

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER | 2022

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Value-added agriculture

UW faculty visit Ritzville farm

WGC Year in Review

Sensors, drones and
the internet of things

Where WAWG started

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109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, WA 99169

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**WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION OF
WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



Honor tradition by making new ones

By Howard McDonald

Traditions. We all have them. From Christmas traditions, to wearing the winning game socks (religiously) in a high school Friday night football game, to flipping aebleskivers every Sunday morning for the family. People love their traditions, and it's no surprise that farmers have their own.

When I was farming with my dad, when my mom was still alive, we had a tradition of the harvest crew eating as one giant happy family! My mother, Gemma, was an excellent cook, and she made a one-pot meal to feed eight for lunch. Chicken and rice, enchiladas, roast and potatoes were just a sampling of her cooking skill. Let's talk dessert! What good would a tradition be without the dessert?! Gemma always made the best pies and cinnamon rolls. Gemma also had her own traditions as she would take time off her waitressing job and then lived in her kitchen for the next two weeks. She was also very particular about what went on at her dinner table. The men had to break their bread before they buttered it, and there was no room on her table for elbows! But even with her "demands," the same crew sat at her table harvest after harvest! I loved Gemma's cooking, and that was a tradition I was sad to see come to a halt. One tradition that has continued is our harvest farm crew dinner that happens after seeding. It is a great way to celebrate the long, hot, busy harvest and to thank our crew for another great year!



I have a few of my own farming traditions. I never start harvest or seeding on a Friday. And that goes back to my great-grandpa and his tradition! This tradition continues with Travis, who is the fourth generation. I also believe in giving the harvest crew a break, and Sunday is the day! Travis and I still go out and service the harvest equipment early Sunday morning. As the saying goes, "Harvest on Sunday and broke down on Monday." So enjoy your Sundays!

It is no surprise to me that the farm traditions we once did, back in the earlier days, are no longer continuing. That is neither a good thing or a bad thing...it is simply what it is. The lunches for a large crew are really no longer happening. The equipment is bigger and better, and we don't have to stop at lunch to grease all of the equipment, so we can just keep on keeping on! It is also no longer monetarily feasible to feed the masses. Bring your own lunch is the new and forever tradition.

The next generation doesn't need to feel the need to carry on all of the past traditions. They should be starting some of their own to add to the ones already being honored. So get out there and create some new traditions and have a safe and bountiful harvest! Here's a quote from my all-time favorite show, *Hill Street Blues*, "HEY, let's be careful out there!" ■

Cover photo: A rainbow marks the end of a summer storm in Spokane County. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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WAWG MEMBERSHIP FORM

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- ☐ Student \$75 ☐ Family \$200 (up to 2 members)
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☐ Landlord \$125 ☐ Convention \$600
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Lifetime \$2,500 (1 individual)	X	X	X	X		X
Non-Voting Membership						
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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.

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Wheat growers announce priorities for 2023 Farm Bill

For the past year, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has been providing input to the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) on what Washington wheat growers would like to see in the next farm bill. Last month, after much discussion, NAWG released its 2023 Farm Bill priorities. They include:

- Protecting crop insurance, to ensure growers have a strong and reliable safety net that provides assistance to wheat growers when needed in times of disaster.
- Supporting the financial and technical assistance provided through voluntary conservation programs.
- Increasing the reference price for wheat in Title I to cover the cost of production more accurately.
- Enhancing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's market access and development programs to enhance trade.

"Keeping crop insurance as a strong safety net is one of our top priorities, because it always seems to be in the crosshairs," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director. "Increasing the wheat reference price is also something that we'd like to see. NAWG is working hard to make sure wheat growers have a seat at the table as discussions in Congress heat up."

Congress has been reviewing the 2018 Farm Bill, holding listening sessions across the country, including one last month in Western Washington, which was hosted by Rep. Kim Schrier (D-Wash.).

"The farm bill addresses many programs that are critical for wheat growers, and we look forward to actively engaging in the farm bill reauthorization process. NAWG has been actively seeking farm bill feedback through our grassroots network and various outreach tools, and we will continue to refine these priorities in the coming months," said NAWG President and Washington state wheat grower Nicole Berg. "The farm bill not only benefits wheat growers, but all aspects of American agriculture. It is very important wheat growers' voices are heard on Capitol Hill and that members of Congress understand what worked and what can be improved upon as the committees work towards reauthorizing the farm bill in 2023. I am very appreciative of all the wheat growers who participated in the farm bill survey and committee work session that helped us determine our priorities. NAWG looks forward to working with Congress and other agricultural organizations to pass a farm bill that benefits the industry." ■

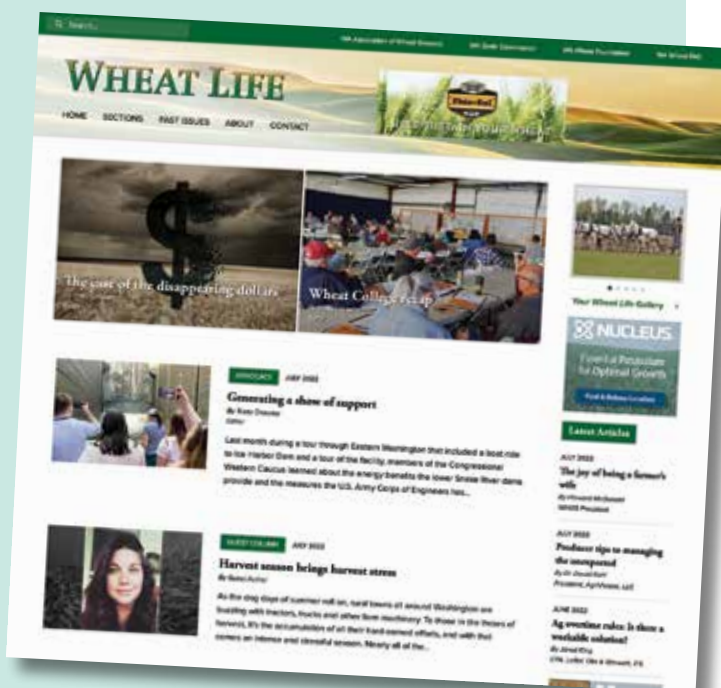
Wheat Life website gets face-lift

After six months of work, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has unveiled a re-vamped website for *Wheat Life* at wheatlife.org.

"We wanted a website that worked somewhat like an archive, where visitors could look at all the articles from a single month's issue, download a pdf of that

issue or view the reader-submitted photos we've published," said Trista Crossley, *Wheat Life* editor. "The new website is also mobile friendly and completely searchable, two things that were lacking on our old website."

WAWG staff worked with Cougar Digital Marketing in Tri-Cities to redesign the website. ■





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Industry leaders discuss dams on ag business podcast

Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers; Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission; and Rob Rich, vice president of Marine Services at Shaver Transportation Company, recently appeared on The Business of Agriculture podcast, hosted by Damian Mason, to talk about the importance of the Columbia-Snake River System.

Mason and his guests discussed how environmental activism is taking food off Americans' plates by advocating for the breaching of dams on the river system, which consists of 465 miles that act as agricultural infrastructure. The waterways and their eight dams allow barges to move 10% of America's exported wheat and 40% of the inland Northwest's total wheat production. In short, the river system is vital for food production as well as the economies of agriculturally dependent communities in three states.

You can find Mason's podcast at <https://bit.ly/3PU81Ef>, on Soundcloud or wherever you get your podcasts. ■



Michelle Hennings
Washington
Association of Wheat
Growers



Glen Squires
Washington Grain
Commission



Rob Rich
Shaver
Transportation

Remembering NASS's Chris Mertz and FSA's Rod Hamilton

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is saddened to report the passing of two, long-time U.S. Department of Agriculture employees who have been very instrumental in supporting the Washington wheat industry.

Christopher Mertz, director for the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Pacific Northwest office, died on June 22 at the age of 59 of a degenerative brain disorder, Cruetzfeldt-Jakob disease. *Wheat Life* profiled Mertz in the June 2022 issue, which can be downloaded at wheatlife.org/issues/.

Earlier that same month, on June 12, Rod Hamilton,

Winter, spring wheat production up from 2021

From the National Agricultural Statistics Service

Based on July 1, 2022, conditions, production of winter wheat in Washington is forecast at 131 million bushels, down 1 percent from June, but up 84 percent from last year. Harvested area, at 1.79 million acres, is up 100,000 acres from 2021. Yield is expected to be 73 bushels per acre, up 31 bushels from the previous year. Washington spring wheat production is forecast at 22.3 million bushels, up 38 percent from last year. Harvested area, at 465,000 acres, is down 75,000 acres from 2021. Yield is expected to be 48 bushels per acre, up 18 bushels from the previous year. Washington barley production is forecast at 5.85 million bushels, up 120 percent from last year. Harvested area, at 75,000 acres, is up 5,000 acres from 2021. Yield is expected to be 78 bushels per acre, up 40 bushels from the previous year. ■

U.S. wheat production by class
(forecasted July 1, in 1,000 bushels)

CROP	2021	2022
Winter		
Hard red	749,489	585,123
Soft red	360,689	375,626
Hard white	20,283	15,108
Soft white	146,904	224,834
Spring		
Hard red	297,366	456,847
Hard white	5,662	7,675
Soft white	28,112	38,398
Durum	37,259	77,208
Total	1,645,764	1,780,819

former farm program chief at the Washington State Farm Service Agency, passed away suddenly at age 64. A memorial service will be held for Hamilton at the Chattaroy Community Church in Chattaroy, Wash., on Aug. 6 at 10 a.m. Hamilton had retired two years ago.

"Chris and Rod were ardent champions of agriculture, and they were always happy to answer questions and address our concerns. Wheat growers send their condolences to the Mertz and Hamilton families," said Howard McDonald, WAWG president. "Their loss will be keenly felt." ■

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COLUMBIA COUNTY CREW. Following the local Washington State University Extension variety plot tour, close to 40 people gathered in the shop of Columbia County President David McKinley (standing) outside Dayton, to hear legislative, marketing and research updates, enjoy a BBQ lunch and take care of county business.

USDA releases over \$4 billion in emergency relief payments

On June 29, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced that to date, agricultural producers have already received more than \$4 billion through the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). This accounts for approximately 67% of the more than 6 billion dollars projected to be paid through this first of two phases of the ERP program. The first phase utilizes existing claim data to provide relief expediently, and the second phase focuses on ensuring producers that are not covered by other programs also receive assistance.

In late May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed out prefilled applications to producers with crop insurance who suffered losses from natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. Vilsack stated that this program has yielded its desired results by reducing burdens while expediting payments to approximately 120,000 disaster-impacted agricultural producers. ■

September board meeting set

The next board meeting of the Washington Association

of Wheat Growers is scheduled for Sept. 13, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Foundation building in Ritzville. ■

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Early bird registration opens Aug. 15 at wawg.org/convention and ends Nov. 1, 2022

JULIE BORLAUG is continuing the Borlaug legacy of food security and innovation in agriculture. She serves as President of the Borlaug Foundation and Vice President of External Relations for Inari. She is the granddaughter of the late Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the founder of the World Food Prize.



ROBERT BONNIE (invited) is the Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation at USDA. Prior to joining USDA, Bonnie was at Duke University, first as a Rubenstein Fellow and later as an Executive in Residence at the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions working on conservation and environmental issues in rural America.

RAY STARLING has been the Chief of Staff to a U.S. Senator and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, worked at the White House, and been involved in crafting public policy for over 15 years. He grew up on a family farm in North Carolina. Ray combines a humorous style with a deep sincerity for his audience members' self-reflection and personal development.



ERIC SNODGRASS is a Science Fellow and the Principal Atmospheric Scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, where he develops predictive, analytical software to help agricultural producers manage weather risk. His frequent weather updates focus on how high-impact weather events influence global agriculture productivity.

WHEAT WORLD UPDATE will feature a panel of industry experts discussing global issues facing the wheat industry and the opportunities they present for producers. This panel will feature Antonina Broyaka, an Associate Professor from Vinnytsia National Agrarian University, Ukraine; Dr. Randy Fortenbery, Washington State University Extension; and more.



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Auction and Dinner

Auction and dinner is Thursday, Dec. 1, at 6 p.m. Social hour starts at 5:30. Donation forms can be found at wawg.org.



**Watch wawg.org/convention
for updates!**



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After 11/01/2022	_____ x \$ 270 =	\$ _____
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***Note: FULL Convention Registration includes Wednesday & Thursday meetings and all meals.**

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___ Dinner & Auction	_____ x \$ 75 =	\$ _____

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___ Tri-State Luncheon (Wednesday)	___ Idaho Banquet (Wednesday)	___ Luncheon (Thursday)
	___ Washington Banquet (Wednesday)	___ Dinner & Auction (Thursday)

Please Indicate All that apply:

___ Speaker	___ Committee Chairperson	___ Past Washington Wheat Commissioner
___ Exhibitor	___ Idaho Wheat Commissioner	___ Past Washington Barley Commissioner
___ Sponsor	___ Idaho Barley Commissioner	___ Wheat Foundation
___ Past President	___ Oregon Wheat Commissioner	___ First Time Attendee
___ State Officer	___ Washington Grain Commissioner	___ 15x40 Attendee
___ County President	___ Past Idaho Wheat Commissioner	___ WA Lifetime Member
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POLICY MATTERS

Growers challenge impacts, accuracy of dam report

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) filed public comments in response to the draft Lower Snake River Dams (LSRD) Benefit Replacement Report published on June 9. On behalf of over 4,000 members, WAWG urged Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Gov. Jay Inslee to reconsider the direction of the Joint Federal-State Process regarding dam breaching, citing the lack of feasibility of recommendations outlined in the report, along with the overall inaccuracy of scientific data used to formulate recommendations.

The consequences of implementing the report's recommendations could wreak havoc on Washington state's economy. As the nation's largest wheat export gateway, the Columbia-Snake River System is critical for the transportation of over 60% of Washington wheat. This river system is not only key to supporting overseas export markets, but also for supporting nearly 4,000 jobs.

"Dams are essential to wheat farmers and to the

Washington economy at large. Without the extensive network of inland waterways, it would be incredibly difficult and drastically more expensive to transport wheat in an efficient way," said WAWG President Howard McDonald. "The impact of dam breaching is wide-reaching and long-lasting. The oversimplified recommendations in this report won't achieve salmon population recovery goals, but will surely devastate the wheat industry."

In addition to the inevitable adverse economic impacts, the convoluted and rushed process in which this report was written leads to recommendations with a notable lack of scientific integrity.

"As farmers whose top priority is the stewardship and health of land, water and natural resources, Washington wheat growers fully support salmon recovery efforts. However, those efforts must be backed with sound science, not political motivation," said WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings. "Dam breaching is a decision



A barge loading up at the Almotia Elevator on the Snake River.

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that will have significant adverse impacts on the economic conditions of wheat farmers who are already struggling with complicated supply chain issues and rising input costs. Decisions such as this one must be made carefully, through consideration of environmental and economic impact and the review of sound evidence — factors that seem to have been omitted from this process.”

In its comments, WAWG noted that more than half of all wheat exported from the U.S. goes out through lower Columbia-Snake River ports, and 10% of all U.S. wheat exports travel by barge through the LSRD to the Portland area each year. WAWG called the report “tone deaf” to producers’ current operating environment because it seems to imply that an increase in transportation costs associated with moving from barging to rail or truck would be marginal when compared to the average price of wheat per bushel.

“The report fails to acknowledge the significantly increased costs and market volatility seen by farmers over the past several years due to the pandemic, supply-chain disruptions, drought, and global political instability impacting wheat markets. These disruptions cannot be

minimized or ignored in determining future action on the operations of the LSRD.”

WAWG also noted that breaching the dams would fundamentally alter the agricultural economy across the country, weaken the competitiveness of Washington’s wheat producers in a global market, and undermine Washington state’s climate targets to reduce emissions by 25 percent by 2025.

“Dams and salmon can and do co-exist. Time and funding would be better spent on adding fish passage capabilities to dams that don’t have them and addressing other resource concerns, such as predation and habitat restoration,” the comments state.

WAWG’s full comments can be found at <https://bit.ly/3RENViQ>. ■

WAWG comments on federal government’s dam reports

Last month, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), released two new reports on the effort to restore salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin. One report, prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), with input from and support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, assesses the state of the science and large-scale actions to make progress toward healthy and harvestable fish stocks in the Basin. The report includes recommendations to breach one or more of the lower Snake River dams.

Besides breaching, the actions identified in the report include management of native and non-native predators; systematic and strategic tributary and estuarine habitat restoration and protection; fish passage and reintroduction into priority blocked areas; and focused hatchery and harvest reform.

The other report, which was commissioned by the Bonneville Power Administration, presents a range of power production scenarios and costs associated with replacing the electrical power from four lower Snake River dams if they were breached. The study finds that replacing the energy and grid services provided by the dams is possible and predicts costs from \$11 billion to \$19 billion, assuming that emerging energy technologies become commercially available.

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) expressed disappointment with the reports, especially the NOAA report.

“Unfortunately, the report fails to consider the impacts breaching the lower Snake River dams would have on



The fish ladders at Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake River.

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farmers that rely on the river system to move agricultural exports via barge to consumers around the globe. Washington's wheat growers continue to face market volatility, rising input costs and significant supply chain challenges, and any action to remove these dams would further threaten the livelihoods of family farms across the region," said WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings. "We have the utmost concern for the health of the salmon population, but it is critical that these decisions are made through sound science and extensive research, instead of political whims. We urge the Biden Administration to consider the impacts of dam breaching on all stakeholders as they evaluate potential actions regarding the Columbia Basin, including those who rely on the lower Snake River dams."

Over 60 percent of Washington wheat exports utilize the Columbia-Snake River System, which is essential for supporting a thriving overseas export market along with providing nearly 4,000 jobs. The breaching of critical dam infrastructure would threaten the viability of the Washington wheat industry and would cause greater adverse impact on the economy and the food supply chain as a whole. ■

USITC votes against imposing duties on imported UAN

The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) has voted down new duties on imports of urea ammonium nitrate solutions from Russia and Trinidad and Tobago. The vote came after a year-long investigation by the USITC after CF Industries, a fertilizer manufacturer and distributor based outside Chicago, filed a case accusing producers in both countries of "dumping" UAN in the U.S. at below market prices and benefiting from government subsidies that reduce costs. Producers were concerned that any new duties would increase already high fertilizer prices.

"NAWG (the National Association of Wheat Growers) is pleased with USITC's UAN decision, having previously raised concerns regarding input costs, fertilizer prices and availability. We thank the USITC for their consideration on this decision, which will help to provide relief from tariffs for U.S. growers, and we appreciate the members of Congress willing to testify," said Chandler Goule, NAWG CEO, in a statement. ■



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Seltice's "blue" elevators are the closest landmark. "I'm the current mayor of Seltice. I took over from my dad, and my wife, Amy, is the First Lady."

Dave Champion is the official chief assistant. He has lots of driving miles, so this little Volvo with an automatic is going to be a comfortable "yawnfest!" for him and should be comfortable and easy for others, too.

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Trains, trucks, barges: How Washington wheat moves to market

TRUCKS made their way onto farms at the turn of the century. Ford, Deere & Co., Allis-Chalmers, and others debuted the first renditions of a “motor truck,” and many of them served the dual purpose of hauling loads and pulling plows. In the early days, they had 20 horsepower engines and could only haul a few sacks of grain. Today, a common semitruck has 600 horsepower engines under the hood, and the grain hopper can hold approximately 1,000 bushels of wheat — or 60,000 pounds of wheat in a single load.

In Washington, the semis and wheat trucks you see on the roads are usually the first transportation mode farmers use to get their product to the market. They are used during harvest to haul wheat from the fields to the local elevator or grain storage facility. These facilities are owned primarily by grain cooperatives. Once at the local elevator, the cooperative then uses either more trucks, trains or barges to get the grain to the next step in the marketing chain.

On a rail system, the local elevators load the grain onto multiple hopper cars and these “scoot” **TRAINS** haul to larger facilities that can separate different grain types and quality levels. Washington state owns several shortline railways that the grain cooperatives use to move wheat to central locations where it joins the main track. At these locations, larger facilities load the grain into 110-car unit trains. In Washington, we have five 110-car shuttle train car facilities. About 40% of the wheat grown in Washington arrives at domestic mills or deep-sea export facilities by train.

Between the 1930s and 1970s, a convergence of interests in navigation, irrigation and power led to the construction of a series of dams and locks that transformed the Columbia and its largest tributary, the Snake River, into a major waterway. Port districts and other government and private entities developed an infrastructure and transportation system that now supports the movement of some 50 million tons of cargo by **BARGE** between Lewiston, Idaho, and the Pacific Ocean.”

Today, grain facilities along the Columbia and Snake rivers load 60% of Washington’s wheat crop onto large, four-barge tows and move it to the ports along the coast. Trucks or shortline railcars deliver the grain to larger facilities along the river. At these facilities, the grain is loaded onto barges that are pushed by a tugboat down the river. The river system is roughly 360 miles from Portland/Vancouver to Lewiston, Idaho. A four-barge tow keeps more than 530 cargo semitrucks off the highways. Barging is the safest method of moving cargo, with a lower number of injuries, fatalities and spill rates than both rail and trucks. It is also the most fuel-efficient and has the lowest emissions. ■



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DNR mapping potential solar farm sites

POSTCARDS SENT TO LESSEES WHO MIGHT BE IMPACTED

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the final stages of mapping their Eastern Washington properties for potential solar farm development. Lessees who might be impacted have been notified by postcard.

According to **Dever Haffner-Ratliffe**, DNR's Clean Energy Program manager, the goal of the mapping project is to identify properties that are currently unleased or where renewable energy development will have the least impact. The department will then steer renewable energy developers to those properties first. Currently, developers tend to pick an area with renewable energy potential and reach out to all the landowners, including DNR. Haffner-Ratliffe said that puts DNR in a position where they have to be responsive to that interest because of their trust mandate to get the best rental return



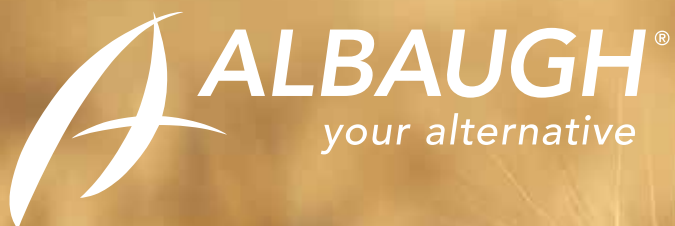
on their properties. One of the big drivers of renewable energy development is the focus on climate policy.

"We reached out to existing lessees on those properties and let them know about this work, because one of the big things that is important is that we are transparent, that we are proactive with our communication. I don't want to catch anybody off guard with what we are doing," Haffner-Ratliffe said. "I think it is fair to say they (renewable energy developers) are coming right now, and they will continue to come. We aren't the ones driving that interest. We've been responsive to it, but it is already here."

DNR is the second largest landowner in Washington state, behind the federal government. The department manages approximately 6% of the state's land, consisting of about 3 million acres of uplands and about 2.6 million acres of tidelands. About 1 million acres of that is agricultural land. DNR currently has about 1,300 acres leased to solar development, but would like to have 5,000 acres in solar farms by 2025. The department also leases approximately 16,000 acres for wind energy, although the majority of that land remains useable for grazing or agriculture.

Over the past few months, DNR has contacted agri-





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cultural associations that represent lessees, including the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, to inform them of the project and has held several online information sessions for lessees, the Tribes and the general public. The next phase of the project involves gathering feedback on a mapping tool that the department has developed. DNR expects to have the mapping tool publicly available on their website by the end of the year, although interested parties can email DNR at mlcep@dnr.wa.gov for a temporary link to the tool.

For now, DNR is gathering feedback, not only on the mapping tool itself, but the process they are using to look at their properties for renewable energy, the process related to their renewable energy leases, and feedback and/or concerns on the specific properties or areas the properties are located in.

“Part of what we are trying to do is not only gather information to help with our decision-making, but to gather information that we can pass on to developers who might be interested in our properties,” Haffner-Ratliffe explained. “For developers, (those concerns) translate to risk in a lot of ways, and risk costs them money. If we can help direct them to properties where there aren’t going to be concerns, it’s better for everybody.”

While DNR will consider solar development on the west side of the Cascades on a case-by-case basis, the economic productivity of DNR-managed forests there is comparable to the leasing rate for solar power development in Eastern Washington. Additionally, DNR would have to amend their habitat conservation plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for any of the west-side development.

In general, solar farm developers are looking for large, flat areas that are close to transmission lines that have capacity, but some pre-existing conditions could make the land unsuitable for renewable energy development. Haffner-Ratliffe said there is quite a bit of developer interest in Douglas County, but that area also has sage grouse habitat. Kittitas County is another hotspot, but half of the county is covered by DNR’s State Lands Habitat Conservation Plan, which would require an amendment with USFWS before any solar development could occur.

“Part of what we are trying to do is proactively communicate those things to developers, just like where we do and don’t have current leases,” she said. “DNR has not, to date, been the only property included in a solar development, and I think it is really unlikely that we will be the only property included, which means there’s lots of projects where, even if DNR decides not to lease, that project is still moving forward. I think that’s probably worth noting, because it means the surrounding landowners are leasing, and we don’t have enough property in the projects, typically, to make or break it for the developer.”

DNR is interested in ways to co-use their property that is leased for solar development, including solar panels that can be farmed (or grazed) around and under. However, while the department can encourage and facilitate co-use, they can’t require developers to include co-use options in their plans. That pressure will need to come from private landowners, with DNR being willing to make sure the leases are written to accommodate co-use and helping to facilitate it on their properties.

Haffner-Ratliffe is also hoping that lessees will find the mapping tool useful beyond just finding out if their leased DNR ground is included as

WAWG leader alerts producers to DNR mapping project

For the last few months, Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), has been beating the drum at county meetings, warning producers that solar farm development is coming to Eastern Washington wheat fields sooner, rather than later.

“It’s going to happen, and you need to be aware of it. If you get a postcard from DNR, that means your leased property is on DNR’s radar,” she’d tell each group.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) met with Hennings in early May to notify her that the department was identifying properties in Eastern Washington that had solar farm development potential. Hennings said that while she understands the department has a mandate to get the highest and best use from their lands, it shouldn’t come at the cost of losing potential and/or productive farmland, especially as food costs continue to rise and the issue of food security gains national importance.

“I feel like it’s a little ironic that the Biden Administration is pushing farmers to grow more food, but our state is actively looking to take farmland out of production,” Hennings said. “Producers are already facing so many hurdles. This just adds to the list of uncertainties they have to deal with.”

WAWG appreciates that representatives from DNR took the time to meet with Hennings and discuss the department’s mapping effort. According to DNR, all producers whose leased properties have been identified as having solar farm potential have been notified by postcard. ■

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a potential solar development site. She said the tool can help gauge what the potential interest in a parcel might be (if it's close to transmission lines, it's more likely to be of interest to a developer). The data can also be helpful for private landowners who are considering leasing their property for renewable energy.

DNR is required to get market rental rates for their properties, which means that anybody else in the same project should have the potential to get the same rate.

"If you are a neighbor, and you are trying to figure out if a developer is making a good offer, you can look at what DNR is considering for our property," Haffner-Ratliffe said. "We are going to be doing a little bit more proactive marketing on properties where we know they are high value and low impact, so that means rather than a neighbor taking the first offer on the table, they might be able to pause and watch what DNR is doing to see if we are able to get multiple interests in the area. If there's a bidding war, anything like that, that can help increase the negotiating power of our neighbors. The higher their negotiating power, the more they can ask for things like the project to be developed with co-use or requirements about decommissioning and reclamation and returning it back to a farmable state."

People with questions are welcome to reach out to the clean energy program through their website at dnr.wa.gov/CleanEnergy, and lessees can contact their land managers if they have any concerns.

Haffner-Ratliffe said the department will do everything they can to wait until the contract is up on a leased property that is scheduled to be part of a renewable energy development. If DNR terminates a lease early under their higher and better use clause, the lessee

would be entitled to compensation, according to legislation passed in the 2022 Washington State Legislative Session. Lessees approaching the end of their DNR lease contract that are considering not renewing the contract are asked to communicate that to DNR so that information can be taken into consideration. The department has approximately 159 properties in Eastern Washington that aren't currently under lease.

"This is not a happy subject for everyone, but I also don't want to run away from that," Haffner-Ratliffe said. "We are trying really hard to direct developer interest to properties where there isn't a lease. Anything we can do to focus the interest where there are no impacts to an existing lessee, we are going to do everything we can to try to make those the properties that get highlighted." ■



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ADDING VALUE TO A COMMODITY CAN BOOST PRODUCERS' BOTTOM LINES, RURAL COMMUNITIES

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Have commodity farmers become so efficient that they're hurting themselves and the rural communities that they live in? Finding ways to add value to a crop could bolster the bottom lines of both.

"We are producing more than we ever have before, and we are doing it cheaper than we ever have, so food prices are affordable, but that comes with a downside," **Rich French** explained. "Farm employment has been reduced by about 90% because of new technologies that have come out. That's fabulous for you and I as a buyer, but for small communities in the Palouse, you are reducing the number of jobs by 90%, so people are leaving, and the towns are shrinking, losing their grocery stores and banks. That is sad to see."

French is executive director of One Palouse, formerly the Palouse Knowledge Corridor, which is an economic development and entrepreneurship-focused organization in Moscow funded by Whitman and Latah counties, the Port of Whitman, the University of Idaho and Washington State University. In a region steeped in farming, it isn't surpris-



ing that value-added agriculture is one of the initiatives One Palouse is currently pursuing.

Value-added agriculture means producers are adding additional value to their crop in one of two ways: either changing the state of their product after it is grown or changing the production of their product in a way that makes it more valuable. For wheat farmers, that could look like milling grain into flour and selling the flour or switching to organic production meth-

ods (organic products can usually be sold at a premium). Barley growers could malt their barley, and chickpea growers could start making hummus and selling it.

"From a wheat farmer's perspective, they are obviously all about efficiencies and technologies, and that's fabulous, but it limits their ability to add revenue, to add to their bottom line. Wheat prices are fixed. You are going to get what you get, but if you add that extra step to it, the returns can be quite large," French said. "Malting your barley or if you were to mill your own grain and focus on that regional, 'grow local, buy local, eat local' type of thing, the margins are much higher, so it's giving you more opportunity to grow and add to your bank account. Each one of





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these steps can create pretty large job growth in your community."

French and representatives from the aforementioned entities have been attending ag industry meetings to spread the word about how producers can strengthen their bottom lines — and their rural communities — by finding ways to add value to their crops. The Washington Small Business Development Center is also a partner in the initiative and provides education, mentoring and networking assistance. Funding is generally done through traditional bank lending models, although there are some grants available.

Steven Peterson, an economics professor at the University of Idaho, compiled some statistics that are being used in the presentations. In 1776, 90% of jobs in the U.S. were farm jobs. In 1900, that percentage dropped to 37%, and by 2020, it had dropped to 1.4%.

Besides finding the best way to add value to their product, producers also need to consider where the funding will come from and where to find buyers. For a grain farmer who wants to turn their grain into flour, a big hurdle is the milling process. One solution, French said, could be through a group approach.

"I truly think the co-op model is the right approach, where a group of farmers come together and invest in a mill, and maybe the port is involved. The Port of Whitman is always interested in assisting in these types of growth opportunities," he said. "We recommend a producer work with university Extensions, the counties or your port to find creative solutions. Instead of paying the costs to truck your grain to the river and then barge it to Portland, you could mill it and sell it locally. This will create local jobs and keep those dollars in your community."

Barley (through craft beer) and grape growers (wineries) are perhaps the poster children for success in the value-added agriculture world, but opportunities aren't just for the big guys. "If you grow asparagus, instead of just selling raw asparagus at the farmers market, pickling it and selling it as a finished product increases your margins considerably and your brand," French said. "If you raise your own pigs, instead of just selling the meat by itself, make a jerky or a sausage, something to differentiate it."

More information can be found at onepalouse.org and wsbdc.org. ■



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UW faculty field tour

STAFF VISITS STATE SENATOR'S RITZVILLE FARM TO LEARN ABOUT THE WASHINGTON WHEAT INDUSTRY

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Teachers generally do the educating, but last month, a group of University of Washington (UW) faculty members found themselves on the other side of the desk when they visited Sen. Mark Schoesler's Ritzville farm to learn about the Washington wheat industry.

The visit was part of UW's Faculty Field Tour and is open to faculty hired in the last two academic years, said Jennifer Johnston, UW special projects director. The group spends a week traveling around the state, learning about Washington's history and industry. Schoesler's farm has been part of the itinerary for at least a decade, he estimated.

"It is a chance, as a wheat producer, to communicate with people, most of whom have very little ag in their background, about what we do. Some of them may not have met a real life Republican lately," he said, laughing. "It's been fun. I genuinely enjoy doing it."

One of the highlights at the wheat farm is showing off the "really cool, big toys," such as a self-propelled field sprayer and a hillside combine. Schoesler and his employee, Colby Schell, explain how the equipment and the precision ag components work.

"I think the precision ag part is a real positive for them, that we are doing things in a modern way and that we are stewards," Schoesler said. "There's the usual questions, such as where do you sell wheat, where does wheat go, what is it used for, that are standard things that producers all understand."

Schoesler also talks to the groups about the changes the ag industry has seen, particularly in the size of the equipment and the technology. ►



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“We get some very interesting questions. One of the things they (tour members) are really very knowledgeable about — a lot of them have research and science backgrounds — is you mention that Clearfield wheats and CoAXium wheats came through the Crispr technology and aren’t GMOs. They know more about Crispr than many. They are the people who use that technology, so they get excited when you talk about how that science works.”

Members of the tour group left Ritzville with wheat-themed products provided by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. Besides the Schoesler wheat farm, the group also stopped at the UW-Gonzaga Health Partnership’s new medical school facilities in Spokane, Grand Coulee Dam and a farm workers clinic in Yakima.

While the faculty members are learning about the wheat industry, Schoesler said he also gets something from the visits, namely a reminder that not everybody thinks the same way as the 9th Legislative District or the Senate Republican Caucus. He hopes the visitors leave his farm with a better understanding of the struggles wheat farmers have and the steps farmers take to protect the environment.

“(Wheat farming) is not an easy business to succeed in, and we are good stewards of the land and the environment,” he said. “Case in point, when they drive from my place to town, they can see reclaimed water being applied. They can see CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) in sensitive areas.” ■







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From Peace Corps to hard-core soil conservationist

Chris Laney, 1989/90 WAWG past president

By Kevin Gaffney
Special to Wheat Life

Founded in 1878, Lanefield Farms is located in southeast Lincoln County a few miles north of Sprague, Wash. Chris Laney is the fourth-generation owner/operator of the farm. Laney took the reins from his father, Bob Laney, in the 1970s. The farm was started by Laney's great-grandfather, William Gaffney, who came west from Iowa. Laney's paternal grandfather, Frank Laney, Sr., married William Gaffney's only surviving child, Nellie.

Chris Laney was the third of five siblings in the Laney family, with two older brothers, John and Steve, younger brother, Tom, and baby sister, Norine. He was raised in Sprague and attended the local parochial school, St. Joseph's Academy, through the 8th grade before attending and graduating from Gonzaga Prep in Spokane in 1968. He went on to Washington State University (WSU), graduating in 1972 with a degree in agricultural economics.

Laney didn't concentrate only on ag during those years, however, working on the student publications team for three years, including two years as sports editor for the Chinook yearbook and one year as yearbook business manager.

Soon after graduation, Laney entered the Peace Corps, serving in Sierra Leone in West Africa. His work involved two main roles: assistant to a livestock specialist for a British Technical Assistance Team that was performing a feasibility study for a proposed large cattle ranch operation on behalf of the World Bank and serving as a resident instructor to a dozen rotating ag college students at an underfund-



Chris Laney is shown on Windy Gap Road by his stand of spring wheat. As evidenced by the trees, the grass strips and the divided slope in the background, conservation practices are an important component of Lanefield Farms' operation, a farm founded in 1878 north of Sprague. Laney served as president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers in 1989/90.

ed former colonial cattle research station.

Laney completed his Peace Corps service and returned to the farm in 1974, where he began the transition of taking over the farm management from his father.

"I don't remember suddenly coming to the realization that I was going to be a farmer, but it may have been pre-ordained. As a youth, I often heard, 'Christopher! Go spend some time on the tractor with your father!'" he recalled. "One of my first tasks back on the farm was to computerize our farm book-keeping records. There was no hurry to push my dad out. He had decades of valuable experience and knowledge. He and I both wanted to have a smooth, efficient generational transition that everyone was comfortable with."

Lanefield Farms, incorporated in 1971, was traditionally in a two-year wheat-summerfallow rotation. They also had a cow-calf operation on their pasture land. The annual moisture is around 13 inches.

After Laney returned to the farm, one of his changes was to phase out the cattle operation, since the haying crew (his siblings) all began to leave the farm for school or urban careers.

"I transitioned the farm into a three-year rotation pattern, also establishing a divided-slope field format to provide better soil conservation and reduce erosion," explained Laney. "My father had been an early proponent of soil conservation, helping to form the original Southeast Lincoln County Conservation District. He was the 1954 Conservation Farmer of the Year. ►



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Laney first became involved with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) at the invitation of his neighbor, Jim Ringwood. Laney was immediately impressed with the programs and individuals active in the organization.

Laney quickly became involved, becoming a sidekick of Eddie Johnson of Wilbur. Laney helped work on environmental issues from drafting best management practices to dealing with important issues such as pesticide licensing and ag burning.

"Eddie Johnson and Bill Zagelow were two of our WAWG leaders at that time who could speak very intelligently and articulately on critical agricultural issues. I learned a great deal from them," he said.

Laney was soon going through the leadership chairs of the Lincoln County Association of Wheat Growers. When he was serving as president for Lincoln County, a proposal by Washington Water Power for a generating plant powered by coal was proposed near Creston. It became quite controversial locally, both in regard to emissions and the routing of the transmission lines.

"There was some serious on-the-job leadership training for me," said Laney. "I also served as the national legislation chair for WAWG during this period. The farm bill negotiations were very challenging concerning cross-compliance, pay-

"One of the most crucial challenges for WAWG will be to keep the organization energized in its third and fourth generation of farmers, especially with larger farms and shrinking farmer numbers. Current farm operators have to wear many hats, but they should never lose sight of how important their WAWG hat continues to be."

—Chris Laney
WAWG Past President

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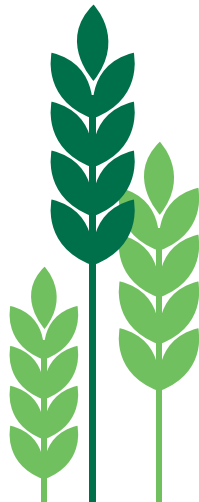
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ment limits, eligibility and several other issues.”

Laney’s work impressed the line officers enough to draft him to serve in the WAWG officer chairs. He served as president for the 1989/90 term.

“I faced two major issues as president of the association. The first was to get the organization back on its feet financially after the very first Tri-State Convention, held in Portland, went way over budget. We accomplished that with great membership and industry help.

“Secondly, we had to find a new executive director for the Ritzville WAWG office. Regrettably, the individual we hired did not work out permanently. I was fortunate to be followed by two outstanding line officers, Judy Olson and Dan Blankenship, who cleaned up my mess by instituting a shared leadership structure that worked effectively for many years.

“It was also during this time that we brought in a new *Wheat Life* editor, David Andersen, who completely redesigned the publication into the current magazine format that has made it one of the highest quality ag trade publications in the western U.S.

“Another significant challenge was finding candidates to go through the WAWG leadership chairs. It was down to the wire at my outgoing convention when I landed Andy Rustemeyer as our incoming secretary-treasurer in 1990. Then we signed up Phil Isaak the following year. The maturity and leadership of those two farmers I consider to be my best and lasting contribution to the organization.”

The most important mission of WAWG, in Laney’s opinion, would be to continue to educate and inform an increasingly urbanized populace and Legislature of the important role and needs of agriculture.

“As each new generation becomes more removed from our societal agricultural roots, farmers must be effective spokespersons,” noted Laney. “The current anti-science movement would seem to make this even more critical if farmers are to protect our most productive methods and tools.

“One of the most crucial challenges for WAWG will be to keep the organization energized in its third and fourth generation of farmers, especially with larger farms and shrinking farmer numbers. Current farm operators have to wear many hats, but they should never lose sight of how important their WAWG hat continues to be.

“A related challenge is for all of our rural communities. My hometown of Sprague is a startling example. What was once a thriving farm town now has no bank, no machinery dealer, no fertilizer plant, no Grange Supply or auto parts store, not even a tavern. It’s a community on

life support with high school graduation classes as small as four. Gifted students or athletes have few good local options.”

Laney singled out two individuals for notable contributions to the ag industry. One was his mother, Eleanor Laney, who was instrumental in founding the Ag Forestry Program. She worked with Dr. Art Peterson of WSU in finding sponsorships, funds and publicity for the program, which has helped to form many industry leaders over the decades.

The other was Karl Kupers, former Harrington farmer and WAWG member. Though Kupers never served as WAWG president, Laney points to his huge impact in developing industry spokespersons at the county level. Kupers also led a Lincoln County delegation to South Dakota to Dr. Duane Beck’s research farm in 1996. This was the genesis for the eventual founding of the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association. Kupers also was a founding partner of Shepherd’s Grain.

Laney has no plans to retire anytime soon and continues to grow alfalfa and crop rotations of wheat, barley and canola on his farm. Laney and his wife, Linda, have two daughters, Kara and Juliann, and one son, Eric. ■



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WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Mike
Carstensen



Grandpa Henry said, “I think guys want to know, what’s the wheat price going to do next year? What’s fertilizer and fuel going to do? Should I plant soft white, club, red wheat or canola? What’s my spending going to be?” Sadly, I don’t know the answers to any of those questions. I do know that everyone’s still going to take a cut in a farmers’ profit including the Washington Grain Commission (WGC). This brings me to this month’s article continuing “what the heck” the WGC is spending my money on. Keep in mind that at a net price of \$5.50 a bushel at the first point of sale, the three quarter of one percent WGC assessment is less than a nickel per bushel. If a grower can net \$9.50, their assessment is a little over 7 cents a bushel.

My report from last month revealed our 2022/23 fiscal budget that was approved by the WGC board in May. The main four budget items are research (\$1.95 million), marketing (\$1.54 million), grower services (\$1.84), and education (\$598,500). It should be noted that the grower services budget category contains many line items that are educational in nature, just focused on services for growers as opposed to general public education programs. Check out the details on our new budget, posted to the WGC website at <https://bit.ly/wgc-budgetFY23>. This month I’m going to focus on the category that is critical to maintaining our current customers and developing future trading partners. I’m talking about marketing.

The WGC market development efforts are some of our most visible activities for those who participate in trade team visits through U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) and other national organizations’ meetings. The WGC will invest \$1,541,740 in marketing and market development activities, again just edging up from \$1,501,981 last year and keeping it at about 20% of the budget. We are seeing marketing efforts pay off. A prime example: a technical assistance and mixed cargo shipping pilot has led to the first shipments in several years to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Our WGC, in concert with Idaho and Oregon, jointly fund a South American technical expert to work with flour mills. See June’s issue of *Wheat Life* for more on the Colombia market success story and watch for this series to continue in the fall.

Marketing efforts have helped keep our exports to traditional markets remarkably stable considering very high prices. One of those efforts was last year’s extensive virtual effort with customers. Going forward, virtual will continue, mainly with crop updates. Virtual enables larger audiences to attend — some as high

as 250 attendees. In addition, as COVID-19 recedes, trade teams are starting to travel; at least eight, in-person teams are expected to visit so far this year — Japan (2), Korea (2), Colombia, the Philippines, a South Asia cake team, and a team of flour millers from across the Middle East and North Africa.

While I mentioned exports to traditional markets have remained remarkably stable considering very high prices, China and Korea have purchased much less soft white (SW) for feed this year, and that has caused much of the decline in exports. Indonesia is also down. Several weeks ago, USW vice president for South and Southeast Asia, Joe Sowers, mentioned, “I’m seeing a lot less tourism in Southeast Asia, and that, in a sense, is contributing to demand destruction.” However, the Philippines and Japan are somewhat stable. We will continue working with the Philippines flour millers and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to address Turkish flour dumping that displaces Pacific Northwest SW.

I should also mention the ongoing club wheat technical exchange between the WGC and the Japan Flour Millers Association. This technical exchange marketing effort remains strong.

Next month, I will continue and finish the “what the heck” budget update for the next fiscal year. We will visit about the grower services and education portions of the budget. We will discuss the WGC trying to address misinformation, increase awareness of agricultural conservation and sustainability efforts, trying to help people to learn what they don’t know, and several others.

When it comes to what the heck the WGC is spending our money on, marketing is an important part. Often, farmers are focused only on the lowest price or highest price. We must concentrate on all transactional things to survive. However, lost in this focus are the relational things, and the WGC market development efforts are all relational. The goal is to keep the Washington grain producer relevant and profitable. ■

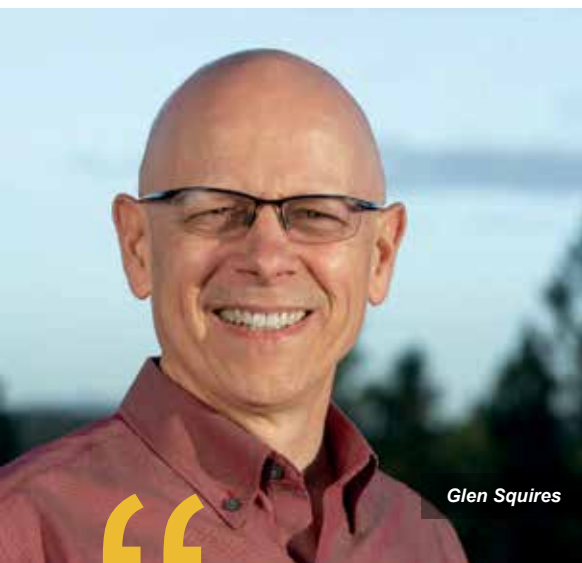


2022 Annual Report



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The Washington Grain Commission was created in 1958 by the Washington State Department of Agriculture with the support of Eastern Washington farmers. Barley came under the auspices of the organization in 2009. Our mission is to enhance the long-term profitability and competitiveness of Washington small grains and small grain producers through research, marketing and education. The current commission board is made up of seven farmer members, two industry representatives and a representative from the state's Department of Agriculture.



Glen Squires



From left: Brian Cochrane, Gary Bailey, Ben Barstow, Mike Carstensen, Brit Ausman (back), Brian Liedl, Mike Miller, Glen Squires, Ty Jessup, Kevin Klein, Scott Steinbacher

A LETTER TO OUR CONSTITUENTS

As far as how the fields look, what a difference a year makes! Cooler temperatures and above average moisture this spring in most growing regions brought optimism for a harvest closer to average. This optimism is reflected in the FY2022/23 budget the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) board approved in May. Heat and drought last summer had a devastating impact on grain production, and estimated revenue for this fiscal year, which ended June 30, is down from FY2020/21. However, a considerable amount of budgeted expenses were not realized and approximately \$1 million was rolled forward into our next fiscal year. The WGC continues to have solid financial footing.

On the buyer front, despite reduced exports with the smaller crop, it is noteworthy that many of our customers have inelastic demand such that substantially higher prices have had less impact on purchases. PNW soft white wheat is often referenced as the “irreplaceable” wheat – a success of commitment to good quality wheat varieties and extensive technical servicing. Some buyers last year bought less due to lower feed wheat demand.

Beyond the gains in moisture and good demand from core buyers, COVID-19 continued to pose challenges to

operations throughout last year. In the wheat industry, there are continual challenges with production costs, transportation and market volatility amid changing world events. The policy landscape surrounding the four lower Snake River dams heated up with the Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) study on replacing the benefits of the dams; language in the Water Resources Development Act regarding dams and ecosystems; and court challenge to the CRSO-EIS. Agricultural groups, utilities and others expressed serious concerns about the Murray/Inslee report, which left out or significantly undervalued costs and even acknowledged that many costs are not available.

The WGC and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) continue to work together in support of the entire transportation system and especially the essential services provided by the dams that all farmers depend on.

In closing, I want to wish everyone a safe and bountiful harvest, and I would like to extend a special thank you to our growers. You are the reason the WGC exists, and your continued efforts to produce sustainable, high-quality wheat and barley are what allows us to continue our work to advance the Washington small grains industry through research, marketing and education.

- Glen Squires, CEO

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RESEARCH ACTIVITY

In 2021/22, the WGC contributed \$1,947,909 to directly fund research at Washington State University. In addition, the WGC contributed \$135,368 towards Grower Services research projects.

Research activity for the year included:

64% PLANT BREEDING AND GENETICS

R. Brueggeman / Improving barley varieties for feed, food and malt

A. Carter / Field breeding hard white and red winter wheat / Use of biotechnology for wheat improvement / Field breeding soft white winter wheat

K. Garland Campbell / Club wheat breeding / Evaluation and selection for cold tolerance in wheat

M. Pumphrey / Breeding improved spring wheat varieties for the Pacific Northwest / Greenhouse and laboratory efforts for spring wheat variety development

K. Sanguinet / Genetic arsenal for drought tolerance, getting to the root of the problem

Z. Zhang / Intelligent prediction and association tool to facilitate wheat breeding

9% PRODUCTION/MANAGEMENT

I. Burke / Weed management in wheat / Herbicide resistance and susceptibility in wheat and weeds

D. Lyon / Extension education for wheat and barley growers

A. Smertenko / Breeding wheat varieties with efficient control of ROS production



19% QUALITY

A. Kiszonas / Breeder quality trials / Quality of varieties and pre-release lines: genotype & environment – “G & E” study / Supplemental support for assessing the quality of Washington wheat breeding samples

C. Neely / Evaluation of barley varieties / Evaluation of wheat varieties

M. Pumphrey / End-use quality assessment of Washington State University wheat breeding lines

8% DISEASE/INSECTS

X. Chen / Improving control of rusts of wheat and barley

T. Paulitz / Fusarium crown rot on wheat: prebreeding and development of tools for genetic disease management

M. Pumphrey / Evaluation of WSU wheat breeding lines for management of Hessian fly and development of DNA markers for resistance breeding



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The first two of six research endowments at Washington State University were created by the Washington Grain Commission in 1990 to establish a perpetual funding mechanism for the advancement of the commission's strategic research goals. Currently, these endowments fund seven research faculty positions aimed at improving varietal development, end use and processing attributes, agronomics, production systems, economics, and new uses for wheat and barley.

The endowments are managed by WSU with distributions made annually to the faculty researcher(s) holding the endowment. These endowments are perpetual and require no further contributions from the WGC to continue funding work on behalf of the wheat industry and the state's wheat farmers into the future.

Est. 1990: the **ORVILLE A. VOGEL ENDOWED CHAIR IN WHEAT BREEDING AND GENETICS** was established in a partnership between the state of Washington, WSU and what was then the Washington Wheat Commission. WSU winter and spring wheat breeders **Arron Carter** and **Mike Pumphrey** currently hold the Vogel endowment.

Original principal: \$1.5 million

2021-22 research distributions: \$92,861.88

Utilization: to fund graduate students and to buy and upgrade breeding technology.

Current Value: \$3,180,000



Club wheat breeder Kim Garland Campbell presents at the Lind Field Day, June 16, 2022.

Est. 1990: the **ORVILLE A. VOGEL WHEAT RESEARCH FUND**, part of the Vogel endowment, is partially funded by an annual revenue gift from the Bohrsen Farm.

2021-22 research distributions: \$227,681.01

Utilization: projects rotate on a three-year funding cycle. Details are available online at: <https://bit.ly/3zVlkOz>.

Current Value: \$5,348,000

Est. 1990: originally established as a distinguished professorship, this endowment was updated in 2013 to the **ROBERT A. NILAN ENDOWED CHAIR IN BARLEY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**. It is held by barley breeder **Robert Bruggeman**.

Original principal: \$250,000

2021-22 research distributions: \$68,096.74

Utilization: barley research efforts.

Current Value: \$1,572,000

Est. 1997: the **R. JAMES COOK ENDOWED CHAIR IN WHEAT RESEARCH** is held by weed scientist **Ian Burke**.

Original principal: \$1.5 million

2021-22 research distributions: \$92,861.88

Utilization: program support for weed management research.

Current Value: \$2,143,500

Est. 2009: originally established as an unnamed endowed chair, this fund was updated in 2012 to honor and acknowledge Thomas B. Mick's service and dedication to the grain industry of

Washington. The **THOMAS B. MICK ENDOWED CHAIR IN SMALL GRAIN ECONOMICS** is held by agricultural economist **Randy Fortenbery**.

Original principal: \$2 million

2021-22 research distributions: \$127,080.52

Utilization: program support

Current Value: \$2,933,500

Est. 2010: The **WASHINGTON WHEAT DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORSHIP** rotates among scientists depending upon pressing research needs that arise. It is currently held by **Zhiwu Zhang**, an expert in statistical genomics. This endowment will transition next year to support a new faculty hire in soil science.

Original principal: \$1.5 million

2021-22 research distributions: \$88,952.61

Utilization: to develop new analytical methods and computing tools to improve breeding efficiency for sustainable agricultural production using genomics and phenomics.

Current Value: \$2,053,000

Est. 2011: the **ENDOWED CHAIR IN SMALL GRAINS EXTENSION AND RESEARCH** is held by **Drew Lyon** with an emphasis in weed science.

Original principal: \$1.5 million

2021-22 research distributions: \$87,596.55

Utilization: Applied research and extension outreach on weed science issues.

Current Value: \$2,022,000



Wheat Marketing Center Laboratory Assistant Kin Wong runs TCK tests on wheat samples received during the 2021 harvest.



LOOKING FORWARD

WGC Research Funding 2022/23
Budget - **\$1,951,105**

68% PLANT BREEDING AND GENETICS

17% QUALITY

9% DISEASE/INSECTS

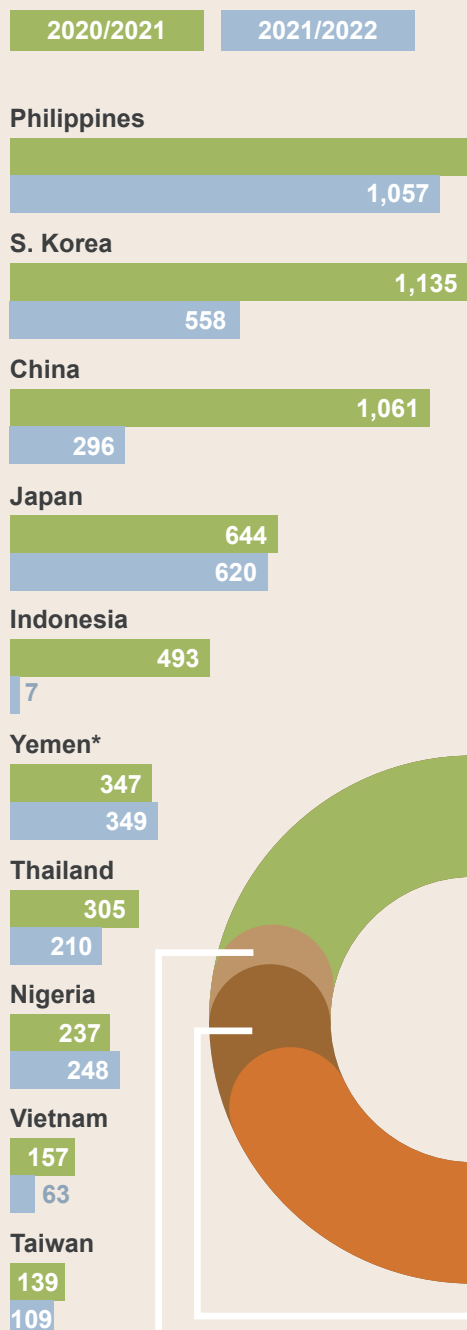
6% PRODUCTION/MANAGEMENT

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

TOP 10 U.S. WHITE WHEAT MARKETS By Thousand Metric Tons

Large decreases in S. Korea and China are due to lower imports for feed wheat, and decrease in Indonesia is due to higher prices.

Source: U.S. Wheat Associates
*2021 Est.



HIGHLIGHTS

- WGC participates in export market development activities with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). In 2021, USW virtual programs reached more than 13,000 people. The integration of virtual programs will continue alongside traditional in-person programs through 2022. This represents a significant expansion in reach from prior to the pandemic in 2019, when USW reached more than 5,000 customers on the ground.
- In August 2021, just two trade teams were able to visit the Pacific Northwest, but it was great to see the interest return for in-person crop tours. WGC will host eight to 10 trade teams by the end of September 2022.
- Former WGC Program Director Joe Bippert started a new role as assistant regional director for South Asia with USW on November 1, 2021.
- In March 2022, the WGC, along with Idaho and Oregon, hosted a dinner in Portland for the USW world technical staff. The USW group was in town to attend core competency training provided by the Wheat Marketing Center, which the WGC is a member. 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.



USDA-ARS Research Biologist Alecia Kiszonas (left) provides a tour of the Western Wheat Quality Lab in Pullman for the NISSHIN trade team from Japan in August 2021.



HighLine Grain Growers, Inc. CEO Paul Katovich (far right) welcomes the SPC trade team from S. Korea in August 2021.

MARKETING EFFORTS

In 2021/22 the WGC budgeted \$1,501,981 toward market development. Total commission time and resources dedicated to market development and promotion includes the following categories:

- 37% END-USE PROMOTION
- 29% CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
- 27% GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- 5% IMAGING (INDUSTRY PROMOTION)
- 2% UNCATEGORIZED

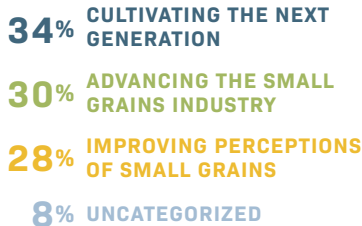
EDUCATION

Part of the 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.

In 2021/22 the WGC contributed \$554,500 to directly fund education programming. In addition, the WGC contributed \$291,200 towards Grower Services education programs.

EDUCATION EFFORTS

Total commission time and resources dedicated to education strategic objectives:



HIGHLIGHTS

Cultivating the next generation is an important part of the WGC's education efforts. The largest portion of the WGC education budget goes to fund the Wheat Week program through the Franklin Conservation District. Wheat Week is a hands-on science program aligned with required Washington State Sciences Standards taught in fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms across Washington. The program teaches students about wheat, dam and transportation systems, water, soil, conservation, DNA, and energy, as well as how they impact our daily lives.

The program reaches approximately 25,000 students and 1,000 teachers a year, and two-thirds of those students are in Western Washington.

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, 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.

FINANCIALS

2021/22 Estimated assessment revenue:

\$6.1
MILLION

2021/22 Budget: \$7.3 million
vs. estimated spent \$6.1 million



\$1 MILLION
to roll forward to the
2022/23 budget

LOOKING FORWARD FY 2022/23 Budget



\$7,801,813

JUST FOR GROWERS:

The WGC-sponsored PNW Export Tour & Wheat Quality Workshop is returning this fall, Nov. 1-3, 2022.

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**WASHINGTON
GRAIN
COMMISSION**

Sensors, drones and the internet of things

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN FOR PLANT BREEDING?

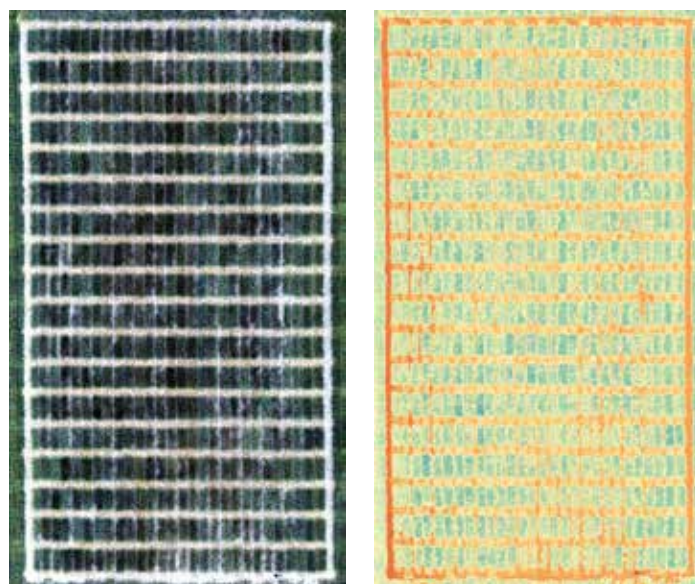
By Arron Carter

Professor and O.A. Vogel Endowed Chair of Wheat Breeding and Genetics, Washington State University

If you have recently been to a field day or heard me talking on the breeding program, you will have heard me talk about our work on high-throughput phenotyping. This is a term we use to generalize the work done on collecting images and other spectral data to inform us about the breeding lines we are evaluating and their overall plant health status. I like to say the images give us information about the plant that the eye can't typically see. We can estimate water content, photosynthetic efficiency, transpiration rates, and canopy temperature, all traits which I can't normally estimate with my eye when looking at a plant, but traits we think are important to developing new cultivars that will maintain high yield in the face of climate variability.

When I started at Washington State University (WSU) 13 years ago, genomic information was very hard to come by. Currently, technology has advanced sufficiently that genomic information can be quickly gathered on every line in the breeding program. This has resulted in utilizing statistical models, which were first developed for animal breeding, to predict future performance of current breeding lines. Using historical performance from thousands of lines within the breeding program, for which we have phenotypic and genotypic data, we can estimate future performance of new lines based on their genetic composition alone. What we now need is better phenotypic information to go into these prediction models.

While our past research has demonstrated that these prediction models can, with high accuracy, predict performance of lines regarding end-use quality and disease resistance, it has been harder to predict complex traits like grain yield. With so many traits like tiller number,



(Left) Winter wheat breeding plots located at Ritzville, Wash., as seen from the drone using a RGB camera. (Right) The same winter wheat breeding plots as shown in the RGB image, this time captured with a camera that shows NDVI spectral images. NDVI is used as an image to extract data associated with green health vegetation. In theory, the more green the plot is, the healthier, which has been correlated to overall grain yield.

spike size, number of kernels per spike, etc., making up final grain yield, it is hard to make predictions without collected data on all these correlated traits, something that would be very difficult to do on thousands of lines. Furthermore, yield has a complex interaction with the environment that it is being grown in, and variables such as rainfall, temperatures, soil conditions and many more also directly affect final grain yield. With all these complex interactions, more accurate estimations of parameters going into final grain yield are needed to maximize genomic prediction of this trait.

Our winter wheat breeding program has been using sensors to help understand grain yield since 2015. Over time, we have begun to understand what spectral traits are highly correlated with yield and when that data needs to be collected. These sensors have now been placed on drones, which allow us to image hundreds of breeding plots within a few hours. Data can then be extracted from these images to give us an understanding of how a plant is



Washington State University winter wheat breeding student Andrew Herr collects spectral data on breeding plots using a drone at the Spillman Agronomy Farm.

responding to different environments with regards to the previously mentioned correlated traits. We can now add spectral traits into our genomic prediction models to improve prediction accuracy with regards to grain yield and grain yield stability over time.

We know that we can improve genomic prediction of yield when we combine sensor data with other agronomic traits collected in the breeding program. Although an improvement, we still feel there is accuracy to gain. This comes in with weather information. We recently installed weather stations, in collaboration with METER Group Inc. (similar weather stations are part of the WSU AgWeatherNet system), to gain a better understanding of the environment the plants are growing in. Weather data will better help us understand temperature and rainfall patterns, as well as available soil moisture content, which will better help us understand grain yield at every location. As we better understand the environmental conditions that lead to final grain yield of each breeding line at each location, we hope to be able to incorporate this data into more complex genomic prediction models to better predict future performance of lines across environments. We currently do this by growing every line at as many locations as possible. So, if we can start predicting performance of lines in locations where we have not yet tested them, we should be able to select more broadly adapted lines for trialing.

So where does the future of plant breeding go with this information? The Internet of Things (IoT) is a group

of objects with sensors, software and processing ability, all connected to exchange data with other systems and devices over a communications network, like the internet. The best way to think about this is with the concept of a “smart home.” Today, you can have appliances, light fixtures, thermostats and security systems all connected and controlled through a communications device, like your cell phone. Transitioning this concept to plant breeding, soon we will have “smart fields.” Devices can be placed in fields with sensors that can monitor plant growth, disease, stress and other parameters, returning this data to the user in real time. As a plant breeder, I can have continuous data on plant growth, when diseases come into the field and which plants are affected, and at what time in the plant’s growth cycle is stress occurring. So instead of going out and flying drones at every field location, the IoT sensors will be placed in fields and provide continuous data for monitoring.

While the IoT concept is still in development, genomic prediction using high-throughput phenotyping and weather data is becoming routine selection within our breeding program. This prediction allows us to remove breeding lines that, based on genetics, will have a low potential of becoming a high yielding cultivar, allowing us to direct our resources to testing lines with higher genetic potential. This is all being done to release cultivars faster and with more confidence that they will be able to have high performance across multiple locations and in the face of annual climate variation. ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Volatility to continue for foreseeable future



By Mike Krueger
President and Founder, The Money Farm

Grain and oilseeds markets collapsed in dramatic fashion in June and early July. The collapse was almost unprecedented given the fact that the world fundamental outlook remains bullish and that there has been no resolution to the Russia/Ukraine war. Charts 1 and 2 show the dramatic drop in Chicago September wheat and December corn futures.

Futures prices for wheat, corn and soybean futures markets are now below where they were trading prior to the start of the Black Sea conflict back in late February. In the meantime, most fundamental signals have remained strong. Inverses in futures markets are still in place. Basis levels in cash markets remain at record or near-record levels. World crop production in several key countries is under some duress from warm and dry weather. There continues to be more market chatter about the potential for food shortages because of the lack of grain and oilseed shipments from Ukraine.

Nonetheless, the crash in futures markets has been relentless. There are many contributing factors to the exit from long positions in agricultural markets. Here are some of the issues that have impacted markets of every type:

- Financial markets have been under significant downward pressure since the start of 2022. Concerns about rapidly rising inflation (9.1% in July) coupled with worries about slow (or negative) economic growth have caused liquidation and contraction. Rising interest rates have also been a bearish factor.
- China continues off and on COVID-19 shutdowns. These total shutdowns have created worries about where China's economy is headed, and what that will mean for demand for everything, including soybeans, wheat and corn.
- The cryptocurrency markets have also become a

Chart 1: September wheat

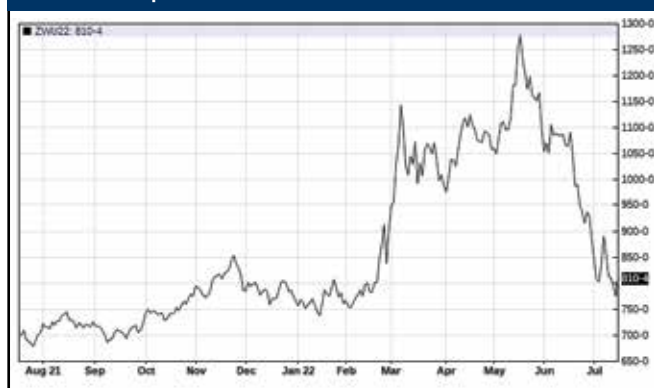
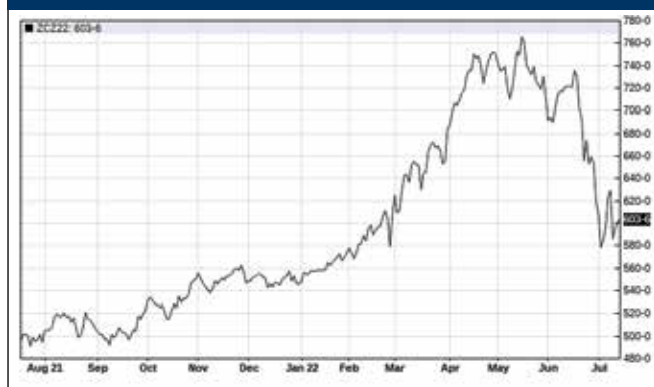


Chart 2: December corn



relative wasteland in recent months. Bitcoin traded as high as \$70,000 in November 2021 and below \$18,000 in early July. A number of crypto exchanges have filed for bankruptcy or closed. The trouble with cryptocurrencies is no one can identify the extent or depth of the risk or exposure that might be out there. That is a serious problem.

- All markets have been extremely volatile. That means that margin requirements have become very large. Margin call liquidation has fueled the declines as long positions are being liquidated in every market, sometimes to satisfy margin call requirements in

unrelated markets. It becomes a vicious circle.

- The pace of U.S. export sales has not reflected the tightening world stocks situation. Some analysts believe that domestic users have kept prices higher than world markets in an effort to guarantee supply, at least until the new crop becomes available. China did buy over 1 million metric tons (about 40 million bushels) of U.S. wheat in early July.

U.S. wheat production in 2022 is a very mixed bag. Last year's big hard red winter wheat crop was followed by a sharp reduction this year due to drought. That was offset by a much better white wheat crop this year following drought issues across the Pacific Northwest last year. In 2022, hard red spring wheat is projected to rebound nicely from last year's drought. Table 1 is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) July production estimates.

There is still a question about planted acres across the northern Plains because of the late, wet spring. The USDA will resurvey North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota acres in July and make any adjustments, if necessary, in the August report.

Shipments from Ukraine have been spotty at best. There have been increasing efforts to negotiate an "export corridor" with Russia, but as of mid-July, no agreement had been reached. Ukraine typically would export approximately 5 million metric tons (mmt) a month, most through Odessa and other Black Sea ports. Some analysts believe Ukraine could ship 1.5 to 2 mmt by truck and rail through eastern Ukraine. Those numbers seem far too high. The rail gauge is different once you enter Poland. That means rail cars must be transloaded. There are virtually no transload facilities today, although some are being built. Remember that Ukraine is the fourth largest exporter of corn in the world behind the U.S., Brazil and Argentina. The situation in Ukraine is far from settled.

Weather around the Northern Hemisphere will be the critical factor for the next 60 days or so. Western Europe has been hot and mostly dry, and that is impacting potential corn yields. The western U.S. Corn Belt has also turned hot and dry with forecasts for the same conditions to continue through July and into August. That could impact corn and soybean yields. The USDA is currently using record corn and soybean yields in their

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

	2021	2022
Hard Red Winter	749,500	585,123
Soft Red Winter	360,689	375,626
Winter White	167,187	239,942
All Winter	1,277,365	1,200,691
Hard Red Spring	297,366	585,123
All Wheat	1,645,764	1,780,819

supply/demand analysis. Ending stocks estimates are relatively tight, even with record yields. Just a 5% yield reduction would have major bullish consequences for the markets.

The world has been in a La Niña weather pattern for two years now. Some weather forecasters now believe we could remain in a La Niña pattern for a third year. This would be very unusual. A La Niña pattern typically means dry conditions in southern Brazil and Argentina and very good conditions in Australia. The situation in these three countries today mirrors this pattern. Argentina's wheat crop is struggling under very dry conditions as the planting season is ending. Australia's wheat crop got planted under very good conditions. Brazil's 2022 soybean crop was much smaller than expected because of dry conditions in the central and southern regions, as was soybean production in Paraguay and Argentina. There's no question weather, as always, will be a closely watched market factor.

Volatility in all markets will continue as far into the future as one can reasonably see. World supplies were tightening before the Russia/Ukraine conflict took Ukraine out of the export market. Agricultural commodity prices should rebound from current lows. The extent of the rebound will depend on how this growing season finishes. The second important factor will be the level of U.S. export sales going forward. ■

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.

Where WAWG started

In 1954, wheat growers split from the state Farm Bureau to start their own organization

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Nowadays, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is the main organization dedicated to legislative advocacy for Washington wheat growers, but it wasn't always that way. Fourteen years before growers first met under the WAWG banner, it was the Washington State Farm Bureau (WSFB) that was performing those duties.

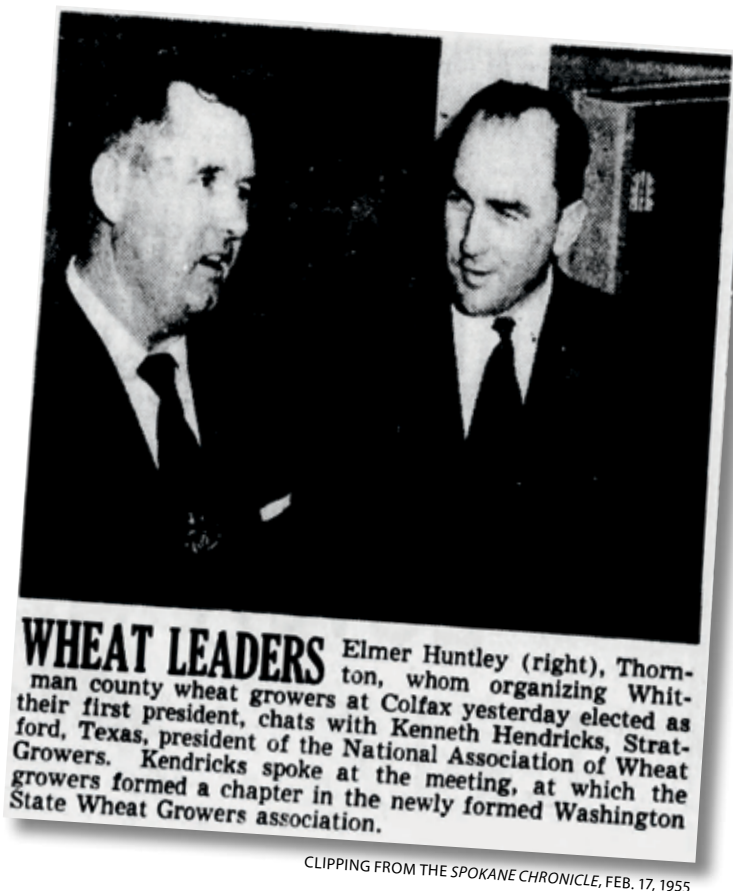
In February 1940, WSFB President Herbert F. Clark announced the formation of the Washington Wheat Growers League as a Farm Bureau affiliate that would be responsible for the WSFB's wheat program. In the announcement, Clark said the league had strong membership in Kittitas County, the Palouse and in southeast Washington grain regions. The league's immediate focus was to study the Agricultural Adjustment Act (legislation that provided price support for certain crops, along with marketing quotas to help keep supply in line with demand) and parity payments; support of caps on property taxes; study of highway and rail transportation; and backing Columbia River transportation development. In December 1941 at the annual WSFB convention, the wheat league expanded to include wheat farmers in North Idaho, renaming itself the Washington-Idaho Wheat League (WIWL).

The WIWL worked closely with the WSFB for many years, holding its annual convention immediately before the WSFB's and appearing as a partner in the editorial box of the WSFB's newsletter, the *Pacific Northwest Farm Bureau News*, until 1955. The two organizations even shared staff. R. D. Flaherty of Walla Walla was the managing editor and business manager of the newsletter for many years and served as secretary-treasurer of the WIWL from 1940 to 1942. By February 1954, however, wheat growers were contemplating striking out on their own. The WIWL officially disbanded in December 1954 "in an effort to resolve

conflicts of interest," according to a *Spokesman-Review* article from that period.

Wasting no time, wheat growers formed a new organization in Spokane on Dec. 3, 1954, and named it the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. The first elected officers were John Stephenson of Benge as president; Donald Moos of Edwall as vice president; Edgar L. Smith of St. John as second vice president; and Ken Parks of Fairfield as secretary.

At that first meeting, the group adopted resolutions that recognized the importance of



CLIPPING FROM THE SPOKANE CHRONICLE, FEB. 17, 1955

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the commodity-by-commodity approach in considering the problems of the group as well as the importance of cooperation with other agricultural groups. Another resolution recommended giving earnest consideration to a national multiple price system for wheat, urging 100 percent of parity for wheat used for human food domestically with the remainder to be sold for feed, seed and export at a competitive price.

The group's focus for the first year was on membership efforts and building strong county organizations.

"In our new association, every policy and every action will be born at the grassroots level," Stephenson told the *Spokane Chronicle* in an article on Dec. 24, 1954. "Farmers in each county will express their own opinions and the state association will take action only in accordance with the wishes of a clear majority of operating farmer-members."

WAWG's first steps to incorporation were taken in late December 1954 when a committee was formed to draw up by-laws. The committee included Archie Staley, Adams County; Charles Vollmer, Benton County; Richard Juris, Stevens County; Jake Ottmar, Lincoln County; and Dwelley Jones, Walla Walla County. The state executive board was also considering whether or not membership in the previous Washington-Idaho Wheat League should carry into the new association. Articles of incorporation were officially filed on Jan. 6, 1955, in Olympia, and a few days later, Stephenson announced that a full-time state WAWG office would be set up in the Old National bank building in Ritzville.

The effort to organize the counties got off the ground immediately. Within two weeks of WAWG's formation, 55 Adams County growers met and organized the first county wheat growers group. According to the *Spokesman-Review*, more than 200 farmers attended the charter meeting of the Walla Walla County WAWG chapter on Jan. 13, 1955. Garfield, Columbia, Spokane and Lincoln counties were also organized in January (see sidebar for more information).

At the beginning of February 1955, Stephenson told the *Spokesman-Review* that he

County growers organize

With the December 1954 formation of the state wheat growers association, county groups weren't far behind. According to newspaper archives, these counties quickly started to organize:

Adams County, Dec. 15, 1954: H. J. Holiday of Benge was elected county president with C. W. Eckhardt, Ritzville, as vice president; R. J. Martin of Ritzville as secretary; and Otto Amen, Ritzville, as treasurer.

Walla Walla County, Jan. 13, 1955: Dwelley Jones, Walla Walla, was elected president; Jack Schnell, Eureka, was chosen as vice president; Ernest Cowell as second vice president; and Ray Small, Lowden, as secretary-treasurer.

Garfield County, Jan. 26, 1955: No further information found.

Columbia County, Jan. 27, 1955: No further information found.

Spokane County, Jan. 28, 1955: Kenneth Parks, Fairfield, was elected president. He was joined by Milton Wolf, Latah, as vice president; Milton Lehn, Espanola, as second vice president; and Floyd Simpson, Cheney, as secretary-treasurer.

Lincoln County, Jan. 31, 1955: Keith Carlson, Edwall, as president; Gilbert Lybecker, Harrington, as vice president; Hale Simpson, Edwall, as second vice president; and Orrie Morse, Davenport, as secretary-treasurer.

Franklin County, Feb. 7, 1955: Frank Hart, president; Hal Hockett, vice president; Floyd Hudlow, second vice president; and Dennis Herron, secretary-treasurer.

Whitman County, Feb. 16, 1955: Elmer Huntley, Thornton, as president. No further information was found.

Benton County, Feb. 22, 1955: Charles Vollmer, president; Harold Easley, vice president; Allen Deffenbaugh, second vice president; and Glen Bayne, secretary-treasurer.

Grant County, Feb. 28, 1955: John Timm, Almira, as president; Chris Mordhorst, Wilson Creek, as vice president; Russell Higginbotham, Hartline, as second vice president; and Laurence Dormaier, Hartline, as secretary-treasurer.

Klickitat County, March 2, 1955: No further information was found.

Asotin County, March 25, 1955: Carl Ausman, Asotin, as president; S. T. Hanson, Clarkston, as vice president; Steve Black, Asotin, second vice president; and Archie Claassen, Clarkston, as secretary-treasurer.

Douglas County, March 31, 1955: No further information was found.

Okanogan County, April 12, 1955: John Goldmark, president. No further information was found.

Stevens County, organization meeting planned for May 17, 1955: No further information was found. ■



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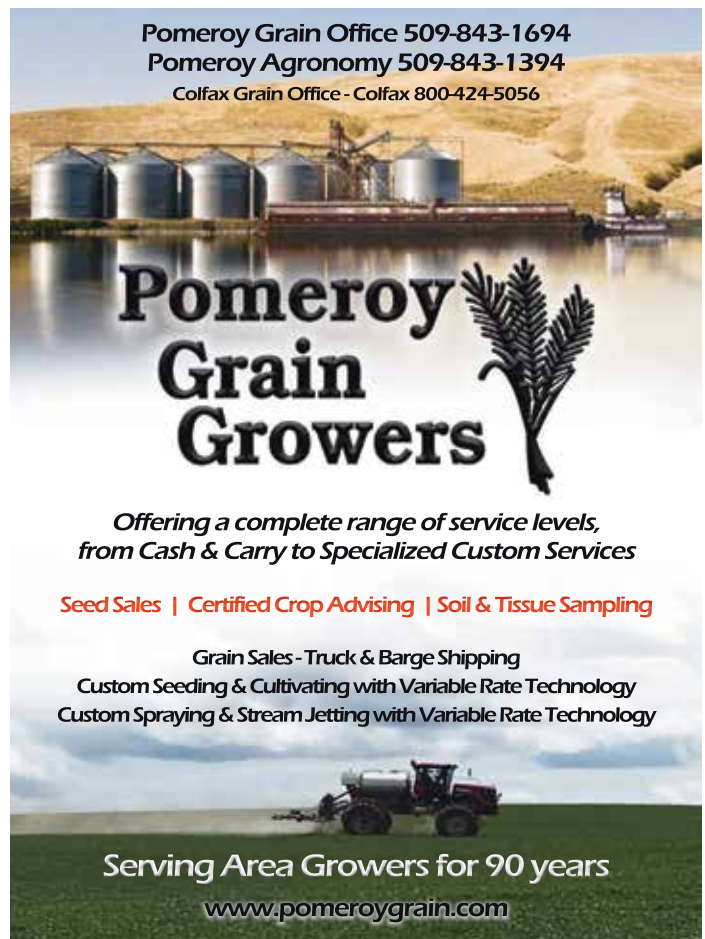
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Washington farmers are losing ground politically! The ability to protect our interests is slowly dwindling. Washington wheat producers need elected officials who know and understand the industry. Without these relationships our ability to remain competitive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

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

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

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

DONATION PROMISE

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

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

Fill out form and send, along with payment, to PO Box 184, Ritzville, WA 99169. Checks should be made out to the Washington Wheat PAC.



hoped that all wheat-producing counties would soon have their organization set up so a state-wide meeting could be held to formulate policy on research, markets, transportation and legislation.

"Until a general meeting of all our members is held, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers cannot endorse, support or contribute in any way to any legislation," he told the newspaper.

By the beginning of March, growers in Franklin, Whitman, Grant and Klickitat counties had also organized, just in time for the first full membership meeting of WAWG on March 7, 1955, in Ritzville, where members voted on association policies. According to a *Spokane Chronicle* article, WAWG now had 2,000 members. At the state meeting, members voted to become members of the National Association of Wheat Growers. Growers also:

- Called for the repeal of the Butler Amendment, which required that 50 percent of the surplus commodities going into foreign trade under the disposal law must be carried in American ships.
- Recommended to Congress that the price of wheat for 1956 should be set at least the same as in 1955.
- Favored passage of the reciprocal trade agreement act.
- Resolved to promote the use of Pacific Northwest wheat and wheat products for animal feed.

Around the middle of 1955, the WAWG executive committee voted to recommend the establishment of a wheat commission financed by assessments on all wheat grown east of the Cascades (the Washington Grain Commission would be established in 1958). In July 1955, Ivan Packard of Ritzville was hired full-time as the executive secretary of WAWG.

The association continued to grow throughout 1955. On Dec. 12, it held its first annual convention in Spokane. During the two-day event, members held committee meetings, attended business sessions to hear reports of officers and committees, and acted on resolutions. Members also elected a new slate of officers for the coming year. Don Moos of Edwall replaced Stephenson as president. Edgar Smith of St. John became vice president; Emmett Burrow of Walla Walla became second vice president and Otto Amen of Ritzville became treasurer.

In February of 1956, WAWG began publication of a limited-circulation newsletter, the *Wheat Growers Association Bulletin*. The first two issues were four pages long with no advertising. By the third issue, however, things changed. In his president's column, Moos said, "Our last *News Bulletin* brought such favorable response from our readers, members and new members, that we have decided to extend our circulation to include all the wheat growers of the state. It is our goal to present a policy beneficial to all

Washington wheat producers, and we, therefore, think it only right that news of our activities should be sent to all of you. To defray the expenses of this increased circulation, we have incorporated paid advertising, and I want to take this opportunity to thank our advertisers for their support."

Sixty-six years later, WAWG is still going strong. There are county wheat growers associations in 13 Eastern Washington counties: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Spokane, Yakima/Klickitat, Walla Walla and Whitman counties. Membership has fallen to about 1,700 since WAWG's incorporation, mainly due to the consolidation of farms. The *News Bulletin* has morphed into *Wheat Life*, and growers still gather in the winter for the annual convention (although these days Washington growers are joined by Idaho and Oregon growers). ■

Sources:

"Washington State Farm Bureau," by Trista Crossley, historylink.org/File/21183

Archives of the *Spokesman-Review*, the *Spokane Chronicle*, the *Daily Sun-News* and the *Tri-City Herald*, all accessed via newspapers.com.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

What are written crop insurance agreements?

By Curtis Evandenko
McGregor Risk Management Services

By definition, a written agreement is a document that alters the terms of a policy as authorized under the Common Crop Insurance Policy, Basic Provisions, Crop Provisions or Special Provisions of the multiperil crop insurance policy reinsured by the Federal Crop Insurance Provisions. A written agreement is seldom required in the production of wheat for the Pacific Northwest, as wheat is the predominate crop grown, insured and insurable in nearly all counties. That said, we have applied for and issued numerous written agreements for wheat rotational crops, as well as irrigated crops, that were not insurable in the county at that time.

To best understand what an approved written agreement can do, we must first set up how the policy is structured. The Common Crop Insurance Basic Provisions state the rights and responsibilities of the parties are specifically subject to the

Federal Crop Insurance Act and is an agreement to insure in return for payment of premium, subject to all the provisions of the policy.

The Crop Provisions are specific to each crop. The Small Grains Crop Provisions outline definitions, unit division, contract changes, cancellation and termination dates, the insured crop, insurance period, causes of loss, replanting, duties in the event of damage or loss, settlement of a claim, late planting, and prevented planting for small grains. The crop provisions for other crops — apples, canola or dry peas, for example — will follow a similar format but be specific to the insured crop in question.

The Special Provisions of Insurance are contained within the county actuarial for the specific crop, county and state. The actuarial documents provide specifics on the availability and plans of insurance for a particular county and state, including for crop types (winter or spring) and practices (irrigated, nonirrigated, continuous crop or summerfallow). The actuarials also include information on unit structure, prices, transitional yields, all dates corresponding to the crop, all rates, and all subsidy factors. The Special Provisions of Insurance provide a summary of the actuarial documents as well as general statements of insurability, clarification of definitions or dates, crop rotation requirements for insurability, quality determinations and measurements, and discount factor charts.

A written agreement can provide an exception to the standard crop insurance policy and would allow a producer to insure a crop that otherwise would not be insurable. Written agreements are typically applicable for the crop year in which they are signed, and the terms must be agreed to by both the Risk Management Agency (RMA), which provides the insurance offer, and the producer.

At last count, there are 16 different standard written agreements available nationwide, each with specific requirements and submission deadlines. Written agreements include:

- Requesting a premium rate change for high-risk rated areas of crop production, such as a lower rainfall area within a county or tillable river bottoms. Deadline for the crop to be insured is the sales closing date for that crop.
- Requests to establish coverage for acreage not planted or harvested in one of the three previous crop years. For example, former Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage left in grass for a couple of years after the CRP contract expired. Deadline for the crop to be insured is the sales closing date for that crop.
- Requests to establish coverage for a crop practice/type that is not currently insurable. For example, Benton County is a summerfallow-only county, meaning that for the wheat crop to be insurable, it must be grown on qualified summerfallow acreage. Recropped wheat acres are not insurable. This is for both spring and winter wheat. If a producer in Benton County wanted to insure recrop fall wheat or spring wheat, they would need to submit a written agreement to RMA's Spokane Regional Office for consideration. Deadline for submission is the acreage reporting date or the date specified in the Crop Provisions or Special Provisions.

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- Written unit agreements provide unit structure by irrigation systems or topographical features, canyons or rivers, rather than by a rectangular survey system. The rectangular survey system works great in North Dakota or Iowa; however, in our region, a field could encompass several sections and, in some instances, could be a single unit for the entire farm. The deadline for submission is the earliest acreage reporting date for the crop(s) to be included in the request. Producers don't need to submit a new request every year provid-

ed there are no changes to the farming operation.

- County without actuarial documents requests establish coverage for a crop in a county with no actuarial documents for that crop. Initially, canola was not widely grown in our region, so some counties didn't have insurance available. Sunflowers are another crop that is gaining interest in parts of the Pacific Northwest that might be considered for this request. Deadline for submission is the cancellation date in the Crop Provisions or Special Provisions for the initial request, and the sales closing date in subsequent years.

There are also requests for nursery plant list, rotation exception requests, special purpose corn, seed potato acreage, dry bean types, and unrated land. This gives a flavor for the variety of applications for written agreements. The takeaway I'd like to leave with you is this: If you're contemplating planting and insuring a crop out of the ordinary, have discussions with your crop insurance agent early in the planning stages so the necessary documentation and paperwork can be completed in a timely manner. ■

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

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QUOTE WORTHY

What legislators whose districts border the Snake River are saying about the Murray/Inslee draft report on breaching the lower Snake River dams.

“From the start, we have placed public and stakeholder engagement from communities across the Pacific Northwest as the foundation of any regional process. This continues to include consultation and advisement by federally recognized Tribes, whose unique perspectives and sovereignty each of us deeply appreciates. We value the diverse perspective of the many stakeholders who have already provided input toward the independent draft report, and we look forward to hearing much more.”

—Joint statement from Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Gov. Jay Inslee on the release of their lower Snake River dams draft report.



“We urge this administration to consider the facts, prioritize transparency, and utilize sound science and input from all Tribes, industry groups and the ratepayers themselves before coming to an outcome in any final report that would be catastrophic to the communities we represent.”

—Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.)

“The total estimated costs for breaching these dams are estimated by the Inslee-Murray report to be between \$10.3 to \$27.2 billion (noted as ‘low’ estimates). Breaching is more than an unnecessary and unfair burden to place upon communities throughout Washington state and the Pacific Northwest, it would be catastrophic. Especially when these families are already struggling from soaring energy costs.”

—Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)



“Removing the lower Snake River dams would be a disaster for the PNW. There is no scientific evidence that removing the dams would do anything to help endangered fish. However, it is certain that such a move would drive wheat prices through the roof at a time when we face an impending global food shortage and drive up energy costs while Americans are paying skyrocketing costs to fuel their cars and power their homes.”

—Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ore.)



“The four lower Snake River dams provide immense value to Idahoans, our economy and the Northwest as a whole. As our country faces increasingly hostile foreign energy suppliers and our own Administration’s out-of-control inflation that threatens our domestic energy reliability, the importance of our dams and the power generation they provide has never been clearer.”

—Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-Idaho)



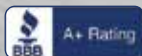


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A spring storm over Malone Farms in Douglas County. Photo by Amy Kenney.



Sawyer Scoggin (5) from Pomeroy reading his Wheat Life before bed. He lives and breathes farming and loves helping when he isn't forced to go to school. Photo by Alia Scoggin.



At 85 years old, Jerry Walter still gets out to check the wheat. He lives on the family's original homestead south of Odessa. Jerry's son, Bruce, now farms the land and is the 4th generation on a farm that dates back to 1893. Once a farmer always a farmer! Photo by Sheri Heidenreich.

Your wheat life...



Stuck on Horse Heaven. Who would of thought it?
Photo by Brian Andrew.



Preston Hatfield (4) helping us set the turbo max. The
Waitsburg McKay Elevator is in the background. Photo by
John McCraw.



Trying to spring seed at Bonnie Lake Land and Livestock in Rosalia. Photo by Michelle Bothman.

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.

AUGUST 2022

4-6 MOXEE HOP FESTIVAL. Parade, beer garden, live entertainment, food and crafts, games, BBQ cookoff. Moxee, Wash. evcea.org

5-7 KING SALMON DERBY. Up to \$20,000 in cash and prizes available. Registration required. Brewster, Wash. brewstersalmonderby.com

6 SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES. Enjoy the traditional features of Scottish Highland Games, such as massed bands, pipe band exhibitions, individual piping, heavy athletics and highland dancing. 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Spokane County Fair and Expo Center in Spokane Valley, Wash. spokanehighlandgames.net

10-13 YAKIMA VALLEY FAIR AND RODEO. PRCA rodeo, car show, parade, beer garden. County Fair Park in Grandview, Wash. yofair-rodeo.org

11-14 OMAK STAMPEDE. Parade, carnival, art show, rodeo dances and vendors. Omak, Wash. omakstampede.org

13 SWIM THE SNAKE. Only .7 of a mile, lots of flotilla support. Participants are REQUIRED to preregister at eventbrite.com/swimthesnake. Come watch the swimmers. Lyons Ferry, Wash. swimthesnakedotorg.wordpress.com

13 WATERVILLE PLATEAU FARMERS MARKET. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Pioneer Park in downtown Waterville. A variety of homemade/homegrown crafts, garden items and nonprofit information booths will be available. Local restaurants and food vendors. Open to the public. historicwatervillewa.org/events

16-20 GRANT COUNTY FAIR. Ag exhibits, livestock competitions, carnival, arts and crafts, entertainment, food. Moses Lake, Wash. gcfairgrounds.com

19-20 NATIONAL LENTIL FESTIVAL.

Stop by and see the world's largest bowl of lentil chili. Fun run, parade, softball tournament, beer garden. Pullman, Wash. lentilfest.com

19-28 NORTH IDAHO FAIR AND RODEO. Fireworks, monster trucks, demolition derby, entertainment, carnival. Kootenai County Fairgrounds in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. northidahostatefair.com

20-21 PIONEER POWER SHOW AND SWAP MEET. See the equipment of yesterday with vintage trucks and engines on display and watch our popular equipment parade. Learn about blacksmithing and watch demonstrations of the turn of the century sawmill and the apple packing line. Enjoy the quilt displays, other historic exhibits and more. See wheat threshing done the old-fashioned way and then enjoy freshly baked bread at the Bread Shack. Central Washington Ag Museum, Fullbright Park in Union Gap, Wash. centralwaagmuseum.org/pioneer-power-show-union-gap.asp

20-27 BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR AND RODEO. Demolition derby, parade, live entertainment. Kennewick, Wash. bentonfranklinfair.com

23-27 BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR AND RODEO. Demolition derby, BBQ cookoff, parade, live entertainment. Kennewick, Wash. bentonfranklinfair.com

25-27 LINCOLN COUNTY FAIR. Rodeo, livestock, exhibits, food and games. Davenport, Wash. lincolncountywafair.com

25-28 NCW FAIR. Live entertainment, carnival, livestock sale, rodeo and horse. Waterville, Wash. ncwfair.org

25-28 NORTHEAST WASHINGTON FAIR. Exhibits, parade, talent show, live entertainment, Colville, Wash. stevenscountywa.gov

27 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.

30 SNAKE RIVER ROCK FESTIVAL. Live rock, food vendors, kids area, dry camping, beer garden and one heck of a sound system! 12-10 pm, Nez Perce County Fairgrounds, Lewiston, Idaho. facebook.com/SnakeRiverRF

31-SEPT. 5 PIG OUT IN THE PARK. Music and food. Riverfront Park in Spokane, Wash. spokanepigout.com

SEPTEMBER 2022

1-4 WHEAT LAND COMMUNITIES' FAIR. Rodeo, exhibits, entertainment, cowboy church. Ritzville Rodeo Grounds. fair.goritzville.com/fair.php

2-5 ELLENSBURG RODEO AND KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR. Carnival, midway, hoedown, pancake breakfast, parade, entertainment. Ellensburg, Wash. ellensburgrodeo.com

3-4 METHOW VALLEY RODEO. Saddle bronc, bulls, barrel racing and junior events. Held at the rodeo grounds, about halfway between Twisp and Winthrop. methowvalleyrodeo.com

9-18 SPOKANE COUNTY INTERSTATE FAIR. Livestock exhibits, rides, food booths, rodeo and entertainment. Fair and Expo Center, Spokane Valley. spokanecounty.org/fair/sif/

10 WATERVILLE PLATEAU FARMERS MARKET. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Pioneer Park in downtown Waterville. A variety of homemade/homegrown crafts, garden items and nonprofit information booths will be available. Local restaurants and food vendors. Open to the public. historicwatervillewa.org/events

10-17 PENDLETON ROUNDUP. Rodeo, parade, entertainment. Pendleton, Ore. pendletonroundup.com

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

14-17 OTHELLO FAIR. Food, entertainment, livestock. Adams County Fairgrounds in Othello, Wash. othellofair.org

15-18 DEUTESCHFEST. German music, food and crafts. Parade. Biergarten, fun run. Odessa, Wash. deuteschfest.com

17 PALOUSE DAYS. Fun run, pancake breakfast, parade, car show, live music, duck race, ping pong ball 'drop', more! visitpalouse.com/palouse-events/

18 PIONEER FALL FESTIVAL. Tour the Bruce Mansion, see pioneer craft demonstrations, antique farm equipment and tools, and horse-drawn carriage rides. Food and vendors. 11 am-4 pm. Bruce Mansion, Waitsburg, Wash. waitsburgmuseum.org/fall-festival

23-25 SE SPOKANE COUNTY FAIR. Exhibits, carnival, pancake breakfast, parade, 3 on 3 basketball tournament, pie eating contest, entertainment. Rockford, Wash. sespokanecountyfair.org

23-25 GREAT PROSSER BALLOON RALLY. Sunrise and night-time balloon launches, harvest festival, farmers market, street dance. Prosser, Wash. prosserballoonrally.org

23-OCT. 2 CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE FAIR. Entertainment, beer garden, monster trucks, demo derby, food and carnival. State Fair Park in Yakima, Wash. fairfun.com

24-25 VALLEYFEST. Duathlon, family bike ride, car show, pancake breakfast, entertainment. Mirabeau Point Park in Spokane Valley, Wash. valleyfest.org ■

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 description.



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