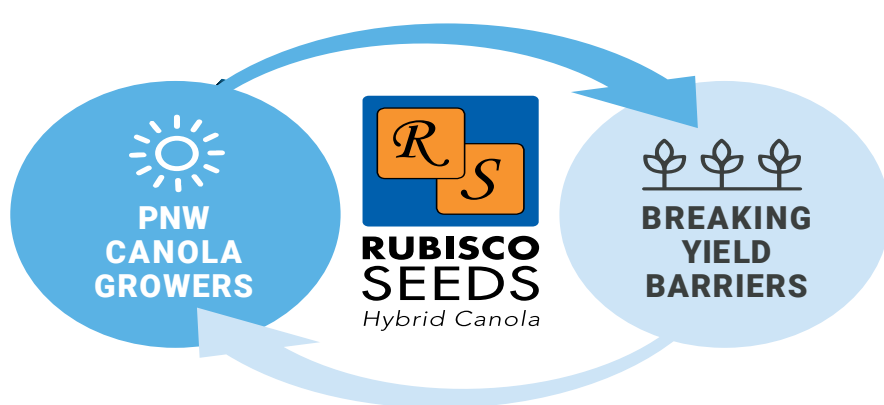
The 2022 Supplemental Capital Budget utilizes \$81.9 million in bond authorization remaining from the 2021 Legislative Session and makes an additional \$25 million in bond adjustments for total of \$107 million. Additionally, the supplemental capital budget authorizes appropriations of just more than \$300 million from the federal infrastructure investment and jobs act and \$25 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. A total of \$1.5 billion is authorized through the supplemental budget. This supplemental budget makes amendments and additions to the \$3.97 billion 2021-23 budget approved during the 2021 session.

The largest proposed investments from all resources are in the areas of housing (\$440 million); water (\$251 million); infrastructure (\$200 million); broadband (\$100 million); school seismic (\$100 million); and behavioral health and crisis stabilization (\$98 million).

Of particular interest to the agricultural community, the final budget includes \$3 million for the Voluntary Stewardship Program and \$2 million for the Farmland Protection and Land Access Grant program, intended to reduce the conversion of high priority agricultural land at imminent risk of development and to increase farmland access by historically underserved producers. The budget also includes \$15 million in federal funding for Salmon Recovery Funding Board projects to protect or restore salmon habitat and assist in related activities.

Supplemental 2022 Transportation Budget

In the last days of session, the Legislature adopted a \$11.6 billion supplemental transportation budget and reached an agreement on a 16-year, nearly \$17 billion Move Ahead Washington transportation package. There was a lot of uncertainty around the controversial \$2 bil-



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PNWVT	2018	2019	2020	2021
Control Varieties	lbs/ac (rank)			
Athena	4,084 (10)	4,344 (18)	4,015 (15)	3,698 (12)
Dwarf Essex	3,413 (28)	--	3,698 (23)	3,279 (27)
Ericka	2,865 (30)	3,829 (25)	3,516(25)	3,219 (28)
Rubisco Seeds' Hybrids	Data courtesy of University of Idaho			
Kicker	—	—	4,792 (1)	4,701 (1)
Mercedes	4,933 (1)	5,145 (1)	4,419 (6)	4,359 (3)
Plurax CL	4,708 (2)	4,959 (2)	4,717 (2)	4,465 (2)
Phoenix CL	4,636 (4)	4,900 (4)	4,611 (3)	4,043 (5)
PNWVT Mean	3,956	4,470	4,085	3,726
LSD (p=0.05)	326	287	253	228
C.V. (%)	14.7	12.4	12.3	10.6

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lion in funding drawn from the proposed export fuel tax. Ultimately, the transportation chairs chose not to impose an export fuel tax, instead opting for a transfer of \$57 million from the Public Works Assistance Account per year until 2038. The remaining amount is addressed through an annual \$57 million transfer from the state's general fund.

Roughly a third of the package is funded by Climate Commitment Act resources, with \$1.2 billion dedicated to active transportation, \$3 billion for transit programs and projects, \$517 million on alternative fuel and electrification, \$335 million on electrification of ferries and \$162 million on ultra-high speed rail and free youth rail fares. The remaining \$11.5 billion invests in maintenance and preservation, new highway projects, fish barrier removal, and backfilling funding gaps from existing projects.

The bill also sets a target for all new cars and light-duty pickups sold, bought or registered in Washington to be electric by 2030.

Legislation that passed

The Legislature considered a vast amount of legislation, given it was a short session. Over the course of the 60-day session, 1,281 bills were introduced (2,746 total were considered, counting the carry-over bills from the 2021 session), and 302 bills passed the Legislature and were sent to the governor to be signed into law. Bills of interest to agriculture include:

- Custom Farming Tax Exemption (HB 1641) reinstates the business and occupation tax (B&O) exemption for custom farming and the public utilities tax exemption for the hauling of farm products. The legislation would allow farms with employees working among multiple operations to pay employees under a single paycheck, rather than several different checks from the different operations to avoid paying B&O tax on the transfer of funds between the operations.
- Short-Term Disaster Recovery Financial Assistance to Agricultural Producers (SHB 2051) would require the Washington State Conservation Commission to develop a short-term disaster recovery financial assistance program for farmers and ranchers.
- Water Policy in Regions with Regulated Reductions in Aquifer Levels (SSB 5860) would allow a water-right holder to avoid relinquishment for the nonuse of a groundwater right from the Odessa Aquifer. Under the bill, water users who do not exercise a right to withdraw ground water from the Odessa Aquifer subarea are considered to have done so involuntarily due to a drought or low flow period and are not relinquishing their right to use the water. This was previ-

ously a provision in state law that had expired.

- Modifying the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (E2SHB 1812) establishes the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) as an independent agency separate from Utilities and Transportation Commission and delegates an EFSEC council. This bill requires the Department of Commerce to conduct stakeholder meetings (at least one in Eastern Washington) with rural, agriculture, natural resource management and conservation, and forestry stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the benefits and impacts of anticipated changes in the state's energy system, including the siting of facilities under EFSEC's jurisdiction.
- Organic Waste (SHB 1799) tackles a host of issues related to the disposal of organic waste, including setting statewide organic waste target requirements, putting in place organics management requirements for businesses, introducing funding and incentives for methane emissions reduction activities, and detailing new provisions regarding deceptive compost labeling. Several issues have been raised by agriculture including updates to the Good Samaritan Law as food producers in the state have raised a hesitancy to donate based on potential liability concerns. The bill exempts waste managed in agricultural settings from counting towards organic material generation thresholds for businesses.
- Long-Term Care Delay (House Bill 1732) delays the implementation of the program from Jan. 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023 (18 months). This bill also addresses near retirement age workers by allowing a person born before Jan. 1, 1968, who has not met the duration requirements, including payment of the premium, to be eligible for the program at the percentage of years paid into the program. With the delay of the law, employers are not required to withhold premiums from their employees for 18 months. However, it is important to note that if an employer has already begun withholding premiums, they must refund them to the employee within 120 days of collection. ■

Growers send letter to USDA detailing CRP concerns

Last month, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack asking that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) address several issues concerning the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), including extending the sign-up deadline to April 30. Unfortunately, the ex-

tension wasn't approved, but WAWG will continue to press USDA on the issues outlined in the letter. The CRP general sign-up ended March 11.

"We are disappointed that the general CRP sign-up deadline wasn't extended to give the state Farm Service Agency (FSA) office time to address the issues Washington wheat growers have with the program, especially this year's rental rates," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "We are working with the state FSA office and the National Agricultural Statistic Service (NASS) to address these issues before the next rental rate publication."

The letter points out that in Washington state, it is difficult for NASS to obtain accurate rental rates. NASS's annual Land Values Survey asks for cash rental rates, but rental rates in Washington are negotiated based on crop shares. That means cash rental rates, because they comprise only a small portion of the rental market, are not representative of the state's actual rental rates.

Usually, these situations are addressed through the FSA State Committee. Under the 2018 Farm Bill, state committees can submit alternative rental rates with supporting documentation. In this case, the alternative rental rates were rejected because of a lack of adequate documentation.

WAWG's position is that the absence of a state executive director and a fully staffed state committee severely impaired the request. The Biden Administration left the state's executive director position vacant for more than a year. In February, Jon Wyss was reappointed as the state executive director, and he has said one of his top priorities is to fill out the state committee and work with NASS to properly account for Washington's crop share rentals.

"This year has been frustrating because we didn't have a state executive director or a state commit-



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tee in place in a timely manner to make sure the correct changes were made,” Hennings said, pointing out that the delay came from the current administration. “We will also be advocating for a change in procedure that doesn’t leave these positions open when an administration turns over. Having to wait a year with these positions unfilled is unacceptable and unfair to farmers.”

These issues were also brought up by WAWG leaders at the National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) annual conference March 8-12. NAWG leaders signed a letter in support of the deadline extension and WAWG’s letter. During that same week, NAWG President Nicole Berg met with Secretary Vilsack and was able to personally bring these issues to his attention.

The letter also mentions that the state FSA office attempted to adjust the environmental benefits index by implementing a site-specific erodibility calculation. When that didn’t work, FSA switched back to an older erodibility calculation, which caused some confusion among growers and in county offices.

“Despite the commitment by FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide excellent service, increased workload and staff shortages have prevented these agencies from providing the service we are accustomed to. For these reasons, the Washington Wheat Growers is requesting an extension of Conservation Reserve Program general enrollment beyond the current deadline of March 11, 2022. Extending the deadline would increase participation and support the Administration’s climate-smart initiatives,” the letter to Vilsack concluded.

The letter was signed by WAWG President Howard McDonald. ■



Benton County grower and president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, Nicole Berg, testified in a U.S. House Agriculture Committee hearing on the 2018 Farm Bill.

NAWG leader testifies on 2018 Farm Bill

At the beginning of March, Washington farmer Nicole Berg, then vice president of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), testified in front of the House Agriculture Committee in a hearing to review the 2018 Farm Bill with a focus on Title I programs.

Berg highlighted key improvements made during the 2018 Farm Bill and how those programs are working for wheat farmers, especially the ability to re-elect programs each crop year and making the Risk Management Agency the primary source of data for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. However, she did point out that PLC doesn’t adequately cover the cost of production for wheat. She also acknowledged the supply chain issues and the rising cost and availability of inputs that are negatively impacting wheat producers.

“Today’s hearing is timely as NAWG is also evaluating the effectiveness of the farm safety net programs. These programs and how the U.S. Department of Agriculture administers them can be improved in the next farm bill. It is important that Congress maintains a strong safety net for farmers given the farm economy’s cyclical nature,” she told the committee. “Supply chain issues and availability of inputs continue to present challenges for farmers. These challenges include rising prices and availability for fuel, parts, vital equipment and crop protection tools that allow farmers to continue using climate-smart ag practices like no-till.”

NAWG is currently finalizing the industry’s key priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill.

Watch Berg’s testimony at youtube.com/watch?v=o2ZpsKV9o5s. ■



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Hall Farm, established in 1901, near Steptoe

In 1901, George Washington Hall (G.W.) and his wife, Nancy (Nanny), came from Tennessee to Whitman County with more than 100 of their family members. The cost to travel from Knoxville to Spokane was \$75.

Land around Steptoe cost \$2 an acre, and they bought three parcels of land.

G.W. had a herd of 80 mules, which he used to run harvest teams all over Whitman County.

G.W.'s brother also started a farm. They hired family members to help with the harvests, and over time, more than 300 family members came over from Tennessee. To this day,

Steptoe is sometimes referred to as "Tennessee Flats."

In 1918, they built the house on the farm, which still stands to this day. G.W. and Nanny had eight children (four boys and four girls). When G.W. died in 1941, their son, Richard, and his wife, Wanda, moved into the house and lived there until 1986. Richard raised and raced prized Tennessee Walker horses.

Richard and Wanda had three daughters: Shirley, Maxine and Elaine. When Richard was 45 (1941) he turned the operation of the farm over to his nephews, but Shirley, Maxine and Elaine retained part ownership. Elaine married a mechanic who sometimes worked for Richard sewing wheat sacks. The family jokes that he was the only person in town that Elaine wasn't related to, so they got married.

All three of the Hall girls helped out on the farm and even drove the trucks when they were young. However, one Sunday, Elaine rolled the truck. That was the last time they worked on a Sunday—and the last time Elaine was allowed to drive. Today, Elaine's daughter, Ann, owns 780 acres of the farm along with her family, while her cousin and cousin's grandson do all of the farming. From the very beginning, wheat has been the constant crop on the farm. They have grown barley and seed peas throughout the years, and today, they grow garbanzo beans.

The farm has changed in numerous ways. It went from tractors pulling the combine to fully automated GPS combines.

"It was horrible being on the old tractors," said Ann Mitchell Ingersoll. "It was terribly itchy, and you would have to cover your entire body with cornstarch to keep from scratching all day. Then you would have to run through the sprinkler because you couldn't go inside. They would wear long sleeves and pants, and it would get so hot during those long summer days."

Farming is constant, Ann says. Her grandmother was always worried about something. And you're always working, starting at sun up and not stopping until two hours after dinner.

To learn more about the Hall family and other generational farms in Washington, visit wawheat.org/centennial-farm-project. ■



G.W. and Nanny Hall with their eight children.



One of G.W.'s harvest teams.

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Grant program gets green light

Sustainable Farms and Fields will use \$2 million to help fund climate-smart farming practices

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

After three years of stop-and-go progress, the Sustainable Farms and Fields (SFF) grant program finally has the green light to start funding climate-smart farming practices across Washington state.

“Sustainable Farms and Fields is a brand new program we are rolling out. It is intended to support growers who are interested in increasing climate-smart practices on their farms, where they can get technical and financial assistance through their local conservation districts or other public entities to help implement those practices,” said Alison Halpern, scientific policy advisor at the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) who has been working to develop the program. SFF, which will be managed by the SCC, received \$2 million in the state’s 2022 supplemental budget. Halpern anticipates the program rolling out to producers in July of this year.

The general intent of SFF is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration on agricultural land, rangeland and tidelands. Since 2019, Halpern has been developing draft guidelines for the SFF with the help of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Washington State University (WSU) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Initially, the practices that will be eligible for SFF funds will be drawn from NRCS’s list of approved, climate-smart best management practices. Those practices may include conservation cover for pollinators; conservation crop rotations that improve soil health; residue management through no-till and reduced till practices; cover crops; riparian buffers; nutrient management; prescribed grazing that improves wildlife habitat; and tree and/or shrub establishment that increases carbon sequestration. As the program develops, Halpern said additional practices that aren’t part of NRCS’s list may be added.

Producers won’t be able to apply for the funding directly; they’ll need to work through a public entity, most likely a conservation district, although WSU Extension, counties and municipalities will also be able to apply for fund-

ing for some of their eligible programs. Initially, Halpern anticipates much of the funding will go towards technical and financial assistance on the ground and cost sharing through the conservation districts.

“I think right now, the conservation districts are well poised to do that cost sharing, so they will be the leaders in providing financial assistance. But as far as technical assistance, I see us having multiple partners to do that along with the conservation districts,” she explained.

One of the requirements is that the SFF funds are to be used throughout the state as fairly as possible and to support as many commodities as possible. In that light, \$2 million isn’t very much to spread across an industry that grows more than 300 crops commercially and whose production totaled more than \$9 billion in 2019. Halpern acknowledged that fact, but said they wanted to start small in anticipation of “bumps in the road.” The SCC will also be applying for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities, which has \$1 billion of available funding for pilot programs

that support climate-smart practices, create market opportunities for products that use climate-smart practices and develop ways to measure and verify greenhouse gas benefits. Although there is no match required for the USDA program, the fact that the state already has funds committed to climate-smart practices is a point in the state’s favor. Halpern also anticipates submitting a state budget package for SFF funding next year.

“The program does allow cost sharing for new equipment, and knowing how much a direct seed drill in Eastern Washington costs, that’s not going to do much. But if we start by doing the technical assistance and create some cost sharing while we are applying for additional funds, the program has room to grow. I think \$2 million is just the starting point,” she said.

From no to go

The road to \$2 million wasn’t easy. The original bill, SB 5947, sponsored by Sen. John McCoy (D-Tulalip), and co-sponsored by, among others, Sen. Mark Schoesler



Alison Halpern, scientific policy advisor at the Washington State Conservation Commission, has been working to develop a new grant program that will help fund climate-smart farming practices in Washington.

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(R-Ritzville), was introduced in the 2019 Legislative Session a week before the cutoff deadline without much outreach to stakeholders or the state agencies included in the bill. Despite the concerns with the bill, there was enough interest that, although it didn't pass that year, the Legislature provided proviso funding for the SCC and the WSDA to work with stakeholders to develop recommendations on what a good sustainable farms and fields program would look like. The SCC handed the reins to Halpern at that point.

One of the first things Halpern did was hold in-person stakeholder meetings and send out an online survey so producers could directly weigh in (see sidebar).

"What we learned from that survey is that the majority of producers were already implementing some climate-smart practices," Halpern said. "They identified the lack of technical assistance and financial assistance as the two big barriers to doing more, but they were really interested in having an incentive program to help them increase these practices."

Using that feedback, the bill was reintroduced with new language in the 2020 Legislative Session. The bill passed the Senate and the House and made it through the reconciliation process with strong bipartisan support. But then, like the rest of the world, it ran headfirst into COVID-19. In March 2020, the bill passed the Legislature, but because of economic uncertainties raised by the pandemic, no funding was attached to it. The program remained unfunded until the 2022 Legislative Session, although Halpern and her partners at WSDA, WSU and NRCS continued to work on developing guidelines.

Size doesn't matter

One of the requirements of the bill is that funding is to be distributed across different-sized farms, and Halpern feels smaller-scale farms could really benefit from the results of implementing climate-smart practices. Those benefits could include improved soil health, increased

Producer survey says...

Back in November of 2019, Alison Halpern, scientific policy advisor at the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), asked Washington state producers to fill out a simple survey to help the SCC build guidelines for the Sustainable Farms and Fields (SFF) program. Within the first nine days, 125 people had responded. In the end, she heard from 270 people, most of them actively engaged in agriculture. Some of the results included:

- More than 65 percent said they were currently implementing practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or sequester carbon.
- The top three barriers to adopting or implementing additional carbon-farming or emissions-reducing practices were questions over which options were best for one's farm, the cost to upgrade equipment and unfamiliarity with the latest technology.
- Producers said cover crops, soil health, mulching/compost application and tree/shrub establishment should be the priorities for the SFF.
- More than 60 percent of survey respondents said they would be very likely to start adopting or implementing additional carbon-farming practices or emissions-reducing measures if there was financial or technical assistance. ■

drought resilience, flooding resiliency and, especially, reduced operating costs that come from using less water, fewer chemicals and less fuel (if no-till or reduced-tillage practices and precision agriculture are put in place).

"There is so much interest right now in carbon markets, but one of the concerns is that if you are a small farm and you implement all the climate-smart practices, you aren't going to be as competitive or as profitable going



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into a carbon market if it's calculated per acre," she explained. "There are all of these economic co-benefits to these practices, and so we recognize that if we are providing technical assistance and financial assistance to smaller farms or to first time producers or historically underserved communities, including veterans, we have an opportunity to really help more farmers in Washington state be economically viable. For me, that's one of the most exciting things about this program; it does help to mitigate against some of the effects of climate, but it also is intended to support farmers."

Halpern has repeatedly heard from farmers frustrated that these types of programs bypass producers who have already implemented climate-smart practices. Because there's no baseline requirement in SFF, she is confident that those farmers will still find something in the program for them, from technical assistance and cost-share opportunities to the economic co-benefits having healthier soil can bring.

"There are so many co-benefits that a wheat producer could benefit from even if they are doing one of the big practices like no-till. Nobody wants to be left out, and we don't want to punish somebody for implementing climate-smart practices decades ago," she said.

One of the concerns that was voiced back in 2019 and 2020 was that SFF would take money away from other state conservation programs, like the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). Halpern is confident that rather than taking away from VSP, SFF can actually support it, especially in light of the fact that the SCC is looking at different funding sources. Halpern said SFF is different in its intent and structure from VSP, and farmers who get individual stewardship plans with recommendations that include climate-smart practices to meet VSP goals could conceivably get SFF funding to help with implementation.

For more information on SFF, visit scc.wa.gov/sff. In addition, Halpern is available by email at ahalpern@scc.wa.gov to answer questions.

"I love this program. I'm a plant ecologist, and I'm supposed to be focusing on the SCC's science-based policy, but I feel so committed to this program because of the way it's built, and I want to ensure its success. We had so much buy-in from farmers, and it's so flexible and scalable," she said. ■

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Looking ahead

Extreme volatility will bring challenges, opportunities for prepared producers

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Last month, Dr. David Kohl warned producers that a period of extreme economic volatility is approaching, but along with the challenges it will bring, there will also be opportunities for producers who are prepared.

"I think it's a new era of prosperity if you follow a certain management mindset. If you don't, I think it's going to be a temporary opportunity, and it's going to be up to you which direction you want to go," he said.

Kohl is an academic hall-of-famer in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. He travels extensively, talking to stakeholders about future trends in the agriculture industry and the economy. He was talking to Eastern Washington producers as part of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's 2022 workshops.

Kohl listed 10 macroeconomic disruptions that producers need to watch that will create both challenges and opportunities:

- A very fragmented U.S. trade policy. The U.S. is moving from globalization to deglobalization, accelerated by the Russia/Ukraine situation. That's an issue because one in five dollars in U.S. net farm income comes from export markets.
- Environmental, social and governance standards. Kohl explained that the big companies are under pressure from activists, investors and consumers to meet these standards. "More and more ag producers are going to be scorecarded because the companies you sell to and buy from are being scorecarded."
- The oil and energy complex. Eight out of every 10 dollars a farmer or rancher spends is connected to oil and energy.
- Labor shortage/automation.

- Technology. Kohl explained that a critical element that will give producers a competitive edge is the data they can collect, which can help them make strategic adjustments in their business.
- Government stimulus funds.
- Extreme weather and climate change. Both of these are going to create extremes in economics. Producers also need to watch growing conditions in other areas of the world.
- China. Not only is it America's biggest trading partner, but its economy is slowing down. This could be critical for commodity prices moving forward.
- Russia and China's political and military strategies.
- Supply chain challenges, especially related to ports and trucking.

Another important factor for producers to watch is inflation, which Kohl said is the highest it's been since 1984, and producers should expect to be managing in an "inflationary environment" for at least the short term. How long it lasts depends on many factors, including relief in supply chains, the lack of confidence by U.S. and global consumers, automation and government debt. The federal government has been signaling interest rate increases.

"The feds are going to have to be real careful, because they could throw the U.S. economy and the world economy into a recession," Kohl explained. "People are going to watch these interest rate increases, and their consumer habits will be adjusted depending on what goes on."

To deal with the expected volatility and to take advantage of opportunities, Kohl suggested producers institute a three-point program. The first thing they need to do is know their cost of production so they can execute a marketing and risk management plan. They also need to manage their expenses line-by-line



"I think it's a new era of prosperity if you follow a certain management mindset. If you don't, I think it's going to be a temporary opportunity, and it's going to be up to you which direction you want to go."

—Dr. David Kohl

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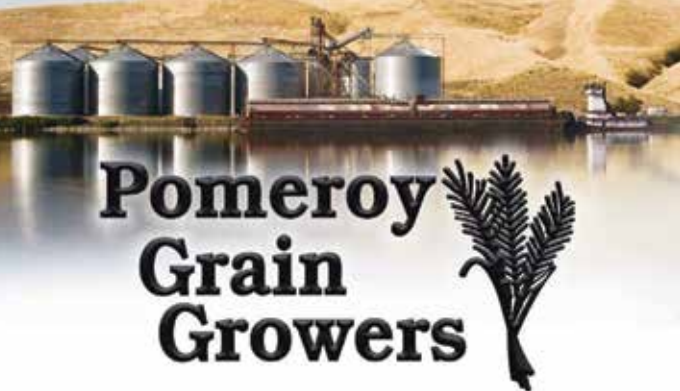
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and review their financials at least quarterly. Finally, with interest rates predicted to rise, producers need to closely watch any credit that is on a variable rate.

Besides managing economic volatility, producers will also need to learn to manage around the “uncontrollable,” such as what happens in Washington, D.C., or other parts of the world. They will need to be prepared to adapt, innovate and focus, and the older generation needs to take a close look at their management transition plan, which Kohl called a potential “Achilles’ heel.” He explained that too many producers wait too late to do this.

“People are buying hard assets (land), and if you are, you’d better have a transition plan in place for that next generation,” he said.

From 2004 to 2014, government payments as a percentage of net farm income was very low, but that has changed in the past five years. According to the Center for Farm Financial Management, government payments made up 62 percent of net farm income for crop farmers in 2020. For dairy farms, it was 72 percent. For hog farmers, it was 127 percent, and for beef farmers, it was 108 percent.

“We were very government-payment dependent, and government payments makes passive managers,” Kohl said. “The big point I’m trying to make is a new era of prosperity is going to (need to include) a plan to move away from government payments.”

Business IQ: Management Factors

Critical Questions for Crucial Conversations

Farmer Checklist	Your Score	Green (3 points or 4*)	Yellow (2 points)	Red (1 point)
1. Knows cost of production		Written	In head	No idea
2. Knows cost of production by enterprise		Written*	In head	No idea
3. Goals - business, family, & personal		Written*	In head	No idea
4. Record keeping system		Accrual	Schedule F (one & done)	No idea
5. Projected cash flow		Written*	In head	No idea
6. Financial sensitivity analysis		Written*	In head	No idea
7. Understand financial ratios, break evens		Written*	In head	No idea
8. Work with advisory team and lender		Yes*	Sometimes	Never
9. Marketing plan written and executed		Yes	Sometimes	Never
10. Risk management plan executed		Yes	Sometimes	Never
11. Modest lifestyle habits, family living budget		Yes*	Sometimes	Non existent
12. Written plan for improvement executed & strong people management		Yes*	Sometimes	Non existent
13. Transition plan/Business Owner plan		Yes	Working on plan	Non existent/controversy
14. Educational seminars/courses		Yes*	Sometimes	Never attend
15. Attitude		Proactive	Reactive	Indifferent

Score	Overall Analysis
35-50	Strong management rating, strong potential for resiliency & agility
24-34	Moderate management rating, potential issues in resiliency & agility
<24	Weak management rating, potential major issues in resiliency & agility

2021 Version - Developed by: Dr. David M. Kohl, Professor Emeritus, Ag & Applied Economics, in cooperation with Dr. Alex White, Dairy Science, Virginia Tech

Business IQ Exercise

- After completing the Business IQ: Management Factors Scorecard, what are three areas/points in your business that you will continue and three areas/points for improvement?

Three areas/points to continue:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three areas/points to improve:

- _____
- _____
- _____

After answering the 15 questions at the top of this chart, producers should use the bottom part to list three areas in which to continue and three areas in which to improve.

To help producers increase their odds of business success, Kohl introduced a set of 15 business IQ questions (see chart). He said the questions will help producers screen their team for attitude, will assist them in prioritizing improvements and provide an objective way to measure those improvements. After answering the questions, producers should list three areas in which to continue and three areas in which to improve.

“One of the fastest growing trends I’m seeing in agriculture is informal or formal advisory teams,” Kohl said. “Your lender is on it. Your crop consultant is on it. Your livestock consultant is on it. You can’t go it alone today.”

Kohl closed out his presentation by listing four practices that will increase producers’ odds for business success.

- Have strong working capital. This helps navigate volatility, face adversity and positions producers for opportunity. Producers need to look at current assets minus current liabilities. “If you can be 22 to 25 percent of your expenses, you are in a pretty good position to handle all this volatility. You can sell when you want

to sell, not when you have to sell. You can have that marketing and risk management program, and you can execute. You can buy those inputs at an opportune time."

- Watch debt levels. Take net income plus interest paid and depreciation and add them together. Divide that number into term debt. Kohl said if that number gets above 6 to 1, producers "better be tapping their brakes on debt."

- Operation efficiency. Producers should target a 60-30-10 plan for profits. That means 60 percent of their profits go to build efficiency first and then growth. Thirty percent goes to build working capital, and 10 percent is table money. "The mistake people will make is growing their business before they get efficient. If you aren't efficient, you have a negative margin, and you only compound your losses."
- Cash flow planning is 80 percent of a business plan. ■



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Keeping the tools sharp

Risk Management Agency reviewing crop insurance's wheat program

By Trista Crossley

Editor, *Wheat Life*

Farmers know that regular maintenance is the key to keeping their equipment running smoothly, but sometimes even the tools in the toolbox need a little maintenance of their own.

Last October, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) began reviewing the crop insurance program for wheat to determine if improvements should be made. The review will take approximately a year, and all 10 of RMA's regional offices are involved as wheat is grown across the U.S.

"The overall objective of the program performance assessment, or PPA, is to determine the actuarial soundness and the effectiveness of crop programs. These reviews are a fairly comprehensive tool for identifying and evaluating the performance, vulnerabilities, weaknesses of a crop program, and whether crop program modifications are required," explained **Ben Thiel**, director of RMA's Spokane regional office. "It doesn't sound very glamorous, but the process is another tool for doing program maintenance within crop insurance."



Thiel alerted growers to the review at the February board meeting of the Washington Association of Wheat

Growers, because the regional office is conducting outreach and asking for feedback on the wheat program. The review includes an evaluation of final planting dates for both winter and spring wheat to see if they need to be changed.

"We are looking across the board in our entire region at wheat planting dates. We are open to any feedback where it's problematic for a producer to meet a certain final planting date," Thiel said.

The regional office will also be conducting underwriting reviews. Several active wheat policies will be randomly selected, and the office will review the underwriting performed by the insurance company. The review includes looking at the producers' applications and actual production history to ensure their insurance choices and correct yields for level of insurance coverage were applied. The insureds' share and acreage reports will also be verified.

"Although we are looking at an individual policy, the producer is not aware that we are looking at it. He doesn't need to be notified. He doesn't need to provide any records for it," Thiel said. "This is something that we work on with the company, and if the regional office finds any errors during the review, then the insurance company is notified of their performance issue."

RMA will also be looking at the written agreement process for improvements and to see if an expansion in crop insurance is warranted. Written agreements are used when coverage or rates aren't available in a particular area for an insurable crop.

If, during the review, the regional office discovers any program vulnerabilities, a referral is made further up the RMA chain of command to consider a policy procedure change.

"Although wheat is grown all across the county, it's not all grown the same, and not all the same kind of wheat is grown everywhere. Under different grow-

ing conditions, different forms of loss can occur in different areas. There are things that certainly could come out of a review in our region that would be a different finding than in another region,” Thiel said. “We aren’t trying to look for problems, rather we are looking for opportunities to improve the program and make coverage better for growers. This is just another tool for maintenance where we are trying to make sure how the program is currently structured meets the needs of the producer.”

The PPA process, which is based on a six-year cycle, is relatively new. Every year, RMA selects a group of national and regional crops to review. Last year, the national crop reviewed was corn; this year, it’s wheat and soybeans. Thiel said the idea was just part of RMA’s desire to continue to improve crop insurance.

“We are always looking to evolve and improve the program over time, and this is just another step of that with the program maintenance,” he said. “Sometimes producers have concerns about the insurance companies doing things correctly. This is a tool for doing that, making sure companies are following our policies and procedures and making sure the policies are done correctly.” ■

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Community organization helps facilitate charitable giving

Columbia Basin Foundation

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Corinne Isaak calls the Columbia Basin Foundation (CBF), variously, an umbrella, a vehicle, a conduit and a gathering place for charitable generosity, but those descriptions just scratch the surface in describing an organization that manages more than \$14 million in charitable assets and distributed more than \$1 million across 10 Eastern Washington counties last year.

“(The Columbia Basin Foundation) is a way for people to create a legacy and make sure the organizations they love and benefited from go on. It’s very much about legacy and generosity,” she said. “It’s for people who are interested in estate planning, and people who want to give charitably to the community in which they have lived, worked and played and have true roots in. They come to us, and we help them execute their charitable plans.”

The CBF, which is based in Ephrata, Wash., is a 501(c)(3) public charity, established in 1996 as a way to make it easy for people to donate money to their communities. The foundation sets up, manages and distributes money from funds and endowments on behalf of the donors. The foundation serves rural communities in Adams, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln, Okanogan, Stevens and Whitman counties. Isaak, who has lived in Coulee City, Wash., for 30 years, is executive director of the CBF, a position she’s held since 2020, although she’s been involved in the organization since 2004 as both a board member and the communications director.

Community foundations are important in both urban and rural settings, but Isaak said rural communities often don’t have as many resources to draw on as urban communities do. The money that the CBF distributes can often act as a stimulus package in small communities, and the scholarships that the organization gives out each year—almost 60 of them—can make a big difference to a student.



Corinne Isaak (left), executive director of the Columbia Basin Foundation (CBF), and Jacquie Hunt, CBF finance director. Photo courtesy of Corinne Isaak.

One of the biggest challenges facing the CBF is reaching and educating people on how the community foundation concept works. In general, an individual will include the CBF as a beneficiary in their will. They’ll meet with Isaak, who will help them decide what kind of fund(s) to set up, how much to fund them and how the money will be distributed. Only a portion of the interest is used each year, leaving the rest to grow the balance. Isaak said one donor left the CBF her estate and specified 23 different entities she wanted to benefit from it.

“Our job was to take her wishes and execute them in perpetuity,” Isaak said. “We can show donors how much their initial investment will give, and how it will grow. We take the charitable gift they give, we invest it, and the return becomes the distribution, and it continues to grow and give and grow and give.”

Besides scholarships, the CBF manages different kinds of funds, including:

- Agency endowment funds benefiting entities such as the Columbia Basin Allied Arts, the Ephrata Senior Center and the McKay Foundation.
- Building/Special Project Funds that address specific community needs, such as rebuilding the Almira School or improving a park.
- Designated/Donor-advised funds that benefit one or more specific organizations as determined by the donor.
- Field of interest funds, which support a general charitable interest, such as the arts, health, etc. ▶

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TAX BENEFITS

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COMMUNITY IMPACT

Giving through a community foundation allows donors to put their charitable dollars directly to work in their own communities.

FLEXIBILITY

A community foundation can accept nearly any kind of gift, from cash and real estate to stock, QCD and other appreciated assets. An individual, family, business or organization can create a philanthropic fund for virtually any charitable purpose.

RECOGNITION

Endowing a fund at a community foundation is a fitting way to memorialize or honor a loved one and create a permanent legacy to be remembered for generations. Also, if a donor is interested in complete anonymity to protect their identity, this type of fund can be established as well.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Because a community foundation manages many individual donor gifts, it can service and administer each of them at a fraction of the cost of a private foundation or smaller non-profit organization. The Columbia Basin Foundation looks forward to working with you. We are just a call away and can assist you in creating a lasting legacy that will benefit the community where you have lived and worked for your lifetime.

It's not just individuals that work through the CBF. Businesses also use the organization to manage some of their charitable giving, such as Microsoft and the Grant County PUD.

While most donors' gifts happen after they've died, Isaak suggests people consider establishing a fund during their lifetime, so they understand how it works, have a hand in selecting the recipient (for scholarships) and be able to see the recipients and the benefits of their contribution. One common way to do that is through a qualified charitable distribution, which uses a person's minimum IRA distribution instead of requiring that the distribution be reported as income.

In the last few years, the foundation has hired a grant writer to help increase the amount of grant monies available to communities and to help other nonprofit entities apply for

Connell scholarship honors daughter

Greg and Julie Hart from Connell, Wash., have used the Columbia Basin Foundation (CBF) to continue to honor their daughter, Emily, who passed away more than 20 years ago while she was in high school. The Harts established a scholarship, the Emily Hart Fine Art Scholarship, to help encourage student involvement in the arts. Hart said he and his wife originally set up the scholarship and administered it themselves before handing it off to the foundation to administer. He said he's been more than satisfied with how the foundation has handled the scholarship.

"Most people involved (in the CBF) come from small communities like ours, so they have a good understanding of the students who are applying for the scholarship. They know where the kids are coming from," he said.

One of the things that has really impressed Hart is the fact that a CBF representative has come to the high school to make a presentation in person when the scholarship opportunity is available.

"I think it is important that the kids there see it and know it's not just some nameless money that showed up," he explained. "The scholarship is meant to go to students that share a lot of the same interests and values that Emily did in high school. We directed it that way in hopes that kids could stay involved in the arts in high school." ■



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grants. The foundation also recently invested in a comprehensive software system built specifically for community foundations. Isaak said they can quickly and easily produce a statement for a donor that shows all contributions, distributions and how the fund is doing.

Some funds managed by the CBF are unrestricted, meaning they aren't designated for a specific goal. Instead, the foundation's board of directors decides where the needs are. The board of directors is made up of nine to 15 local professionals who serve three-year terms.

The CBF hasn't forgotten its communities' roots. A few years ago, it started an endowment that will benefit students who are going into agriculture. The goal is to grow the endowment to \$1 million, which will enable it to have between \$35,000 and \$50,000 every year to distribute.

"I want people to know that we are a rural, charitable resource," Isaak said. "When they want to start their estate planning and need an expert to walk them through the process of how to get to that end goal, we are just a phone call away. We will meet with them personally.

PUD funnels charitable giving through CBF

Besides individuals, the Columbia Basin Foundation (CBF) also partners with businesses, like the Grant County Public Utility District (PUD), to give back and support rural communities.

Annette Lovitt, the Grant County PUD community engagement public affairs officer, takes money returned to the PUD, usually in the form of energy conservation rebates, and partners up with different groups to give the money back to the community. Through the CBF, the PUD has helped buy computers for school children and supported a community garden that supplied food to food banks during the pandemic. She said partnering with the CBF has allowed the PUD to do more in the community.

"Having a community foundation is just so critical to meeting those needs that otherwise would go unmet," she said. "Corrine is great to work with. She thinks outside the box, and it's rarely a no, it's a 'how do we make this happen.' She has done great things in our community through grants, scholarships and just really representing the entire area. It's a great partnership."

Lovitt believes community foundations are important, especially in rural areas, explaining that they often serve as a central place for people who want to give, but have questions, and for entities that need help finding grants.

"I think the whole partnership that the Grant County PUD has with the Columbia Basin Foundation allows us to do more and be more in our communities. That's really what we are about, helping out our communities," she said. ■

We understand rural living and will make suggestions. We will make sure their hard-earned money is invested and will grow even after they've passed."

For more information about the CBF, visit columbiabasinfoundation.org. ■



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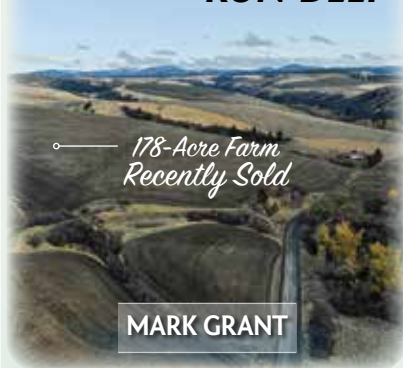
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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Mike
Carstensen



Spring forward the clocks, kick the tires and light the fires. The buttercups are popping, while the meadow larks are singing. The green flag is dropping on another season of living the dream. April is the month we begin to execute on all that winter planning, weather permitting. The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is the same way as we execute all our strategic plans.

The WGC has a long-standing reputation for being a mission-driven organization. In February, the WGC marketing and education committees worked to strategize and prioritize for the second half of this fiscal year and into the next. The WGC research committee also met with the research teams at Washington State University to hear progress reports and get an outlook for upcoming project work. These committees meet so that WGC efforts and resources remain focused on WGC's strategic objectives based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats we can see affecting our industry through 2023. One threat identified in the process was "a black swan event" in the geopolitical arena.

However, as I write this month's article, here is my disclaimer: This article is written almost a month before publication. With geopolitical events (Russia invading Ukraine) happening so fast, some of my narrative is obsolete by the time you receive your copy of *Wheat Life*.

Russia invading Ukraine has caused extreme market volatility and higher near-term prices. Higher ag commodity prices represent an opportunity for farmers in the Pacific Northwest, while increases in the cost of crop inputs will put a drag on that opportunity. The invasion has caused extreme suffering. U.S. Wheat Associates' Vince Peterson said it best, "It's a human crisis, a disastrous drama, fully in progress, absolutely beyond anyone's vision or knowledge as to the final scope and end game." All of us are complaining about our input costs, but we don't have bombs raining down nor family members being blown up!

We all have concerns for our world markets as well as

geopolitical stability. The Russian invasion of Ukraine pits two of the world's largest producers of wheat and fertilizers against each other. As a result, the price of those commodities has shot up recently. We all know Russia is also a major producer of oil and natural gas, and the cost of energy has also jumped up. Remember, last year we had one of our lowest crops on record after our drought, and our carryout was already projected at the lowest since 2013 (the last good bull market). The world wheat market, the U.S. included, was a bit tight on exportable supplies as we began the year (one of the lowest global stocks-to-use ratios in exporter hands in recent history). At the same time, the global trade required to distribute wheat to all needs was projected at a new record level. Ukraine/Russia were expected to export a total of about 25-30 percent of this need.

As of this writing, the Black Sea region is mostly shut down. According to *Foreign Policy Magazine*, the Russian invasion is making the existing economic pressures worse, and notes, "in the short term, the global supply of wheat's disruption has unnerved top international organization officials and food security experts the most."

Well Grandpa Henry told me he always liked the "good ole days." In the next breath, he said, "except chopping wood, pull combines, hot water bottles, moldboard plowing, old wheat varieties..." and the list goes on. The good ole days had their world market/geopolitical black swans as well, and like Grandpa Henry, we still get up every day and do our best to move forward despite the uncertainty and challenges.

Following suit, the WGC will continue to execute on its mission-driven service to Washington farmers and the small grains industry to navigate world markets and geopolitical events. Also, thanks to my fellow board commissioners and the WGC staff who have dedicated their time and efforts in this year's strategic planning processes so we can continue to advance the research, marketing and education efforts that enhance the long-term profitability and competitiveness of Washington small grains. ■



REPORTS

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Quality is king in PNW

Rankings help producers increase desirability of Washington wheat

When it comes to wheat in the Pacific Northwest, quality is king.

That's why the Preferred Wheat Varieties list ranks Eastern Washington, Oregon and Northern Idaho wheat varieties using not just one, but six components to evaluate quality. Washington was the first state in the U.S. to rank varieties for quality, with Oregon and Idaho joining the effort soon after. The Washington Grain Commission is pleased to feature the latest and greatest in wheat varieties in the following 2022 quality rankings.

There are eight new entries to the Preferred Variety Brochure for crop year 2022. The new entries for soft white winter wheat are YSC-215, most desirable; OR2x2CLP, VI Presto CL+, Appleby CL+ and VI Voodoo CL+, desirable; and AP Iliad, acceptable. There was one new winter club, ARS Cameo, which was rated most desirable. The one hard red spring new entry was Hale, coming in at most desirable.

It was a challenging crop year, so locations were chosen for the Genotype and Environment (G&E) study that had test weights of at least 58 pounds per bushel and had a reasonable protein for the class. With nearly all the new entries at the desirable and most desirable levels, we continue to hold steady with the high quality in the Pacific Northwest that our customers expect and appreciate.

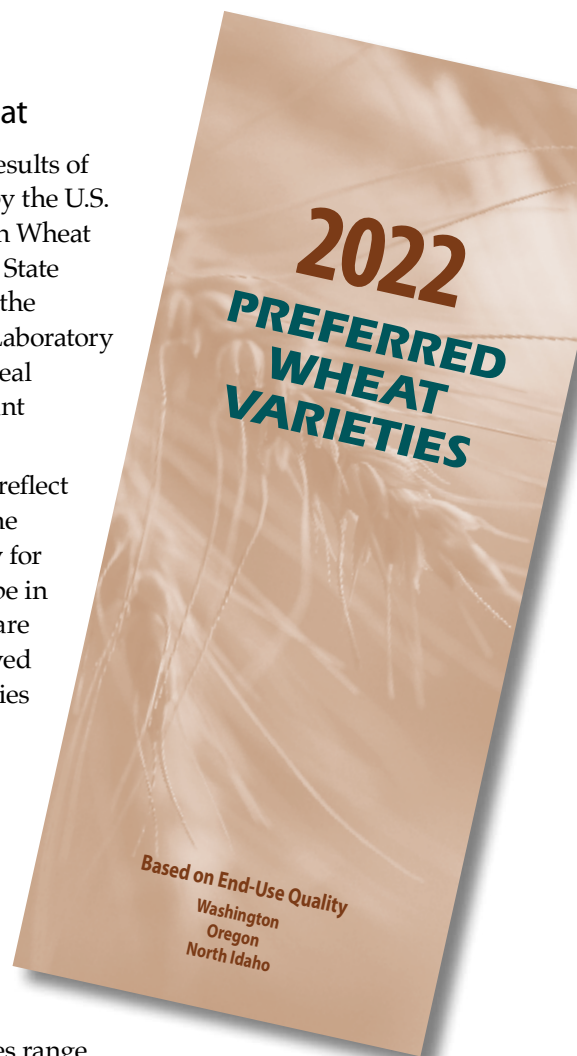
These rankings are based on the results of the G&E quality testing conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Western Wheat Quality Laboratory, the Washington State University Wheat Quality Program, the University of Idaho Wheat Quality Laboratory and the Oregon State University Cereal Quality Laboratory, including relevant breeding nurseries.

The quality scores presented here reflect a minimum of three years' data in the G&E study, using a reference variety for each class. Therefore, varieties may be in commercial production before they are included in the list. The list is reviewed annually and includes the top varieties currently in production.

End-use quality determinations were based on results from grain, milling and product quality tests. The most desirable ranking characterizes varieties that have high test weights, appropriate protein content (kernel properties) and excellent milling and end-use properties. Desirable-ranked varieties range from good to very good kernel, milling and end-use qualities. Acceptable varieties have qualities ranging from acceptable to good and may contain potential minor flaws, but are acceptable in international trade.

Of the components used in evaluating quality, 10 percent of the score is assigned to a variety's test weight and protein, while milling attributes receive 30 percent of the focus. The largest consideration is end-use functionality (baking performance), where 60 percent of a variety's score is assigned. The scores are reviewed yearly, as new data becomes available, and are subject to change. Varieties not listed have not been tested or have less than three years of data. For complete results, please visit <http://wwql.wsu.edu>.

All classes have shown dramatic improvements in quality since the G&E study first began gathering data in 1997. The Preferred Wheat Varieties list is provided courtesy of the Washington Grain Commission, the Oregon Wheat Commission and the Idaho Wheat Commission. ■



2022 Quality Rankings

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOFT WHITE WINTER

VI Frost	UI/LCS	MD
YSC-215	YSC	MD
Sockeye CL+	WSU	MD
Bobtail	OSU	MD
UI Castle CL+	UI	MD
Jasper	WSU	MD
Kaseberg	OSU	MD
Bruneau	UI	MD
LCS Shine	LCS	MD
YSC-201	YSC	MD
LCS Ghost	LCS	MD
Nixon	OSU	MD
Puma	WSU	MD
UI WSU Huffman	UI/WSU	MD
Piranha CL+	WSU	D

SY Command	AP/SY	D
VI Bulldog	UI/LCS	D
Mary	OSU	D
OR2X2 CL+	OSU	D
LCS Shark	LCS	D
LCS Biancor	LCS	D
VI Presto CL+	UI/LCS	D
UI Magic CL+	UI	D
Devote	WSU	D
SY Ovation	AP/SY	D
LCS Drive	LCS	D
Appleby CL+	OSU	D
UI Sparrow	UI	D
Eltan	WSU	D
Stingray CL+	WSU	D
LCS Blackjack	LCS	D
VI Voodoo CL+	UI/WSU	D
SY Assure	AP/SY	D
Norwest Duet	OSU/LCS	D
M-Press	TMC	D
Otto	WSU	D
LCS Sonic	LCS	D
SY Raptor	AP/SY	D
Resilience CL+	WSU	D
Stephens	OSU	D
LCS Hulk	LCS	A
SY Dayton	AP/SY	A
AP Dynamic	AP/SY	A
AP Iliad	AP/SY	A
LCS Artdeco	LCS	A
WB1532	WB	A
Madsen	ARS	A
WB1604	WB	A
Purl	WSU	A
Norwest Tandem	OSU/LCS	A
Curiosity CL+	WSU	A
Mela CL+	WSU	A
Rosalyn	OSU	A
Xerpha	WSU	LD
WB1529	WB	LD
WB1376CLP	WB	LD
WB1783	WB	LD

SOFT WHITE SPRING

Tekoa	WSU	MD
Diva	WSU	MD
WB6341	WB	MD
Louise	WSU	MD
AP Mondovi CL2	AP/SY	MD
Alturas	UI	MD
UI Cookie	UI	MD
Whit	WSU	MD
Seahawk	WSU	MD
Ryan	WSU	MD
WB6121	WB	D
AP Coachman	AP/SY	A

HARD RED WINTER²

Scorpio	WSU	MD
SY Clearstone CL2	AP/SY	D
WB4311	WB	D
SY Touchstone	AP/SY	D
Keldin	WB	D
Sequoia	WSU	D
LCS Jet	LCS	A
WB4623CLP	WB	A
WB4303	WB	A
LCS Rocket	LCS	A
LCS Evina	LCS	A
WB4394	WB	A

HARD RED SPRING²

Jefferson	UI	MD
Hale	WSU	MD
SY605 CL	AP/SY	MD
Net CL+	WSU	MD
SY Selway	AP/SY	MD
Glee	WSU	MD
SY Coho	AP/SY	MD
Alum	WSU	MD
SY Gunsight	AP/SY	MD
Chet	WSU	MD
AP Renegade	AP/SY	D
Kelse	WSU	D
WB9668	WB	D
Buck Pronto	LCS	A
WB9662	WB	LD

HARD WHITE WINTER¹

UI Silver	UI	MD
Millie	OSU	MD
Irv	OSU	MD
Earl	WSU	A

HARD WHITE SPRING¹

UI Platinum	UI	MD
WB-Hartline	WB	D
Dayn	WSU	D

CLUB

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

SPRING CLUB

Melba	WSU	MD
JD	WSU	MD
Hedge CL+	WSU	MD

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

TMC . . .The McGregor Company
OSU . . .Oregon State University
UIUniversity of Idaho

WBWestBred/Bayer
WSU . . .Washington State University
YSYield Star Cereals

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

²Analysis parameters for dough mixing strength have been modified to better reflect suitability in commercial bakeries. Quality designations of the strongest and weakest mixing lines have changed because of this.

Growing market looks to U.S.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES HELP FEED INCREASING WHEAT CONSUMPTION IN PHILIPPINES



JOE BIPPERT

Assistant Regional
Director,
USW South Asia



**ADRIAN "ADY"
REDONDO**

Baking Technician
USW Philippines



**GERARDO "GERRY"
MENDOZA**

Baking Consultant
USW Philippines

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) promotes the small grains industry through the allocation of farmer checkoff dollars in the areas of research, market development and education. When it comes to promoting our wheat in international markets, the WGC works directly with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), which is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry. USW activities in more than 100 countries are made possible through grower contributions from 17 state wheat commissions (including Washington) and cost-share funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. This Wheat Life series features some examples of how your commission checkoff dollars are working hard to promote, grow and maintain demand for the high-quality U.S. wheat the world has come to rely on.

Wheat market overview

While the Philippines doesn't officially have a national bread, if it did, it would be pandesal. A soft and airy flour roll, pandesal is Spanish for "salt bread" and is a common breakfast bread of choice throughout the Philippines. However, contrary to its name, the bread is relatively sweet to appeal to Filipino consumer preferences. Bread formulations include sugar content of around 17 percent, versus 4 percent in the U.S. Furthermore, the long-term trend of low consumption of noodles in the Philippines compared with other countries in Southeast Asia gives bread products higher priority when sourcing wheat in the Philippines. Both these factors give U.S. hard red spring wheat (HRS) an advantage over other suppliers, and the significant biscuit and cake markets carve a distinct niche for U.S. soft white wheat (SW).

After several years of consumption shifting from wheat to rice, the trend is now moving



U.S. Wheat Associates' (USW) Manila and Seoul offices collaborated on a Korean Bakery Workshop held in Seoul, South Korea, in 2019. USW designed the workshop as a service to Philippine bakers and millers to familiarize the industry with Korean products, formulations and production methods to help the industry take advantage of growing opportunities and improve processes in the Philippines.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

"For God, People, Nature, and Country" is the national motto of the Philippines, adopted in 1998.

As of 2020, the Philippines is home to about 109.6 million people. The country is made up of more than 7,600 archipelagic islands in the western Pacific Ocean, in between the Philippine Sea (east) and the South China Sea (west). Its capital is Manila. The Philippines gained independence from Spain in 1898. It is a founding member of both the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.



Official languages: Filipino, English

Head official: Rodrigo Duterte, president. The president and the vice president are elected by direct popular vote and serve a term of six years. The president cannot be re-elected.



Government type: Unitary presidential republic. What does that mean? This is a republican form of government with executive, legislative and judicial branches. Congress is made up of an elected 24-member Senate and a 250-member House of Representatives that are selected or elected from party-list representatives. The Supreme Court has 15 seats. "Unitary" refers to one centralized government state, as opposed to the federal system of the U.S. which has 50 states.



Economy overview: The currency of the Philippines is the Philippine peso (one U.S. dollar is about 50 pesos). According to the World Bank, the gross domestic product of the Philippines in 2020 was \$365 billion (U.S. dollars). This is up from \$84 billion in 2002. Despite the growth over the last decade, the average per-capita income is far lower than other developed countries at \$3,160 in 2021. However, there are expectations of further growth.

Major economic sectors include services (61.4 percent of GDP), industry (28.4 percent), and agriculture, forestry and fishing (10.1 percent). It considers Japan, the United States, China, South Korea and Germany as its top export markets.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. and the Philippines have had a very close trade relationship for more than 100 years. U.S. goods and services traded with the Philippines totaled an estimated \$25.3 billion in 2020. Of that, exports of U.S. agricultural products were \$3.2 billion, making the Philippines our country's ninth largest ag export market. Leading agricultural exports from the U.S. include soybean meal (\$900 million), wheat (\$827 million), dairy products (\$409 million), pork and pork products (\$114 million), and food preparations (\$109 million).

Read more about the Philippines at www.gov.ph. ■



Culture/main religion: The Philippines is the only country in Asia in which Christianity is the national religion. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of Filipinos are Christian, predominantly Roman Catholic.

the other way. In the past decade, annual rice consumption has fallen slightly, while wheat food consumption is up 51 percent. In the past five years, per capita consumption of milling wheat has risen from 26 kg to 36 kg. Although Philippine rice consumption is nearly four times greater than wheat, per capita consumption growth for wheat is moving at a rapid pace.

The Philippine Society of Baking estimates that there are more than 35,000 bakeries operating in the Philippines, mostly small-size operations with minimal mechanization. Fewer than 100 bakeries are fully or semi-mechanized. Large volume bakeries, especially those in metro Manila, have expanded their market share to other parts of the country by producing high-quality baked products that provide consumers value for

money. With this expansion comes the requirement for the milling industry to maintain consistent, high-quality flours that are suitable for production line operations.

The Philippines does not produce wheat and therefore depends on imported wheat to meet its growing demand. Given the quality characteristics needed to make products that fit the Filipino diet, the U.S. enjoys more than 90 percent market share for milling wheat in the Philippines.

Market outlook for 2022/23

The Philippines is now the largest U.S. export market for both HRS and SW with high growth potential because of its dynamic economy, growing middle class and strong consumer demand. End-product preferences

Flour dumping is an ongoing issue

Philippine wheat flour millers have had two successful antidumping petitions against Turkish flour millers. The first was in 2015, the second in 2020. These successful efforts were achieved through the determined and united efforts of Philippine flour millers and strong support from U.S. wheat farmers through U.S. Wheat Associates and the wheat commissions, particularly, the Washington Grain Commission (WGC).

A petition for another extension of the antidumping imposition is being readied for filing early next year, and once again, Philippine flour millers will need to reach out to their U.S. partners for technical, research and legal assistance.

Turkey is the world's biggest wheat flour exporter with average exports of more than 3.2 million metric tons (mmt) in the past five years (2016-20). Turkish flour millers first set their sights on the Philippine market in 2004. Philippine Bureau of Customs records showed that at its peak in 2012, Turkish flour dumped to the Philippine market reached 157,005 metric tons (enough to fill up five handymax vessels), a volume equivalent to 209,340 metric tons of U.S. soft white wheat, which Turkish flour replaced in the Philippine market. At the time, with free on board (FOB) value of \$300 per metric ton, U.S. soft wheat farmers lost around \$62.82 million (U.S. dollars) in exports to the Philippines due to these unfair dumping practices of Turkish flour millers. That is why this topic is at the forefront for the WGC.

The World Trade Organization defines "dumping"

as the export of commodities at FOB prices lower than their wholesale prices in the export country's domestic market. Dumping is an unfair trade practice.

In 2014, the Philippine Association of Flour Millers (PAFMIL) filed its first antidumping case against Turkey. A yearlong series of hearings later, the Philippine Tariff Commission found the Turkish flour millers were indeed dumping flour and imposed a 5-year antidumping duty ranging from 2.87 percent to 16.19 percent against 17 Turkish flour mills.

In 2020, as the five-year antidumping imposition neared its end, PAFMIL sought an extension of this trade penalty. The Tariff Commission and others established that "the termination of antidumping duties is highly likely to lead to the continuation or recurrence of dumping," ruling in favor of local flour millers and imposed an even higher penalty ranging from 2.87 to 29.57 percent. This antidumping imposition is due to end in 2022, which is why Philippine flour millers are preparing a petition for another extension.

Philippine flour millers continue to stand tough against the strong lobby of the Turkish government and its giant wheat flour export industry. Against formidable foreign opposition, Philippine flour millers draw strength from the united stand of local wheat flour manufacturers and the support of its largest trading partner, U.S. wheat farmers. The Philippines was the second largest importer of U.S. wheat in five of the last six years, with average imports exceeding 3 mmt. In 2019, the Philippines imported 97 percent of its wheat requirements from the U.S. ■

in the Philippines have facilitated a strong disposition for U.S.-origin wheat, and according to a 2020 study, millers, bakers and consumers in the Philippines credit USW programs and activities, which the Washington Grain Commission has been heavily involved in, with contributing to nearly 40 percent of the increase in per capita wheat consumption since 2014.

Despite strong economic growth forecasts for 2022, inflation remains a concern in the Philippines. High prices of wheat in the global markets continue to pull prices of flour and end-products higher. A presidential election in May will shift policy strategies for economic recovery as the country emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, but the gradual economic reopening has helped revive household consumption, which will continue into the next marketing year.

USW maintains a world-class technical team to help improve end-use quality and consistency for medium to large baking and processing industries. Their technical programs help end-use manufacturers improve their ability to specify and obtain flour that consistently meets production requirements and supports expansion.

A market development success story

Until a decade ago, the Philippines was a consistent buyer of Western White wheat to use in their sponge and chiffon cakes. Western White is a blend of SW and at least 10 percent club wheat. The typical Philippine tender was 13 percent. However, high price premiums on club wheat caused Filipino mills to look at other formulations for their cake flour.

One mill, Philippine Foremost

On the street: A note from Philippine Foremost Milling

As one of the participants of the END Collaborative Study in Portland, Ore., U.S.A, Miss Jo Louise Sauler was able to grasp the technical aspect of the wheat that was evaluated, specifically the Western White, soft red winter wheat and soft white wheat, in terms of the requirements for its possible use. On the same year, we have a project for the removal or an alternative to chlorine treatment for cake flour, which the learning and experience was capitalized.

We have purchased a limited amount of Western White to verify the performance. In our study, we stumbled upon a series of challenges and questions where the assistance of the technical staff of U.S. Wheat Associates was helpful, especially the expertise of Mr. Roy Chung in baking applications and Mr. Peter Lloyd in milling, all made possible with the coordination and assistance of Mr. Gerry Mendoza and Mr. Adrian Redondo.

At the end, we were able to produce the unchlorinated cake flour using soft white, but chemical treatment is still preferred by the bakers. It will need time for the end-user to shift to the alternative. Hence, we are promoting the flour in a retail online selling platform. Eventually, the goal is for its use as a bulk commodity.

—Roc Cañares, R&D Head, Philippine Foremost Milling

Milling Company (PFMC), saw opportunities after participating in USW-sponsored seminars and demonstrations of Japanese and Korean end-products that require a blend of Western White to achieve the desired quality. Washington Grain Commission funded an end-product collaborative study at the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Ore., with PFMC and other top mills in the country that analyzed the optimal Western White blend levels in Philippine and Japanese-style cakes.

Further technical servicing with USW technicians in 2021 gave PFMC the tools to launch their new unchlorinated cake flour, which led to the first Western White commercial shipment to the Philippines since marketing year 2012/13. ■

Stripe rust report

KEYS TO CONTROL ARE PLANTING RESISTANT VARIETIES, SPRAYING FUNGICIDES AS NEEDED

By Xianming Chen

Research Plant Pathologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service

Stripe rust of wheat occurs every year in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), but the rust pressure and potential damage vary from year to year, mainly due to the variable weather conditions. Thus, the control measures can be different from year to year.

Over the last 46 years, from 1975 to 2021, the potential yield losses, which are the yield reductions in highly susceptible wheat varieties in plots allowing stripe rust to develop in comparison with plots sprayed with fungicides to protect crops, ranged from near 0 in 2021 to 90 percent in 2011, with an average loss of 34 percent. However, the average potential yield loss in the last 20 years, from 2002 to 2021, increased to 43 percent with a standard variation of 21 percent, indicating big fluctuations from year to year.

Taking the last four years as examples, stripe rust caused yield losses of 70.5 percent and 66.4 percent in 2018; 35.8 percent and 32.7 percent in 2019; 48.6 percent and 83.8 percent in 2020; and 0.8 percent and -4.0 percent in 2021 in winter and spring susceptible wheat varieties, respectively. Please note that stripe rust in the experimental fields in 2018 and 2019 was all from natural infection, whereas the fields in 2019 and 2021 were artificially inoculated with stripe rust spores. Even when the winter wheat field was inoculated twice and the spring wheat field inoculated once, stripe rust did not develop into the level of causing significant damage in 2021 due to the extremely long drought and hot weather conditions from May to July.

Stripe rust can be controlled mostly through breeding and planting resistant varieties and applying fungicides when needed. Growing resistant varieties is considered the most effective, economic, easy-to-use and environmentally friendly method of control. In the PNW, breeding for wheat varieties with resistance or tolerance to stripe rust started in the early 1960s, with the first variety, Nugaines, that had a low level of resistance, which was identified later as high-temperature, adult-plant (HTAP) resistance. During the last 20 years, almost all commercially grown varieties have at least some levels of resistance. The overall resistance in the commercially grown varieties has been able to reduce the average



Stripe rust on seedlings (left) and adult-plant (middle) leaves of susceptible wheat plants and resistant reaction of an adult plant (right).

potential yield loss from 43 to 8 percent.

Again, taking the last four years as example, the yield losses of commercially grown winter wheat varieties were estimated as 10.1 percent in 2018, 5.5 percent in 2019, 11.6 percent in 2020 and -2.1 percent in 2021. Similarly, the yield losses of spring varieties were estimated as 13.8 percent in 2018, 2.3 percent in 2019, 10.7 percent in 2020, and 1.6 percent in 2021.

The average of 8 percent potential yield loss of commercially grown varieties is still huge for PNW wheat production. This figure indicates that on average, every year without the use of fungicides, Washington state would lose more than 15 million bushels of grain (worth more than \$90 million), Idaho would lose 8 million bushels (\$50 million), and Oregon would lose 5 million bushels (\$30 million).

Because wheat varieties have different levels of resistance to stripe rust, not every variety needs to be sprayed with fungicides, even in years when stripe rust is a big problem, such as 2018 and 2020. Based on the yield loss data, wheat varieties are rated for necessary or unnecessary fungicide applications. The value of yield loss (in bushels per acre) of a variety divided by the least significant difference (LSD) value of the experiment is used to rate the variety. If the value is between 0 and 0.5, the variety is rated 0; from 0.5 to 1.5 is rated 1; from 1.5 to 2.5 is rated as 2 and so on. Varieties with rating of 0 do not need fungicide application, and those with ratings of 2 or higher need fungicide application. For the varieties rated 1, growers can consider how many bushels they aim to get from fungicide application, although the lower part

of the yield loss range is statistically insignificant.

Wheat varieties with a high level of resistance tend to be consistently in the rating 0 group. For example, winter wheat varieties Madsen and Bobtail and spring varieties JD and WB 6121 were consistently rated 0 from 2018 to 2020. In contrast, winter wheat ARS-Crescent was rated a 2 in 2018 but a 1 in both 2019 and 2020; ORCF-102 was rated a 1 in 2018, a 3 in 2019 and a 2 in 2020; and LCS Jet was rated a 1 in 2018 and 2019 but a 3 in 2020. Spring wheat variety Kelse was rated as a 2 in 2018, a 1 in 2019 and a 5 in 2020; Whit was rated a 2 in 2018, a 1 in 2019 and a 4 in 2020; and Diva was rated a 0 in both 2018 and 2019, but a 3 in 2020. Such variations were mostly caused by the different levels of rust pressure due to weather conditions. The specificity of all-stage resistance in wheat varieties to different races of the pathogen and the level and sensitivity of HTAP resistance to the weather conditions contribute to the variations.

Due to the limitations of field space and workforce, it is not possible to include all currently grown varieties in every year's yield loss study. However, every commercially grown variety has been tested for resistance to stripe rust before and/or after their release and rated on a 1 to 9 scale with 1 to 3 considered resistant, 4 to 5 moderately resistant, 6 to 7 moderately susceptible and 8 to 9 susceptible. This information is available in seed-buying guides. In general, varieties with ratings 1 to 3 do not need fungicide application, and varieties with ratings 8 to 9 need application.

Dr. Chen has published yield loss tables and resistance rating charts at <https://bit.ly/3wi9Rle>.

Depending upon the rust pressure, varieties with ratings 4 to 7 may or may not need fungicide application. When rust pressure is high, fungicide application is particularly needed for varieties with ratings of 6 to 7 and may be beneficial for those with ratings of 4 to 5. When rust pressure is low, fungicide application may be only beneficial for the moderately susceptible and susceptible groups.

Depending upon winter weather conditions, stripe rust can start developing either early or late. We have developed and used a set of models to predict stripe rust. In the past decade, the prediction models for potential yield losses worked very well as they were mostly in the same observed epidemic categories. These categories include low (less than 20 percent), moderate (20 to 40 percent), severe (40 to 60 percent) and extremely severe (more than 60 percent) yield losses on highly susceptible varieties. For example, in 2020, stripe rust was predicted in January to cause 44 percent yield loss and a 48 percent loss in March on the winter wheat susceptible check (PS 279); the yield loss of this variety was determined as 48.6 percent in our field experiment. Although stripe rust was predicted quite low (22 percent) in March for the 2021 crop season, the disease did not cause any significant damage due to the unusually dry and hot weather conditions from May to July.

For the 2022 growing season, our current prediction is 33 percent yield loss on the susceptible check variety based on the weather conditions from November to February. According to this prediction of a moderate epidemic, commercial varieties will likely have 0 or insignificant yield losses for the resistant group (stripe rust ratings 1 to 3, fungicide rating 0); 4 to 10 percent yield losses for the moderately resistant group (stripe rust ratings 4 to 5, fungicide rating 1); and 10 to 24 percent yield losses for the moderately susceptible and susceptible groups (stripe rust ratings 6 to 9, fungicide rating 2 and higher).

Based on our field observations of no rust in early March, the early application of fungicides at the time of herbicide application is not necessary, but late application in the flag-leaf stage will be likely needed for varieties with stripe rust ratings 6 to 9. Varieties with ratings 4 to 5 may need application in the flag-leaf stage depending upon the weather conditions from May. ■



A susceptible variety (left) and resistant variety (right) in the experiment to estimate yield losses and fungicide responses of winter wheat varieties near Pullman, Wash., in 2020.

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Markets face unprecedented times



By Mike Krueger
President and Founder, The Money Farm

We're witnessing unprecedented times in all markets because of the war in Ukraine. Agricultural markets are being affected more than other markets because the Black Sea region, especially

Russia and Ukraine, has become significant exporters of grains and oilseeds in the past decade. Russia is now the world's largest exporter of wheat. They also export more than half of the world's sunflower oil. Ukraine is the world's fourth largest exporter of corn, just behind Argentina. Ukraine is also the world's second largest exporter of sunflower oil. Russia and Ukraine combined account for about one third of world barley exports. Exports from Ukraine are obviously on hold. Exports from Russia are also slowing significantly. A major problem is that vessel owners are reluctant to allow their vessels to enter the Black Sea because of the uncertainties of this war. Insurance costs are also moving sharply higher. No one is certain how much damage has occurred at port facilities in Ukraine. No one knows the extent of the damage to roads, bridges, railroads, etc., within the country.

The second major impact of this event is how much will the hostilities affect the spring planting season? Most people believe the impact will be severe. Aside from shortages of fuel, fertilizer, etc., it's difficult to plant crops with tanks and troops in the fields. It appears that corn planting might be the most affected because of high input costs and lack of fertilizer. Some analysts are already predicting that 2022 corn production in Ukraine will be down 50 percent if the war ends soon. Russia is also experiencing the same shortages of crop inputs, especially fuel. Labor is also a problem in both countries.

The point is that this conflict will have long-term consequences even if it ends soon. Port and transportation infrastructure will have to be rebuilt. That doesn't happen overnight under good circumstances.

The net effect of the sanctions, etc., on Russia's ability to maintain exports is also unknown. It's important to note that in 2021 Russia accounted for just more than 20 percent of the world's total fertilizer exports.

The Black Sea mess coincided with much smaller

soybean production in South America than expected last fall. The shortfall is between 1 and 1.5 billion bushels because of the La Niña drought. That is a significant number and will push more soybean export business to the U.S. Weather across southern and central Brazil has improved, and that will mean the Safrinha corn crop (second crop corn) could be big. Argentina's corn crop is expected to be smaller than last year.

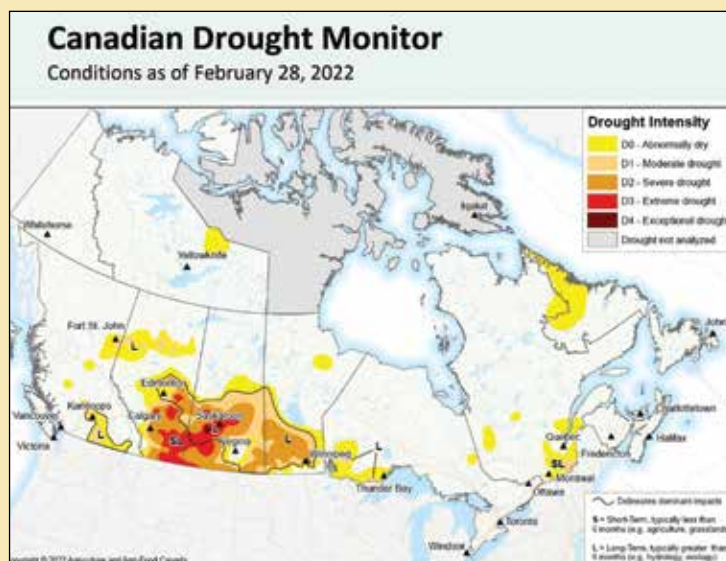
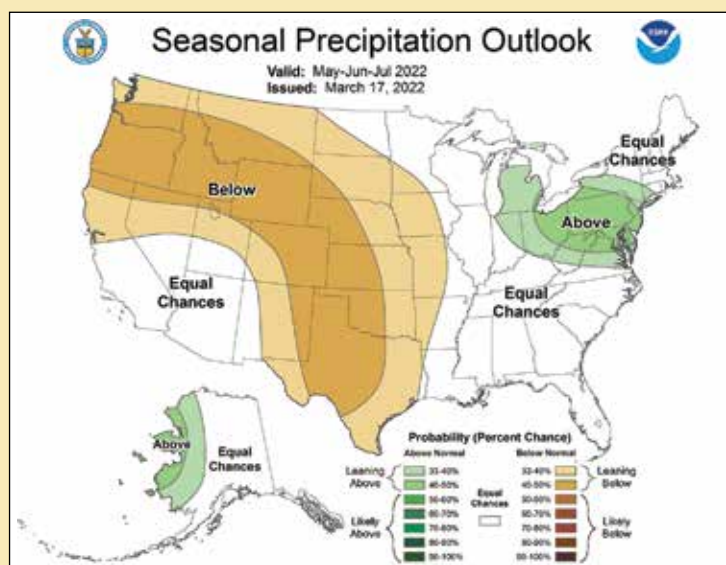
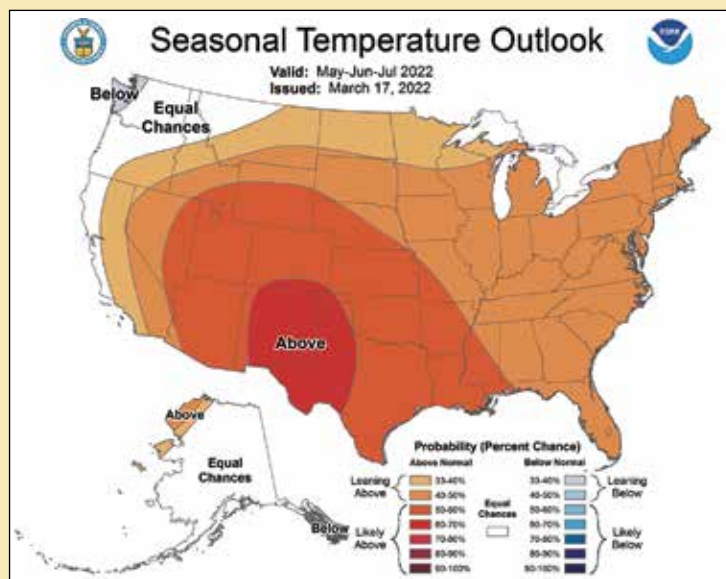
There is more world weather news that will also influence prices in the months ahead. North Africa has been in a drought, and production will be down there and import requirements up. Russia has been the biggest supplier of wheat to Egypt and North Africa for several years. The U.S. southern Plains is also in the midst of a significant drought. This region produces about 80 percent of the U.S. hard red winter wheat. Some analysts believe yields have been reduced by as much as 30 percent already. The Pacific Northwest (PNW) is also struggling with some leftover dryness from last year. The western half of the northern Plains and much of western Canada also remains dry.

The latest National Weather Service 90-day outlooks, released March 17, suggest a warm and dry summer across the western half of the U.S. (see maps).

The problems in the Black Sea region, coupled with smaller-than-expected South America soybean (and possibly corn) production, will put increased emphasis on northern hemisphere crop production. There is simply little room for yield and production shortfalls for any crops in 2022. The battle for acres will be closely watched across North America. Record high prices for canola/rapeseed will present a challenge for spring wheat acres in Canada. A similar situation exists across the U.S. northern Plains. Minor crop prices, including oil sunflower, dry beans, pulse crops, flax, etc., are all at or near record levels. No crop can afford to lose acres to another crop in 2022.

One of the interesting aspects of these minor crops is that none of them have futures markets. That means there are no speculative trading funds or technical traders that can influence prices. They represent "real" cash markets. Buyers must pay whatever price necessary to secure supplies and acres.

The last piece of this complicated puzzle is that it



appears that consumptive buyers, those who actually use these commodities, have little forward coverage in cash markets. This includes millers, processors, livestock feeders, biofuels producers, etc. They were reluctant to add coverage last fall ahead of forecasts for record South American soybean and corn crops. They assumed world and U.S. ending supplies would build in the 2021-22 marketing year. They assumed it would rain in South America and the southern Plains of the U.S. No one believed Russia would actually invade Ukraine.

There are several key issues that will drive markets for the next several months:

- The length and outcome of the Russia/Ukraine conflict will take priority over everything else. The longer it continues, the more volatile agricultural markets will get, and the longer the impact of this will last as infrastructure damage increases. This will include crop input prices, especially fertilizer.
- North American acres and growing-season weather will become a daily market factor. Anything less than trendline corn and soybean yields will be bullish.
- China's posture with Russia will also be important. Could potential sanctions against China affect China's imports of soybeans, corn or wheat? Can China afford to risk food or feed imports?

It is also likely farmers everywhere will be reluctant sellers in the face of all of this uncertainty, most of which should be bullish.

Lastly, but importantly, volume of trade in futures markets of every type have been sharply reduced. The financial risk and exposure is too uncertain and not measurable to allow big positions. Many grain buyers are limiting new crop purchases over fears that short hedge margin calls could eventually exceed credit limits. This was also a major concern back in 2012-13 when corn and soybean markets pushed to new, all-time highs. ■

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

To the farmers...

Taking life day by day is how we roll up here on the Emtman Ranch. As I sit and read so much about everything going on in our country—all the politics, anger, protesting, finger pointing—I think of the man pictured here (and many others in his boots). My husband doesn't have time to complain. He is the 4th generation on our farm and doing all he can to hand it down to one of our sons.

As I walked with him last night around 10:30 to check cows, he commented that baby number 100 had just been born. The happy new mama was cleaning off her baby; he was minutes old. This man loves his cattle and takes such good care of them. As we walked around, the cows were all nestled so close you could feel the heat from their bodies. They know what we are doing, and they just lie there, chewing their cud.

This man is up before sunrise, out checking babies. He says, "I didn't make it out last night, I overslept my alarm" as I rub his tired, sore back to try to give him comfort. In four hours, he will finish his feeding—that's if everything goes as planned—then move on to other jobs. I can see the stress in his eyes as fuel prices and everything else keeps going up.

Several times a day, he is running his tractors to feed the cattle. Then in the spring, he hauls them to other pastures. Then there is farming all summer, putting up hay, hauling it out of the fields and then stacking it, or selling it and hauling it somewhere else. Then harvesting wheat, which will then have to be hauled to bins.

This is just a short version of what farmers all do. You see, we provide food for your tables, and it's not as easy as some might think. So please say a prayer today for all the ranchers and farmers as they are gearing up for their season. God bless all the farmers, ranchers and anyone that runs heavy equipment.

Thank you. ■



Russ Emtman feeding cattle on his family's farm in Spokane County. Photo by Hazen Audel.

From a loving farmer's wife

By Teresa Emtman

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT AGFORESTRY SERIES IS QUICKLY APPROACHING

By Vicky Scharlau

Interim Executive Director, Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation

Violence broke out. People were arrested; some were beaten. Shots were fired. Vehicles were damaged. A bridge was burned.

This could be the news from last week, but I want to take you back to Washington's "Fish Wars" of the 1960s and 70s. Sport and commercial fishing industries were competing with Native American tribes. The lawsuit that followed redefined the roles of tribes in natural resource management in the Pacific Northwest, leading eventually to the Timber Fish Wildlife Agreement (TFW), which was signed in the early 1980s as a new way to manage natural resources with tribes, loggers, environmentalists and agencies working together on practices.

Credit for TFW is given to two strong leaders: Billy Frank Jr., a Nisqually tribal leader, and Stu Bledsoe, an Ellensburg rancher turned politician. What these two men accomplished with TFW showed all natural resource industries, including agriculture, the need for and value of aggressively pursuing their needs and explaining them to the public—especially as it related to public policy.

As he worked on TFW, Stu Bledsoe also drove the first efforts to build a natural resources leadership program in Washington state, patterned after other state programs.

Leadership. Some will say, "I know it when I see it." What if you didn't have to wait to stumble upon someone with leadership skills? What if you could build leaders? Take raw talent and allow that talent to grow, to bloom, to excel? Would you be interested?

Now in its 45th year, the AgForestry Leadership Program has graduated more than 1,000 leaders in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Leaders that help advance their industries through understanding, education and empowerment. Leaders who understand and navigate issues in the public policy arena. The program spans 18 months with 11, multiday seminars, plus a week in Washington, D.C., and two weeks in a foreign country. The seminars build leadership skills but also group dynamics and public speaking; working with the media; social issues; state and federal government; forestry and agriculture issues; transportation; the Columbia River system; and crime and corrections.

But the AgForestry program of 1977 would not be effective in 2027.

To continue intentional impact and to deliver adult

leadership development through training, programming and experiential learning, well, one needs to look to the future: a future with Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z—then comes Generation Alpha! It's already clear that the target audience of tomorrow is different and has very different values, learning styles and expectations. AgForestry needs to evaluate and retool to ensure its leadership program remains relevant, attracts high-quality candidates, makes an impact with graduates and continues to resonate with grantors, alumni, contributors and stakeholders.

I'm a graduate of Class 10 and was barely 30 years old at the time. AgForestry changed my life and my professional trajectory and taught me much, most importantly, to help others find their voice and facilitate the "process" toward public policy. A process often like watching paint dry, but necessary and often overdue. I found I could make a difference by not being the loudest voice in the room.

If you look closely, you can spot an AgForestry graduate. And if you know a recent graduate, you are no doubt amazed and impressed with the transformation that occurred before your eyes. Graduates emerge as different people. As they should, after a highly competitive selection process, seminars covering 18 months, and at least 58 days of required time and attendance. Astonishingly, the cost to a participant is just \$6,000. The actual cost is more than \$40,000—offset by contributions from grants, alumni and other stakeholders who value leadership. The total investment in each class is \$750,000.

The Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation, which oversees the AgForestry Leadership Program, looks for production candidates—decision-makers from farming, forestry, fishing or natural resource entities or who spend their time in hands-on activities. Agriculture, forestry and natural resources include producers, processor/shippers and marketing/salespeople. It also includes education, law, finance, insurance and government agencies who serve the natural resources sector. Those in fields such as the environment, media, research, labor and public relations who demonstrate strong connections to natural resource industries are also considered.

Applications for Class 44 will be accepted until April 30. The first seminar is set to start in October at Washington State University. To learn more, there are Q&A sessions on April 6, from 10–11 a.m., and April 18, from 1–2 p.m.

To learn more or to start the application process, go to agforestry.org/prospects. To invest in future leaders, go to agforestry.org/donate. ■

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Covering the history of crop insurance

By Curtis Evanenko
McGregor Risk Management Services

Congress initially authorized federal crop insurance back in the 1930s to help agriculture recover from the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) was created in 1938 to administer the program, which was initially limited to major crops in main production areas of the U.S.

The Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 expanded the scope of crops covered across the country. The intent of the expansion was to encourage producer participation in the crop insurance program and reduce reliance on ad hoc money, which the 1960s and 70s farm bills had been known for. Participation was encouraged by authorizing a 30 percent premium subsidy for producers who purchased crop insurance at the 65 percent coverage level—a \$100 crop insurance premium was \$70 out of pocket for the insured.

When I started my career in the

mid-1980s, 65 percent coverage was the most popular due to the cost savings the premium subsidy provided. During this time, the highest coverage level available was 75 percent; there were few takers due to the premium outlay. Today, the FCIC provides coverage level up to 85 percent of the insured's proven yield on most crops across the country.

There were numerous acts passed by Congress (1988, 1989, 1992) to again provide ad hoc monies because the desired level of crop insurance participation hadn't been attained. I clearly recall discussions with my employer at the time, that the continued authorization of ad hoc monies jeopardized the very existence of the private crop insurance companies—Congress would either fund ad hoc disaster monies or fund crop insurance, but not both.

Originally from a farm in central North Dakota, I began my career as a marketing representative for a crop insurance company travelling western North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota. At that time, there were roughly 36 crop insurance companies participating in the federal crop insurance program. Competition was plentiful and stiff for the agent/agency's attention and shelf space. But in the mid-1980s, participation in crop insurance across the U.S. was low.

Enter the Federal Crop Insurance Reform Act of 1994, which made participation in the crop insurance program mandatory for growers to be eligible for benefits received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Due to the mandatory participation requirement, catastrophic coverage was created—think 50 percent coverage of the crop yield and price. The premium for catastrophic coverage was completely subsidized by the government; producers had only to pay \$50 per crop per county.

The 1994 Act also increased premium subsidy levels and began introducing higher coverage levels (80 and 85 percent) for the major crops (corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat). Participation began to soar; from 1988 to 1998, the amount of acreage covered by crop insurance tripled.

In 1996, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) was created to administer the federal crop insurance program. RMA has 10 regional offices across the country, including one in Spokane. The Spokane office is responsible for Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington and provides local interface and support for regional producers and grower associations.

The national offices in Kansas City, Mo., and Washington, D.C., are where everything related to the policy occur—leadership, actuary, policy, procedure and pricing. Kansas City also houses people that are dedicated to interfacing with the crop insurance company representatives.

In 2000, Congress enacted legislation expanding the role of the private sector (crop insurance companies), allowing participation for research and develop-

In 1996, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) was created to administer the federal crop insurance program. RMA has 10 regional offices across the country, including one in Spokane.

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ment of new products and features. Some of the products created that are now available include coverage for triticale, revenue policies for dry peas and sweet cherries and whole farm revenue protection. All newly introduced products remain “pilot programs” until sufficient data is gathered, analyzed and released as a program product or scrapped. The revenue products available today for dry peas and cherries are both still in the pilot stage.

For consistency, rate establishment for all crops follows the same format. The data is reviewed by actuary staff in the Kansas City office on a county-by-county basis every two to three years. The information reviewed includes grower participation, causes of loss and frequency of crop losses. The reason for the short cycle is for accuracy—catching any obvious trends such as yield and weather cycles.

A similar process is used when addressing and assessing transitional yields, or what’s commonly referred to as T-yields. County data is reviewed every three years to obtain the most accurate data. Insured yields on reported, planted and harvested acres are analyzed to capture any anomalies or trends.


Crop insurance is often portrayed as a public/private

partnership that, for the most part, is very successful. Crop insurance, a public program administered by RMA through a network of approved insurance providers (AIPs) and independent agents (yours truly), uses government funding (subsidies) to deliver crop insurance policies to producers.

The Standard Reinsurance Agreement, established in 2004, is the financial and operating agreement between RMA and the AIPs. The agreement is the same for everyone, and everyone must agree to it in order to participate in the federal crop insurance program. The agreement outlines the duties and responsibilities of the crop company when administering and providing crop insurance policies. In return, the AIPs are reimbursed for expenses and administrative costs incurred for delivery of a policy. The policy reimbursement percentage varies by policy type. In general, a wheat revenue policy is different than a potato actual production history policy, which is different than a whole farm revenue policy.

An application, production report and an acreage report must be submitted annually to the RMA for each policy. After the data is approved, the AIP will be reimbursed for the administration and expense of that policy. They, in turn, will pay the agency or broker that placed the policy

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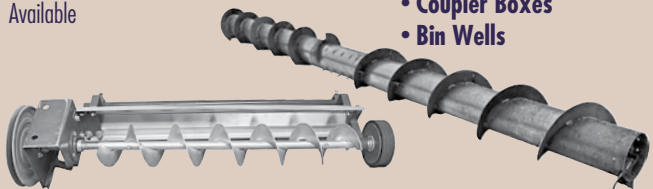
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The 2008 Farm Bill allowed for renegotiation of the Standard Reinsurance Agreement to reign in program costs. In 2010, USDA announced that all crop insurance companies had agreed to the new terms. The agreement can be renegotiated once every five years if USDA notifies the companies of their desire to do so. To date, there has not been any change or renegotiation since the last agreement that began with the 2011 crop year.

Much has changed in the industry during my career. The original "federal crop books" serviced by federal employees have become privately owned books of business with service typically provided by local, hometown agents and agencies. Administrative and operating costs

reimbursed by RMA to each company to deliver the program (and correspondingly, yours truly), was capped by the 2011 Standard Reinsurance Agreement with a baseline funding level set at \$1.4 billion (I'm not complaining, just explaining). For reference, that same budget was \$1.6 billion in 2009. Those 36 crop companies have consolidated to 12 carriers nationally. Washington state has 10 carriers approved to operate in the state for 2022.

The only constant is change. Wishing you and yours the very best in health and happiness. Happy Easter. ■

Curtis Evanenko serves as a risk management advisor with McGregor Risk Management Services. He can be reached at (509) 540-2632 or by email at cevanenko@mcgregorrisk.com.



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Why Support the Washington Wheat PAC?

Washington farmers are losing ground politically! The ability to protect our interests is slowly dwindling. Washington wheat producers need elected officials who know and understand the industry. Without these relationships our ability to remain competitive is at risk. Now is the time for the industry to join together and proactively influence legislation that directly impacts the Washington wheat producer.

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

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

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

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

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Winter in Adams County.



Preston Hatfield (4) waiting patiently for the bank-out driver.
Photo by John McCaw.



Joe Roach and Jim Moore above Sulphur Canyon, which is west of Kahlotus. Photo by Travis Matthews.



Briar Brown (3 months) ready to help her dad, Zane, with fall work near Oakesdale. Photo by Emma Brown.



Jace (3) and Evelyn (6) Luft during harvest at J & T Koller Farms in Pomeroy. Photo by Karla Luft.



Zeke Zaring (6 months old) on his first combine ride. Zeke represents the 6th generation on his family's Dusty farm. Photo by Katie Zaring.

In Dusty, JR (9) and Isaiah (6) Appel waiting to ride the combine while their dad, Pete, fixes a belt. Photo by Laura Appel.

HAPPENINGS

As of press time, the events listed here are being planned. However, you should check prior to the event for updates. All dates and times are subject to change.

APRIL 2022

16-17 PLOW DAY. Teams of horses and mules take part in plowing events. Event starts by 9 a.m. Palouse Empire Fairgrounds, Colfax, Wash. facebook.com/pethreshingbee

28-MAY 8 WASHINGTON STATE APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL. Parade, carnival, golf tournament, apple pie and dessert bake-off, live entertainment, auction. Wenatchee, Wash. appleblossom.org

30-MAY 1 RENAISSANCE FAIR. Music, entertainment, food, arts and crafts and maypole dances. East City Park, Moscow, Idaho. moscowrenfair.org

MAY 2022

1 BLOOMSDAY. Spokane, Wash. bloomsdayrun.org

3-7 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW OF

SPOKANE. Spokane County Fair and Expo Center. juniorshow.org

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

7-8 WINTHROP '49ER DAYS. Parade, rendezvous party, Saturday dinner, Sunday cowboy breakfast. Winthrop, Wash. winthropwashington.com/events/old-west-festival/

13-15 MAIFEST. Maipole dancing, music, entertainment. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org

14 PLOWING DAY. Teams of horses and mules take part in plowing events, starting at 9 a.m., in Davenport, Wash. Contact Jon Overmyer at (509) 721-1100 for directions.

19-22 SELAH COMMUNITY DAYS. Carnival, poker run, pancake breakfast, arts and crafts. Selah, Wash. selahdays.com

20-22 WAITSBURG CELEBRATION

DAYS. Parade, classic auto show, carnival. Waitsburg, Wash.

cityofwaitsburg.com/events-calendar

27-29 LAST STAND RODEO. Cowboy breakfast, parade, rodeos. Coulee City, Wash. laststandrodeo.com

27-30 TOUCHET RIVER ROUNDUP. Woody's pig roast, Chili feed, camping, dancing, kids games. Registration required. Fairgrounds in Waitsburg, Wash. snafubar.com/pigroast/

28 DAYTON DAYS PARADE. Downtown Dayton, Wash. historicdayton.com/local-calendar/dayton-days-parade-rc4n9

28-29 METHOW VALLEY RODEO. Saddle bronc, bulls, barrel racing and junior events. Held at the rodeo grounds, about halfway between Twisp and Winthrop. methowvalleyrodeo.com ■

Email listings to editor@wawg.org. Include date, time and location of event, plus contact info and a short description.

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