

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

DECEMBER | 2022

*Happy
Holidays*

from
The Washington Association
of Wheat Growers

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Reports mark Ecology's work in the
Hangman Creek Watershed

Eastern Washington producers exploring
harvest weed seed control

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Superfood? Super goal

Tractor throwback in the Palouse

WHEAT LIFE

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WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



Introducing the 'new kid'

By Andy Juris

We've all been there. Sitting at the local café/coffee pot/rural community news center when a strange vehicle pulls into town. "That's the new kid" one of the local farmers says. "He's taken over the old Smith place." Folks smile and shake their heads, bless his heart but he doesn't know what he's gotten himself into. "Just look at them boots" as Alan Jackson says!

This scene has played itself out in probably every rural community around the country a hundred times. I've been a part of a few myself. And now I find myself in the position of being the new kid driving into town! Those who have previously served as president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) have done an excellent job. Obviously, I have big shoes to fill. So, who is this new kid with "them fancy boots and new ideas?"

I'm a 4th generation wheat farmer from Bickleton in the western Horse Heaven Hills. My great-grandfather, originally from Cle Elum, bought our farm in 1930 after working on many of the local farms and leasing ground for a few years. Today, my dad, Ron Juris, and I grow dryland wheat, forage grains and dryland alfalfa.

After I left home for college, I attended the University of North Dakota where I obtained a degree in aerospace science. I taught at the university for a couple years before leaving to fly for the airlines. After about 10 years of weathering the chaos of post-September 11 and the economic downturn of 2008, my wife, Jen, and I decided to return home to the farm. Farming in dry, arid eastern Klickitat County has proved to be a challenge far greater than flying an airliner, but getting to face those challenges while working with my dad and grandfather has been a rewarding experience.

About nine years ago, I became the WAWG board representative for both Klickitat and Yakima counties. While I had been involved with various advocacy organizations during my time with the airlines, I had not truly considered what exactly WAWG did for farmers until I was asked to represent our county by former longtime board member, Neal Brown. After several years on the board, I came to really appreciate the role that our organization plays in advocating for Washington wheat farmers in Olympia and in Washington, D.C. With less than 2% of the U.S. population actively involved in agriculture, it is more important than ever that policymakers and the public are aware of how their food is grown, and what steps need to be taken to ensure a safe and stable food supply.

As I look forward to this next year as your new president, there will be plenty to keep me busy. Among other things, we will be actively looking to meet with new members of Congress as well as continuing conversations with sitting members. We will be active in advocating for all of you as the 2024 Farm Bill is negotiated, and we will continue our staunch support of the Snake River dams.

I am a firm believer that Washington wheat farmers are amongst the most resourceful and productive small grains producers in the nation. As a strong believer in a team approach to problem-solving, I call on all wheat growers to participate in county and state board meetings, to get involved in the legislative process, and to educate the public on the amazing work you all do every day. The issues facing us this next year are many and concerning; however, together we can (as we have before) continue to be the breadbasket of the Pacific Northwest, both for our consumers here and our valued customers abroad. So, let's get to work! ■

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WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

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WAWG at WORK

ADVOCATING FOR THE WHEAT FARMERS OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

WAWG board sets dates for annual Olympia advocacy trip

At the last board meeting in late October, Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leaders and staff began transitioning from the growing season into the meeting season.

The board set tentative dates for the association's annual Olympia Days of Jan. 23-24, 2023. Unlike the past two years, growers are hopeful that they'll be able to visit in-person with legislators in their offices. WAWG leaders were also preparing to travel to Salt Lake City to take part in the National Association of Wheat Growers' fall meeting, which is held jointly with U.S. Wheat Associates. See page 10 for more on the trip.

WAWG lobbyist Diana Carlen gave a state legislative update. Carlen is participating on the Legislature's riparian buffer taskforce, which had held its first meeting earlier in the month. Carlen said the general consensus, so far, is acknowledgement that salmon runs are decreasing, voluntary programs are critical and underfunded, and more money is needed. She said there was disagreement that agriculture is the problem and hopes that the taskforce will consider scientific facts as it progresses. Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director, has also been invited to participate in the taskforce.

In other state legislative news, the agricultural lobby is still working on the agricultural overtime issue. Carlen said a harvest exemption doesn't necessarily work for some commodities, and the group is considering other avenues, including tax

incentives or a grant program that would reimburse producers for overtime pay.

In the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) report, Casey Chumrau, the WGC's new CEO, introduced herself (see page 38 for more on Chumrau). She told the board that Washington's 2022 wheat crop quality looks good. Unfortunately, the high U.S. dollar is hurting exports, and commercial sales of most classes are down from last year, which was the lowest in 10 years.

Jon Wyss, state executive director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), talked



COUNTIES MEET. Spokane County growers (above) met in Rockford last month where they discussed county issues, including working with the Washington State Department of Ecology over water quality issues in the Hangman Creek Watershed and heard updates from the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Washington Grain Commission. (Below) At their annual meeting in Ritzville, Adams County growers heard a market report from Ritzville Warehouse Company's Pat Yerxa, and updates from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, the Washington Grain Commission and the Washington Wheat Foundation.



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about the agency's recent issue where producers, mostly in Whitman County, were erroneously enrolled in the CP15A program. Most of those producers were able to transfer to the Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI) program and not miss a payment, but due to some soil scores, some producers were not. Many of those producers will go into the Conservation Reserve Program instead and will not get a payment next year.

Wyss reminded producers that Dec. 15 is the acreage reporting deadline.

Keith Griswold, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Washington assistant state conservationist for programs, was also at the board meeting. He said Washington state was fourth in the West Region for practice implementation for the fiscal year, and about half of the state NRCS budget was earmarked for the Conservation Stewardship Program.

The next WAWG state board meeting was held during the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention at the end of November. ■

RMA seminar to cover whole farm revenue protection

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is inviting producers interested in learning more about the Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm Insurance programs to attend a regional workshop, either in-person or virtually, on Dec. 7 at 11:30 a.m. PST.

The workshop will be held at the Washington State University Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee, Wash. A

2023 wheat ambassadors selected

Two high school seniors have been selected to serve as Washington Wheat Ambassadors for the upcoming year. Shaley Tiegs of Fairfield and Angelina Widman of Rosalia were selected after an initial written application process that included submitting a short introductory video. The seniors will be awarded scholarships funded by the Washington Wheat Foundation and will represent Washington wheat farmers at various civic and community events and will participate in Washington Association of Wheat Growers' advocacy meetings with state agencies and legislators.

Shaley Tiegs

Tiegs is the daughter of Brian and Rachel Tiegs and grew up on her family's Spokane County wheat farm. She attends Liberty High School, where she is active in FFA and the National Honor Society. She also plays on the varsity volleyball team. In her spare time, she likes to read and show pigs. As a wheat ambassador, she is most looking forward to the trip to Olympia to meet with state legislators.



"I'm so excited and glad for this amazing opportunity. I cannot wait to make the most of it," she said. "I'm excited to network and meet new people. Hopefully those connections will last throughout a lifetime."

Tiegs said she's always been very involved in the family's farm and hopes to continue to be involved in agriculture as an agronomist by majoring in crop science in college. "I've known agronomists my whole life and been around them. Just knowing and seeing how important they are to my dad and the family farm, it pushes me to want to do that as well," she explained.

Angelina Widman

Widman is the daughter of Allen and Emmy Widman. The Widmans raise poultry and crops on their family farm near Rosalia. Like Tiegs, Widman is a senior at Liberty High School and is nearing completion of her associate degree through the Running Start program at Spokane Falls Community College.



Widman is an active member of FFA and placed third in state in prepared public speaking. She participates in cross country and loves to run and bake — especially with her family's own milled flour. Widman plans to attend the University of Idaho to study animal and vet science. She said she applied for the ambassador program because it seemed like a natural fit with her public speaking experiences.

"I'm pretty excited (about the opportunity)," Widman said. "I'm looking forward to expanding my knowledge of the wheat industry. I've been involved so much with poultry and that side of farming that I don't have as much knowledge as I'd like to. I'm also looking forward to learning from other people and getting to know the industry and the people in it." ■



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link to the event will be posted at rma.usda.gov/Topics/Outreach-and-Education/RMA-Roadshow. Producers and stakeholders will learn about the latest updates and improvements to these two programs. Those improvements include:

- Doubling the maximum insurable revenue under the Whole Farm Revenue Protection, now up to \$17 million.
- More than tripling the size of farm operations eligible for Micro Farm to \$350,000 in approved revenue.
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“We want to make sure farmers and ranchers know about these very important insurance options,” said Marcia Bunker, RMA administrator. “The RMA Roadshow will include me and leadership to highlight important improvements to Whole Farm and Micro Farm and answer your questions.”

An RSVP is not required to attend the event virtually, and attendees will have a chance to submit written questions during the workshop. ■

WAWG staff, leaders take part in NAWG fall meeting

Last month, Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leaders and staff traveled to the National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) fall board meeting in Salt Lake City, where they took part in committee meetings and considered resolutions to help guide the national organization.

“We discussed research, trade and supply chain issues,” said Michelle Hennings,

WAWG’s executive director. “We also considered the wheat industry’s next steps for the farm bill. With the election over, we anticipate Congress will begin working on that legislation in earnest, and we want to make sure wheat has a seat at the table.”



WAWG secretary/treasurer and Benton County grower Anthony Smith (back row, second from right) took part in the Bayer Leadership program over the weekend.



(Above) Marci Green (second from right), a Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) past president and a Spokane County grower, sits on the National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) Budget Committee. (Below) WAWG Vice President and Klickitat County grower Andy Juris (third from left) is on NAWG’s Operations and Planning Committee. Sitting next to Juris is Nicole Berg, NAWG president and a Benton County Grower.



Several WAWG leaders sit on NAWG committees, including Vice President Andy Juris, who sits on the Operations and Planning Committee, the Nominating Committee and is the vice chair on the Domestic and Trade Committee. Marci Green, WAWG past president, sits on the Budget Committee, and Past President Howard McDonald sits on the Environment and Research Committee. ■

Wheat foundation accepting scholarship applications

The National Wheat Foundation is now accepting applications for the Jerry Minore Scholarship, honoring students pursuing a career in agriculture. The scholarship is available to college students for the 2023 academic year, with an application deadline of Dec. 31, 2022. Interested students can apply on the wheat foundation’s website at

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"The scholarship is meant to support students' efforts who have a passion for agriculture in their studies," said Joe Kejr, chairman of the National Wheat Foundation. "We hope to see these students play a role in developing sound ag policy, research new technologies, or other discoveries important to wheat growers, agriculture and society."

The late Jerry Minore was a BASF senior market manager and a liaison to the wheat industry. Since his unexpected death in 2012, BASF has partnered with the National Wheat Foundation to fund scholarships and honor his

advocacy efforts for wheat growers.

"We are proud to partner with the National Wheat Foundation to find students who have shown a commitment to our industry and a willingness to honor Jerry's legacy and enthusiasm for agriculture," said Jeff Blackwood, BASF policy lead, government affairs and National Wheat Foundation board member. "BASF is proud to invest in the best and brightest ag students to help them achieve their career goals. We hope these students will make positive and important innovations in the agriculture industry." ■

Sponsors, exhibitors help make 2022 convention a success

The 2022 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention has closed the books on another successful event. Join us next year back in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Nov. 14-16, 2023, for the 2023 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention. Because of the deadlines for the December issue of *Wheat Life*, coverage of the 2022 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention will appear in the January 2023 issue.

The wheat organizations of Idaho, Oregon and Washington want to thank everybody who made the convention possible, especially our sponsors, industry supporters and exhibitors.

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POLICY MATTERS

No red wave in Washington; Democrats retain majorities

By Diana Carlen
WAWG Lobbyist

While there are a couple of legislative races still too close to call, it is clear that Democrats will expand their majorities slightly. In the Senate, Democrats have picked up one seat (29-20) as Rep. Sharon Shewmake (D-Bellingham) has defeated Sen. Simon Sefzik (R-Ferndale) who was appointed last January to replace Sen. Doug Ericksen after he passed away in December 2021. In the House, Democrats are close to picking up one seat (58-40) in the 10th Legislative District, but the race is too close to call. Now that the election is over, House and Senate leaders will meet to elect their leadership and determine committee structure and composition for the 2023 Legislative Session.

Economic revenue forecast updated

On Sept. 21, the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council released the updated September 2022 Economic Forecast. Once again, projections for Washington's current two-year budget period increased, this time by approximately \$43 million more than what was anticipated from the last quarterly update.

The update, however, was not all good news. The numbers released by the council reflect a decrease for the next two-year budget cycle (ending in 2025) by \$495 million. The decrease in collected revenues predicted for the 2023-25 biennium is due to several factors, including high inflation, rising interest rates and lower personal income.

No new gas vehicles by 2035

At the end of August, Gov. Inslee announced that Washington state will follow California and require all new light-duty cars and trucks sold in Washington to meet zero-emission vehicle standards by 2035. California's decision is having a ripple effect, triggering a process by which Washington must enact the same rules. That's because in 2020, Washington legislators passed a law tying Washington's vehicle emissions standards to California's. This year, Washington legislators set a goal of phasing out sales of new internal combustion-powered cars by 2030.

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) must go through a rule-making process to finalize the details of Washington's phase-out plan, with final adoption expected by the end of this month.



Minimum wage increases

Washington state's minimum wage will increase to \$15.74 an hour in January, up \$1.25 an hour. It is being reported that this will be the nation's highest state minimum wage. Cities can set higher minimum wages if they choose, which Seattle (\$17.27 an hour), Sea-Tac (\$17.54 an hour), and Tukwila (\$19 an hour) have done. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour.

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) has also calculated new minimum salary requirements for managers and other employees who are exempt from overtime rules. The 2023 minimum salary for overtime-exempt employees working for employers with 50 or fewer workers is \$57,293.60 a year, or 1.75 times what a full-time minimum wage worker earns. The minimum salary is \$65,478.40 a year for larger employers.

L&I proposes workers comp rate increase

Recently, L&I proposed a 4.8% increase in workers compensation insurance tax rates for 2023. The proposed increase comes on the heels of a 2022 rate increase of 3.1%.

L&I reported that the increase would work out to an additional \$61 jointly from employers and workers per year. L&I also noted that workers will continue to pay on average about a quarter of the premium, a similar percentage to that paid in 2022. If adopted, the new rate will take effect at the beginning of next year. ►



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Paid family leave program facing deficit

The state's paid family leave program will have an \$8.7 million deficit by the end of 2022 according to consultants hired by the state. The report shows that the current premium rate is not keeping up with the demand for this state program that began in 2020.

In response, the state's Employment Security Department announced premiums on workers' wages will rise on Jan. 1 to 0.8% from the current 0.6%. Of this, employers with 50+ employees pay up to 26.78%, and employees will pay 73.22%.

Ecology finalizes cap and invest rules

At the end of September, Ecology finalized the regulations for the state's first cap-and-trade program. Under the Climate Commitment Act passed by the Legislature in 2021, Ecology is required to implement the program by Jan. 1, 2023. Washington is only the second state in the country to adopt such a program.

Under the cap-and-invest program, businesses and organizations responsible for 75% of Washington's greenhouse gas emissions will have to obtain allowances to cover their emissions. Over time, the number of these allowances will be reduced. Some allowances will be awarded at no charge, while others will be sold at quarterly auctions, with the first auction planned for the second half of February 2023. The Legislature designated three business types — electric utilities, natural gas utilities and emission-intensive, trade-exposed entities — that receive some of their emissions allowances for free. These businesses must report additional information to determine the number of no-cost allowances they should receive.

L&I proposes permanent heat rule

L&I is building on the temporary rulemaking implemented earlier this summer to draft permanent rulemaking for ambient heat exposure in the workplace. The temporary rule lays out multiple requirements for employers once the temperature reaches a specific trigger temperature. Some of the requirements under the current rule include:

- Providing that the required water is cool enough to safely drink.
- Providing adequate access to shade.
- Mandating cool-down rest periods.
- Allowing and encouraging workers to take additional paid preventative cool-down rest.
- Encouraging close observation of newly assigned employees for 14 days.
- Observing employees for signs of heat-related illness.

The updated draft rule notably deviates from the temporary rule by lowering the trigger temperature to 80 degrees (52 degrees if wearing nonbreathable clothing), considering the expansion of meal and rest break requirements under high heat procedures, and applying the rule year-round (previously the rule was only in effect from May through September). ■

Ag groups call on Congress to reaffirm pesticide pre-emption

In a letter to congressional leadership, more than 300 agriculture, environment, academic, infrastructure and other stakeholder groups asked Congress to reaffirm federal pesticide pre-emption on labeling and packaging. Failing to do so, the groups warn, could hold disastrous consequences for food security, the environment, public health, vital infrastructure and other uses where pesticides provide important societal benefits.

The letter, which drew 332 signers including the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), called on Congress to reaffirm that states may not impose additional labeling or packaging requirements that conflict with federal findings.

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act is clear that states "shall not impose or continue in effect any requirements for labeling or packaging in addition to or different from those required" by the federal government.

However, in recent years, states have sought to impose health claim label requirements that directly contradict federal findings. This not only risks eroding public trust in science and evidence-based regulation, but also opens the door for a patchwork of conflicting state and municipal labels that could disrupt commerce and limit access to vital tools.

"Between drought, war and supply chain issues, farmers' viability to feed the world is now more critical than ever," said Nicole Berg, Washington state wheat farmer and NAWG president. "Farmers rely on crop protection tools to grow healthy, sustainable and affordable food. Too much is on the line to allow the emergence of an unscientific patchwork of state pesticide labels that would threaten grower access to these tools."

Many signers of the letter sent a separate letter to President Biden in May urging him to withdraw a brief submitted by the solicitor general to the U.S. Supreme Court that erroneously suggested that state health claim labels are not preempted by federal regulatory findings. ■

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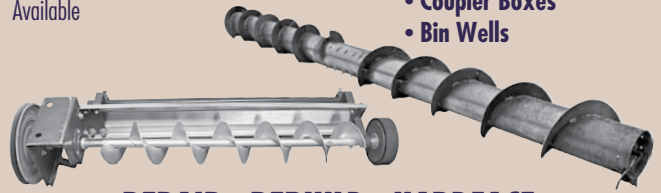


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Ambassador experience highlighted need to protect family farms

By Tate Nonnemacher

2022 Washington Wheat Ambassador

I have had so many opportunities as the Washington Wheat Ambassador.

Last December, I attended the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention and delivered a presentation on the rising costs of inputs in agriculture. I listened to the perspective of those farmers, discussing what they feel the challenges are on their farms.

Then I traveled to Olympia with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers to attend meetings with our legislators to lobby for the wheat industry. We discussed problems that the local farmers have talked to me about. The costs of agricultural inputs, such as fuel, fertilizer and spray, are rising dramatically. Half the state is in a drought. Corporate farms are taking over family farms, which distorts markets and leaves farmers and ranchers vulnerable to abuse and unfair practices. Because farmers rely on both buyers and sellers for their business, concentrated markets squeeze them at both ends. I hope that our presence in Olympia can in some way help make a positive impact on our wheat industry.

Right before harvest, I had another great opportunity. I was interviewed by Farmland Company in the famous "Kitfox" airplane while flying over the local wheat fields. This interview was added to their podcast. Not only did I get a bird's-eye view of my local farming community, I also got to share my perspective as a next generation farmer to a broad audience.

I am currently studying field and crop management at Washington State University. I have a majority of my college paid for in generous community scholarships as well as the scholarship provided with the wheat ambassador position. With this financial assistance and because



I took many college credit classes throughout high school, I intend to earn my bachelor degree in three years and get out of college with no debt. Then I'll begin my journey as a full-time agronomist. Since the family farm isn't going anywhere, neither am I. Eastern Washington has one of the largest markets for wheat; I'd be remiss to leave it.

Becoming a Washington Wheat Ambassador has created a desire in me to protect the future of agriculture by promoting the family farm. Throughout this experience, I learned that sometimes you need to travel across the state to benefit your community at home. I realize that we all have a voice if we choose to use it. I realized that I am not only capable of influencing change, but I can be persuasive and successful at it. I'm so grateful for this opportunity to serve as your Washington Wheat Ambassador, where I've learned that my purpose is to make a difference and positively impact future generations of farmers. ■

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Watershed work update

TWO REPORTS MARK ECOLOGY'S WORK ON HANGMAN CREEK WATER QUALITY ISSUES

By Trista Crossley
Editor, Wheat Life

This year, water quality work in the Hangman Creek Watershed was marked by two reports released by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology): the “Nutrients and Sediment Pollutant Source Assessment, 2018,” that was released in May, and the “Hangman Settlement Agreement 2021 Annual Report,” released in August. Both documents detail Ecology’s efforts to improve water quality in the watershed and help set the stage for what comes next, namely that more work is needed despite significant improvements.

“The watershed is improving a lot. Water quality is improving, and there’s been a lot of really positive momentum in the watershed. We certainly remain committed to doing our work in a way that recognizes the value and importance of dryland agriculture production,” explained Chad Atkins, Ecology’s watershed unit supervisor for Eastern Washington. “This plays out with all the different projects we’ve been working on, that we really don’t have to choose between clean water and healthy, productive farms. We feel like we can have both.”

Nutrient, sediment assessment

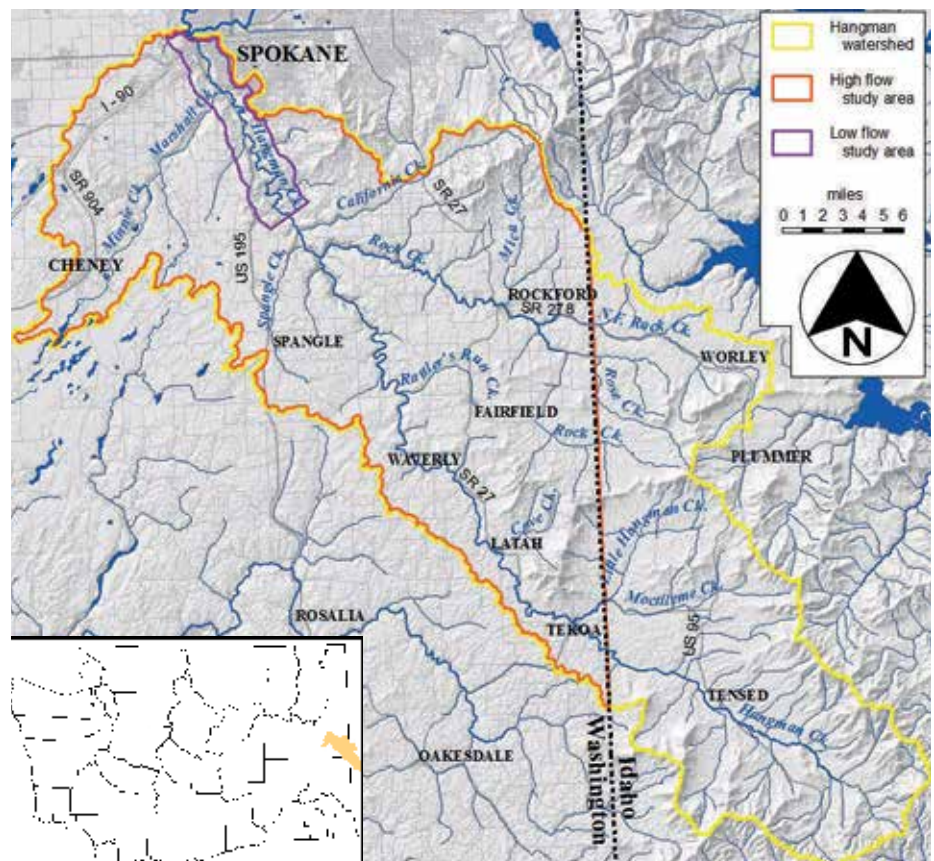
The “Nutrients and Sediment Pollutant Source Assessment, 2018,” is the culmination of a multi-year study to evaluate current conditions and trends in Hangman Creek and quantify the sediment and nutrient reductions needed to meet total maximum daily load (TMDL) goals as established by Ecology in 2009 and 2010.

The assessment found that while sediment conditions in Hangman Creek have improved substantially over the last four decades — by almost 75% — they remain extremely high during the springtime high-flow season and show a “strong sensitivity” to agricultural management practices. The report concludes that meeting the TMDL for total phosphorus will require eliminating the vast majority of springtime sediment (95%) and phosphorus (76%) in the creek through a “transformational change in practices” throughout the watershed.

What does that mean for producers? According to Atkins, it's expanding existing practices that reduce sediment delivery, such as conservation tillage and direct seeding, and improving riparian conditions that reduce bank erosion.

“Farmers have made a lot of progress on the conservation tillage piece and continue to do so,” he said. “That riparian piece is more of challenge, and so that’s something we are going to need to be focusing more on moving forward. We think we can meet water quality standards in the watershed. That’s the goal. We believe that by continuing the progress that has been made, we can get there.”

In the past few years, Ecology has invested more than \$7 million in the wa-



The assessment found that nearly all of the springtime sediment and phosphorus in Hangman Creek originates in the upper two-thirds of the watershed, while summertime total phosphorus (about 60%) and dissolved inorganic nitrogen (about 95%) that reaches the mouth of the creek originates in the lower watershed and is associated with groundwater.

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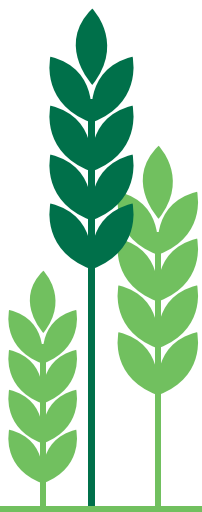





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tershed in the form of low interest loans for conservation tillage equipment, payments to cover the cost for direct seeding and custom seeding, and the cost for riparian restoration work. The department is partnering with the Spokane Conservation District on a \$1 million pilot program that will reimburse producers for lost income created by riparian buffers by matching the value of the crop displaced by the buffer. Atkins said they've committed much of the \$1 million already, which will address 80 to 100 acres of riparian area.

Adriane Borgias, Ecology's water quality section manager, added that part of that transformational change is also on Ecology.

"We've listened to what landowners in that area want, and what they see as necessary to move forward. The project that Ecology and the Spokane Conservation District have going on with some of the reimbursement for lost use of land, etc., that's a really new approach for us, and that's transformational for us, too. It (transformational change) goes both ways," she said.

In order to assess where the sediment and nutrients were coming from, the report breaks the watershed into subbasins. While nearly 100% of the sediment and phosphorus originated in the upper two-thirds of the watershed where dryland agriculture is the predominant land use, the report found subbasins in that area varied widely in their contributions. Little Hangman Creek, Upper Rock and Rock Creek Canyon subbasins were at the top of the list for sediment and phosphorus. Rattler's Run and Rock Creek Canyon were top of the list for nitrogen. The difference between subbasins was not what the Ecology team had anticipated.

"(The report) showed that they all needed work, but it was interesting to see a couple of subbasins that kind



A grass filter strip being established along Hangman Creek. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

of rose to the top in terms of the amount of work they needed. Maybe, on day one, we wouldn't have thought that was the case," Atkins explained.

The assessment recommendations include:

- Ecology, conservation districts, farm associations and other stakeholders should continue to promote and encourage the widespread adoption of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that have been evaluated for their protection of water quality, such as conservation tillage, residue management and vegetated riparian buffers, among others.
- Ecology and other stakeholders should continue to implement BMPs that have been shown to be effective for mitigating human caused streambank erosion, and BMPs that reduce peak flow runoff, among others.
- Ecology and other stakeholders should also continue to work to reduce other nonpoint sources of nutrients, such as lawn fertilizer, septic tanks, and animal waste.

The "Nutrients and Sediment Pollutant Source Assessment, 2018," report can be downloaded from Ecology's website at apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2203004.pdf.

Settlement's annual report

The annual report is a condition of the settlement agreement reached in 2018 between Ecology and the Spokane Riverkeeper. It describes the work Ecology and its partners did in 2021, including evaluation work, funding and outreach efforts. Atkins pointed out that work in the watershed isn't solely focused on agriculture. One of the projects they just finished was moving several fairways on the Latah Valley Golf Course back from the creek and planting the stream banks. They've also installed educational signs about Hangman Creek in strategic locations.

"There's a number of different efforts underway that we are hoping continues to move the ball forward," Atkins



A livestock fencing and planting project along California Creek, a tributary of Hangman Creek. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

said. As far as enforcement actions, Atkins said Ecology has contacted 78 producers since 2018, with the majority working on compliance and implementing changes. Ecology has issued three orders, which aren't penalties but are issued after technical and financial assistance efforts have been exhausted. Orders ask landowners to implement specific actions to protect water quality. Two of the actions were for livestock sites; the other was a dryland agriculture site. If a landowner refuses to take action, the next step is to levy penalties.

"That's typically the next step if we fail to implement an order. But again, 78 contacts, 3 orders and no penalties so far ... so we really feel like we are making a lot of progress without having to use those regulatory tools," Atkins said, adding that the two livestock sites are being implemented, and Ecology is in contact with the dryland producer.

The report also sets out priorities for 2022 that included completing a public survey, reviewing the settlement's action plan and continued funding for watershed projects.

Borgias said both reports will help keep Ecology on track with water quality improvements in the Hangman Creek Watershed, and those improvements will benefit not only the stream, but farmers as well.

"In my mind, it comes down to muddy water, in the sense that during the winter or maybe extremely wet seasons, we get a lot of water coming down Hangman Creek, and it's definitely a different color. That's soil. That's stuff that should stay on the ground and not go into the water," she said. "So, it's not just a water quality thing, it's really just an overall health of the watershed and the viability of the businesses there, and I just think our work really combines with the interests of agriculture. We may have a different lens on it, but I think it's completely compatible with what's out there and how people use the land." ■

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Washington ag's 2021 top 10

DROUGHT SINGED WHEAT'S PRODUCTION VALUE, DROPPING CROP TO 4TH PLACE

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Thanks to the impact of the 2021 drought on wheat's value of production, the crop slipped from No. 3 to No. 4 in the list of Washington state's top 10 agricultural commodities last year. Apples remained at the top of the list, followed by milk, then cattle and calves, which moved from fifth place to third. Following wheat's fourth-place finish was potatoes, which was No. 4 in 2020. Hay, hops, sweet cherries, grapes and blueberries rounded out the top 10 list.

Wheat's value of production lost just over 20% from 2020 to 2021. That decrease isn't a surprise to growers, but the size of it could be jarring to those less familiar with the industry.

"We all know it was a tough year on yields because of how dry it was in 2021. One saving grace was that the prices were quite a bit higher for the 2021 crop than they were for 2020," said Dennis Koong, Northwest Regional Field Office director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

The decrease in wheat's value was big enough that it depressed the state's total value of crop production, despite big increases in several other commodities.

"You can see that the value of crop production decreased 3% in 2021 from 2020. That doesn't really tell the story of grains, because apples actually increased," Koong explained. "Even though apple production was down in 2021, the price was up slightly, so that led to apples, which is obviously the No. 1 crop in the state, being up 4%. Even with that, the value of crop production, as a whole, was down 3%, and that was largely due to the wheat value being down so much."

The other crop that Koong pointed out as newsworthy was hay. That commodity's value increased 20% in 2021, driven mainly by price.

NASS has also released their 2022 Washington Annual Statistical Bulletin, which, somewhat confusingly, summarizes the 2021 crop and livestock year. Koong explained that while the commodities are harvested in 2021, they are marketed and sold through the summer of 2022. The information NASS gathers for the bulletin comes from

Washington top 10 agricultural commodities 2019-2021

Commodity	Rank		Value of production			Change
	2021	2020	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020
			(1,000 dollars)	(1,000 dollars)	(1,000 dollars)	(percent)
Apples	1	1	1,958,900	2,095,265	2,185,373	4.3
Milk ¹	2	2	1,281,987	1,192,975	1,209,744	1.4
Cattle and Calves	3	5	700,501	705,796	801,563	13.6
Wheat, all	4	3	792,509	948,593	756,838	-20.2
Potatoes	5	4	934,144	753,377	712,442	-5.4
Hay, all	6	7	468,306	500,740	601,794	20.2
Hops	7	8	475,686	444,909	482,267	8.4
Cherries, sweet	8	6	393,577	561,696	476,400	-15.2
Grapes, all	9	9	308,070	302,178	300,750	-0.5
Blueberries	10	11	153,224	217,467	228,368	5.0
Value of crop production			6,792,945	7,446,189	7,211,599	-3.2
Value of livestock production			2,704,558	2,767,121	3,021,210	9.2
Total value of production, all commodities			9,497,503	10,213,310	10,232,809	0.2

¹Value at average returns per 100 pounds of milk in combined marketings of milk and cream plus value of milk used for home consumption and milk fed to calves.

several sources, including grower surveys and entities who purchase commodities.

“The biggest thing that jumps out at me is the diversity (of crops) we have in our state,” Koong said. The annual bulletin can be downloaded at nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Washington/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/index.php.

Highlights from the bulletin include:

- Winter wheat’s yield per acre dropped from 76 bushels in 2020 to 42 bushels in 2021. Spring wheat yields dropped from 61 bushels per acre in 2020 to 30 bushels per acre in 2021. Barley fared even worse, dropping from 90 bushels per acre in 2020 to 38 bushels in 2021.
- The most wheat (both winter and spring) harvested was in 1976, when 3.2 million acres was harvested. The lowest was 82,000 acres in 1879.
- 2016 saw the highest average yield of all wheat at 71.5 bushels per acre. The lowest was in 1918 with 12.5 bushels per acre.
- Barley follows the same arc: 1985 had the most acres harvested with nearly 1.2 million acres while 1882 had the lowest with 24,000 acres. In yield, 2016 had the highest average, with 77 bushels per acre, while 1918 had the lowest at 13 bushels per acre.
- Oats’ heyday was in 1909 when 270,000 acres were harvested, compared to 2009 when only 2,000 acres were harvested. Yield, however, increased over time, with 2004 clocking in at 88 bushels per acre vs. 1918 at 33.5 bushels per acre.
- The average number of farms in Washington has decreased from 37,300 in 2012 to 35,300 in 2021, while the average farm size has increased from 394 acres to 411 acres in that same time period.
- The marketing year average price for all wheat in 2021 was \$8.67 vs. \$4.16 in 2016.
- In 2021, producers paid approximately 3% more, compared to 2011, for chemicals and 25% more for supplies and repairs. Machinery was up 46% over 2011.
- In 2021, Whitman County led all counties in the production of winter wheat with 18 million bushels. Lincoln County was second with 10.2 million bushels, followed by Adams County with 9.3 million bushels.
- Growers have steadily been planting less barley, from just over 200,000 acres in 2013 to 83,000 acres in 2021.
- Once again, growers in Whitman County planted the most barley in 2021 with 31,500 acres, followed by Columbia County (8,600 acres) and Spokane County (8,500 acres).

In other NASS news, Koong asked producers to be on the lookout for the 2022 Census of Agriculture questionnaires, which will mostly be mailed out in December. Data from the census is used by federal and state governments, as well as agribusinesses, researchers and many others. The census is conducted every five years and looks at land use and ownership, producer characteristics, production practices, income, and expenditures.

“This (the ag census) is going to be the most in-depth look that we have at agriculture in the state and in the U.S. at the county level,” he said, emphasizing the need for producers to completely and accurately fill in NASS surveys. “With higher response rates and getting cooperation from the growers, it ensures we publish more accurate data. It’s really the cornerstone of the reliability and the accuracy of our data.” ■



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ON IMPACT

Harvest weed seed control gives growers another tool in battle against weeds, herbicide resistance

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

For the past four years, Mader Enterprises has been practicing harvest weed seed control on their farm near Pullman, Wash. In late October, area growers gathered at Greg Mader's farm shop to hear some of the things they've learned and to meet one of the experts on harvest weed seed control, Dr. Michael Walsh, an associate professor at the University of Western Australia.

The meeting, organized by Drew Lyon, weed scientist at Washington State University and a frequent collaborator of Walsh's, focused on the Mader team's work with the Seed Terminator, a device installed on the back of a combine that destroys weed seed by funneling chaff through an impact mill. Lyon said the meeting was a good opportunity to show Walsh how the impact mill technology works in the Pacific Northwest.

"The Palouse is a high production area. We've got hills. Australians tend to have a lower production and not so many hills. So what have they (the Mader team) had to do to modify the system and make it work here?" Lyon said. "I just thought it would be a neat way for him (Walsh) to learn about the systems, these mill systems that are here, how are they working, and how might they need to be set up differently than he's used to."

Joe Limbaugh with Mader Enterprises told growers that the first year using the device, 2019, was a "year for learning." Among other things, they learned that chaff is fluid, but straw is dense compared to the standard Australian harvest conditions. They also learned that



Joe Limbaugh (second from left) with Mader Enterprises talks to a group of growers at a meeting at the farm's shop about their experiences running the Seed Terminator, an impact mill that destroys weed seed during harvest.

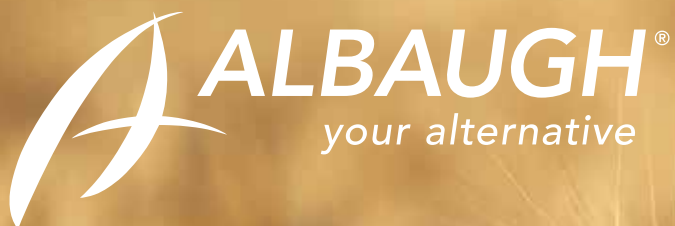
the impact mill doesn't like green material. They were able to deal with that by changing cutting height (for field horsetail) and switching screens to improve the impact mill's performance when cutting green-stemmed material, such as canola. Limbaugh said that switch lowered the efficacy rate for ryegrass from 99% to mid-80%, but destroyed nearly 100% of canola seed, which decreases volunteer canola in the following winter wheat crop.

The Mader team has also learned that by planting earlier-maturing crop varieties, they are able to capture more ryegrass seed in the impact mill.

"Overall, we feel that the technology is promising and is showing positive results, especially in our winter wheat rotation," Limbaugh said. Due to both percentage of seed capture and seed dormancy, the company behind the Seed Terminator expects growers will need three to five years of running the multi-stage impact mill before seeing significant results.

"The seed bank is full and is similar to interest in that it keeps building, although when it comes to making our preplant Roundup application in the spring, it is definitely looking like there is a reduction in the numbers of rye. Now, is that attributed to weather, and we aren't seeing the flush yet? It's hard to say," he explained.

The Mader team has been running the Seed Terminator across all of their crops, which has included winter and spring wheat, spring barley, canola, peas and lentils. They've found they've needed to reduce their normal cut height in wheat and barley to ensure weed seed capture, which slows harvest a bit. Fuel usage is up as the device draws an additional 80-120 horsepower depending on



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the conditions. They feel the trade-offs the device requires are worth it, especially since the combine is the biggest weed seed spreader.

“From an agronomic standpoint, we are dealing with a massive reduction of volunteers. We don’t see the amount of green bridge that we used to. The green bridge we see today is usually from the combine operator pushing the limits of the grain tank and spilling,” Limbaugh said. “The reduced volunteer has allowed us to go from a blanket preplant Roundup application to a spot spray application on our canola ground. This past spring, we only sprayed roughly 25% of our canola ground. We feel this not only is a money saver, but also allows us to get across the ground quicker, improving our chances of seeing a higher yield but also preserving the glyphosate trait.”

PRACTICE WIDESPREAD DOWN UNDER

Walsh has seen firsthand the struggle to control herbicide-resistant weeds. Farmers in Australia have been dealing with this issue since the early 2000s, leading them to investigate alternative methods of weed control.

“We’ve had extensive resistance across landscapes at very high frequencies, 80 to 90% of weed populations are resistant to several mode of action herbicides,” Walsh said. “It just forced us into change, to try different techniques.”

Walsh is currently in the U.S. as part of the Fulbright Program to work with U.S. researchers and growers who are just starting to investigate harvest weed seed control. In Australia, harvest weed seed control is mainly used in small grains, but in the U.S., the technology is being considered for corn, soybeans and even cotton. Walsh said adoption of the technology in the U.S. is still in the early stages, but there’s already been some clear differences in how harvest weed seed control will have to work in the U.S. vs. Australia.

“We’ve heard a few stories about green material causing issues with the mill systems, in particular, and that’s something we haven’t seen a lot of in Australia, so that’s a new learning experience,” he explained. “In Australia, at harvest time, it’s hot and dry. There’s no humidity, and so the weeds and the crops are pretty much dead or dying of drought, typically. We don’t often have a lot of green material, but it can occasionally happen in crops like canola, where we’ll have some green stem material.”

Besides the impact mills, there are several other types of harvest weed seed control (see sidebar). For farmers interested in experimenting with this type of weed control, Walsh recommends starting conservatively with a cheaper option, such as chaff lining, which concentrates the chaff (and weed seed) into a strip. The emergence of the weeds is an easily seen indication of how well it worked. ►



(Above) Dr. Michael Walsh, an associate professor at the University of Western Australia and an expert on harvest weed seed control, attended a meeting of growers outside Pullman to talk about his work and hear how Pacific Northwest growers are using harvest weed seed control. (Below) One of the growers inspecting the Seed Terminator, an impact mill that is installed on the back of a combine.



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“So, if you see a big strip of green weeds coming up, you go, ‘oh yes, that’s obviously worked because there’s no weeds coming up in the areas surrounding that strip,’” he said. “Once you see that, it gives you an idea that it is going to work for you, and you can start thinking about graduating to something a little bit more sophisticated.”

GROWING PROBLEM IN THE PNW

But how big of a problem is herbicide resistance, particularly in the Pacific Northwest? According to Lyon, critical in some areas.

“Here in the high rainfall area, Italian ryegrass is really changing how people go about doing what they are doing because they’ve had such trouble because there’s a lot of biotypes out there resistant to multiple herbicides. It’s becoming very difficult to control simply by herbicides,” he said. “Downy brome in the Walla Walla area. I’ve come across biotypes that are resistance to all the group 2 herbi-

cides. They are really struggling to control downy brome there. This might be a tool that can help with that.”

Lyon advised growers to think about harvest weed seed control methods and “pencil them out.” Like Walsh, he explained that there are cheaper options than the impact mills that growers can start with. Lyon has collaborated with other researchers on several publications about managing herbicide resistance. They can be accessed at smallgrains.wsu.edu/herbicide-resistance-resources/.

“We’ve been very fortunate the last 30, 40 years to have highly effective herbicides, but we are losing them because we’ve overused them, and we just don’t have new stuff coming like we used to,” Lyon said. “People are going to have to start looking outside the herbicide solution to everything. We still have some herbicides that are really effective, but if that’s all we use, they won’t be effective for long.” ■

Methods of harvest weed seed control

As concerns over herbicide resistance increase, more growers are investigating alternative ways of reducing weed populations, including physical methods such as harvest weed seed control.

Harvest weed seed controls target weed seeds collected during harvest by managing chaff material. While developed primarily in Australian small grains production systems, the technology has the potential to be used where weed seed is harvested alongside the cash crop. As Dr. Michael Walsh, an associate professor at the University of Western Australia and an expert on harvest weed seed controls, explained at a recent meeting of Washington growers, if you can collect the weed seed at the front of the combine, you can deal with it on the back end.

According to a Pacific Northwest Extension publication, available at smallgrains.wsu.edu/herbicide-resistance-resources/, harvest weed seed control systems include:

- **The chaff cart system.** The chaff cart system is a trailing cart attached to the rear of the combine that collects the chaff material, including the weed seed, during harvest. The collected chaff is placed in piles that, for ease of management, are normally lined up across the field for subsequent burning, grazing or collection.
- **Narrow-windrow burning.** This system requires a chute attached to the rear of the combine that concentrates the chaff and straw into a narrow (20- to 24-inch) windrow during harvest. These windrows are subsequently burned prior to crop planting. Research

in Australia and Eastern Washington has shown that 99% of rigid and Italian ryegrass seed in the windrow is destroyed by this method.

- **The bale direct system.** This system consists of a large square baler attached directly to and powered by the combine that builds bales from the chaff and straw exiting the combine during harvest. This system is reliant on available markets for the baled material. There are concerns over the removal of crop residues and the negative impact that has on soil health.
- **Integrated impact mills.** These devices fit into the body of the combine itself. Chaff material exiting the combine is processed by these impact mills to destroy the weed seeds contained in the material. The processed chaff is then spread back across the field. This is the only system fully compatible with many soil conservation practices that promote full straw loads returning to the field.
- **Chaff lining and chaff tramlining.** These are the newest harvest weed seed controls that are rapidly gaining popularity in Australia, due primarily to their low cost. Attachments at the rear of the combine collect and place chaff into narrow 10- to 12-inch rows, either between stubble rows directly behind the combine (chaff lining) or in the wheel tracks (chaff tramlining). Concentrating the chaff in narrow rows creates an unfavorable environment for weed seed germination and emergence. Those weeds that do emerge and grow are contained in narrow rows where they have little or no impact on overall crop yield. ■

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'Man of action' takes on new role as PNWA president

Tom Kammerzell, Commissioner, Port of Whitman

By Kevin Gaffney
Special to Wheat Life

Tom Kammerzell is a man of action who wears many hats. He approaches issues and projects by conducting thorough research and then instituting a plan to achieve specific goals.

"If you aren't playing offense, you are always going to be on defense, in a reactive mode," he explained.

Kammerzell was raised in a homestead farm family. His great-great-grandfather first started their farming heritage in the Farmington area in 1885. Kammerzell now lives on the segment of the family farm acquired in 1936 near Wilcox, Wash., southwest of Colfax. He and his wife, Cheryl, keep extremely busy operating Maple K Farms, LLC. Along with caring for their herd of Scottish Highland cattle, they are landlords for three wheat farms leased out to farm operators they trust to properly care for the land and produce high-yielding crops.

"I believe in entrusting work to the experts in their respective fields," Kammerzell said. "We have three excellent farm operators, and in today's agricultural industry, that is especially important."

Kammerzell didn't plan to farm when he graduated from Colfax High School, and he took a circuitous route to get to where he is today. He first studied architectural drafting at Spokane Community College. Before completing that degree, he decided he could not spend his working career sitting behind a desk. He worked at a local florist shop in Colfax before managing it. Then he moved on to work for the Colfax Grange Supply for a time. Working on a farm and cattle ranch



was next, during the early 1980s. He then received an offer to manage a 2,500-head cattle feedlot in Salina, Kan. He accepted and worked there for nearly two years. Deciding to come back home, Kammerzell worked for a local farmer briefly before accepting the maintenance manager position for the Colfax School District where he stayed for 24 years. Those employments don't begin to cover all the activities and organizations that Kammerzell has been involved with.

Kammerzell was the youngest member to ever serve on the Colfax City Council, serving for seven years beginning in 1987. He served on the Whitman County Conservation Board for seven years. He has served as a trustee of the Whitman County Historical Society. He served for three years as the president of the Educational Support Group of the Washington Education Association, a job that Kammerzell said did more to develop his communication skills than any other position he has held.

Kammerzell currently serves as one of only three ag industry members on the Farmland Preservation Committee for the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. He has served as commissioner of District 3 on the Port of Whitman Board since 2012. He is proud of the Port's accomplishments over the past decade, including millions of dollars of improvements and renovations made to the various port properties, including Boyer Park Marina near Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River.

"Most people don't realize there are 150 ports nationwide, and fully half of them, 75 ports, are located in Washington state," he said. ►



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The Port of Whitman has six major properties: the Port of Wilma, the Port of Almota, Boyer Park and Marina, the Port of Central Ferry, Pullman Industrial Park, and the Port of Whitman Business Air Center (at the Colfax Airport). Several of these properties are already at full capacity, with warehouses, grain shipping facilities and other agricultural and industrial business tenants.

Kammerzell is a strong advocate of conservation practices on his farms and statewide. He is a seasoned veteran of meeting with legislators and agency personnel in Olympia and Washington, D.C. He will be even more heavily involved in lobbying for the ag industry and the Snake River dams after being recently elected president of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA). He succeeds Glen Squires, who is also retiring as the director of the Washington Grain Commission. PNWA is a non-profit, nonpartisan association of ports, businesses, public

agencies and individuals who support navigation, energy, trade and economic development throughout the region. The PNWA is comprised of over 150 members.

"Unfortunately, the question of breaching the dams has become an emotional issue instead of being judged on a scientific basis," Kammerzell said. "Rarely acknowledged is that many rivers without dams have reduced salmon return numbers. There is plenty of scientific evidence that points to ocean conditions as a primary cause of reduced salmon populations.

"The Snake River dams, owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, were designed from the beginning to allow salmon passage, and they have been improved continually over the decades. It's not like nothing has been accomplished. There has been around \$17 billion spent on salmon habitat and fish passage efforts over the decades. Over \$50 million was recently spent on Lower Granite Dam alone to improve fish passage rates. Now, only an estimated three to four percent of the fish ever actually pass through the dam turbines.

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homes. If the four lower Snake River dams were removed and the power generation replaced with efficient natural gas, it would increase the region's annual carbon dioxide emissions by between 2 and 2.5 million metric tons."

Kammerzell noted that over 85% of Washington wheat is exported, most of that on the Columbia-Snake River System. Barging grain is 40% more fuel-efficient than rail cars and 270% more efficient than semitruck transport.

"Many farmers and other Eastern Washington residents have asked me what they can do to help save our dams. I tell them to vote! It costs you nothing to vote, but if you don't vote, it can cost you everything," he said.

Additionally, Kammerzell also believes agriculture needs to do a better job of telling its story to legislators and to urban neighbors. He feels if the ag industry doesn't effectively and accurately portray its message, people will stay uninformed.

"If you think you can make a difference, you need to help provide answers," said Kammerzell. "Just complaining doesn't solve problems unless you help provide solutions."

Kammerzell is excited about serving as president of the PNWA.

"The PNWA has an excellent reputation here in the PNW and in Washington, D.C., and we plan to carry that momentum forward into the future."

Kammerzell can be reached at tomkammerzell@gmail.com. ■



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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Mike
Carstensen



What's your favorite sandwich? Grampa Henry said one of his favorites probably is a "Billy Burger!" Now, you might ask where this is going, and as I've said before, this is what I call the sandwich season. No, not eating sandwiches, but the holiday season sandwiched by the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. As the old year ends, we go over farming strategies that worked or failed. We develop a game plan for the new year we are facing down. Commissioners and staff at the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) are constantly doing the same thing. So, if I may, let's look back a little and look forward a little.

A major change for all of us was the leadership transition to our new CEO, Casey Chumrau (that's pronounced Chum-RAH, like you would go "Rah, Rah!" at a football game). Keep in mind looking back a little, Glen was such a positive force. He just lived and breathed the WGC, and he's had such good relationships with all our markets in the Asia-Pacific Rim. After 29 1/2 years at the commission (10 as CEO), he has set the bar high for all of us to meet and surpass.

With that said, Casey has already proven to be a strong spokesperson for Washington small grains. She will be the fifth CEO since the Washington Wheat Commission was created in 1958. Casey is the next up-and-coming generation that maybe can take our grain commission to the next level. I am looking forward to working with Casey, and I hope you get the chance to meet her at one of the grain events in the coming year.

Another change must be the easing or lessening of COVID restrictions, which in turn, brought back in-person events. I don't know about you, but it feels like this last year went by in a blink. I think everyone was enthusiastic about getting back into the swing of everything, all at once. Looking back, none of us can forget virtual events, cancelled events or masks. However, commissioners and staff at the WGC were on the road again this past year, attending grower meetings and research field days across the state, representing the wheat industry at national meetings, educating our elected officials in Olympia and Washington, D.C., and hosting our international customers on trade team visits.

Most recently, WGC commissioners and staff represented us domestically and internationally. I attended the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) and National Association of Wheat Growers fall joint board meeting in Salt Lake City, and it was good to see so many of you at the Tri-

State Grain Growers Convention in Coeur d'Alene. This regional conference and other local grower events like it is a great place to start for new growers (or old growers, for that matter!) who are interested in participating in leadership opportunities within the agricultural community.

Internationally, WGC commissioners participated in the South America USW crop quality tour to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, and the Southeast Asia USW board team trip to Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. These trips strengthen relationships with overseas customers and help demonstrate the transparency and reliability of the U.S. export system, leading to increased market opportunities.

A look forward on the research front — the Washington State University (WSU) Research Review is coming up in February, and we invite growers to come participate. The WGC is mindful to ensure the grower dollars invested in research are addressing grower challenges, which means we need growers to come interact with the WSU crop researchers and provide opinions. This is a critical feedback loop for the WSU research and crop improvement programs. Event details will be sent via Greensheet and in *Wheat Life* in January.

On the education front, the Wheat Week program has returned to all in-person teaching for the 2022-23 school year. The WGC continues the pilot program "Claims, Connections, Conversations," which is a new classroom discussion resource for high school students and teachers. We are also conducting some audience assessments to again ensure that grower dollars are maximized for impact regarding our education programming.

Don't forget to watch for the grower workshop schedule next spring from the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO). These are great opportunities for you to acquire some of the new knowledge coming out of the agricultural research programs that could help your operation thrive.

This year was a busy one, and now the holidays are upon us. I know it's much needed slowing down time. I'm sure most of us don't waste our down time, whether it's attending grower meetings, servicing equipment for the upcoming year, getting involved, or spending time with family and friends. Taking the time to recharge and reset the transition from the last season to the next is needed. On behalf of the staff and commissioners of the WGC, we want to wish you the best Sandwich Season! ■

Meet the new WGC CEO, Casey Chumrau

GRAIN COMMISSION BEGINS NEW CHAPTER WITH FIRST FEMALE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Casey Chumrau has begun her leadership role in earnest with the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), following the retirement of Glen Squires on Nov. 1.

The WGC is the state's commodity commission for wheat and barley. The WGC mission is to enhance the long-term profitability and competitiveness of Washington small grains and small grain producers through research, marketing and education. As the commission's fifth chief executive and first female CEO, Chumrau has already proven to be an effective leader in promoting the small grains industry.

"The WGC is a leader on a national and international level because commissioners and growers are extremely engaged, informed and forward thinking. They have set the bar high," Chumrau said. "I'm looking forward to meeting as many growers as possible, hearing the challenges they are facing and how the commission can help."

Chumrau has worked in agriculture and international business for most of her career, promoting the U.S. wheat industry for more than a decade. She comes to the WGC from the Idaho Wheat Commission, which is based in Boise, where she served as the executive director. Prior to that, she served as the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) marketing manager for South America in Santiago, Chile. USW is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry. As the



Washington Grain Commission (WGC) Chairman Mike Carstensen (left) and retiring CEO Glen Squires (right) present the "key" to the WGC to new CEO Casey Chumrau at the commission board meeting on Oct. 7.

marketing manager for South America, Chumrau worked with major importers to promote the use of all U.S. wheat classes, overcome trade barriers, and worked to resolve purchasing and shipping issues.

"Hearing directly from customers helps us understand the evolving needs of the end users, which guide our strategies and investments," Chumrau said. "I'm very excited to meet and reconnect with customers in person, both hosting them here in Washington and visiting their mills and factories."

She began her tenure with USW in 2011 as a market analyst in Washington, D.C., gaining extensive knowledge of commodity markets, international trade and freight logistics. Prior to that, she served one year as an international trade associate for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance. Chumrau worked her way up through a variety of roles in business management and operations at the beginning of her career, including managing logistics and operations for an international travel company in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Along with the high level of interaction with international customers, Chumrau extolls how the WGC benefits from the constant engagement with local industry and policymakers.

“The U.S. grain industry today faces many challenges, including greater competition on the global market, more demanding customers and consumers, political threats to key infrastructure and farm policies, and agronomic obstacles like extreme weather, weed resistance and pests. It will take bold ideas and deep conviction to confront these challenges and secure a sustainable future for farmers,” Chumrau said. “The WGC has long been considered a visionary when confronted with a changing industry, and I am honored to help lead the commission into this next stage.”

Chumrau currently serves on several state and national committees, representing the interests of the grain industry. She earned an MBA with an international emphasis from the University of Montana and a bachelor’s degree in history with minors in business and Spanish from the University of Oregon. Chumrau and her husband, Valentin, live in Spokane with their dog, Canela.

“Really, what motivates me is the opportunity to help commissioners implement their creative solutions to challenges. Truly, I don’t think there is a better grain commission in the entire country,” she said. ■



Casey Chumrau (far left) with U.S. wheat growers and an Alicorp representative (center) during a U.S. Wheat Associates trade team visit in 2012. Alicorp is the largest consumer goods company in Peru, providing ingredients and inputs for the bakery, food and large industries sectors.

In good company

Chumrau joins a robust roster of Pacific Northwest ag leaders who are women:

Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Nicole Berg, chairwoman of the National Association of Wheat Growers

Amanda Hoey, CEO of the Oregon Wheat Commission

Britany Hurst Marchant, executive director of the Idaho Wheat Commission

Stacey Satterlee, executive director of the Idaho Grain Producers Association

Laura Wilder, executive director of the Idaho Barley Commission

Dr. Wendy Powers, dean of the College of Animal, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University

Dr. Staci Simonich, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University

Heather Stebbings, CEO of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association ■

Plotting an easier way to gather grain

Harvest time at Spillman Farm will be easier with grower gift of plot combines

By Addy Hatch

Washington State University Marketing and Communications

Generations of Coug students have worked under the hot sun harvesting test crops at Washington State University's (WSU) Spillman Agronomy Farm.

At first, they did the work by hand, cutting and gathering wheat, barley, pea, lentil and chickpea crops from small test plots. Specially made combines for the research plots were an improvement, but they still were labor-intensive to operate.

With the arrival of two new Zurn plot combine harvesters, students and faculty have access to similar technology, safety and comfort found in commercial rigs, said Arron Carter, a professor in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences and the O.A. Vogel Endowed Chair of Wheat Breeding and Genetics. The machines cut, thresh, weigh and bag samples, with special features to prevent cross-contamination between plots.

The Zurn 150 combines came to WSU thanks to the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), which approved the nearly \$500,000 gift in 2021.

"It was a natural fit for the WGC to help out when we learned the winter and spring wheat breeding programs at WSU needed new equipment for harvesting test plots," said Glen Squires, former CEO of the Washington Grain Commission. "Research through the Crop and Soil Sciences Department is a foundational part of helping advance the small grains industry in Washington."

Similar generosity created Spillman Farm in 1955 as Washington farmers, WSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture saw the need for a dedicated research field for plant breeding and cultivar development.

Angela Senter worked at Spillman Farm as an agricultural education student in the late 1990s to early 2000s.

"It should have been an awful experience," she said of

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION





Washington State University Crop and Soil Sciences staff harvesting test plots with the new Zurn plot combine harvesters. Photos by Robert Hubner, Washington State University Marketing and Communications.

the old combine, describing how one person would drive the harvester while the other sat on a seat mounted on the side of the machine, bagging the seed and spraying the header to prevent cross-contamination. "It was hot, it was dirty, it was long, but actually, it was super fun. I loved it."

Senter now teaches in the Carson College of Business School of Hospitality Business Management.

The new Zurn combine has an air-conditioned cab where both workers can sit in ergonomic comfort, monitoring a range of data about each test plot.

There are about 5,000 test plots on Spillman Farm's 382 acres, Carter said, where crops are bred for resistance to

disease, various growing conditions and to increase their nutritional value. The farm also hosts an annual field day for growers; this year about 80 attended.

"We show growers our different research plots and talk about new varieties being developed," he said. "We talk to them about their experiences and challenges. It's a two-way interaction, because most everything we do is for the farmer."

Spillman Farm lets WSU "put research into practice," added Senter. "It doesn't do much good for the economy or for research in general if everything stays in an academic paper." ■

Reprinted from the Sept. 22, 2022, WSU Insider.



A summer sunset over Washington State University's Spillman Farm test plots.

More friend than foe

Study finds no relationship between high intake of refined grain foods, risk of cardiovascular disease

Refined grains may not be as bad for you as you thought. Consumption of refined grains, widely viewed as contributing to chronic disease, is not associated with risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), stroke or heart failure, according to a study published Sept. 19.

Food Business News and *Milling and Baking News* both recently reported on the study published in the journal *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine* from Dr. Glenn Gaesser, Ph.D. and professor in the College of Health Solutions at the University of Arizona. Gaesser conducted meta-analyses of 17 relevant cohort studies that examined refined grains as a distinct consumption category. The results represent data from over 1.2 million participants in 21 countries across eight geographical regions, including the U.S., Japan, China, Finland and Sweden.

Although refined grains are included as a component of the Western dietary pattern, the results of the meta-analyses suggest that refined grains do not contribute to the higher CVD risk associated with this unhealthy dietary pattern. According to the study, this information should be considered in formulation of future dietary recommendations.

“Consistency was evident in that none of the meta-analyses showed a significant association between refined grain intake and risk of CVD, stroke or heart failure,” Gaesser wrote in his study discussion.

Gaesser’s findings are at odds with the 2015 and 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees, which were based on dietary pattern research identifying patterns characterized by higher consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or non-fat dairy products, seafood, legumes and nuts, compared to Western dietary patterns characterized by higher intakes of red and processed meat,

sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, french fries, high-fat dairy products, and refined grains.

Current U.S. dietary guidelines recommend that at least a half of grain consumption be from whole grains. Despite the well-documented health benefits of whole grain consumption, less than 7% of the U.S. population consumes the recommended minimum three servings per day of whole grains, and more than 70% of Americans consume less than one serving per day of whole grains.

In contrast, refined grain consumption in the U.S. is approximately five times greater than whole grains, accounting for approximately 80% of total grain intake.

“Although a Western dietary pattern, which includes refined grains, has been reported to be associated with increased risk of CVD, this association is likely attributable to components of the Western dietary pattern other than refined grains,” Gaesser wrote.

Refined grains can include both staple grain foods (e.g., bread, cereal, pasta, white rice) and indulgent grain foods (e.g., flour-based desserts such as cakes, cookies, doughnuts, muffins and pastries).

Because white rice is a major refined grain consumed worldwide, a part of Gaesser’s meta-analysis also looked the association between white rice intake and CVD. Of the seven cohorts his meta-analysis assessed, he found no significant risk of CVD associated with white rice intake.

The study was supported in part by a grant from the Grain Foods Foundation. Gaesser is a scientific advisory board member of the Grain Foods Foundation and the Wheat Foods Council. The Washington Grain Commission is a member of the Wheat Foods Council. ■



Making staples more like superfoods

Biofortification of wheat could help address challenge of malnutrition around the world

Kimberly Garland-Campbell

Research Geneticist, USDA ARS

The sheer abundance of wheat grain around us is evident from the large piles of grain at regional elevators and transport sites. Yet, food insecurity is on the rise again in much of the world due to a combination of old and recent conflicts, population displacement, climate change, and many other factors. In 2022, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimated that over 2.3 billion people, or almost 30 percent of the global population, did not have adequate food, with over half of these people in Asia and another third in Africa. Across the globe, food shortages are more prevalent among women and the poor.

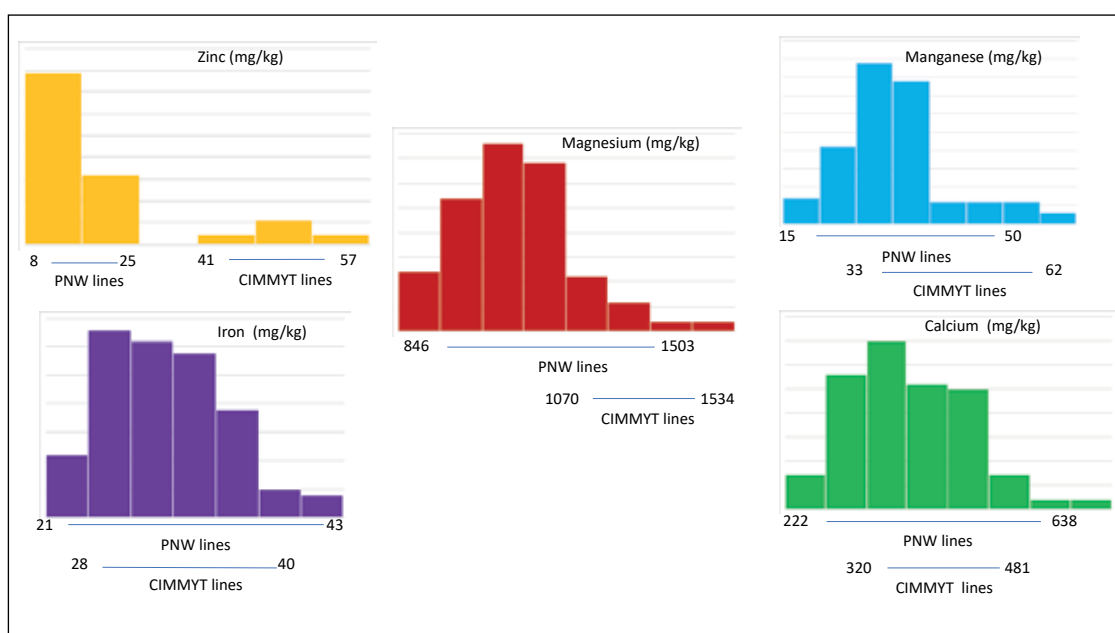
Malnutrition includes undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity. Healthy diets are lacking or expensive in many parts of the world, including the U.S. Globally, 15 crops supply most human calories, with half of them supplied by rice, maize, sugarcane, barley and wheat. Plant breeding and improvements in production have increased the availability of calories, but these improvements are associated with a decrease in micronutrients. Fortunately, genetic variation exists in wheat and other plants for uptake of micronutrients. Therefore, while the availability of micronutrients can be obtained through consumption of a balanced diet including veg-

etables, grain and protein sources like animal products and pulses, increasing the amount of minerals such as iron and zinc in staples like wheat will also have a positive effect on reducing nutrient deficiencies.

Wheat is the second major human food grain, both in terms of acreage and consumption, with approximately 70 pounds consumed by each person per year, including the U.S., so even small increases will have a positive effect. Biofortification in grain crops is led internationally by the HarvestPlus program (harvestplus.org) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). Washington State University (WSU) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have had close collaborations with CIMMYT for many years, and they have demonstrated the success in breeding for improved mineral nutrition through the release of 22 high zinc wheat cultivars to countries in Latin America and Asia.

In 2018, we began a project to incorporate selection for improved mineral nutrition into the USDA and WSU wheat breeding programs. This project was led by graduate students Emily Klarquist, Lance Merrick and Aicha Djibo Waziri. Our initial grant, Biofortifying Wheat Using Selection, Introgression, and Reverse Genetics, from the USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture-Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (USDA-NIFA-AFRI), has the goal of assessing cur-

Figure 1. Variation in micronutrient levels in whole grain of Pacific Northwest (PNW) wheat cultivars and breeding lines as compared to high nutrient lines selected by CIMMYT. For zinc, all the PNW cultivars are low, but for other nutrients, variation exists in PNW germplasm that can be selected to improve wheat nutritional qualities. Data was generated by Emily Klarquist and Jessica Braden using microwave plasma atomic emission spectrometry.



rent variation for iron and zinc concentration in Pacific Northwest hard red spring wheat, develop breeding populations, and to select using genomic selection and assessment of mineral concentrations. In addition, we aim to reduce the levels of the antinutritional compound phytate, which occurs naturally in grains but impairs the absorption of iron, zinc and calcium. Currently, we have created the populations and conducted the genomic analysis. We have grown multiple spring wheat populations in the field since 2020 and collected grain samples for analysis.

Wheat breeders are known for their collaborations with many other disciplines. The biofortification project has been unique in the breadth of collaboration, including plant breeders and physiologists, soil microbiologists, agronomists, biochemists, food scientists, and environmental health specialists.

We are also part of the larger grant, Optimizing Human Health and Nutrition: From Soil to Society, funded by USDA-NIFA-AFRI and led by WSU's Dr. Kevin Murphy (soiltosociety.org). This five-year, \$10 million project employs researchers from WSU, Johns Hopkins University, USDA, Viva Farms (vivafarms.org), and Kansas State University in the crop and soil sciences, food science and health and medicine disciplines to create more nutritious, affordable and accessible whole grain-based foods.

We have discovered that the challenge to developing effective screening tools for mineral concentration and phytate for a large number of samples was more difficult than we expected. Wheat samples with known zinc and iron concentrations were sent to us by Velu Govindan of CIMMYT so we can combine them with our samples to develop our equipment calibrations. With persistence and the assistance of Jessica Braden in the WSU Sustainable Seed Systems Laboratory and Laura Bartley in the Institute of Biological Chemistry, we have developed reliable screening systems. We are using a variety of tools, including a benchtop energy dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence machine for iron, zinc and calcium, and microwave plasma atomic emission spectrometry for elements in smaller concentrations such as in white flour.

Phytate can be analyzed using high-performance liquid chromatography. We also had to develop standardized methods to harvest, thresh and clean grain samples to avoid contamination from soil and metal parts in combines and threshing machines.

Our goal is to increase the mineral nutrition of all the classes of wheat that we grow in the Pacific Northwest. This will take time, however, because increased levels of minerals are correlated with increased protein and nega-

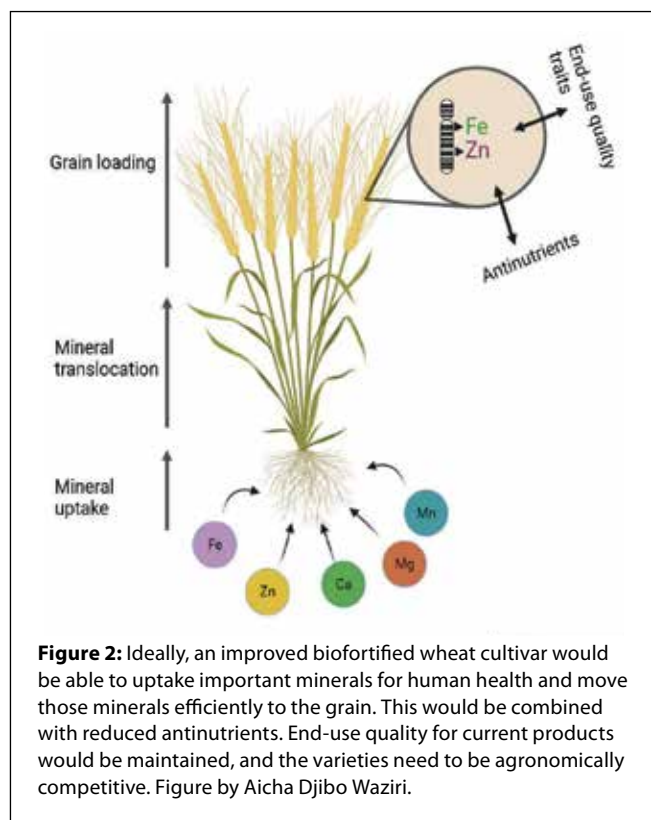


Figure 2: Ideally, an improved biofortified wheat cultivar would be able to uptake important minerals for human health and move those minerals efficiently to the grain. This would be combined with reduced antinutrients. End-use quality for current products would be maintained, and the varieties need to be agronomically competitive. Figure by Aicha Djibo Waziri.

tively correlated with increased yield. So we are starting with hard winter and hard spring wheat and selecting for agronomic performance and increased mineral nutrition together. We will also assay club wheat and soft white wheat to learn how much variation exists and set reasonable breeding goals that don't sacrifice soft wheat end use quality or grain yield. Our ideal varieties (see Figure 2) will be agronomically competitive with existing cultivars and have higher levels of mineral nutrients important for human health. With the exception of zinc, the range of nutrients present in our current cultivars and breeding lines overlaps that of high nutrient selections from CIMMYT. For zinc, we will have to make additional crosses to bring in new variation. A remaining challenge is that soil zinc concentrations are low in many parts of Washington, such as Lind where WSU test plots are located. We have been testing various soil-applied fertilizers to add zinc. The additional zinc can also contribute to improved crop performance, resulting in a winning combination for wheat growers and the public. ■

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WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Global, domestic issues drive stock volatility



By T. Randall Fortenbery
Professor and Tom Mick
Endowed Chair, School
of Economic Sciences,
Washington State University

Wheat markets continue to exhibit substantial price volatility heading into the winter months. The volatility is being driven by conditions in both international and domestic markets.

Figure 1 shows the path of nearby futures prices for soft red wheat last crop year compared to the first six months of this crop year. Note that before the invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, wheat futures prices were quite stable — between the start of the crop year on June 1, 2021, and late February 2022, the wheat price increased by about \$1 per bushel, and there was very little trade activity outside the \$7-to-\$8-per-bushel trading range.

This crop year has been quite different. We began the crop year with wheat futures trading near \$11 per bushel, but by Thanksgiving week, they had fallen to about \$8 per bushel. Not only have prices fallen almost 28% through the first half of the marketing year, but the day-to-day price volatility has been quite high. During the mid-August to mid-September harvest period alone, futures price changed by almost \$2 per bushel.

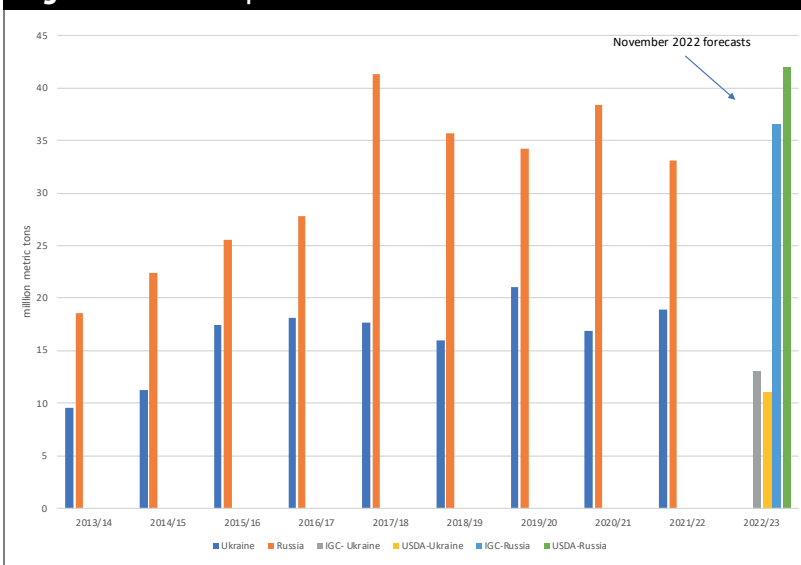
Soft white wheat prices in Portland have reflected volatility levels similar to futures through the first half of the current crop year. Like futures, they started the crop year at about \$11 per bushel, rallied briefly, and then fell to \$8.25 per bushel by mid-August. Between mid-August and mid-September, prices increased \$1.75 per bushel, but by Thanksgiving, soft white wheat was again below \$9 per bushel in Portland.

Much of the wheat price volatility is driv-

Figure 1: Nearby soft red wheat futures prices

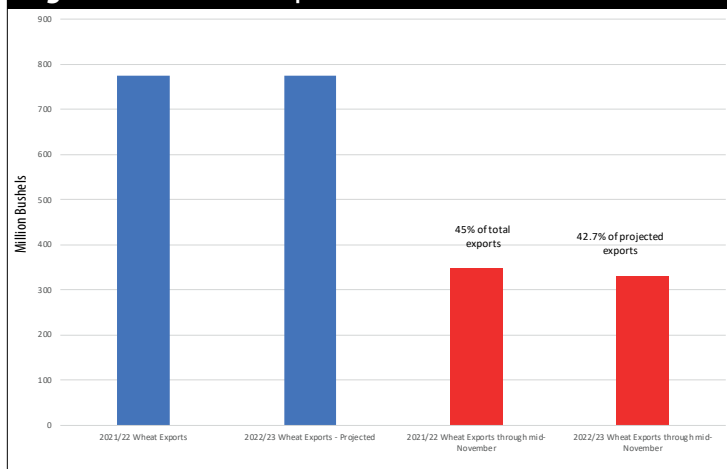


Figure 2: Wheat exports



en by uncertainty surrounding the Ukrainian conflict, but other issues are impacting markets as well. These include transport concerns faced by U.S. grain shippers and a generally price neutral to negative global wheat balance sheet for the 2022-23 marketing year.

At the end of October, President Putin indicated Russia was ready to abandon the safe traffic corridor that had been negotiated between Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the United Nations for export of agricultural products from Black Sea ports. In the two days following the announcement, soft red wheat futures prices rallied from about \$8.29 per bushel to over \$9. However, prices quickly corrected following the suc-

Figure 3: U.S. wheat exports

successful loading and shipment of two wheat-laden vessels out of Odessa, Ukraine, immediately following the announcement. In November, Putin agreed to extend the safe passage agreement, and threats to Ukrainian and Russian wheat exports subsided.

Based on the assumption of safe passage through the Black Sea, the International Grains Council (IGC) has estimated that global wheat ending stocks for the 2022-23 marketing year will be up about 2.8% compared to the previous year, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in their November World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), projected a global reduction in world wheat ending stocks of about 3%.¹ The difference in the ending stocks forecasts is partially explained by a difference in trade projections — USDA expects total world wheat exports to be up about 2.8% this year compared to last, while IGC is projecting trade to go down about 2.2% this year.

Despite their differences, neither forecast is particularly price bullish going forward. Both forecasts assume that Ukraine and Russia remain active in world wheat trade. USDA is currently forecasting Ukraine will export about 11 million metric tons of wheat for the 2022-23 marketing year, while IGC is forecasting 13. While the USDA forecast is down over 40% from Ukrainian exports last year, keep in mind that most of Ukraine's 2021-22 exports occurred before the Russian invasion. For Russia, USDA is currently forecasting a year-over-year increase in wheat exports of about 27%, while IGC's projected increase is closer to 11%.

Figure 2 shows the November 2022 forecasts for both Ukrainian and Russian wheat exports this crop year compared to the previous nine years. Both IGC and USDA are forecasting

Ukrainian exports to be more in line with export volume back in the 2014-15 time frame, with Russian wheat exports well above last year and consistent with exports for the years just prior to the invasion. Regardless of whose forecast you use (IGC or USDA), total wheat exports from Russia and Ukraine combined are expected to be about equal to last year.

In addition to the international situation, U.S. agricultural markets are dealing with two different domestic transportation issues. First, traffic down the Mississippi River to the Gulf has been severely impacted by low water levels. As of late November, this issue was affecting traffic from as far north as St. Louis all the way to the Gulf. Low water has resulted in both reduced cargo capacities for barges and the number of barges that can be towed by a single tug. This has increased barge rates and has had a negative impact on farmer prices for producers whose commodities are exported through the Gulf. While this may not affect soft white wheat producers directly, it does impact soft red wheat markets, and some spillover impact is possible.

Despite the current barge constraint, USDA is projecting U.S. soft red wheat exports will be up about 21% year-over-year. Through the first half of the marketing year, however, shipments of soft red are only up about 16%. Total U.S. wheat exports for 2022-23 are projected to match last year at 775 million bushels, but through late November, were running 2% below year ago levels (Figure 3).

Closer to home is the potential of a national rail strike. As of Nov. 21, 2022, four of the rail unions had voted to reject the deal struck between railroads and union leadership last September. If this is not resolved by Dec. 9, several unions are threatening to strike. This would likely have a negative impact on local wheat basis levels as moving grain out of local markets becomes more challenging. If this occurs, we may see a deterioration in the values of any stored wheat, at least until the issue is resolved. Even without a rail strike, profitable wheat storage will likely hinge on an improved U.S. export pace or a significant disruption in international trade prospects. ■

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

¹The difference in ending stocks forecasts is partly due to a difference in the definition of the wheat marketing year. USDA defines the wheat marketing year as June through May, while the IGC's wheat marketing year runs from July through June.

TRACTOR THROWBACK

It wasn't the fieldwork happening along Highway 95 in early October that was unexpected, it was the equipment doing the work — no towering, high-tech machines in sight, only old tractors, most pulling small moldboard plows.

In all, about 30 tractors took part in a plowing bee organized by Palouse High School student, Colby Dugger, in one of the Dugger family's fields just outside Moscow, Idaho. Dugger said he's been going to plowing bees since he was a child. He started this one, with the help of family and friends, because he felt there weren't enough of them on the Palouse.

"It's not just the plowing and tractors, it's the people. That's why I did it," he explained. "I didn't realize what went into them (plowing bees) before I did it myself. There's a lot more planning, coordination and advertising than I realized. I put in ads (in local publications), posted flyers, posted on social media and purchased some banners for the road."

Spectators could ride a trailer around the field to see the action close up or enjoy food and drink from the Palouse Lions Club's concession stand at the field's edge.

Dugger said his interest in older tractors began with his great-grandfather's 1948 Model A. A family friend got it running as a surprise for Dugger's father.

"That was really the first time I'd been to a plowing bee. It instantly got me hooked," he said. Dugger recently inherited a tractor from one of the family's landlords that he is fixing up.

This is the second year in a row that Dugger has organized a plowing bee. The high school senior hopes to host a third plowing bee next fall despite heading off to Iowa State University. He said he was happy with how this year's event turned out, and he heard good feedback.

"It was really a good field, a good location, perfect weather. It couldn't have been any better," he said. ■



Colby Dugger



Story and photos by Trista Crossley





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Gilberto Morales

The Columbia Basin, Moses Lake, to be exact, is home for Gilberto and his wife. "I've been blessed hauling for many years for many good customers," he says. "We've raised four great kids, and this trucking always seems to keep a man busy!"

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THE BOTTOM LINE

The upside of paying taxes (you made money)

By Chris Jenness, CPA
Leffel, Ottis & Warwick, P.S.

It is hard to remember the last time we had a “normal” year in farming. In fact, you talk with most folks out there, and no one can remember what a normal year even looks like anymore. This year proved that point with 10-year record high wheat prices, scarcity in equipment, input prices skyrocketing, and abnormally wet spring months. Thankfully, even with all the challenges that 2022 brought us, most farmers out there are in the best financial position in quite some time.

While it is hard to pinpoint one specific reason why farmers are so well off this year, factors such as the culmination of built-up carry-over crops, crop insurance payments, Emergency Relief Program payments this spring, and rising wheat prices all played a part in record 2022 profits. Increased profits generally mean taxes, and if you're like any person I know, no one enjoys



paying taxes. On the tax front, not much has changed to the bulk of the tax law since the major overhaul in 2017, but we are nearing closer to the sunset period on those laws, which means we need to be planning how to handle these profits we are experiencing now.

The Tax Jobs and Cuts Act (TJCA) of 2017 revamped many tax laws through Dec. 31, 2025. One of the main tools that get utilized regularly by farmers to minimize taxes is accelerated depreciation. Beginning in 2023, bonus depreciation is the first area to see a significant change. Under the current tax laws, bonus depreciation allows assets with an IRS class life of 20 years or less to be expensed entirely in the year the asset is placed into service. In 2023, we start the phase-out of bonus depreciation, where it drops by 20% each year until it is fully expired by 2027. An essential item to remember that can confuse taxpayers when comparing bonus depreciation to a similar tool in Section 179 is when the asset is placed into service. This timing difference can be critical when you have a fiscal year-end corporation, as bonus depreciation always follows year-end calendar rules for when the asset is placed in service. In contrast, Section 179 follows the tax year for the filed return. Although Section 179 has been an effective tool for many farmers over the years, bonus depreciation allows expensing farm structures such as shops and other real property improvements. While we have little time left in 2022 to complete any projects, being aware of the future phased-out expiration dates can avoid any unexpected surprises during tax planning meetings.

Another change that the TJCA brought us in 2017 was favorable tax rates and a newly created offshoot of the 199A deduction, dubbed the qualified business income (QBI) deduction. The tax rates, which dropped most brackets by a few percentage points, have successfully created sizeable differences in total tax in years of high profits. On the 199A front, the expanded IRS code from the TJCA created a QBI deduction that allowed individuals the ability to calculate a

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deduction of up to 20% of the qualifying business income. While the formula is quite complex, the deduction has been beneficial in saving tens of thousands of dollars each year since it was implemented. Both the rates and the QBI deduction are set to expire on Dec. 31, 2025.

Increased profits, rising land values and machinery that is now worth more, in some instances, than the original cost have increased net worth amongst individuals. While many farmers laugh when you ask them if their net worth exceeds the 2023 exemption of \$12.92 million, in 2026, these estate and gift tax exemptions at the federal level are set to drop to half that amount unless D.C. can come together. This temporary doubling of the exemption brought a unique estate planning opportunity by allowing clients to make large gifts prior to 2026 and secure a much higher exemption. As an added benefit, the IRS released final regulations in 2019 that allowed a decedent to calculate estate tax credits in the year of the gift or the exemption available at death. This will enable individuals to make full use of the current gift exemption without negative tax consequences if the individual's death occurs after 2025.

Proper planning is critical in today's climate. While it is nobody's favorite, we need to be mindful that the tax

laws we have in front of us are at all-time historical lows. Utilizing these lower rates to pay taxes now to reduce the carry-over profits, as well as maximizing the exemption laws, can save a person significant amounts rather than waiting for old rates to reappear in 2026. ■

Chris Jenness, CPA, is a shareholder with Leffel, Otis & Warwick, P.S., and works in the firm's Wilbur, Coulee City and Okanogan offices. The majority of the firm's clients are family farms and ag-related businesses. For information, visit low.cpa.

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Your wheat life ...



Harvest 2022 in Dusty. Photo by Derek Repp.



(Above) In Hartline, the Kelley Brothers crew picked up a hitchhiker on the combine. Photo by Timi Erickson. (Left) Brentlee Rosecrans (1) watches the Zuger's harvest on the field around his house in Waitsburg. Photo by Anissa Rosecrans.



(Above) Grandpa Mike Woods sharing knowledge about wheat harvest with his granddaughter, Bryn (2), near Centerville. Photo by Kyle Tynan. (Right) Jeslyn Lillquist (6) and little brother, Jace (2), wait for a ride with their dad, Luke Lillquist, as he unloads his wheat near Mansfield. Photo by Stacy Lillquist.



A nighttime lightning storm over the wheat fields of Eastern Washington. Photo by Titus Walter.

HAPPENINGS

All dates and times are subject to change.
Please verify event before heading out.

DECEMBER 2022

1-24 CHRISTMASTOWN. Choirs, carolers, gingerbread houses, photos with Santa, crafts. leavenworth.org/christmastown

3-4 HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS. Santa, parade, shopping. Waitsburg, Wash. waitsburgcommercialclub.org/events

13-14 WSU WHEAT ACADEMY. Increase your knowledge of disease diagnostics, insect pest management, herbicide decisions and nutrient management. Registration is required. Pullman, Wash. smallgrains.wsu.edu/2022-wheat-academy/

JANUARY 2023

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

10-11 2023 CROPPING SYSTEMS CONFERENCE. Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Wash. Registration and more info at directseed.org/events/annual-conference/

13-22 LAKE CHELAN WINTERFEST. An event for the whole family! Ice sculptures, fireworks and more! Chelan, Wash. lakechelan.com/winterfest/

18-19 2023 NORTHWEST HAY EXPO. Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash. For information visit wa-hay.org/northwest-hay-expo.html

FEBRUARY 2023

7-9 THE LARGEST FARM MACHINERY SHOW IN THE INLAND NORTHWEST.

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

Submissions

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

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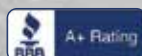
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Tractors at an October plowing bee
outside Moscow, Idaho. See story
and more pictures on pages 48-50.

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