

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

JUNE | 2022

TROUBLE ON THE TRACKS

Shipper complaints
trigger federal hearings
on Class 1 railroads

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

How commodity growers are finding
space in local and regional food systems

USW spotlight: Colombia

Herbicide resistance will take
a group effort to address

Ag, family inspire ambassador's
nonfarm career choice

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

WHEAT LIFE

Volume 65 • Number 06
www.wheatlife.org

The official publication of



**WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION OF
WHEAT GROWERS**

109 East First Avenue
Ritzville, WA 99169-2394
(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666

WAWG MEMBERSHIP

(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666
\$125 per year

EDITOR

Trista Crossley • editor@wawg.org
(435) 260-8888

AD SALES MANAGER

Lance Marshall • lance@wawg.org
(253) 221-7000

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Devin Taylor • Trista Crossley

AD BILLING

Michelle Hennings • michelle@wawg.org
(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666

CIRCULATION

Address changes, extra copies, subscriptions
Katie Teachout • katie@wawg.org
(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666
Subscriptions are \$50 per year

WAWG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michelle Hennings

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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



Talking about mental health awareness

By Howard McDonald

Way back in the day of my father and generations before him, farmers didn't talk about mental health because most folks were too proud or embarrassed to talk about their struggles. It was viewed as weak. But farmers have the enormously stressful job of "feeding the world," which comes with the daily gamble of weather, finances, health, regulations, etc. It's likely that someone you know or love is struggling, and I believe that shouldn't be taken lightly.

In life, one has to navigate careers; running a business/farm; raising children; past traumas; school; making ends meet; burning the candle at both ends; relationships with family, friends and co-workers; death; retirement...the list goes on. All that we do in our daily walk can bring many joys and blessings, but it also can give us stress, worry, grief, loss of sleep and loss of connection.

Fortunately, attitudes have changed about mental health, and we are becoming more aware and more sensitive to the issue. I believe that the connections that farmers have with one another can help lighten the load of feeling overwhelmed. Producers who are feeling the financial pressure of farming aren't giving up or giving in...they are reaching out to other farmers and asking if they would like to lease their ground, which is an admirable and humble move. It keeps that farmer connected to farming but without all the stress and responsibilities they once had.

How do I keep myself mentally healthy? I talk to my wife because she is the one person who knows me the best. She is my biggest cheerleader and advocate, and she understands the pressures of farming. I also talk to other farmers about how they might be doing things on their farms. Comparing notes is a great way to lighten the stress. I keep educating myself in the wheat industry to avoid any surprises down the road. My wife and I also spend as much time as we can on Banks Lake in the summer. When I come down the hill from the farm, we'll hop on the boat and spend a few hours out on that beautiful lake, and we just talk and soak up the sunshine and beauty. We also enjoy our family as they bring us so much joy. We meet up with our farming friends, once a month, for conversation, a lot of laughter and a great potluck meal. For me, keeping connected is everything.

My advice to anyone who is struggling is to reach out to someone you trust. There is absolutely nothing wrong about talking through an issue with someone. If you are worried about someone, reach out and give them a call. Let them know that someone cares, and if they would like to talk, you are there to listen with NO JUDGEMENT. Invite them to coffee or lunch. Spend an extra 10 minutes talking to that farmer you see now and then. That 10 minutes could mean the world to that person. It takes courage both to reach out for help and to offer help, but I would much rather live with hope than live in fear because fear is paralyzing. Let's all keep the hope!

Did you know that the suicide rate among male farmers and ranchers is almost double the national average? If you or someone you know needs help, please contact one of these national hotlines:

- Farm Aid Hotline at 800-FARM-AID (327-6243), Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255). Help is available 24/7.
- 2-1-1 is a comprehensive hotline that connects callers with local resources. ■

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Contributors

Howard McDonald, president, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Mike Carstensen, chairman, Washington Grain Commission

Lori Maricle, communications director, Washington Grain Commission

Diana Carlen, lobbyist, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Ian Burke, R.J. Cook Endowed Chair in Wheat Research, Washington State University

Nick Bergman, research associate, Washington State University

Mike Krueger, president and founder, The Money Farm

Cadence Zellmer, Washington Wheat Ambassador

Jared King, C.P.A., Leffel, Otis, and Warwick, P.S.

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Industry Associate \$150	X	X	X			

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.

If these priorities are important to you, your family and your farm operation, join WAWG today and help us fight.

More member benefits:

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



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Washington counties declared drought disaster areas

On April 29, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated nine Washington counties as primary natural disaster areas. Those counties are Adams, Asotin, Benton, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Walla Walla and Yakima counties.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of D2 (drought-severe) for eight or more consecutive weeks or D3 (drought-extreme) or D4 (drought-exceptional).

This natural disaster designation allows USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to extend emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through emergency loans. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation, or the refinance of certain debts. FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses,

security available and repayment ability. The application deadline is Dec. 22, 2022.

The counties contiguous to these primary natural disaster areas are also eligible for emergency credit. Those counties are Chelan, Garfield, Lincoln, Skamania, Columbia, King, Okanogan, Whitman, Douglas, Lewis and Pierce counties in Washington; Nez Perce County in Idaho; and Gilliam, Hood River, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Wallowa and Wasco counties in Oregon.

To file a notice of loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA service center. ■

For more information about what the natural disaster designation means for your operation, contact your local U.S. Department of Agriculture service center.



AIRING NOW. Marci Green, a Spokane County wheat farmer and past president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (shown here with her husband, Lonnie), is helping promote the benefits provided by the lower Snake River dams by narrating a commercial running on broadcast and cable TV, streaming video, and social media channels. The commercial is part of a campaign from Northwest River Partners, a member-driven organization that serves not-for-profit, community-owned electric utilities in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada and Wyoming. To view the video, visit wawg.org.

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June board meeting scheduled

The next Washington Association of Wheat Growers state board meeting will be held Tuesday, June 14, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Wheat Foundation building in Ritzville. Board meetings are open to the public. ■

USDA to provide \$6 billion to farmers for disaster aid

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021 will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments totaling approximately \$6 billion through the Farm Service

Agency's (FSA) new Emergency Relief Program (ERP).

"The announcement from USDA is a welcome relief to wheat growers across the country who experienced unprecedented drought and other extreme weather events in 2020 and 2021," said Nicole Berg, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers. "Last year in my home state of Washington, wheat production was nearly half what it was in 2020 due to drought, low soil moisture and extreme heat. Unfortunately, this was a familiar story across many wheat-producing states and regions in 2021, and this assistance will play a critical role in providing relief to wheat growers."

For impacted producers, existing Federal Crop Insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data is the basis for calculating initial payments. Phase one will cover losses to crops, trees, bushes

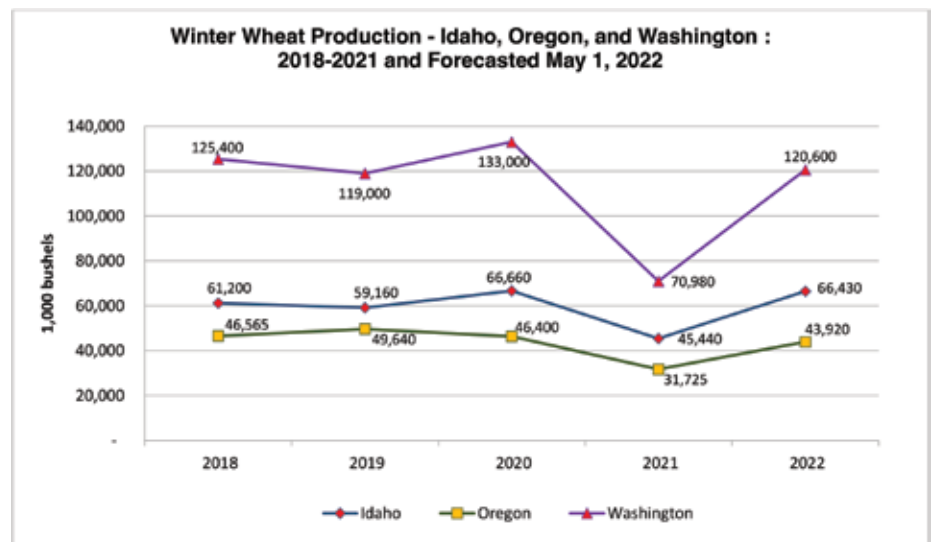
Washington 2022 winter wheat production up 70 percent

From the National Agricultural Statistics Service

Based on May 1, 2022, conditions, production of winter wheat in Washington is forecast at 121 million bushels, up 70 percent from 2021. Yield is expected to average 67 bushels per acre, up 25 bushels from the previous year. Growers planted an estimated 1.85 million acres in the fall of 2021, down 100,000 acres from the previous year. Harvested acres are forecast at 1.80 million acres, up 110,000 acres from 2021.

Idaho production is forecast at 66.4 million bushels, up 46 percent from 2021. Yield is expected to average 91 bushels per acre, up 20 bushels from last year. Growers planted an estimated 790,000 acres in the fall of 2021, down 80,000 acres from the previous year. Harvested acres are forecast at 730,000 acres, up 90,000 acres from a year ago.

In Oregon, production is forecast at 43.9 million bushels, up 38 percent from 2021. Yield is



expected to average 61 bushels per acre, up 16 bushels from last year. Growers planted an estimated 730,000 acres in the fall of 2021, down 10,000 acres from the previous year. Growers expect to harvest 720,000 acres, up 15,000 acres from the previous year.

Nationally, production is expected to be 1.17 billion bushels, down 8 percent from 2021. Yield is forecast at 47.9 bushels per acre, down 2.3 bushels from last year. Growers planted an estimated 34.2 million acres in the fall of 2021, up 588,000 acres from the previous year. Harvested acres are forecast at 24.5 million acres, down 965,000 acres from 2021. U.S. white winter wheat production is forecast at 230 million bushels, up 38 percent from last year. Of this total, 15.7 million bushels are hard white and 214 million bushels are soft white. U.S. hard red winter, at 590 million bushels, is down 21 percent from 2021. Soft red winter, at 354 million bushels, is down 2 percent from 2021. ■

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and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in 2020 and 2021. Eligible crops include all crops for which crop insurance or NAP coverage was available, except for crops intended for grazing. Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze, smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions. For drought, ERP assistance is available if any area within the county in which the loss occurred was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or D3 (extreme drought) or higher.

To streamline the delivery of ERP phase one benefits, FSA will send prefilled application forms to producers where crop insurance and NAP data are on file. Receipt of a prefilled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP phase one payment.

For crops covered by crop insurance, the ERP phase one payment calculation for a crop and unit will depend on the type and level of coverage obtained by the producer. Each calculation will use an ERP factor based on the producer's level of crop insurance or NAP coverage:

- Crop insurance: The ERP factor is 75 to 95 percent depending on the level of coverage from catastrophic to at least 80 percent coverage.
- NAP: the ERP factor is 75 to 95 percent depending on the level of coverage from catastrophic to 65 percent coverage. ■

Correction

In May's *Wheat Life*, we inadvertently misspelled Antonina Broyaka's name in her guest column on the war in Ukraine and its potential effects on the world wheat market. We regret the error. ■



SPOKANE FARM FAIR. Marci Green (left) from Spokane County and Teri McDonald from Douglas County talk to 5th grade students about wheat and agriculture at the Spokane Farm Fair last month.

Study: Programs boost exports by billions

Programs to help U.S. farmers build markets overseas boosted agricultural exports by an average of \$9.6 billion annually from 1977 to 2019, representing 13.7 percent of total agricultural export value and returning \$24.50 in additional net export revenue for every dollar spent on export promotion.

Those are the key conclusions from a study commissioned by the U.S. Grains Council on behalf of members of the U.S. Agricultural Export Development Council (USAEDC) to evaluate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program.

The MAP and FMD programs are authorized by the farm bill and administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. The programs form part of the public-private partnerships that offer competitive cost-share grants for foreign market development activities to USAEDC members. The study reported that these market development programs effectively leveraged industry contributions, averaging between 70-77 percent of expenditures from 2013-2019, valued at an estimated annual average of \$567 million.

The study found that from 2002 to 2019, foreign market development investment through the MAP and FMD programs:

- Increased farm cash receipts by \$12.2 billion (3.4 percent).
- Contributed \$45 billion annually in economic output and \$22.3 billion annually in gross domestic product.
- Created an estimated 225,800 jobs across the entire economy.

"The organizations that comprise our membership use these export programs to great effect," said Lorena Alfaro, executive director of USAEDC. "The export programs not only boost the entire agricultural sector, but they also have a multiplier effect throughout the entire U.S. economy, supporting jobs and income in a range of industries."

The full study can be found at usaedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/USGC-IHS-Markit-Cost-Benefit-Report-April-2022.pdf. ■



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POLICY MATTERS

Interim legislative workgroups to focus on ag, salmon

By Diana Carlen

WAWG Lobbyist

With unprecedented revenues for a supplemental year, the 2022 supplemental operating budget appropriated over \$63 billion. Of particular interest to the agricultural industry, the final budget maintained significant spending on salmon recovery, including multiple workgroups and studies for the industry.

- Financial incentives for landowners to protect and restore streamside habitat.
- Improving salmon recovery program coordination between state agencies.
- Additional changes when voluntary measures and incentives do not achieve streamside protection and restoration.

Preliminary recommendations are due to the

Legislature and governor by Oct. 1, 2022, with a final report to be submitted by Nov. 1, 2022.

SNAKE RIVER DAMS STUDY

The 2022 supplemental budget provided \$350,000 for the governor's office to complete an analysis on options to replace the benefits of the four lower Snake River dams as a part of a comprehensive salmon recovery strategy. The analysis is directed to be completed within an extremely short timeframe, due on July 30, 2022.

In order to execute the study, the governor's office contracted with a third party for completion of the evaluation

and collection. In a rare move, the governor's office began the study, stakeholder outreach and contract work prior to passage of the supplemental budget.

FARMWORKER STUDY, PERFORMANCE AUDIT

This year, the legislature provided for two studies surveying the services provided to farmworkers in Washington. The first study will be conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy under Evergreen State College. The comprehensive study is intended to inform policymakers on whether the needs of farmworkers are being met by current state administered programs, policies and statutes. The study will look at health and safety in the workplace; wage payment; preventing harassment, discrimination and retaliation; and access to services. The study will also examine how relevant agencies coordinate with one another and provide outreach on the state and federal level. The appropriation lays out the groups that the institute must consult with,



SALMON RECOVERY STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

The 2022 supplemental operating budget provided \$300,000 for the governor's office to invite stakeholders to participate in a facilitated process to develop policy and spending priorities to improve riparian habitat. The stakeholders involved in the process include federally recognized tribes, legislative leadership, local governments, agricultural producers, commercial and recreational fisher organizations, business organizations, salmon recovery organizations, forestry and agriculture organizations, and environmental organizations.

The budget lays out that the group must work through recommendations on:

- Improvements to land use planning and development that ensure salmon protection and recovery.
- Standards to protect and restore areas adjacent to streams and rivers.



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namely advocacy organizations, state agencies and non-profit organizations working directly with farmworkers. Notably absent from the work are agricultural groups and farmers themselves. The study is planned to be completed before June 30, 2025, with an initial report submitted by Dec. 1, 2023.

The budget also grants funding to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct performance audits of state agency programs and services addressing the needs of farmworkers. Under the appropriation, the following areas of review are noted: wage and hour laws; health and safety standards; laws relating to harassment, discrimination and retaliation; the Employment Security Department's administration of H-2A programs; and the Department of Health's rules related to pesticide safety. The audits are intended to assess performance and provide recommendations to improve service delivery and effectiveness.

NET ECOLOGICAL GAIN REPORT

In line with the session's strong focus on salmon recovery, the supplemental operating budget appropriated \$266,000 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. The addition of the study followed the ultimate failure of House Bill 1117, a partial revival of the Riparian Buffer Bill, that would have integrated salmon recovery planning into local comprehensive plans under the Growth Management Act.

The study requires the department to:

- Develop a definition, objectives and goals for the standard of net ecological gain.
- Look at and compare opportunities and challenges, including legal issues and costs on state and local governments, to achieve overall net ecological gain.
- Provide recommendations on funding, incentives, technical assistance, legal issues, monitoring and use of scientific data to the integration of needs to assess progress made toward achieving net ecological gain into each environmental, development and land use law or rule.
- Assess how applying a standard of net ecological gain in each environmental, land use or development law is likely to achieve substantial additional environmental or social co-benefits.

The final report to the Legislature is due by Dec. 1, 2022.

EVALUATION OF VOLUNTARY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR LANDOWNERS

In line with the goal of salmon recovery, the Office of

Financial Management received \$226,000 in the supplemental operating budget to evaluate the voluntary incentive programs for landowners and existing regulatory programs protecting and restoring riparian ecosystems. The analysis is intended to look at the effectiveness, utilization and outcomes of the programs at hand.

The office is directed to work with an independent entity to complete the analysis. A preliminary report is due to the governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by Sept. 1, 2022, while a final report is due by Dec. 1, 2022. ■

Industry applauds Taylor nomination for USDA post

Pres. Biden announced the nomination of **Alexis Taylor** to serve as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under secretary for trade and foreign agriculture affairs. The trade and foreign agriculture affairs mission area plays a key role in developing and implementing USDA's trade policy, oversees and facilitates foreign market access, and promotion opportunities for U.S. agriculture. The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) applaud Taylor's nomination.



"NAWG welcomes Pres. Biden nominating Alexis Taylor to this key role and encourages the Senate Agriculture Committee to work diligently and expeditiously in considering this nomination," said NAWG CEO Chandler Goule. "We are eager to see this key leadership role be filled quickly and encourage timely Senate consideration so she may begin important work at the USDA to advocate for U.S. wheat farmers and be an advocate for American agriculture around the world."

"Looking ahead to the next farm bill negotiations, we know she will be an experienced advocate who can help explain to policymakers how important export market development programs are to our country's farmers and ranchers," said USW President Vince Peterson.

Taylor currently serves as director of the Oregon State Department of Agriculture, where she oversees the state's efforts on food safety and consumer protection, natural resource protection, and the promotion of Oregon products. Prior to this, Taylor oversaw the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Services, where she worked to improve market access and improve the competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products around the world. ■



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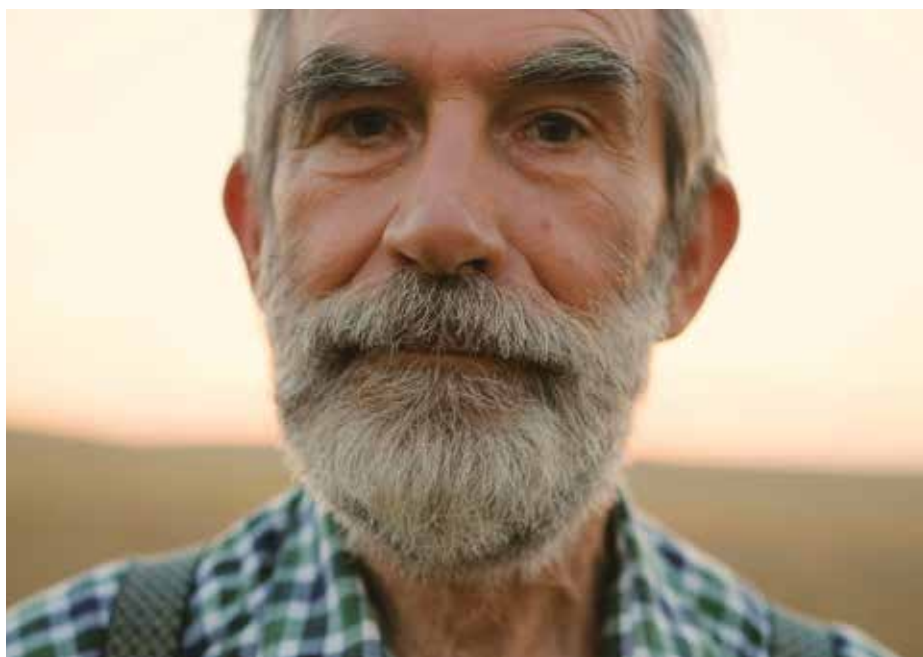
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Just like a crop, farmers' mental health needs nurturing

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and, although it's currently June, we want to take a moment to consider and discuss the harrowing difficulties that many farmers face each and every day.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), those in farming, fishing and forestry occupations are nearly twice as likely to commit suicide than those in the general population. Unlike other workers who can quit or look into other options when facing unpredictability, farmers and agricultural workers must persevere because all aspects of their livelihood are woven into their occupation — legacy, identity, finances and housing, to name a few. Farming is an arduous occupation with a tremendous amount of responsibility that often leaves farmers feeling incredibly lonely, especially in rural areas where there are fewer mental health resources available. This is combined with the fact that the future of farming is, quite literally, uncertain and often a gamble. Factors such as devastating economic events and worsening weather conditions make the longevity of farming uncertain and a risky occupation. These are all elements that are out of farmers' control.




However, even with all the challenges they may face, farmers around the world are still experiencing an all-time high demand for the crops they produce. No matter the



circumstances, farmers and agricultural workers sacrifice their time, finances and mental health in order to feed families around the globe. Farmers are a tough bunch, but it's easy to understand why their suicide rate has increased with such a taxing occupation. Death by suicide doesn't occur in a vacuum, but usually involves a multitude of triggering events that lead a father, son, mother, daughter, friend or neighbor down a dark path. So, please reach out and offer support if you see a farmer struggling. Receiving support from family and friends is just as important to a person as seeking out professional mental health resources.

We know that wheat farming can be an isolating and difficult profession. However, we are hopeful the development of new ag technologies and growing advocacy on social media and the internet will create a future for farmers that's less stressful, full of promise and allows them to instill a legacy the generations that follow can be proud of.

If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255. ■

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Washington Wheat Foundation Meetings are scheduled for **June 6 and Oct. 3, 2022**, at the Wheat Foundation Building in Ritzville, Wash.

Larry Stanley Uses Philanthropy To Honor His Hometown



Regardless of how successful a businessman Larry Stanley became in Spokane, his beloved hometown of Oakesdale was never far from his heart. It still is to this day.

Now recognized for his philanthropic efforts, Larry, who is 93, established The Oakesdale Community Fund last December with a \$20,000 matching gift challenge to benefit the Oakesdale community for future generations.

Once the fund is endowed, a council of Oakesdale residents will ensure distributions are making a transformational impact on the opportunities and needs that matter to the community.

Those needs include downtown revitalization, historic structure restoration, enhancement of play areas and public parks, establishing partnership with first responders for community events, and investing in local school and youth development activities.

The founder of Spokane-based Empire Bolt & Screw Inc., Larry credits his work ethic, which includes building the highly successful Spokane company, to his upbringing in Oakesdale.

"If I didn't believe in the value of the small town, then I wouldn't have done this," said Larry of his decision to establish a fund at Innovia Foundation.

Created in 1974 by several visionary community leaders, Innovia Foundation leads philanthropic efforts in a 20-county service area across Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

In that same visionary spirit, we are asking residents of the region to think about what they want their communities to look like in the next decade and beyond.

With more than half (57%) of our region's wealth in the hands of the baby boomer generation, an excess of \$42 billion in wealth will transfer to the next generation in 10 years. Most of those assets are not in the form of cash but in appreciated assets such as farmland, real estate, and retirement accounts.

Our region's collective assets are in the hands of people who don't often consider themselves independently wealthy. But altogether our region has \$293 billion in assets.

Innovia's 5% campaign is an on-going effort asking everyone in our region to leave an end-of-life contribution of 5% to their community.

That would leave more than \$2 billion for community endowments and nonprofits to build stronger and more sustainable communities over the next 10 years.

Whether you are a farmer, small business owner or a teacher, you do not have to be wealthy to participate in the 5% campaign. Your gift of just 5% will benefit your community in so many positive ways.

Of particular concern is wealth transfer away from rural communities, like Larry's beloved Oakesdale. As a generation of farmers enter retirement and sell their land, most buyers are larger land conglomerates from outside the area. The local resource drain on a community is substantial.

"It's tragic to see so much of what I remember absolutely gone," he says.

Instead of lamenting about what once was, Larry decided to do something about it. In the last few years, he began actively recruiting long-time surviving friends and their families to contribute to the Oakesdale Fund.

The long-since retired businessman says he owes a great deal of success to Oakesdale. Larry was the youngest of five children when his father died when he was 16 years old. Larry says his family had a meager existence, at best, even before his father's death.

"We were poor... just plain poor, upon the arrival of the Great Depression," he says. His father was one of three barbers in town and it was often a struggle for him to provide for his family.

What followed in the immediacy of his father's death is something he still recalls vividly.

"In a small town, everyone knows each other's business," Larry says with a laugh. "It was no secret to anyone that it was a struggle for us."

With his father's medical bills left behind, Oakesdale organized a fundraising dance to support the family.

"I'll never forget what the people of Oakesdale did for us; it was just plain compassion," Larry says fondly.

Not long after his father's death, Larry's mother moved the family to Spokane, and he graduated from John L. Rogers High School. Later, he founded the wholesale hardware company in 1972 with the same work ethic and vigor that he observed in Oakesdale during the Great Depression.

Despite the fact most of his life was lived in Spokane, Larry says the professional success he achieved was conceived out of Oakesdale.

"I always made sure whatever happened in my life moving forward that I would pay my dues back to my hometown," he says proudly.

It's a piece of advice that we should all consider taking.

Kevin Blocker, a marketing and communications manager at Innovia Foundation can be reached at 509.624.2606 or kblocker@innovia.org.



innovia.org

info@innovia.org

(509) 624-2606



TROUBLE ON THE TRACKS

Shipper complaints trigger federal hearings on Class 1 railroads

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

In recent months, the Class 1 railroads have come under scrutiny for inconsistent and unreliable rail service particularly from agricultural shippers in the Midwest. In letters and federal hearings, rail customers have detailed labor and locomotive shortages, off-the-rail prices for cars, and one-sided financial penalties for loading and unloading delays.

Pacific Northwest (PNW) shippers are feeling the effects of the service issues plaguing both Union Pacific (UP) and BNSF, the two major Class 1 railroads that service the region. Paul Katovich, CEO of HighLine Grain Growers, said that any time a rail system slows down (or speeds up), it can be troublesome across the entire network because service becomes unpredictable.

"If they (UP or BNSF) have a manpower problem, they have a manpower problem more or less everywhere. If they have an engine problem, they more or less have that problem everywhere," Katovich said. "In a perfect world, we'd just run consistently all the time, and everybody can gear up for that. We understand, though, that we're playing an outdoor sport, and with it comes variability."

STB hearings

The complaints concerning the Class 1 railroads' performance garnered enough attention that the Surface Transportation Board (STB), which is the federal agency that has jurisdiction over railroad rates, practices and service issues, scheduled two days of hearings at the end of April. Earlier that month, the National Association of Wheat Growers joined with other agricultural commodity groups in a letter to the STB urging the agency to take measures to prevent service disruptions. That letter can be seen at wawg.org/rail-letter-details-ag-issues/.

At the STB hearing, representatives from the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA), the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), The Fertilizer Institute and Cargill, among others, talked about double trip times, excessive dwell times at origin, delayed arrivals, crowded lines and uncertain schedules.

"NGFA members reported paying in excess of \$500,000 in additional charges per substitute shuttle in the secondary market," said Michael Seyfert, president and CEO of the NGFA. "Many NGFA members have a daily risk of slowing or shutting down operations due to reduced and inconsistent rail service. Some individual NGFA member companies report losses and increased costs in the tens of millions of dollars and lost or reduced operating days totaling weeks. Based on reports from members, we conservatively estimate the combined costs to the grain industry for lost revenues and additional freight expenses in the first quarter of 2022 were over \$100 million."

The Class 1 railroads are an important part of The McGregor Company's transportation network. Throughout the year, but especially during the spring and fall planting seasons, the company, based in Colfax, Wash., relies heavily on the railroads for shipments of fertilizer ingredients. Any delay in those shipments could mean delays in crop input applications, potentially resulting in lost yields to producers.

"The issues brought up at the recent STB hearings are very real and long overdue for attention," said Alex McGregor, chairman of The McGregor Company. "Just last month, we had time-sensitive rail car deliveries delayed by over 15 days, resulting in over 10 percent of the product being unusable for fertilizer production. We understand



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that the rail network is a complicated system. We need to see better service and greater reliability from our Class 1 railroads.”

Also testifying at the hearing were railroad employees, union representatives and other industry stakeholders. Representatives of several Class 1 railroads closed out the hearings. Both BNSF and UP acknowledged the issues and said they were addressing them by hiring more employees, increasing crew and locomotive availability, and reducing operating inventory.

Labor shortages

Most of those testifying pointed to staffing shortages caused by COVID-19 and the furloughing of employees during the pandemic as one of the main contributing factors to the railroads’ performance issues. Brock Lautenschlager, Cargill’s North America rail leader, told the STB that based on employee data reported by the railroads, the current Class 1 transportation train and engine employee count is 6,400 employees below December 2019 levels, approximately a 12 percent decrease.

“We believe the largest contributing factor for the rail service decline is the railroads currently do not have a sufficient number of employees to, one, provide the surge capacity needed to recover from unplanned events in a timely manner and, two, meet increasing U.S. rail demand, which is projected to be at a three year high near or above 2019 pre-COVID levels,” Lautenschlager testified.

Rick Patterson, a railroad analyst with Loop Capital Markets, outlined how a crew capacity crunch often happens, adding that it generally takes about a year for a railroad to recover. Patterson explained that a decelerating Class 1 network acts like a magnet, sucking in critical resources, specifically crews and locomotives, that can trigger a service meltdown. The steps that generally lead to such a situation are:

- The railroad is running well but with too lean of a crew capacity.
- There is a triggering event, such as a polar vortex, a surge in volume or, as

Class 1 rail issues highlight importance of lower Snake River dams, barging

While shippers in the Pacific Northwest are dealing many of the same issues plaguing Midwest shippers, having an alternative transportation method — barging — has mitigated some of the effects of the railroads’ performance issues and helped keep shipping costs more competitive. Unfortunately, the challenges to the lower Snake River dams threaten those advantages.

“Supporters of breaching the lower Snake River dams often point to the railroads as being able to replace the shipping capacity that barging currently supplies,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. “But as we’ve seen recently, the Class 1 railroads seem to be giving preference to higher-paying cargos, such as coal, and leaving agricultural shippers to scramble for rail cars, locomotives and track time. Without barge competition, railroads would be free to raise shipping rates, and the increased traffic would mean more delays and less rail car availability for growers.”

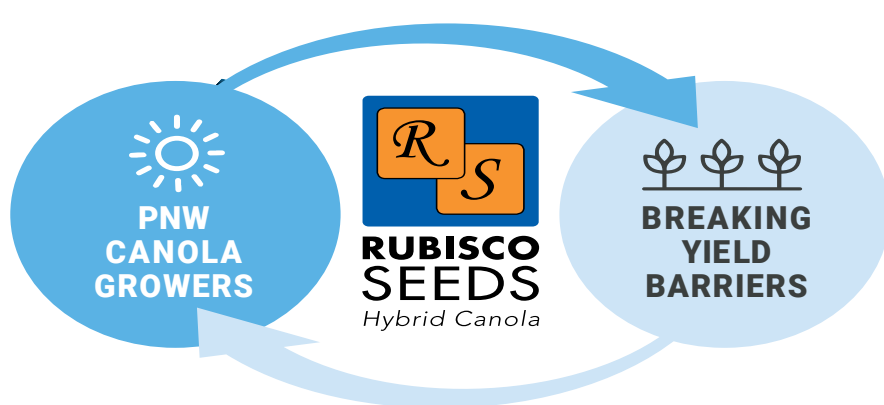
One four-barge tow can move 490,000 bushels of wheat. It would take approximately 140 rail cars to move the same amount, and that doesn’t take into account all of the other commodities that are barged up and down the river system, such as corn, wood products, fertilizer components and fuel. All of that shipping capacity would have to be absorbed by the already-stressed rails and roads, adding wear and tear to existing infrastructure, not to mention a higher carbon footprint.

“Nothing can replace the timeliness of barge deliveries for bringing crop nutrients upriver for farm customers or ag commodities heading downriver to international buyers,” said Alex McGregor, chairman of The McGregor Company. “Class 1 railroads can’t handle the load they have today, much less anything more.”

In a May letter sent to Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee regarding their joint effort to study the feasibility of replacing the benefits provided by the lower Snake River dams, McGregor pointed out that timely deliveries by rail have long been a challenge; he reminded Murray that they had discussed the topic in 2007.

Paul Katovich, CEO of HighLine Grain Growers, agreed that having both barging and railroads to move product is critical to the success of the region’s producers and their overseas customers.

“Rail and barge shipments work together like legs of an athlete to move a massive amount of product efficiently. When you take one leg away, the athlete can’t perform. The rail slowdown we’re experiencing is a perfect example of how important balance is to our world. If we didn’t have an offsetting left leg to kick when the right leg is hurt, it’s an exponentially bigger problem for our entire ecosystem. The value of that balance to the competitiveness in the global marketplace is obvious to the people living it every day,” he said. ■



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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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is the current case, a surge in attrition. The impacted region flips to magnet mode, sucking in crews as the network decelerates.

- The railroad deploys all available crews, and crew overtime is maximized. Furloughed employees are recalled, and crews from other districts are brought in temporarily.
- If all this fails, the railroad will run out of crew capacity at a critical location. Congestion radiates out, network speed plummets. This cycle repeats as slower speeds reduce crew capacity, which reduces speed, which reduces crew capacity, and so on.
- The railroad begins hiring, but training takes time. Headcount is actually higher than it was before the triggering event.
- Over-hiring finally raises crew supply to meet crew demand, and recovery begins.
- The railroad recovers. Over-hires are furloughed, putting the railroad where it was before the triggering event, running well but with little extra cushion.

The PNW is a terminus point for BNSF and UP, and, as a result, Katovich said critical performance issues tend to get exacerbated here. Matt Garland, vice president of transportation at BNSF, stated in his testimony that the company is recalling all furloughed crew in the PNW and offering incentives for employees to transfer to the region.

One-sided financial penalties

Another point of contention that came up multiple times during the STB hearings was the idea of demurrage. If a shipper is slow to load or unload cargo, they are charged a fee, called demurrage. The railroads aren't required to pay demurrage to shippers when rail cars are late, and that one-sidedness stings, said Katovich.

"We (shippers) are held accountable monetarily to perform. If you drag your feet, you are going to pay demurrage, and that's a normal calculation. Railroads don't work that way. You pay if you screw up, but they don't pay if they screw up. That's the heartburn people have," he said.

Jewel Bronaugh, U.S. Department of Agriculture's deputy secretary of agriculture, told the STB board that it should use all its authority to incentivize the railroads to provide better service.

"We cannot continue a system where the railroads face no consequences for providing unpredictable service, and shippers and, ultimately, farmers, ranchers and the American public, pay for it when it goes wrong," she said.

(Trying to) right the rails

A week after the hearing, the STB announced that it will require certain railroads, including BNSF and UP, to submit service recovery plans, as well as provide additional data and regular progress reports on rail service, operations and employment.

"While the railroads have faced certain challenges over the last few years, the evidence produced at last week's hearing is overwhelming that the railroads' longstanding practice of reducing operating ratios by cutting employment levels, mothballing locomotives, and eliminating other essential resources are the central reasons why farmers have been hours away from depopulating herds, manufacturing facilities have reduced operating hours, and shippers cannot get their products to market on time or receive essential raw materials for their companies," said STB Chairman Martin Oberman in a press release.

The rail hearings can be viewed on the STB's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/channel/UCgd2FPpKSpQZ57p771aafNg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgd2FPpKSpQZ57p771aafNg). ■



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A good food fit

How do commodity grain farmers carve out space in a local, regional food system?

As consumer awareness of where and how food is grown continues to increase, some farmers are finding success selling into their local and regional food systems. For more than 25 years, **Colette DePhelps** has worked with multiple partners in the Inland Northwest to develop community food systems and small farms programs. She is currently the community food systems area educator for the University of Idaho Northern District Extension. DePhelps focuses on building the success of businesses from farm to market in terms of local food, or, as she put it, “How do I help make it successful for farmers who want to sell direct to an end customer or through an intermediated market?” She has also worked for Washington State University’s Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, and she co-founded a farm organization — Rural Roots — that helps foster the success of sustainable small acreage farmers and ranchers. Her latest endeavor is the Inland Northwest Artisan Grains Podcast, which focuses on farmers, millers, bakers and brewers who are exploring the world of artisan grains.

Recently, *Wheat Life* chatted with DePhelps about the local and regional food system here in the Inland Northwest, and how commodity grain farmers might fit into it.

What is a local and regional food system?

For me, personally, and my University of Idaho Extension programming, I think a local food system is generally within about 100 miles. It has some geographic base, where we really look at how people and food travel on a local level. For me, that is not confined by geography in terms of a political boundary, especially since I work with people in Washington and Idaho; we cross our state lines a lot.

When we look at a regional food system, the scales are a little bit bigger. I look at up to 450 miles, generally, because that gets us into a boundary where someone might consider themselves, like the Inland Northwest, bounded by mountain regions, climate or the type of population demographics, largely rural vs. the more coastal Pacific Northwest region, which would be on the west side of the Cascades. It’s all a bit squishy. There are no actual established definitions.



What is the purpose of local and regional food systems?

In general, I think a lot of it is customer demand and the ability on the producer side to get a premium price for their product. We know that connection is really important to people, and local food provides a lot of connection. That’s around community, geography, to farmers and to health. Those are, I think, all really wound up together. Flavor is also a piece that is important to people.

When we talk about local food, I think some of the drivers on the customer side are that place matters, and people want to be connected to place and the things they value about place. One of the things people value about place relates to the character of that place, which does relate to food. We’ve seen that grow over a long time, so flavor, quality, experience.

For farmers, especially depending on the scale of the farm and how much product they need to move, (the pur-



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Brothers find success in landrace, heritage grain

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Surrounded by a sea of grain, Palouse Heritage is making its own waves in the local and regional food system with their landrace and heritage crops.

Located between Endicott and St. John., Wash., Palouse Heritage was established in 2015 by brothers Don and Richard Scheuerman who grew up on a small Whitman County farm. The company wholesales most of their grain to bakers, brewers and maltsters. They've partnered with a stone mill in Richland, Wash., to offer some whole grain flours, and they provide much of the grain used at The Grain Shed, a Spokane bakery and brewery that they co-founded and are co-owners of.

When Don returned to Eastern Washington in the early 2000s, the brothers began looking for an agricultural-related project to get involved in. One of the questions they asked themselves was how to do something that would enhance farm revenues on a per acre basis.

"Concurrent with that, we were looking at issues of food supply systems, soil issues, climate change issues... we looked at it in a very broad perspective," Don explained. Some of the brothers' goals included using a more holistic, natural approach to raising crops, keeping the supply chain local and focusing on retail venues for their products.

The Scheuermans based Palouse Heritage on four pillars: growing open-sourced, old landrace grains that typically require fewer farming inputs than conventional crops; integrating regenerative practices directly correlated to soil health; focusing on a vertically integrated system that takes place in a local and regional food system; and enhancing values on a per acre basis.

"We participate in virtually every link in the supply chain. I call it reconnecting the urban with the rural communities. It's not only know your farmer, but know what your farmer's practices are," Don said. "By having a vertically integrated system, we capture the margins in the supply chain that does enhance value. We tell folks that we don't grow bushels of wheat or tons of barley. We grow pints of beer and loaves of bread."

The brothers eventually bought a 30-acre farm along the Palouse River where a German Russian colony was originally established in the 1880s. They collect seeds from around the world with the help of Washington State University, foreign seed banks and germplasm centers. They are looking for naturally drought-resistant varieties



Don (left) and Richard Scheuerman co-founded Palouse Heritage, a Whitman County enterprise that sells heritage and landrace grains.

for brewing, distilling and baking that are culturally significant and are prominent in the history and economies of their home countries. The Scheuermans use their farm to determine which varieties are well suited to the Palouse and to grow out seed stock.

"We actually grow out seed stock on 20 acres, and then we engage a handful of other growers to grow under our specifications, our practices. Right now, we have anywhere from 100 to 125 acres per year," Don said. "We convert all that internally to these varying revenue streams, product streams of raw grain to home bakers, commercial bakers and to breweries and distilleries."

One of the reasons Palouse Heritage has been successful focusing on a regional market, rather than the commodity export market, is they also helped develop the outlets they needed, like The Grain Shed, for their products. One of the hurdles a grain farmer who is looking to add value to their crop has to contend with is that grain, in most cases, needs to be processed into a more consumer-friendly form — flour or beer.

"It is an added step in the supply chain that simply has to be dealt with if you are looking to add value to your product," Don agreed. "There's not a lot of assistance out there to do that if you are a small to medium-sized enterprise grower because there are capital costs involved, not the least of which is the marketing. That's why, I think, what we've tried to do is just to have equity or different partnership forms with every link of the supply chain. For us, we see the end use in retail venues where the higher margins are. It is not easy. I like to say doing these things is not for the faint hearted. It takes a lot of resolve, a lot of hard work, a lot of tenacity, a lot of creativity."

More information is at palouseheritage.com. ■

pose is) being able to sell through a direct market or an intermediated market. The control they have on their product, their price premium, and the attributes that they value and can convey to their market are really important to their business model. There's the quality of life they get from being able to connect to customers, because farmers do value those relationships, and knowing where their product is going makes them feel really good.

(A direct market means a farmer is selling directly to the end customer. An intermediated market means a farmer is selling to a third party, such as a restaurant, a retail outlet, a grocery store or to a processor, not to the end customer.)

Are these types of local and regional food systems something that is growing?

It's definitely growing. I started working in the local food space in the Inland Northwest in the mid-90s. At that time, we were seeing the growth of fruits and vegetables, but we didn't have a lot of proteins in terms of meat protein. We didn't have the dairy we have now. We didn't really have grains in this local food space. And we've seen a large increase in the number of farms that are growing for direct and intermediated markets and that customer base. We know demand is growing. We see it nationally, and we see that echoed locally in terms of the growth of farmers markets and sales.

When you look at these types of systems through the lens of a commodity grain farmer, what's the draw of them?

In the interviews that we've done, one of the purposes is to get a higher return on their investment. Commodity prices are volatile and being able to develop local and regional markets provides some control. It's also a different experience to grow for a local market, and

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some people enjoy that. They really value the relationships they are developing along that value chain. It's really exciting to them to see where their product goes and to experience people valuing the product from their farm. If they feel they are doing things that make their product unique, it's having that not be lost because it's not being blended with other people's product.

I think motivators are really different depending on the farmers. Some are doing it because they believe that they are incorporating regenerative agricultural practices that really focus on soil and varieties that perform well with lower inputs, and that's really important to them. Having a market that tells that story and rewards them for that extra work is really important.

For some, it's flavor and being able to grow something that they see go into a value-added product, like a bakery or a distiller, and that flavor profile is carried through.

I think, as in any agricultural business, it's a lot of work to shift into these local and regional food systems. There's a lot of investment around knowledge, skill development and infrastructure to make that happen. It's not one thing that is encouraging them to do this work. It's very encompassing, and they are coming at it because it provides value to them personally, and they see the potential, if not the reality, of it being more economically viable for them.

What I'm trying to say is that there's not one reason people are doing this, there's a lot, and I think every farmer is going to put different weight on different reasons. I would say, one of the things we've really noticed is the relationships and the excitement around being part of local and regional food systems is a big motivator.

What does the local/regional food system look like in Eastern Washington/Northern Idaho for grain farmers?

I think it's growing, but I think there are definitely some barriers that exist. There's really different scales, from a very small farm that has decided to grow some grain and then moving more into the seed production of different varieties that perform well, to contracting with other farmers to grow out larger quantities of seed.

Other farms, larger farms already with a land base, are looking at growing

Landrace grains help diversify commodity farmer's income

By Trista Crossley
Editor, Wheat Life

Neil Appel and his wife, Liz, have been growing commodity crops on their family's Dusty, Wash., wheat farm for nearly two decades, but in the last couple of years, they've given over some of their acreage to raising landrace grains for Don Scheuerman at Palouse Heritage.

For more about Palouse Heritage, see sidebar on page 26.

"That first year, I put in some Scott's Bere and some Purple Egyptian barley. They didn't yield really well, but when you looked at the bottom line, comparing conventional barley to this with what Don was paying, I was much better off, because I didn't have as much fertilizer going into it, and he paid well enough that it made sense," Neil explained.

Appel likes the idea that he can follow his barley through a local and regional food system and see his friends and neighbors enjoying the beer or whiskey made out of it. He also sees these niche markets as a way to diversify his income stream and help secure his farm's future for his children.

"At the end of the day, I think, as a producer, I will gain more (from these niche markets) over a standard commodity market," he said "Normally, we wouldn't have \$11 wheat, but when everything shakes out, I think this will be better. But in order to make it work, you have to have a market developed, or somebody has to develop a market for these grains."

For Appel, growing grains for Palouse Heritage is part of a larger experiment he's been running on his farm to capitalize his ground more efficiently, such as creating a secondary market by grazing cattle and sheep on cover crops, using regenerative farming practices to improve his soil health, and moving away from glyphosate and synthetic fertilizers. He has also worked with Washington State University specialty crop breeder Kevin Murphy to experiment with quinoa and spelt.

Appel doesn't foresee being done with the commodity market anytime soon.

"The market (for the landrace grains) is not that big at this point in time," he said. "It is developing, but it is a niche market. I wouldn't put in 1,000 acres of Purple Egyptian barley because you'll be sitting on it for a while. You have to know your market and having the crop presold is huge." ■

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specifically for these identity-preserved markets, and we see people picking some specific markets. That might depend on locale and quantity. Maybe they are growing a specific variety that they've been able to identify a market for in terms of malt, which is going to be different than what they are growing that might go to a local bakery. The scales are really variable as well. Some people are selling within 100 miles of their community, some people are moving the product regionally.

How are commodity wheat growers involved?

I would say that some are going to fit in, and some won't. It depends on what their goals are. If they want to look at producing a product for a specified market, they really have to understand what that market wants, because that market probably doesn't want the wheat they are growing for export. They probably want a different variety that has different attributes. If they want to grow for that market, it's getting to understand what that market wants, and what they could produce that would meet it and deciding whether or not it makes sense for them as a farm business to pursue that new market.

I think that's where the values and motivations come in. It's not all about what is most profitable, but there's a lot about interest and wanting to do things differently, which I think is great. We are at the beginning of the development of this sector, and so I can't say what it will look like in 10 or 20 years. Shepherd's Grain has done a great job. They kind of started this at a larger scale, and I think they've been able to be very successful in the marketplace, building market relationships and a brand identity with larger quantities. And then we see in these more niche

markets, it's really looking at some specific attributes of different grains that are meaningful to the end user, whether that's a bakery or brewery.

What are some of the challenges a commodity grower might run into when wanting to participate in a regional food system.

Grains generally have to be processed first into a form the consumer can use. It's a value-added product. They've got to be able to do that affordably, getting the right scale of equipment that for these smaller acreages, generally speaking, to be able to harvest, then clean and store. That's a lot of infrastructure investment.

The thing I've found, everybody is willing to share with each other about what's working, where they are finding things, how they are adapting, or what their challenges are. I really do think we are in the infancy of this sector of local and regional food systems. We have those folks that are doing it, that are the early adopters, innovators that are figuring it out and are willing to share with other people that can learn from them. That's one of the things that's come out of our interviews is how connected this sector is. People know each other, they are talking, sharing and encouraging each other, and that's really motivational to do this extra work. It is fascinating to me, as well, that some really small farms are in this grain space, and some really big farms are in this grain space.

Besides infrastructure and the logistics, are there any other challenges that a grain farmer would have to address?

Seed source and growing out the seed is a challenge. I



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Connection with end users drives farming family

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Down in the Horse Heaven Hills, Garrett Moon and his wife, Jessica, have begun selling small grains to regional flour mills and directly to consumers in an effort to look beyond the commodity market.

"I think part of it was a little bit of curiosity to break outside of the commodity mold and see if we could realize some higher value," Garrett said. "We have a conservation mindset on our farm, trying to care for the ground and the soils. If you just sell on the commodity market and you do those extra mile things, you don't necessarily get paid for that. This is an effort to maybe find buyers who would recognize the extra things we are doing."

The Moons began experimenting with local sales in 2017. Approximately 20 to 30 percent of what they grow is earmarked for the local and regional food system; the rest of their grain will be sold on the commodity market. On their website — moonfamilyfarm.com — they offer several varieties of wheat, triticale and spelt for sale. They have also partnered with Ethos Stone Mill in the Tri-Cities and Cairnspring Mills in the Skagit Valley to sell flour made from their grain.

Another reason the Moons have moved into this space is they enjoy connecting with end-users of their crops.

"Most of the time, when you are a commodity farmer, you put your crop on the truck, it leaves the farm, and that's the end of story," Garrett said. "You don't know where it goes. You don't know who eats it. You don't know anything about it. You don't think of varieties of grain in anything other than the agronomics of what they do, so it's fascinating to get feedback directly from bakers on what they like about specific varieties. They'll try two or three varieties that I'm growing, and they'll tell me they like the flavor of this one better. It's almost like dealing with beer and wine, and it's cool to see how they take the thing and run with it."

One of the challenges the Moons had to face as they explored this new market was educating buyers and consumers on how farms actually work by being open about the way their grain is grown. Garrett pointed out that consumers can be particularly skeptical about chemicals, but because he uses no-till methods, he has to rely on herbicides to manage weeds. He's found that he's had to be very open to talking about the way he farms and why he does what he does.

"It's an educational process," he explained. "I think,



Garrett and Jessica Moon, shown here with their two daughters, Kyla, who is 5 years, and Amaya, 9 months, have started selling grain directly to consumers from their website and through several regional mills.

coming from farm background, we haven't always welcomed those conversations. We've been cautious about them, but we need to have them to build trust with buyers and consumers."

Another challenge the Moons have dealt with is how quickly food fads come and go. The Horse Heaven Hills gets an average of 9 to 10 inches of moisture a year, so a grower may need one or two years to produce a crop, and even longer if they need to do seed increases first.

"You have to be cautious about what you are willing to take on. You have to educate your buyers as well. Many times, they just don't understand the limitations of farming in general and farming in Horse Heaven in particular. I can't just throw whatever they bring me in the ground and expect it to even survive, let alone yield," Garrett said.

Overall, Garrett said moving into the local and regional food system has been enjoyable and worked well for their farm. Up to now, he feels grain has been overlooked by consumers focused on food miles and sustainability, even at restaurants and markets where that is their focus.

"You'd go in (to a restaurant) and they would tell you where everything on the menu came from, but when it came to wheat, it was just whatever came off the Sysco truck," he said. "We happened to stumble into a good time and place where the food world was open to this and was curious about it and wanting to move in this direction." ■

think all farmers are testing varieties, but this is at a different scale, and the financial investment is different. It's not different than the people growing fruits and vegetables who have to develop their market. However, I think the added complexity is that these are relatively new products in the local and regional food system space, and so there's a lot of market development. Searching out and understanding the market and being able to engage with people and have those conversations to understand what the market is looking for can be exciting or interesting, but it also takes time. Definitely understanding the market and where to engage, and then, depending on the scale, being able to connect with buyers that can use your product and enough of it to make it worth your time.

That's one of the things that as commodity farmers think about being in this space, how do they determine if this is feasible for them? Maybe it's feasible if they start out because they've developed a relationship with a farm that is growing out seed and contracting with other farmers to grow that out. Maybe that's the entry place because a farmer is taking 20 acres and growing something out for somebody else, kind of seeing if this is something

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that's really going to work for them, if they want to go to the next level.

Or maybe it's starting with developing a relationship with one bakery. Maybe they don't start with a mill, but they start with a bakery that has a mill and they work with them to say, how does my product work?

Also, and I think this is true with all grains, things get mixed together (in a commodity market) and you get a much more uniform product. But with artisan grains, especially the varieties that respond very quickly to their natural environment, there's a lot of variability in the grain that the market, and the final customer has to have the desire for that variability.

Another thing a farmer needs to consider is if there's a consumer base willing to pay a premium for a product.

Right. It may not be. If you are working with a specific bakery in Sandpoint or the Tri-Cities or Corvallis or Boise, yeah, there's that local food culture, that local food scene that people are looking for, and it's been pretty well developed. That doesn't mean if you go to a more rural community you aren't going to find that. The economies of the community may just be different that you aren't going to have a \$7 loaf of bread. If you can produce that bread at a lower cost point, then that can work.

One of the things that I think will be really interesting to see over the next few years is how the development of this sector of the local and regional food system impacts some of the demand in and focus on our larger food systems (like a national brand producing a microbrew using local ingredients). I wonder if that will be a market opportunity for our larger commodity farmers at some point in time. Again, that's a different customer, which is great. Thinking about those opportunities is exciting because, often what happens on a local level paves the way for innovation at a regional or national level.

Editor's note: DePhelps is helping to plan the Inland Northwest Artisan Grains Experience, July 7-8, in Moscow, Idaho, and Pullman, Wash. For more information, visit inwartisangrains.org. DePhelps' podcast, Inland Northwest Artisan Grains, can be found at the same link. ■

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Agriculture by the numbers

Chris Mertz, regional director of the National Agricultural Statistics Service

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

For 35 years, **Chris Mertz** has been helping the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) tell the story of agriculture through numbers.

"I'm sure I've gotten biased over time, but I just think any story is better when you toss in some figures," he laughed. "It's exciting to see people see the value in numbers. Who doesn't see value in numbers?"

Mertz is a NASS regional director based in Olympia, Wash. His office gathers statistics on agriculture in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

Mertz grew up in Oregon. While farming is in his family's background — Mertz's grandparents were farmers in Minnesota and North Dakota and his great-great-grandparents grew wheat outside of Rockford, Wash. — he didn't grow up on a farm. Instead, he worked for a farming neighbor and raised hogs and sows. He graduated from Culver High School in Culver, Ore., where he was involved in the FFA program. He also met Carla, his sister's best friend and his future wife, in high school. After graduation, Mertz attended Oregon State University, majoring in agricultural resources management, and California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, where he received an advanced degree in agricultural business management. It was at Cal Poly doing research in the library for a trading commodities class where Mertz had his first brush with the agency that has defined his career.

"I was really not very good at making decisions on trading commodities. At that time, NASS had offices in individual states. I saw there was one in Portland. I like numbers. I like agriculture. If I send a resume to these guys, I might get back up to Oregon," he recalled thinking. Fortunately, the Portland office did have an opening. "Typically, NASS doesn't start people in their home state. My excuse was I was living in California. They were able to make me an offer and have me come up to Portland."

Beginning in 1987, Mertz and his family spent four years in Portland. A change in their living situation — their landlord decided to sell the home they were renting — prompted them to consider relocating.

"I was picky on where I wanted to move to. The agency



offered opportunities in several other locations, but I was not showing much interest. Then, there happened to be an opening in New Mexico," he explained. The family jumped at the opportunity to move to Las Cruces, N.M., where they would stay for nine years. "It could have potentially been the last stop (for me). It was definitely a different environment than Portland. It is high desert, and it reminded me of Oregon. Some of the mountains reminded me of Bend. It was a great opportunity."

The next career move took the Mertz family to Washington, D.C., where Mertz was in charge of the agricultural resources management survey at the

national level.

"I've always kind of worked on that survey, where you measure financial health, collect expenses and income. You can calculate a balance sheet and an income statement from the data you report. That kind of information has always interested me," he said.

In 2006, Mertz found himself headed back west to Portland as the state director for Oregon. That lasted until 2013, when the agency restructured, merging state offices into regional offices, and he became the regional director in Olympia. The past 35 years, Mertz said, have flown by, helped by the work NASS does that involves so many different commodities.

"Most people can have a nice variety of tasks and responsibilities in their (NASS) career, and you get to learn many new things and work with lots of different people," he said.

Some of the things that Mertz said he appreciates most about NASS is the drive by its employees to collect and publish the most accurate data possible, as well as the non-political nature of the agency's work. There are no political appointees and no outside influence on the data. Even the secretary of agriculture doesn't see reports until after they are released.

For all the farmer flack NASS sometimes gets about its surveys and questions, the information the agency gathers is vital to many Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program or the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. But being on the receiving end of a producer's

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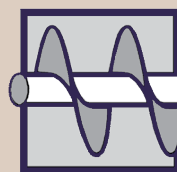
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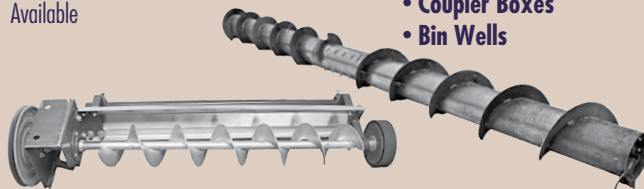


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annoyance with being asked personal questions can be taxing. What keeps Mertz making calls?

"Because the next person says something positive or is utilizing that data for a certain purpose for their farm, and we can talk about that," he said. "Most of the time, when I get to call, it's got to be an opportunity because you can't walk into it being defeated. I might get to learn something about their operation. Or they might not be unhappy with me, they're just taking it out on me and my organization. It's really a learning opportunity, and sometimes we might get to change on how we sell a particular survey."

It's almost unthinkable now, but when Mertz first started with NASS, there were only two personal computers in the whole office (even harder to imagine was those computers only had 20 MB hard drives).

"We took turns working on spreadsheets. We used to have big rooms of people that just keyed in data all day long," he said. "We don't have a lot of that now because you can report online, and when we are calling from data collection centers or enumerators, the enumerator types directly into an iPad, which goes directly into our system."

The emergence of computers has also had a direct impact on the number of NASS staff. Even as NASS has added more surveys, including the Census of Agriculture,

which became NASS's responsibility in 1997, the overall number of staff members has decreased. In addition, the past two years of working remotely has changed how NASS employees work. The agency is offering its employees the opportunity to permanently telework or work remotely. Mertz currently oversees 27 people in the regional office, most of whom are teleworkers.

Another change Mertz has seen is more awareness of how the data NASS collects is being used. Lately, he's been working closely with FSA State Executive Director Jon Wyss and Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, to address how crop share vs. cash rents are being reported.

"We have multiple organizations, government agencies and a commodity group talking. I feel very hopeful and feel good because people are communicating, more people might be understanding what the importance is in making sure that they respond (to surveys)," Mertz said. "When I see commodity groups use data, that's what gets me excited. That's what keeps me and my folks excited every day, somebody using the data for the good of agriculture."

To learn more about Washington agriculture through NASS statistics, visit the state website at nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Washington/index.php. ■

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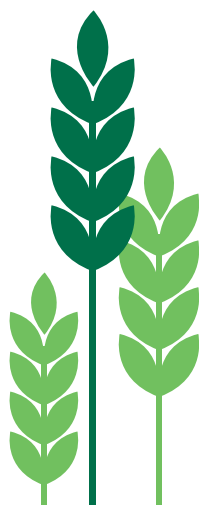
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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Mike
Carstensen



The other day, Grandpa Henry asked me why anyone would want to tear out the Snake River dams. He added, "Most people aren't stupid! They just don't know what they don't know. You better get the WGC to educate what they don't know." So there you have it, and let's get started.

I'd be remiss if I did not remind you that the mission of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is to enhance the long-term profitability and competitiveness of Washington small grains and small grain producers by responsible allocation of assessment funds in research, marketing and education. Of the three, education may be the least talked about, but there are good arguments to support saying that it's the most important so that we can maintain broad support for farmers and agriculture.

Most all of us are at least fourth generation farmers, and a problem I see is the vast majority of the population are at least three generations removed from farming. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the number of farms in the country has fallen from more than 6 million in 1935 to roughly 2 million in 2012. Meanwhile, the average farm size has more than doubled, and the amount of total land being farmed has remained the same. This means the awareness of the importance of agriculture across all sectors shrinks with each generation. I think this is a big source of confusion, misconception and, in some cases, misinformation when it comes to policy that affects agriculture.

Unfortunately, as the trend toward consolidation in our industry grows, fewer kids these days have any exposure to farm life. As a multigenerational farmer, we benefit from the knowledge handed down to us, from the "Grandpa Henriess" and others in all our families. Teaching Washington's youth about wheat is one of many reasons why the WGC works with several great organizations dedicated to agricultural education. Some partners in our educational mission include the Franklin Conservation District (Wheat Week), the Washington Wheat Foundation and the Wheat Foods Council.

In February, the WGC examined strategies and developed game plans for our mission. Specifically, the education committee finished the process of updating its strategic plan. The WGC education goal is that wheat and barley producers are recognized as good stewards of the land, producing healthy, high quality small grains. Without a doubt, the tactical components of these "marching orders" are several. One is to pursue educational public relations efforts, including collaboration with industry partners to benefit small grain producers.

Another is to increase grower and constituent education efforts and services through presentations, grower meetings, print, media and Extension efforts. Finally, but not limited to, providing data and resources to represent our industry.

Now, to break down our marching orders a little further. The WGC pursues educational and public relations efforts in various ways, including collaboration with industry partners to benefit all of us. Hosting and/or participating in trade team visits, as well as coordinating media interviews are examples. Another key item here is sponsorships of events, memberships and participation in, and with, industry partners. The list of industry partners is too large to list them all, however, a few examples are the Wheat Marketing Center, the U.S. Grains Council, the National Barley Growers Association, and the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association.

Next, the WGC increases grower and constituent education efforts through presentations, grower meetings, print media and Extension efforts. Some examples of this are this magazine, Wheat Week, the "Wheat All About It" podcast archives, variety test plot field days, and internal and external market crop update presentations. A main item here is education collaboration with state and federal agencies such as the U.S. and Washington state departments of agriculture, The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington State University, and other state ag organizations.

Finally, the WGC provides data and resources to represent the industry in ways such as maintaining a website, offering harvest data, providing media industry information, and WGC data. A significant item here is the variety of offered publications, which include the Preferred Variety Brochure, Washington Wheat Facts brochure, Wheat Variety Acres Estimate, a selection of farm management best practices brochures (all available online at: <https://bit.ly/WGCpubs>), among others.

It's crucial the WGC continues efforts through education to maintain broad support for farmers and agriculture. However, I challenge all of you to help with our "marching orders." We certainly need to maintain education to Washington farmers, commercial millers and bakers (domestic and foreign), children and educators of children, elected officials and policy influencers, as well as news media. Collectively, all of us need to reach those who "don't know what they don't know" to combat confusion, misconception and, in some cases, misinformation when it comes to policy that affects agriculture. ■

REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Field days let growers see what's next

Wheat and barley growers across the Pacific Northwest are invited and encouraged to participate in one or more of the Washington State University (WSU) Variety Testing Program's 2022 PNW Crop Tours now through the beginning of July. Growers have 27 options over 37 days to attend field day events near them, and wheat and barley growers are encouraged to attend any WSU field day. This season, there will be featured event content or speakers at the following field days:

- Lind Field Day on June 16 at 9 a.m.
- Wilke Farm Field Day on June 29 at 8:30 a.m.
- Pullman Field Day at Spillman Farm on June 30 at 2:30 p.m.

Full schedule details and plot locations are posted online at <https://bit.ly/3wjIVXY>. Plot coordinates can be followed using Google Maps. Location maps for the WSU Cereal Variety Trials are also available online.

WSU coordinates field days for the specific purpose of gaining insight from growers. Whether it's emerging problems or stronger resistance to age-old issues, grower participation provides insight to breeders on their current production needs. Attending the crop tour closest to their production area generally provides growers with the best insight on the varieties that perform well in their specific growing region. Funding for the trials is provided in part from grower checkoff dollars through the Washington Grain Commission. ■

Date	Tour	Location	Time	Contact
1-Jun	Horse Heaven	46.186670, -119.57510	9:30 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
1-Jun	Connell	46.618903, -118.714427	3:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
8-Jun	WSU Weed Tour (Pullman)	46.778130, -117.095733	1:00 PM	Drew Lyon, 509-335-2961
8-Jun	Adams County Crop Tour	47.136808, -118.472107	3:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
14-Jun	Pendleton (OSU/ARS)	48037 Tubbs Ranch Rd, Adams OR 97810	8:00 AM	Debi Sutor, 541-278-4405
15-Jun	Moro (OSU/ARS)	66147 Lone Rock Rd, Moro OR 97039	8:00 AM	Debi Sutor, 541-278-4405
15-Jun	Moses Lake	3132 Rd O NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837	7:30 AM	Andy McGuire, 509-754-2011
15-Jun	Harrington	47.400767, -118.400253	1:30 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
16-Jun	Lind Field Day	781 E. Experiment Station Road, Lind, WA 99341	9:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
17-Jun	Fairfield	47.412094, -117.041731	7:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
21-Jun	Genesee (U of I)	TBD	TBD	Doug Finkelnburg, 208-799-3096
22-Jun	W. Wheat Workers Field Tour	48037 Tubbs Ranch Rd, Adams OR 97810	9:00 AM	Debi Sutor, 541-278-4405
22-Jun	Mayview	46.618062, -117.411032	10:00 AM	Mark Heitstuman, 509-243-2009
22-Jun	Anatone	46.208208, -117.082124	3:30 PM	Mark Heitstuman, 509-243-2009
23-Jun	Reardan	47.657434, -117.960768	9:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
23-Jun	Almira	47.872277, -118.914958	3:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
23-Jun	Lewiston (U of I)	TBD	TBD	Doug Finkelnburg, 208-799-3096
24-Jun	St. John	47.083964, -117.517102	10:00 AM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
24-Jun	Lamont	47.116037, -117.824207	2:00 PM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
27-Jun	Eureka**	46.324311, -118.600736	9:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
27-Jun	Walla Walla**	46.115405, -118.220786	1:00 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
28-Jun	Dayton	46.417577, -118.056688	10:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
28-Jun	Camas Prairie (U of I)	TBD	TBD	Doug Finkelnburg, 208-799-3096
29-Jun	Wilke Farm Field Day	47.656322, -118.131796	8:30 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
29-Jun	Farmington	47.029137, -117.060259	10:00 AM	Steve Van Vleet, 509-397-6290
30-Jun	Pullman/Spillman Farm	46.688636, -117.116519	2:30 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
7-Jul	Bickleton	46.026330, -120.273038	1:00 PM	Hannah Brause 509-773-5817

**Cooperative trial/tour with OSU

CORRECTION: In last month's *Wheat Life*, the schedule of Washington State University's Variety Testing Program 2022 PNW crop tour schedule didn't print properly. Here is the complete schedule. For more information and maps, visit <https://bit.ly/3wjIVXY>

New industry hires

The Washington Grain Commission is pleased to welcome two new faces to the Pacific Northwest agricultural community.

The Wheat Marketing Center announced **Mike Moran** as its new executive director to manage its research and education operations. Moran has extensive experience as a leader and promoter of wheat and wheat quality. Moran began his role on April 1.



In April, **Dr. Wendy Powers** was named the next dean of Washington State University's College of Agricultural,

Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). Powers is an experienced leader who guides state-wide agricultural research and extension for the University of California division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Powers will begin her new role on August 15. She will be the first woman to serve as dean of CAHNRS on a permanent basis. ■

Dam discussion

The Lewiston City Council held an open house on April 12 to provide education and discussion on the impacts of removing or keeping the lower Snake River dams. Representatives from both sides of the issue provided information and answered questions. Informal polling indicated that the interactions helped improve perceptions regarding the dams — more attendees self-identified as supporters of keeping the dams at the end of the meeting than at the beginning. ■

Kara Kaelber in the news

Part of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) mission is funding educational programming with the goal that Washington's wheat and barley producers are recognized as good stewards of the land, producing healthy, high quality small grains.

"WGC has been successfully working with the Franklin Conservation District to provide the Wheat Week program for 4th and 5th grade classrooms for over 15 years," WGC CEO Glen Squires said. "When the opportunity came up to expand this mutually beneficial program to high school teachers and students, it seemed like a natural fit and logical next step to build on the educational success we've already seen."

Kara Kaelber, the education director for the Franklin Conservation District, is beginning a new curriculum for high school students and has been working with teachers to pilot and evaluate the program. Teachers can still take the training now or over the summer and participate in the pilot next school year.

The *Capital Press* recently featured the new program, which is designed for high school social studies, science or English teachers to use and is modeled after science programs for claims, evidence and reasoning, the article said. The new program was developed with funding from the WGC.

"I know of no other program close to what she has accomplished in the wheat or even (the) agriculture industry," WGC commissioner Brian Cochrane told the *Capital Press*. "She characterizes the best approach to education — hands and heart on! Her passion for the 'educational truth' is paramount for young people to know when they become adults and consumers." Read the whole article at <https://bit.ly/3wbM0br>. ■

CLAIMS CONNECTIONS CONVERSATIONS
A new resource for high school students

- Can be implemented both in-person and online
- Support students in identifying and critiquing **claims** from various sources
- Encourage **connections** to curriculum topics and other knowledge
- Get students talking with authentic peer-to-peer **conversations**

Snap the QR code to register today!

The Washington Grain Commission is excited to announce a new resource for secondary teachers - **Claims Connections Conversations**. These free activities are designed with both in-person and virtual options to strengthen student's discussion and informational text reading skills in any subject.

For more information contact Kara Kaelber at kara-kaelber@franklincd.org

FREE asynchronous teacher workshop and 2 FREE STEM approved clock hours!

USW technical staff attends training session in Portland

On March 21, the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), along with the Idaho and Oregon wheat organizations, hosted a dinner in Portland for the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) world technical staff. USW is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry. The USW group was in town to attend core competency training provided by the Wheat Marketing Center, which the

WGC is a member of. The hosted event provided high quality engagement between the commissions and the staff from around the world who are the front lines of USW's market development activities.

Thank you to the USW foreign office team members in attendance: Adrian Redondo, Manila; Andres Saturno, Santiago; Claudia Gomez, Santiago; David Oh, Seoul; Dominique Opperman, Cape Town; Erica Oakley, Arlington; Joe Bippert, Manila; Marcelo Mitre, Mexico City; Mark Fowler, Arlington; Miguel Galdos, Santiago; Peter Lloyd, Casablanca; Roy Chung, Singapore; Rutger Koekoek, Rotterdam; Tarik Gahi, Casablanca; and Wei-Lin Chou, Taipei. ■



Calling on Colombia

DECLINING WHEAT PRODUCTION LEAVES SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY DEPENDENT ON IMPORTS

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, 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

Colombia wheat imports are duty free from the U.S., Canada, the EU and the South American trade bloc known as Mercosur. Average wheat production in Colombia has decreased significantly over the last 40 years, currently under 3.7 million bushels per year, which makes Colombia dependent on imports.

Given that Colombia produces an insignificant amount of wheat each year, wheat consumption is equal to imports at about 66 million bushels annually. Wheat imports from all origins have steadily increased from 51.4 million bushels in 2010 to nearly 70 million bushels in 2021.

Colombia's U.S. wheat imports include:

- Hard red winter, making up 35 to 55 percent of total imports.
- Soft red winter making up 40 to 50 percent of total imports.
- Soft white, which has been increasing and now makes up 4 to 8 percent of total imports.

The U.S. export regions include the Gulf of Mexico, followed by the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and Atlantic ports.

More than 70 percent of imported wheat is used for bread and pastry flour, which is in alignment with the average for the South America region (69 percent). Imported wheat used for cookies and crackers is 14 percent, slightly higher compared to 8 percent in South America. Wheat for pasta, at 11.5 percent, is also in alignment with the regional average. Household baking flour accounts for 4.5 percent of imported wheat. ►

U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES CONTACTS FOR COLOMBIA



**MIGUEL GALDÓS
TANGUIS**
Regional Director



**OSVALDO SECO
FOURCADE**
Assistant Regional Director



**ANDRÉS ANGEL
SATURNO**
Technical Manager



PAOLA VALDIVIA
Finance and
Administration Manager



CLAUDIA GÓMEZ M.
Senior Marketing
Specialist



**MARIA FERNANDA
MARTÍNEZ**
Program Coordinator

COLOMBIA

Colombia is a country at the northern end of South America with Panama and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Caribbean Sea to the north, Venezuela and Brazil to the east, and Ecuador and Peru to the south. As of 2021, Colombia is home to approximately 51 million people. Its capital is Bogotá. Colombia is a member of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, and the Pacific Alliance, among others. The motto of Colombia is "Freedom and Order."



Official language: Spanish and English

Head official: Iván Duque Márquez, president. The president and vice president are elected by direct popular vote and serve a term of four 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 a 108-member Senate and a 172-member House of Representatives that are all elected by the people and serve four-year terms. The judiciary of Colombia has four "high courts," which are the Supreme Court (civil and criminal matters) with



the central government.



Main religion/culture:

It is estimated that 88 percent of Colombians are Christian, of which over 70 percent are Roman Catholic. The name Colombia comes from the Italian navigator Christopher Columbus ("Cristóbal Colón" in Spanish). The Republic of Colombia adopted the name in 1819. Colombia has the second-highest level of biodiversity in the world, which includes parts of the Amazon rainforest, highlands, grasslands and deserts.



Economy overview: Colombia is a middle-income country and one of the oldest democracies in Latin America. It is the fourth largest country in South America and the only South American country with coasts on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The currency is the Colombian peso (one U.S. dollar is about 3,770 pesos). According to the World Bank, the gross domestic product of Colombia in 2020 was \$270 billion (U.S. dollars).

According to the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. established diplomatic relations with Colombia in 1822, following its independence from Spain. Colombia is a free-market economy with major commercial and investment links to the U.S. Colombia has transformed itself over the past 20 years from a fragile state into a vibrant democracy with a growing, market-oriented economy.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Colombia is currently our 12th largest agricultural export market. U.S. total exports of agricultural products to Colombia was \$2.7 billion in 2019. Leading domestic export categories include corn (\$682 million); soybean meal (\$412 million); soybeans (\$223 million); pork and pork products (\$221 million); and dairy products (\$145 million).

Read more at state.gov/countries-areas/colombia/. ■

23 seats; the Council of State (administrative issues) with 27 seats; the Superior Court of Judicature (reports on the justice system to Congress annually and establishes rules for the administration of justice) with 23 seats; and the Constitutional Court (final appellate court for interpreting the constitution) with nine seats.

Colombia has 32 departments and the Capital District of Bogotá, similar to states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. Each department has a governor and an assembly elected by the people for four-year terms. Departments exercise delegated powers devolved from



The U.S. Wheat Associates' (USW) Santiago team worked tirelessly to build a new laboratory to promote U.S. wheat exports to South America. From left to right are Mark Fowler, vice president of USW global technical services; Maria Martinez, administrative assistant; Andres Saturno, technical manager; Claudia Gomez, senior marketing specialist; Mike Spier, vice president of USW overseas operations; Paola Valdivia, finance and administrative manager; Miguel Galdos, regional director; Osvaldo Seco, assistant regional director; and Darren Padget, USW chairman.

However, overall bread consumption is low at 58 pounds per capita annually, compared to Chile's annual per capita consumption of 198 pounds. One reason for the low consumption is that Colombian bread typically contains large amounts of shortening, which makes it very heavy, difficult to digest, and not appealing to many consumers. Data shows that 94 percent of Colombians consume bread only at breakfast. The other major staples are rice, arepas (corn buns), banana, manioc and corn tortillas. Consumers prefer artisan breads, which represent 91 percent of the bread market, whereas packaged pan bread (9 percent) is typically used only for making sandwiches. The largest bread consumption area is the central highlands around Bogotá, accounting for 80 percent of total daily consumption.

Pasta in Colombia is produced with bread wheat, with small amounts of U.S. or Canadian durum used for premium pasta. Pasta is often included as a side dish to rice or as an ingredient in soups, but most consumers do not see it as a main dish. This contributes to Colombia having a low 10 pounds per capita pasta consumption compared with 22 pounds in Peru and Chile. Consumer campaigns conducted regularly by the major pasta companies include promoting the healthy aspects of consuming pasta and releasing new products such as whole wheat and flavored pasta.

There are six major companies producing cookies and crackers in Colombia. Like pasta, per capita cookie consumption is 10 pounds and lower than neighboring countries, including Brazil (14 pounds) and Chile (13 pounds).

In the 1970s, Colombia's wheat production averaged 3.7 million bushels per year, but the calendar year 2021 estimated production was just over 220,000

bushels. Wheat is not a profitable crop in Colombia due to low yields and inadequate climate. Most wheat farms do not exceed four acres, and areas of production are concentrated at 9,000 to 10,500 feet above sea level in the central and southern areas of Cundinamarca, Nariño and Boyacá. The mostly soft, low protein wheat is consumed locally in rural areas, mainly in soups or as an ingredient in traditional dishes.

Colombia has a diversified flour market, with 24 milling companies and 40 mills. The highest concentrations of mills are in Cali, Bogotá and the coast (Barranquilla and Cartagena). Total annual milling capacity is 88 million bushels, and capacity utilization is estimated at 76 percent.

Millers are working with bakers to introduce new bread products, which may help consumption to grow faster as the economy improves. Colombia is estimated to have around 25,000 bakeries. Small bakeries have 80 percent market share, while large- and medium-sized bakeries, including self-service bakeries in supermarkets, comprise the remaining 20 percent. Consumption is being stimulated by growth in the supermarket sector, which is expanding through consolidation and modernization. New stores now offer a wide variety of fresh bakery products, options that the small bakeries should imitate if they expect to be competitive.

Market outlook for 2022/23

The U.S. has typically supplied between 35 to 40 percent of Colombia's annual milling wheat imports, depending on Canadian wheat prices. Duty-free access and the proximity of U.S. ports allows wheat to compete effectively with other suppliers, especially Canada

and Argentina. U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) works to maintain this market share with help from Washington and other state commissions.

Main activities include working with main commercial wheat suppliers in Colombia to increase U.S. wheat offers from the PNW and the Gulf of Mexico and providing technical support to major Colombian bakers to encourage them to incorporate U.S. wheat as a quality product ingredient. USW also works to establish relationships between PNW traders and soft white wheat buyers in Colombia, promoting more purchasing alternatives to Colombian customers. It is important as well to work with the technical staff of the Colombian mills in order to better understand their needs and design programs oriented to increase the ratio of U.S. wheat.

Market development success story

USW attended the Americas Agricultural Cooperators Conference, organized by the U.S. Soybean Export Council in September 2021 in Guadalajara, Mexico. Other collaborators involved included USA Rice and the U.S. Grains Council. The conference included internationally recognized speakers, subject matter experts, farmer/grower leaders, and industry experts to discuss the market outlook, sustainability, animal nutrition, freight, logistics and other topics. The meeting included over 130 in-person participants from 14 countries and approximately 100 virtual participants from throughout Latin America. USW gained a better understanding of the marketing and commercialization process of the other collaborators, possible opportunities for shared activities, and common strategies. USW invited Alberto Guarín, purchasing manager and owner of Molinos del Atlántico, part of the Guarín Group and the largest milling company near Colombia's Caribbean coast. USW's goal was to connect him with wheat and soy traders, providing additional opportunities to buy U.S. wheat. As a direct result of USW's sponsorship at this conference, upon returning to Colombia, Guarín Group bought one shipment of 30,000 metric tons (1.1 million bushels) of hard red winter wheat, valued at more than \$8 million. According to Guarín, the purchase was due to USW and traders' recommendations at the conference in Guadalajara.

The success of USW Santiago technical activities in Colombia using soft white wheat is related to funding support from Washington, Idaho and Oregon. One good example is the father-son duo of Andrea and Andres

Saturno. Andres has been integral in providing technical support from the milling process to end-product evaluation and giving clients the ability to obtain flour within the parameters necessary for each end product. Andrea helps customers to understand the benefits of using soft white wheat in flour blends for baking purposes. These activities have generated increased imports and additional requests from customers to perform more trials to gain technical and quality information. Read about the Saturno family's story on the USW blog at <https://bit.ly/39SCSBe>

The challenge that mills in South America face is their laboratories don't have access to many rheological tests, which provide important information about the technical specifications of flour throughout the milling and baking processes. Contributions from Washington and other state grain commissions for Andres Saturno as a technical expert, and now technical manager, together with funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Trade Promotion program, have made the wish for new laboratory facilities in Santiago a reality. This laboratory is already helping USW Santiago to perform activities and produce value propositions for our different customers in the region. Read more about it at <https://bit.ly/3kX34gb>. ■

*On the street:
A note from a satisfied customer*

"This purchase of 30,000 metric tons of hard red winter was 100 percent due to recommendations made by USW Santiago and traders on the trip to Guadalajara, Mexico."

—Alberto Guarín, purchasing manager and owner of Molinos del Atlántico, after arriving home from the Americas Agricultural Cooperators Conference, September 2021, Guadalajara, Mexico.

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AT [WHEATLIFE.ORG/PASTISSUES.HTML](https://wheatlife.org/pastissues.html)

Group effort needed

RESEARCHERS MAKE CASE FOR VIEWING HERBICIDE SUSCEPTIBILITY AS A COMMON-POOL RESOURCE

By Ian Burke

R.J. Cook Endowed Chair in Wheat Research, Washington State University

Nick Bergman

Research Associate, Washington State University

Herbicide resistance has been a common topic request for regional weed scientists for decades. “How do I manage herbicide resistance?” is the common question we hear from farmers. Often the question is reactive — there has been a failure such that there is now an emergency or, worse, a complete lack of ability to manage the weed with herbicides. We’ve identified an array of best management practices to manage weeds in general and mitigate herbicide resistance specifically. These resources are available to farmers for free through Washington State University Extension and the Washington Grain Commission (WGC). Access these free resources at <https://bit.ly/WGCPubs>. We have also grappled with getting farmer adoption of those best management practices on a farmer-by-farmer basis.

What has become increasingly obvious to those of us working in weed science is that it’s a problem that needs a collective response. Given the array of dispersal mechanisms weeds use — think tumbleweeds, pollen spread, dispersal through contaminated tillage and harvesting equipment — it’s really the weakest link (a farmer repeatedly applying the same herbicide, for example) in the system that causes the problem. Any single farmer likely won’t be able to solve the looming failure of a herbicide like glyphosate causes. All the rest



There’s nothing like a glyphosate-resistant tumbleweed trail to capture the concept of herbicide susceptibility as a common pool resource. The farmer managing the field with the trail of glyphosate-resistant kochia likely didn’t select for the glyphosate resistance. It arrived on their farm from the neighboring fields and, given the path of the trail, likely continued to the next field. But now the farmer must bear the expense of managing the kochia, which includes an extra sprayer pass and a more expensive herbicide mixture. Communities that foster innovation in cropping systems that incorporate a diversity of management methods is part of the solution.

of us must deal with it.

The idea that one person can ruin it for the rest of us is not a new one. It’s typically referred to as the “tragedy of the commons.” Commons refers to common-pool resources. The typical example of a common-pool resource is fish. If a few overfish, then the rest are left without fish. Water is another example. In each case, the resource is finite, and overexploitation leads to exhaustion of the resource.

Herbicide *susceptibility* is of a similar nature — it can be viewed as a common-pool resource. If the weeds remain susceptible to herbicides, we all benefit from the continued use of that herbicide. If a few use a single herbicide over and over again, this practice causes natural selection for resistance, and then that resistance spreads to everyone else’s fields. A few have used up the resource, and the rest of us can no longer utilize that herbicide susceptibility.

There are an array of examples. Remember Glean? Glean completely controlled Russian thistle, and then it didn’t. Now we rarely use that herbicide, if at all. Harmony Extra? An effective and inexpensive tool for managing may-

weed chamomile and many other broadleaf weeds. Seldom used any more. Resistance to each herbicide developed in pockets and spread throughout the region. It's happening right now with cheatgrass and Group 2 herbicides.

Managing common-pool resources is challenging. One approach is to use regulation. Everyone needs a fishing license, there are strict limits on the number of fish you can catch, and government controls the resource, as an example.

In principle, regulation of herbicide susceptibility is not a viable solution. If we are going to commit to the preservation of herbicides as tools, we need to work together. Or at least commit to managing weeds more intensively, with a broader array of tools and tactics. We will likely need to talk about it, too. Management of common-pool resources requires, to a certain extent, a community.

Community, as used here, means that we all hold each other accountable. To use yet another analogy — if you rake your leaves, and then the wind blows the neighbor's leaves onto your yard, are you prepared to have a discussion with your neighbor about leaf management? Likely not. So how do we have such discussions about weed management in a productive and meaningful way?

Following that logic, a community is also larger than just the farmer community, although the more farmers that are engaged, the better. The array of organizations supporting farmers and farming are critical to enabling organization and co-innovation to be effective. In pilot communities in the Pacific Northwest, key stakeholders include weed scientists and farmers — and also the conservation districts, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Agricultural Research Service, grain handlers and marketers, companies that manufacture herbicides, and field agronomists. In short, the array of entities with an interest in maintaining and supporting the wheat production system.

In our efforts to understand how to use community as an organizational structure focused on weed management, one particular aspect of the problem has become clear. Herbicide resistance is an acknowledged problem, but it is not a problem that has galvanized action across the region. It's common to hear "I don't have a resistance problem, but my neighbor does." Communities seldom respond proactively to a problem that does not rise to a crisis. Once a crisis occurs, it's often very expensive to manage.

How the wheat community responds to the looming widespread failure of herbicides is critical, and it is going to require the entire industry to organize around the issue. Herbicides are incredible inventions, facilitate the diversity of novel farming approaches in regenerative agriculture and soil health, and are critical to feeding the world. It's going to take the community to solve the problem.

If you agree this is a concern in your region and for your future operation, don't be the weakest link! Review the array of best management practices and start considering how one or more of them could be incorporated into your farming system. The more integrated the weed management system, the more resilient it is likely to be. Read the brochures available online from the WGC, bring up this topic at your local grower meetings to start the conversation, and work with your county Extension agent or agronomist if you have questions about implementing best management practices to control weeds in your fields. ■

Where to find more information

Free resources for producers are available for download from the Washington Grain Commission website at <https://bit.ly/WGCpubs>

- Managing Herbicide Resistant Weeds
- Broadleaf/Grass Herbicide Application Timing Guide
- Herbicide Rainfast Guide
- Integrated Management of Brome in Winter Wheat
- Integrated Management of Prickly Lettuce in Wheat Production Systems
- Integrated Management of Feral Rye in Winter Wheat
- Top 10 Wheat Pests & Diseases in the Pacific Northwest ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Volatile markets likely to last through July



By Mike Krueger
*President and
Founder, The
Money Farm*

The May series of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports are always watched more closely than “winter” reports for several reasons:

- The USDA gives us their first “official” estimate of 2022 winter wheat production.
- It is the first look at the 2022-23 WASDE (World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates) for the major U.S. crops based on the March 31 planting intentions coupled with USDA’s opinion of what yield and demand might be and, of course, the all-important ending supply numbers.

The USDA’s opinion of the Ukraine/Russia war and its impact on world supplies was also widely anticipated. The USDA made virtually no adjustments in their April WASDE.

World supplies of nearly every crop were getting smaller even before the Black Sea war. Russia has become the world’s largest wheat exporter. Ukraine has been the third or fourth largest corn exporter. Russia and the Ukraine combined account for more than 60 percent of the world’s sunflower oil exports.

Few expected this war to last this long or to result in such massive damage to infrastructure within Ukraine or that the world might

face the near complete elimination of Ukraine as a major exporter. The threat now is that farmers in Ukraine might get only 50 percent of expected 2022 crops planted. More importantly, corn planting could be reduced even more as farmers choose to plant low input crops like barley and oats.

The winter wheat production estimate was clearly bullish. The USDA pegged hard red winter wheat production at 590 million bushels. That was a full 100 million bushels below the average trade guess. It hasn’t rained across 40 percent of the southern Plains region since last summer. Temperatures have now soared into the 90s with high winds. It seems very likely production in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas will get smaller. It’s amazing that so many analysts were still of the belief we could have anything close to a “normal” hard red winter wheat crop when you look at weather and crop condition ratings. Those ratings have continued to decline with another 4 percent slipping into the poor to very poor categories in mid-May.

New crop corn, Minneapolis and Kansas City wheat futures set new highs for this year the day the USDA reports were released. November soybean futures were higher but still 50-60 cents below the year’s highs.

Table 1 shows U.S. winter wheat production compared to last year.

USDA put out an “all wheat” U.S. production estimate that is 83 million bushels larger than last year despite the drop in hard red winter wheat production. White wheat production is expected to rebound nicely from last year’s drought even though it has been a dry spring across the Pacific Northwest. This also assumes a BIG spring wheat crop over last year’s

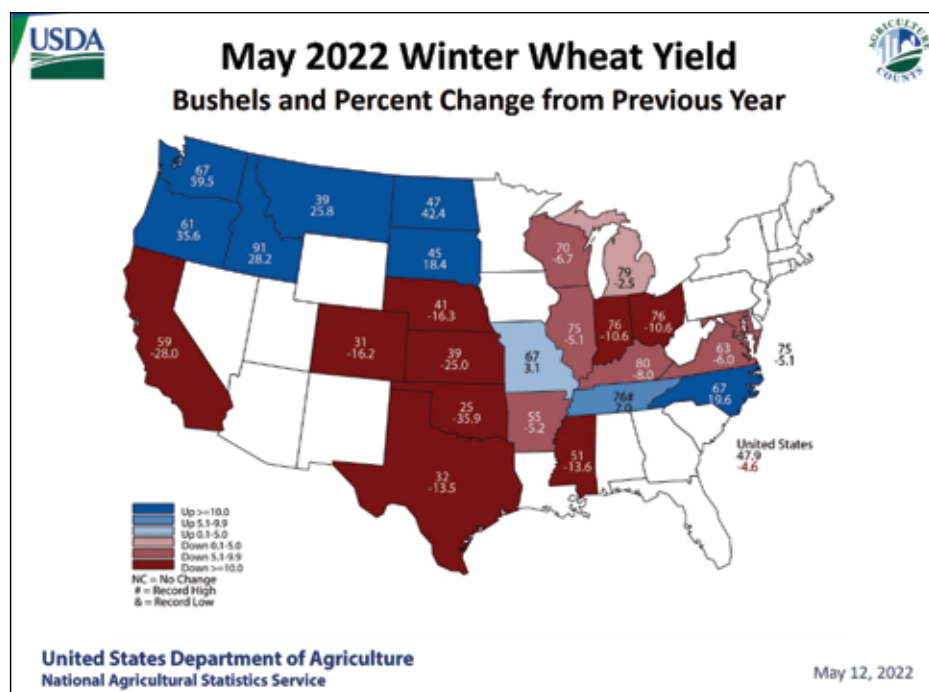


Table 1: USDA U.S. winter wheat production (million bushels)

	2021	2022
Hard red winter	749	590
Soft red winter	361	354
White	167	230
All winter	1,277	1,174

Table 2: USDA U.S. ending supplies (million bushels)

	USDA 2021-22		USDA 2022-23
	April	May	
Corn	1,440	1,440	1,360
Soybeans	260	235	310
Wheat	678	655	619

drought-reduced crop. The problem is that the spring wheat is getting planted slowly, and that should lead to fewer planted acres of spring wheat, plus, later planting can push spring wheat's reproductive stage into hotter and drier weather.

The USDA's first look at 2022-23 U.S. supply and demand estimates contained zero surprises. They reduced the corn export forecast despite the big decline in expected exports from Ukraine. They used a 177 bushel per acre corn yield estimate (same as last year). Some analysts thought they'd go with a yield in excess of 180 (trend line). The corn planting season is also moving beyond the optimal dates because of the wet and cold spring. They did increase the soybean export and crush forecasts, but those increases were offset by the 4 million acre increase in soybean plantings reflected in the March 31 report. They are using a record soybean yield of 51.5 bushels per acre. Table 2 compares USDA's ending stocks estimates with the current marketing year:

The USDA reduced Ukraine's corn production estimate from 42 million metric tons (mmt) this past year to 19.5 mmt this year. They reduced the Ukraine's corn export forecast from 23 mmt (930 million bushels) in this marketing year to 9 mmt (360 million bushels) in the 2022-23 marketing year.

The USDA made no changes to their latest corn and soybean production estimates for Brazil. Most analysts were expecting small reductions in both.

The stage has now been set for the 2022 growing season. Yields around the world will be more critical than ever because of the tightening supply situation. We note

this was happening even before the Ukraine/Russia war. Here is the latest weather summary we have seen:

- **India.** Very hot and very dry. This is cutting into their wheat production.
- **Western Europe.** About two-thirds of France and much of Germany is dry. Their winter wheat and winter canola crops are being hurt, but there is still time for helpful rains.
- **Black Sea.** Parts of Russia and Ukraine have turned dry.
- **Australia.** They will start the planting season with adequate moisture in west Australia and too much water across parts of eastern Australia.
- **Argentina.** Very dry as wheat planting gets underway. Some analysts are saying wheat acres could be down 8 to 10 percent because of the dry conditions.
- **Canada.** The eastern half of Saskatchewan and all of Manitoba have also had a very wet and cold spring. Planting is well behind normal, similar to the U.S. northern Plains.
- **U.S.** It has been a cold and wet spring, but weather forecasters haven't backed off their long-range forecasts for a warm and dry summer across most of the central and western Corn Belt and northern Plains.

The world is still in a lingering La Niña weather pattern. That can typically mean another very good year for Australia while Argentina and southern Brazil can be dry. The summer weather (June/July/August) forecast for much of the western two-thirds of the U.S. calls for above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation. Private forecasters re-affirmed their belief in this forecast in mid-May.

All of these factors combined should mean volatile markets will be with us at least through July. It is likely that prices will trend higher. Supplies will tighten even with trend or near-trend yields. Production shortfalls will lead to severe rationing. Even if the Ukraine war ended quickly, it will take many months or even years to rebuild damaged or destroyed railroads, highways, bridges, ports and port facilities. It is a very different situation than we've seen before. ■

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

Ag, family inspire nonfarm career choice



By Cadence Zellmer
Washington Wheat Ambassador

Farming has always played an important role in my life, considering I am the fifth generation being raised and working on my family's farm near Davenport. Growing up on a farm has taught me many valuable life lessons,

such as having a strong work ethic, time management and responsibility. Also, growing up in a rural area has influenced me to pursue a degree in nursing while focusing on rural healthcare.

My first time in a combine I was only four days old. I've grown up watching my dad work long hours, year round on the farm to provide for our family, and it was very inspirational. By the time I was 7, I was riding in tractors, combines and trucks anytime I got the chance. At 14, I started driving tractors with my dad in the cab with me. By 15, I was driving a tractor for up to 12 hours a day and driving a truck during harvest with my AG permit. Since then, I have been working even longer days whenever I can. Even before school, I will go out and help get equipment ready for my dad.

My grandfather owns and operates a farm in Montana. My first time driving a tractor was with him, and it was such an amazing experience. I was able to spend quality time with him while making memories and learning important skills. Over the past year and a half, though, my grandpa has been fighting an infection with no known cause. He has had many doctor appointments to try to figure this awful sickness out, but he has struggled

with balancing these appointments while also farming. Fortunately, the health care professionals at the local clinic were able to help my grandpa by letting him do at-home treatments. I even got to personally help my grandpa by administering his IV antibiotics. I would flush the PICC line with saline and hook up the IV to antibiotics. After the treatment was complete, I would then flush out the line with saline and heparin. Witnessing these amazing doctors and nurses support my grandpa and his farming while gaining hands-on experience inspired me to pursue a degree in nursing with a focus on rural healthcare.

While many industries are shifting focus from the American dream in agriculture to big cities, such as tech-related fields, there are many challenges. Even though my grandpa was able to receive medical care despite his rural location, that's not the case for many places. Loss of healthcare in many areas threatens my generation's role in agriculture. From the decline in family farms to the skyrocketing prices of crop inputs, the future of ag is going to be very challenging. By shifting the focus of work and major industries towards big cities, many people don't realize the massive negative impacts on agriculture. There is a lack of labor on farms, making it nearly impossible to keep family farms running. And with the current economic situation, such as input prices rapidly rising, many more small farms are going to go under due to the increased expenses. With these challenges facing my generation's role in rural agricultural communities, there needs to be a change if we want the world to continue having reliable food sources.

Becoming a wheat ambassador for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers has helped me commu-



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nicate and stress the importance of agriculture to lawmakers. The farmers, ranchers and community members in rural areas understand the situations facing agriculture, such as drought and the government not hearing our concerns. Being able to visit Olympia this winter was an incredible opportunity for me to express my concerns with legislators. This trip was an eye-opening experience because I was able to see how lawmakers interact with problems and try to address the public on said issues. Also, I learned to communicate agricultural concerns effectively with legislators, and I truly believe that they understood our concerns. Being an ambassador has changed my perspective on the business side of agriculture and let me communicate challenges facing the 28,800 family farms in Washington.

Farming has shaped my future career, even if it doesn't seem to directly relate to the agricultural industry. This fall, I will attend Carroll College in Helena, Mont., as a student in the direct entry nursing program, where I will earn a bachelors of science in nursing. By becoming a registered nurse, I will be able to give back to my community and others by focusing on healthcare in rural areas. ■



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THE BOTTOM LINE

Ag overtime rules: Is there a workable solution?

By Jared King

C.P.A., Leffel, Otis, and Warwick P.S.

For many farmers in Washington state, paying their employees overtime pay has not been required in the past. No matter how long the day, employees earned their hourly pay rate. It was simple, convenient and predictable for the farmer and the employee. However, a November 2020 Washington Supreme Court case (*Martinez-Cuevas vs. DeRuyter Bros.*) has changed this practice, impacting both farmers and their employees. As of Jan. 1, 2022, employees in the agricultural industry are entitled to receive overtime pay.

This leaves many farmers with unanswered questions and a need to become informed. I advise taking a conservative approach to the new law to avoid lawsuits and fines in the future.

The law (ESSB 5172) allows most agricultural employers to phase overtime pay in over three years,

starting in 2022. The chart to the right indicates the number of weekly hours worked before overtime (1.5 X pay rate) is required.

A common misinterpretation we hear from farmers is, “I put my employee on salary, and overtime does not apply.”

Paying employees a salary does not, in itself, eliminate them from overtime pay; they must meet a “white-collar” salaried exemption as an executive, administrative or professional. The executive exemption is most common in agriculture and is the focus of this article.

First, the exemption does not apply to manual laborers and other blue-collar workers who perform work involving repetitive operations with their hands, physical skills or energy.

Second, the executive exemption requires meeting both a duties test and a salary test.

- **Duties test:** While there are several duties tests, in most cases, the employee will need to direct the work and have the hiring and firing capabilities over at least two full-time employees. This is tough to meet with most farmworkers in a dryland farm setting.
- **Salary test:** If they meet the duties test above, employees also need to meet the minimum salary test. In 2022, their salary needs to be at least \$52, 744. This number is projected to increase to \$85,000 by the year 2028.

A salaried employee who does not meet the exemption requirements is entitled to overtime pay. The above tests show that only a tiny percentage of farmworkers will qualify for the executive exemption.

Solution

If there is no workaround, what do we suggest? While every situation is different, I have run numbers on some realistic operations and calculated the cost of implementing the overtime rules on an hourly employee putting in roughly 500 hours of overtime. When the law is fully implemented in 2024 (40 hours per week), the additional cost will be approximately 10 percent. The law will be phased in over three years, so this increase would be about 3 to 4 percent per year. Employers could manage the effect by limiting annual wage increases and replacing them with overtime pay.

Your risk as the employer is a disgruntled employee turning you in for not following the rules or a random check from L&I. I encourage farmers to move their employees to an hourly payroll system because it is simple to track and provides the least complications and risk. Also, follow these guidelines:

- Require time cards for all employees, signed by the employee and maintained by the employer.
- Communicate with your employees from the start.

Year	Regular Hours
2022	55
2023	48
2024	40

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- Farmers often think that making these employees independent contractors is a solution to the overtime rules. Generally speaking, this does not work. They need to be bonafide independent contractors to make this an option.
- Farmers talk about sharing employees with neighbors to avoid exceeding the hour limit. However, rules relating to a “working relationship” could hamper this workaround.

Cost of not complying

Many farmers tend to brush this off and assume it is not a big deal. If this is challenged, the farmer could be liable for back overtime owed for three years, and this amount is then doubled as a penalty. In addition, they will incur interest on the back wages at 12 percent. And lucky you, you get to pay both sides of the attorneys’ fees. This calculation, when complete, can lead to a staggering number.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the new rule will hurt farmers statewide. Lawsuits are not a matter of if but when. There is not an easy, one-step solution to deal with these changes. I encourage farmers to assess their situation, develop a plan and communicate it with their employees.

Employers can manage the effect of this new requirement, and likely, the cost can be minimized by planning up front. I do not feel this legislation was good for either

Like our Facebook page (@WAWheat) and follow us on Twitter (@WAWheatGrowers) for the latest industry and association news.

New Overtime Rules – Example #1 - Hourly

- ▶ *Employee works 40 hours per week for 8 months of year (35 weeks)
- ▶ *Employee works 70 hours per week for 4 months of year (17 weeks)
- ▶ *Total hours for year: 2,590
- ▶ *Hourly rate of \$22 per hour

Old Rules	New Rules	Difference
35 weeks @ 40 hrs x \$22 = \$30,800	35 weeks @ 40 hrs x \$22 \$30,800	
17 weeks @ 70 hrs x \$22 = <u>\$26,180</u>	Overtime weeks:	
	40 hrs straight-time x \$22 = \$880	
	30 hrs overtime x \$33 = \$990	
	Weekly amount <u>\$1,870</u>	
	X 17 weeks <u>\$31,790</u>	
Total \$56,980	\$62,590	\$5,610

This slide compares an hourly employee paid on the old pre-overtime rules to the same employee paid with the new rules in place. Keep in mind that in the past, hourly employees were paid straight time for all hours worked. Under new rules these overtime hours (500) will be paid at 1.5 times the rate so the difference is only the .5 times the pay rate on the overtime hours. So for hourly employees this overtime amount can be manageable. With inflation, most farmers will be increasing wages to keep up, and this can be a component of the increase in arriving at a fair pay rate in today’s environment.

the employer or the employee, but our politicians probably don’t care. A farm manager’s job is to best manage their operation despite the challenges thrown at them. ■

**PowerPoint slides including several examples on this topic can be found on our website at low.cpa.*

Jared King, C.P.A., is an employee at Leffel, Otis, and Warwick P.S. He works out of the firm’s Davenport office. Jared works primarily with farmers and ag-related businesses. He can be reached at jking@low.cpa.



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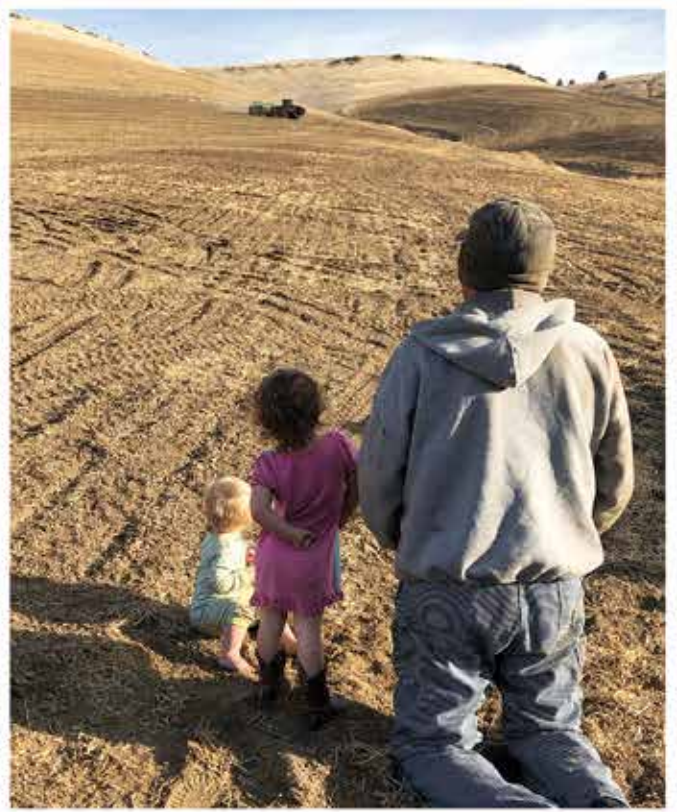
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Abby Talbott (1) and Jesse Talbott (3) enjoying the weather before the snow comes in Dayton at Talbott Farms. Photo by Adalirys Talbott.



At ND Fletcher Partnership in Dayton, Ryleigh JoAnne (2 1/2) and Duane Eugene Fletcher (15 months) are learning the ropes with their papa, David Fletcher. Their father, Nathan, is in the tractor doing the fall seeding. Photo by Christina Fletcher.



Coen Delmore (8 months) is getting ready to learn more about wheat. Coen lives in Los Angeles but was visiting his family's farm near Prescott. Photo by Patsy Adams.



Isla O'Donald Carstensen (2) in Almira. Photo by Shannon O'Donald.

Your wheat life...

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



Crosby Scrivner (19 months) celebrates the end of harvest. Crosby is the 4th generation at Lazy R Farms in Touchet. Photo by Maryann Byerley.



(From left) Madelyn, Malcolm and Vienna Walter (all 3) at Schoonover Farms, located between Odessa and Ritzville. Photo by Brad Walter.

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.

JUNE 2022

1 WHEAT COLLEGE. Presented by AMMO, a program of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, this year's event will feature Peter "Wheat Pete" Johnson on yield triangles. Corteva Agriscience and Washington State University Extension will also present on the latest agronomic research being conducted in the Pacific Northwest. Pesticide credits requested. Wheat Land Community Fairgrounds, Ritzville, Wash. Registration required. Admittance is free. wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ or lori@wawg.org or (509) 659-0610.

1 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Horse Heaven, Wash., at 9:30 a.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5682 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

4 ROSALIA BATTLE DAYS. Community festival that commemorates the 1858 Battle of Pine Creek. Parade, crafts, fun run, pickle ball, kids activities and more. Rosalia, Wash. rosaliabattledays.info

4 REARDAN MULE DAYS. Three on three basketball tournament, poker ride, car show, parade. Reardan, Wash. <http://reardanmuledays.com>

8 WSU WEED TOUR. Pullman, Wash., at 1 p.m. For info call Drew Lyon at (509) 335-2961 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

9-12 PROSPECTORS' DAYS. Pan for real gold! Three on three basketball tournament, 10k run, logging and mining competitions. Republic, Wash. facebook.com/prospectorsdays/

10-11 DEMOLITION DERBY EXTRAVAGANZA. Combine demolition derby, parade, barbecue. Lind, Wash. lindcombinederby.com

10-11 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW. Area

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

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

15 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Moses Lake, Wash., at 7:30 a.m. For information call Andy McGuire at (509) 754-2011 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

16 LIND FIELD DAY. Event begins at 9 a.m. at the WSU Dryland Research Center in Lind, Wash. For more information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

17 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Fairfield, Wash., at 7 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

17-19 ALL WHEELS WEEKEND. Car show, golf, fireworks, live music. Dayton, Wash. allwheelsweekend.com/

17-19 WENATCHEE RIVER BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL. Gospel show, workshops, luau/potluck, band scramble. Chelan County Expo Center in Cashmere, Wash. cashmerecoffeehouse.com/wrbfest.htm

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

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

18-19 UNION GAP OLD TOWN DAYS. Washington state's biggest civil war reenactment. Trading post, blacksmith shop, train rides, games and wagon tours. Fullbright Park in Union Gap, Wash. centralwaagmuseum.org/old-town-days-union-gap.asp

18-19 HUCKLEBERRY MOUNTAIN INVITATIONAL DOG TRIAL. The best

dogs and handlers across the midwest show up for high stakes to showcase their skills and handling cattle. Bring a lawn chair. No pets. Trial is held on a real working ranch in a pasture and competition is done horseback. Sumpter, Ore. huckleberrymtn.com

22 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Mayview, Wash., at 10 a.m. For information call Mark Heitstuman at (509) 243-2009 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

23 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Reardan, Wash., at 9 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

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

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

27 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Eureka, Wash., at 9 a.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

28 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Dayton, Wash., at 10 a.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

29 WILKE FARM FIELD DAY. Davenport, Wash., at 8:30 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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

30 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR.

Spillman Farm in Pullman, Wash., at 2:30 p.m. For more information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

JULY 2022

4 GRAND OLD FOURTH. Pancake breakfast, parade, fireworks. Pasco, Wash. pasco-wa.gov/844/Grand-Old-4th-of-July-Celebration

4 FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION. Music, entertainment and fireworks. Sunnyside Park in Pullman, Wash. pullmanchamber.com/events/chamber-events/

7 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Bickleton, Wash., at 1 p.m. For info call Hannah Brause at (509) 773-5817 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

9 WATERVILLE PLATEAU FARMERS MARKET & WATERVILLE ROLLERS CAR SHOW. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Pioneer Park in downtown Waterville. Variety of homemade/homegrown crafts, garden items and nonprofit information booths will be available. Vintage car show. Local restaurants and food vendors. Open to the public. historicwatervillewa.org/events

8-10 CHENEY RODEO. Dances Friday and Saturday nights after rodeo. Saturday parade. Cheney, Wash. cheneyrodeo.com

15-17 PIONEER DAYS. Parade, live music, BBQ and vendors. Davenport, Wash. davenportpioneerdays.org

30 PALOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL. Local vendors, food, and family-friendly activities available. Palouse City Park, Palouse, Wash. facebook.com/PalouseMusicFestival/ ■

Submissions

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



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

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

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

Why Support the Washington Wheat PAC?

Washington farmers are losing ground politically! The ability to protect our interests is slowly dwindling. Washington wheat producers need elected officials who know and understand the industry. Without these relationships our ability to remain competitive is at risk. 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 supporting the Washington Wheat PAC. Your contribution will strengthen the network of elected officials who understand the wheat industry's goals and objectives by fighting for what is critical to the livelihood of our members.

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

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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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Grant County wheat fields in spring. Photo by Marlene Poe.

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