

# WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

JANUARY | 2024



## DAMMED

Federal mediation  
agreement leaves  
agriculture out, funds  
potential breaching  
studies

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# WHEAT LIFE

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Ritzville, WA 99169-2394  
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# President's Perspective



## Get involved

By Anthony Smith

*President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers*

As I grow older, I look back at my early days of farming. I was full of ideas, ambitious, and willing to put in the time. It took some trial and error, but we introduced GPS to the farm, streamed fertilizers, and implemented no-till and minimal tillage practices. Now, I look ahead and wonder what's next in wheat farming. It's always changing, and we don't want to get left behind. That's why I encourage

young producers to get involved with the industry through county meetings, trips to Olympia, Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) monthly board meetings, wheat variety trial tours, and the Washington Grain Commission Research Review. We need younger producers with new ideas. We want to hear their concerns.

You can get involved even if you aren't on a farm. If you have a career in the wheat industry, such as in trucking, as a fieldman, in equipment sales, work at an elevator, work for the Farm Service Agency or the Natural Resources Conservation Service, heck, even as a general laborer — the list goes on and on — you are welcome to join us. For those who are approaching their senior year in high school, why not apply to be one of our wheat ambassadors? It's a great start to your wheat career, plus there's scholarship money! There's also the 15x40 program that we offer for the annual convention. Producers who are younger than 40 and have never been to the convention before can attend for free. We'll even take care of your hotel room. You'll also get a free WAWG membership for a year. The producers I know that have taken advantage of the 15x40 program had a great time and contributed valuable insights to WAWG.

And then there's the Agricultural Market and Management Organization (AMMO), which offers some great learning experiences during the winter. While the sessions are open to anyone, there is a small fee for nonmembers. See page 34 for more about this year's AMMO schedule.

In just a couple of weeks, we'll be off to Olympia to talk to legislators from both sides of the aisle about our priorities and concerns. It would be great to get some young producers to join us. If you are nervous that you won't know what to do, don't be. Every meeting will include at least one seasoned WAWG veteran, and you'll be briefed on the issues to be discussed and provided handouts.

I remember the first time Chad Smith — past-president of the Benton County Wheat Growers — and I went to Olympia to lobby for the industry with WAWG. We were very uncertain as to what to expect. We got our priority list and a list of the legislative meetings we were attending. Once the nerves settled down, we had very informative discussions with the legislators we met with. Maybe they didn't agree with all of our priorities, but they listened and asked questions. Like I always say, legislators want to hear from us, the growers. If you or someone you know wants to join us in Olympia this year, please call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610 for more information.

Just remember, farmers are getting older, and we need the next generation to step up and get involved. ■

**Cover photo:** Last month, the Biden Administration released the results of the lower Snake River dams mediation process, an agreement that spends millions on restoring fish stocks and studies how the benefits of the dams might be replaced. See page 22. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.



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# WAWG MEMBERSHIP FORM

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## LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

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<b>Family \$200</b> (2 family members)	X	X	X			X
<b>Partnership \$500</b> (1-5 family members)	X	X	X	X		X
<b>Convention \$600</b> (2 individuals)	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Lifetime \$2,500</b> (1 individual)	X	X	X	X		X
<b>Non-Voting Membership</b>						
<b>Student \$75</b>	X	X	X			
<b>Industry Associate \$150</b>	X	X	X			

## WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

## More member benefits:

- Greensheet ALERTS • WAWG updates
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## Work of building relationships never stops

Boy, does time fly by.

I can't believe it's already time for my executive director column. The past six months have been busy with travel, meetings, and working many issues. We've done farm bill fly-ins to Washington, D.C.; participated in multiple workgroups and a Food for Peace event; organized a congressional tour of the river system; participated in multiple dam advocacy events; and celebrated a huge transportation grant for our short-line rails.

The farm bill is at the top of everyone's agenda in D.C. We ended up with a one-year extension, which isn't ideal, but we are working diligently to stay in front of leadership, making sure they are aware that we don't want to see an extension for very long — we all remember the 2008 bill that was extended multiple times — and that we need a new and improved bill so family farms can continue supplying our nation's food in a sustainable manner. Fly-ins are vital when dealing with these big, congressional issues and bringing farmers to meet legislators and staff to tell the ag story IS effective. Congress wants to hear, not read, about real-life farm stories on the issues at hand and learn how they affect your farm. Getting in front of our leadership, educating them firsthand, fostering a **RELATIONSHIP** of trusted knowledge, and making an impact on the decisions they make on behalf of Washington wheat farmers is what the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is all about.

Workgroups at the state level have been a WAWG priority these past six months. One of the groups we participated in was with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to find a way to apply our ag fuel exemption that was included — but never implemented — in the cap-and-trade legislation. What a frustrating process for all parties involved. Farmers have paid thousands of dollars in extra fuel charges since January of 2023, and they still haven't been reimbursed or even have a plan from the state to get reimbursed. We have advocated for a solution and relayed to legislative leaders this must happen, but to my dismay, I don't see a quick resolution coming. Although the workgroup process wasn't as productive as I would



**Michelle Hennings**  
Executive Director  
*Washington Association  
of Wheat Growers*

have expected, it was important for us to be at a table that included different views to discuss and educate the group on what farmers need and to develop **RELATIONSHIPS** to work further to find solutions.

In August, we attended a Food for Peace event in Longview, Wash. It was a great way to celebrate the fight against global hunger, wheat farmers' contributions to the humanitarian effort, and building positive **RELATIONSHIPS** with other countries. It also set the stage for the American Farmers Feed the World Act, which would refocus the Food for Peace program on using U.S. commodities instead of cash donations or buying those commodities from other countries. Washington state plays a big role in supporting wheat exports and food aid contributions.

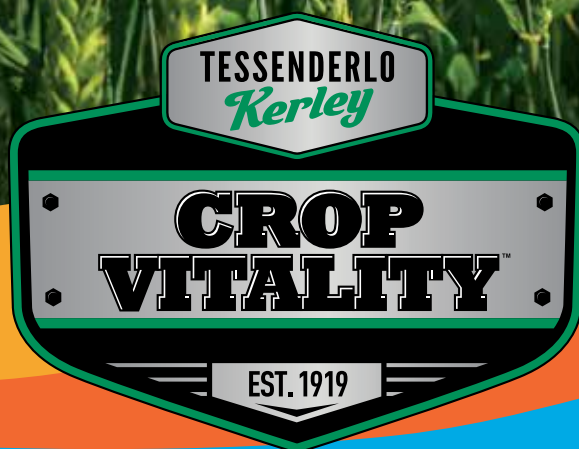
I won't deny it — a lot, and I mean a lot of my time has been spent advocating for our transportation system and keeping the lower Snake River dams intact. A brief list includes:

- Giving testimony in Richland, Wash., for a U.S. House Natural Resource Committee field hearing.
- Providing written comments and attending Council on Environmental Quality listening sessions.
- Writing multiple letters reinforcing our position that we need to be at the table during any kind of negotiations.
- Strategizing with other Pacific Northwest ag groups as a coalition effort to educate legislators and Congress on the implications of dam removal.
- Taking part in a multitude of media engagements, issuing press releases, and writing letters to state and federal leaders.
- Organizing a congressional staffer tour of Lower Granite Dam and the Port of Clarkston.

That dam tour was a highlight of the past six months. We invited congressional staffers who are on House and Senate committees that will have a say in the fate of the dams, like the Natural Resources committees, the Transportation and Infrastructure committees, the Energy and Commerce committees, the Water Resources and Environment subcommittees, and the Agriculture com-



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mittees, just to name a few. We also had staffers from Pacific Northwest legislators, along with staffers from key legislators who reside on those committees. Both sides of the aisle were well represented. A key point we wanted to make was that the lower Snake River dams aren't just a regional issue, but a national issue, as it will affect growers throughout the Midwest. To make that point, we invited national stakeholders to also attend and talk to the staffers. Besides touring the dam and seeing the ways the dam helps with fish passage, we also showcased the entire transportation system with top notch speakers who educated the staffers from start to finish on Marine Highway 84.

The day was long but full of knowledge and information they could take back to D.C. and share with their committees and Congress. Feedback was very positive, and one thing we heard over and over was, "I've always read about the dams and the system and developed an opinion, but, really, until you actually see the system in person, it is a WOW moment." Hearing this gave me a sense of accomplishment, although I know this is only a small step to any kind of success. The **RELATIONSHIPS** and networking that occurred due to this tour has turned not only WAWG, but other river system stakeholders, into reliable sources of data for Congress to access when needed. I'm proud and thankful for all who volunteered their time and energy to make this a seamless, successful event.

**A**s you can see, I have a common theme throughout this column — **RELATIONSHIPS**. Relationship building is the foundation of what I do at WAWG, and it's hard work. You spend the time and energy building **RELATIONSHIPS** and contacts, and then,



In August, a group of congressional staffers visited Lower Granite Dam to see firsthand how the river system contributes to the region.

suddenly, there's a change in administration or someone makes a career change, and it can be overwhelming to feel like you are back to square one and have to start over with someone new. We need **RELATIONSHIPS** in all areas of our life — business, personal, family, and neighbors. It's something we all do. Some people are more successful than others at it, but it's a part of life. I enjoy meeting new people, but it's something you have work at it, even if you have an outgoing personality.

**I** had an amazing experience a couple of months ago. I was at a river governance meeting in Montana when I introduced myself to an urban state legislator. We had great conversations on life in general and learned about each other's background and families. It was very gratifying. We talked about various issues as we both work in the political area and had great conversations on many topics we had in common. At first, I was nervous, because I know I'm very passionate about WAWG's needs for transportation and infrastructure. I knew we weren't going to see eye to eye on many aspects of this issue, but, in fact, we actually had many things in common and were able to talk honestly and respectfully.

**W**hat I learned from that experience is even if you know you don't agree with someone on all the issues, the value of finding common ground and getting to know them as a person will soften the hard line drawn in the sand. This develops respect and nurtures an environment where constructive discussions can take place that benefit both parties in situations where beliefs and needs are very different. Right now, with so many divisive issues, our nation feels like it is being pulled in opposite directions. Maybe we all need to step outside our comfort zone and engage with others who are on the opposite side of an issue. We might be surprised at the outcome. We won't always be successful, but if we don't take the step forward, we'll never know. ■



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# WAWG at WORK

ADVOCATING FOR THE WHEAT FARMERS OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

## WAWG leaders active as dam agreement becomes public

The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is always busy, but for Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leaders, it was even busier as they responded to multiple media requests for comments on the lower Snake River dam controversy.

On Nov. 29, a confidential draft agreement between the U.S. government and the states of Oregon and Washington, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (collectively called the Six Sovereigns) was made public, followed by the release of the official agreement on Dec. 14. See more on this agreement on page 22.

WAWG leaders have given interviews and provided statements to news outlets such as the *Spokesman-Review*, the *Capital Press*, Fox News, and *Agri-Pulse*, said Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director.

"It is gratifying to see media outlets, not only in the Pacific Northwest, but across the country picking this story up. Breaching the dams has consequences that are much broader than the Pacific Northwest, not only through clean energy generation, but products from as far

as the Midwest are shipped along the river," Hennings said. "Our message to the public is that this agreement was made in secret and failed to take into account the stakeholders and communities who will be most impacted by it. We have been ready and willing to share perspectives and insights to find a solution, but we were largely ignored."

WAWG is keeping members updated on the issue through its weekly email newsletter, Greensheet, email blasts, and the association's website, [wawg.org](http://wawg.org). Hennings encouraged members to keep an eye on their email inboxes for the latest news. ■

## USDA accepting applications for farm loans online

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched an online application for direct loan customers. More than 26,000 customers who submit a direct loan application each year can now use an online, interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the



**COUNTY PARTY.** Franklin County wheat growers socialized over a potluck meal at the Kahlotus shop of Ben and Samantha Cochrane for the county's annual Christmas Shop Party.



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ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet, and build a farm operating plan. This tool is part of a broader effort by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to streamline its processes, improve customer service, and expand credit access.

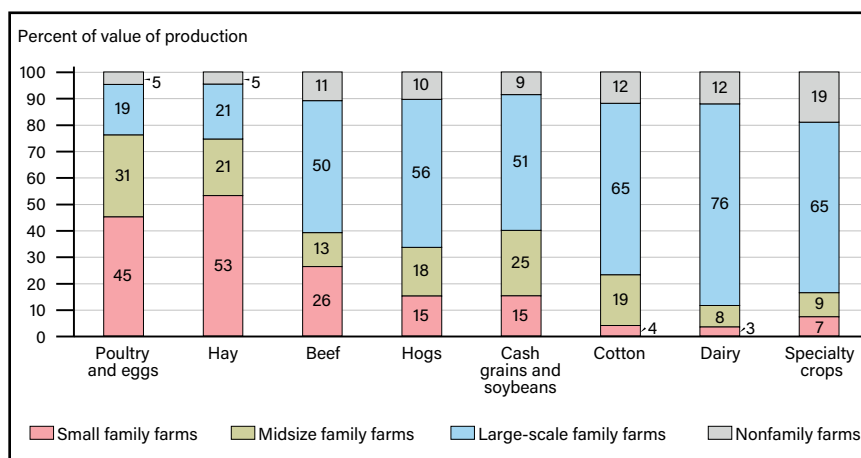
The online farm loan application replicates the support an applicant would receive when completing a loan application in person with an FSA farm loan officer, while continuing to provide customers with one-on-one assistance as needed. This tool and other process improvements allow farmers and ranchers to submit complete loan applications and reduce the number of incomplete and withdrawn applications.

Through a personalized dashboard, borrowers can track the progress of their application. It can be accessed on farmers.gov or by completing FSA's Loan Assistance Tool at farmers.gov/loan-assistance-tool. To use the online loan application tool, producers must establish a USDA customer account and a USDA Level 2 eAuthentication ("eAuth") account or a Login.gov account. For the initial stage, the online application tool is only available for producers who will be, or are currently, operating their farm as an individual. FSA is expanding the tool's availability to married couples applying jointly and other legal entities in 2024. ■

## Washington FSA begins monthly workshops

The Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) has started holding monthly webinars for producers on the first Wednesday of the month beginning at 10 a.m. The webinars will provide practical and

**Value of production of selected commodities by farm type, 2022**



According to the Economic Research Service's 2023 "America's Farms and Ranches at a Glance," large-scale family farms dominate the production of many selected commodities and accounted for a majority of the value of beef (50%), hogs (56%), cotton (65%), cash grains and soybeans (51%), dairy (76%), and specialty crops (65%) production in 2022. Small family farms produced the majority of hay (53%). Small family farms produced 45% of the total value of U.S. poultry and egg output in 2022. Most poultry and egg production is done under contracts, with a contractor paying a fee to a farmer who raises poultry to maturity or manages the egg-laying operation. In 2022, 26% of the value of beef production occurred on small family farms. These farms often have cow/calf operations, while large-scale family farms are more likely to operate feedlots. In 2022, the value of production by nonfamily farms ranged from 5% for poultry and eggs and hay production to 19% for specialty crop production.

Note: Cash grains include barley, corn, rice, sorghum, wheat, and oats. Specialty crops is a broad term that includes fresh or dried fruits, tree nuts, vegetables, beans (pulses), and horticulture nursery crops. Due to rounding, numbers may not add to 100%.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) using USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service and USDA, ERS, 2022 Agricultural Resource Management Survey data.

timely information, such as how to fill out application forms, payment calculations, and other program requirements. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with speakers through the chat during facilitated question-and-answer sessions following the presentations.

Upcoming topics, links to the webinars, and recordings of past webinars will be posted to the new webinar page on the state FSA website at [fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Washington/webinars/washington-state-webinars](https://fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Washington/webinars/washington-state-webinars). Webinars about the Emergency Relief Program for 2022 (ERP 2022) and the Farm Labor Stabilization and Production Pilot Program (FLSP) are already available to view.

If you have suggestions or requests for future topics, please email the outreach coordinator at [kaitlin.davies@usda.gov](mailto:kaitlin.davies@usda.gov). ■

## NAWG sends letter on fertilizer calculation

In early December, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and 57 agriculture organizations sent a letter to the chairman of the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC), asking for consideration of American

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farmers when tariff calculations are being made for Moroccan phosphate fertilizer. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) is still in the process of recalculating the duties, after the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) issued a remand decision in September this year. Commerce will have an opportunity to make the decreased duty calculation of 2.12%, a decrease made in November, permanent. The ITC is expected to make a ruling this month based on a separate remand decision by CIT.

“With impending decisions from Commerce and the ITC, our organizations simply want accurate consideration of the facts and impacts on American farmers. When burdened with high input costs, farmers see ripple effects occurring in every facet of their operation. This inhibits their ability to increase market access on the global stage and satisfy both local and regional customers,” the letter states. ■

## ARC/PLC now open for 2024 crop year enrollment

Agricultural producers can now enroll in the Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2024 crop year. Producers can enroll and make election changes for the 2024 crop year through March 15, 2024.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024, which extended the 2018 Farm Bill through Sept. 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including ARC and PLC, to continue operating.

“Having the farm bill extension in place means business as usual for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program implementation for the 2024 crop year — nothing has changed from previous years,” said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. “These programs provide critical financial protections against commodity market volatilities for many American farmers, so don’t delay enrollment. Avoid the rush and contact your local FSA office for an appointment, because even if you are not changing your program election for 2024, you still need to sign a contract to enroll.”

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire

farm. Although election changes for 2024 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multiyear contract on the farm, it will continue for 2024 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the March deadline, their election remains the same as their 2023 election for commodities on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the cropland.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat.

This fall, FSA issued payments totaling more than \$267 million to agricultural producers who enrolled in the 2022 ARC-CO option and the ARC-IC option for covered commodities that triggered a payment. Payments through the PLC option did not trigger for the 2022 crop year.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products. Producers on farms with a PLC election can purchase Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the ARC and PLC webpage at [fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc\\_program/index](https://fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index) or contact their local USDA Service Center. Producers can also make elections and complete enrollment online with level 2 eAuth. ■

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# POLICY MATTERS

## Ag overtime, fuel surcharges on 2024 legislative short list

By Diana Carlen

*Lobbyist, Washington Association  
of Wheat Growers*

On Jan. 8, 2024, the Washington State Legislature will be back for a 60-day session. It is the second year of the legislative biennium, and a “short” legislative session. During a short session, lawmakers generally focus on making adjustments to the biennial budgets adopted the previous April. Short sessions are fast-paced, and lawmakers consider not only new bills introduced for the 2024 session, but all bills are still available for consideration from the previous session as well.

Budget writers are in a good position because the state is collecting higher revenues than anticipated, especially from two new sources: the tax on capital gains and the state’s cap-and-trade system. This year, the state has raised \$1.8 billion from the cap-and-trade program, and the capital gains tax has brought in about \$890 million.

In mid-December, Gov. Inslee presented his budget proposals for his final year in office. Inslee is seeking about \$2.5 billion more in overall state spending than what was allocated in April for the two-year period ending in mid-2025. His focus on spending is on behavioral health care, housing, education, and fighting the fentanyl crisis.

In addition to releasing his proposed supplemental budgets, the governor released his policy priorities for the 2024 session, including on climate change. Gov. Inslee is proposing legislation to pursue linking Washington state’s carbon mar-



Members of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers meet with Sen. Mark Schoesler last year during the annual Olympia Days trip.

ket to the carbon markets in California and Quebec. The reason for linking the carbon markets is the hope that it will drive the price down to purchase credits and, in turn, help lower Washington fuel prices, which have been fluctuating between the highest and second highest in the nation.

A recent ballot measure is complicating passage of the linkage bill or, frankly, any legislation related to cap and trade during the 2024 session. In December, a ballot measure (I-2117) was delivered to the Secretary of State’s office with over 400,000 signatures to repeal the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), the state’s cap-and-trade program. The Secretary of State’s office is currently verifying the signatures submitted. If the measure qualifies as having enough valid signatures, the Legislature will have three options: pass it as is (highly unlikely); ignore it and it is automatically referred to the voters in November of 2024 (highly likely); or forward to voters along with an alternative (i.e. competing proposal, which is unlikely).

Lawmakers are currently seeking legal advice on whether the linkage bill and other legislation aimed at tweaking the CCA would be considered an alternative that must be referred as a competing proposal alongside the repeal measure. Lawmakers may be reluctant to send competing proposals and thus may wait until 2025 to make any tweak to the CCA.

Gov. Inslee also proposed how to spend the CCA revenue that has come in higher than anticipated, including funding to provide 750,000 households a \$200 utility bill credit. The CCA requires that at least 35% of funds be invested in projects that benefit overburdened communities and a minimum of 10% go to projects with tribal support. The ballot measure will not impact the money the state has already collected, and thus, a wide range of interests will be competing



for the \$1.8 billion in funds that have been raised.

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) will continue to advocate for a comprehensive solution to ensure that all fuel agriculture uses on the farm and for transporting agricultural products is exempt from carbon surcharges, which the Legislature intended when it passed the CCA. While some farmers have been able to purchase fuel without the carbon surcharge, mostly while buying in bulk, the issue has not been resolved for smaller loads and at retail locations.

WAWG will also continue to work on legislation to provide seasonal flexibility from paying overtime for agricultural workers. Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, agricultural workers must be paid time-and-a-half for any hours worked beyond 40 hours in a work week. The law does not offer any seasonal flexibility for harvest. Proposed legislation would allow an agricultural employer to select 12 weeks a year where a farm worker would work up to 50 hours a week without the employer having to pay overtime.

WAWG will be hosting their annual Olympia days Jan. 14-16. Call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610 for more information. ■

## Farm policy criticisms fall flat

From farmpolicyfacts.org

If it's a farm bill year, you know that farm policy critics are going to come out swinging with the same old attacks on family farmers and ranchers. None of the material is new. The only difference is the attacks seem to be less tethered to the truth. Biting the hand that feeds them? Yes. It's ugly. But since there are so many new voices in the farm bill conversation, we need to knock

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down these flimsy, tired attempts to eliminate the farm safety net with actual facts. Let's dismantle some recent #FarmPolicyFallacies from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) and its accomplices with some facts. (After all, it's in our name!)

**What the critics say: The cost of the farm safety net is out of control!**

**The truth:** The entirety of the farm safety net is projected to only cost about 0.2% of the expected federal budget over the next 10 years. It's at a historic low. That's a steal of a deal to protect our national food security, and in fact, we need to make some smart investments in farm policy to strengthen the safety net. Projected base-line farm safety net spending (which is the sum of farm programs, plus crop insurance, plus other disaster assistance) is \$18.5 billion — that's 47% below the most recent five years, and 32% below the 10-year average. By any historic measure, the cost of the farm safety net is down and under control.

**What the critics say: But what about the "spiraling" costs of crop insurance?**

**The truth:** Over the past 20 years, Congress has repeatedly voted to strengthen crop insurance, making it the cornerstone of the farm safety net. Crop insurance now protects more than 90% of planted farm acres and more than 130 crops in all regions of the U.S. It's no surprise that the overall price tag has increased. However, going back 10 years, the projected price tag has only increased 12% while the acreage covered has increased 83%. That is nearly double the acreage covered with just a small increase in cost. Crop insurance is also a public-private partnership, which means that costs are shared between farmers, private-sector crop insurance companies, and the government. Farmers pay for crop insurance coverage, paying nearly \$6.8 billion out of their own pockets last year and \$6.8 billion again this year.

**What the critics say: Farm policy only benefits a small number of large farms.**

**The truth:** Every farmer plays a critical role in the farm economy, and current farm policy is designed to support all types of farms. But 84% of farms in the U.S. are small farms, where the farmers describe themselves as retired or hobby farmers or the farmer only sells a very small amount of farm goods. This 84% share of farmers accounts for only about 10% of overall agricultural production. To say that these smaller producers are left out of farm policy would be yet another misstatement. The facts show that this group of farmers in 2021 alone accounted for 79% of Conservation Reserve Program payments, 21% of working-land conservation payments, 23% of pandemic assistance payments, and 11% of all other payments — which includes the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, disaster payments, Dairy

Margin Coverage, and ad hoc assistance like the Market Facilitation Program.

**What the critics say: Increasing PLC reference prices would only help less than 6,000 rice, peanut, and cotton farmers.**

**The truth:** This is classic EWG — trying to pit crops and regions against one another. It is simply untrue. PLC and ARC are the Title I options for major commodity producers (peanuts, cotton, rice, corn, soybeans, wheat, sorghum, and others) and a higher reference price improves the formula for both PLC and ARC — no matter what you grow. In fact, current U.S. Department of Agriculture projections for 2023 only project a PLC payment for one crop, rapeseed, that EWG doesn't even mention in its misguided analysis. Perhaps this is why farm organizations for all these crops testified to the need to raise reference prices this year. Now, in an ideal world for farmers, market prices and production for all these crops would stay strong so that neither ARC nor PLC trigger, and the reference price would thus be irrelevant. But, turning back to the Congressional Budget Office, where expected support is measured based on historical realities, payments are projected across all commodities based on current reference prices for ARC and PLC for the next 10 years.

**What the critics say: Farm policy only benefits farmers who grow row crops, like corn or soybeans.**

**The truth:** Wait a second, I thought they just said that only rice, peanut, and cotton farmers benefit from the farm safety net?! Same tactic here, but now EWG is just trying to pit staple crops against specialty crops like fruits and vegetables. The markets for these crops are very different, and, therefore, so are the farm policy approaches. But this is an easy one to debunk. Look at crop insurance, which covers more than 130 different types of crops and is available to farmers large and small. There's insurance coverage available if you farm organic, too.

**What the critics say: Farmers are making money from crop insurance.**

**The truth:** We'll let Kansas farmer John, who shared with NPR his experience with crop insurance after losing this year's wheat crop to drought, answer this one for us. "Thank goodness for crop insurance. Crop insurance doesn't make you money, it keeps you in business to plant again next year. It's a beautiful thing."

Hit us with some new ones, EWG. In the meantime, we'll continue dismantling these #FarmPolicyFallacies because at the end of the day, America's farmers and ranchers are making immense sacrifices every day to provide us with an affordable and abundant supply of food and keep our economy moving forward.

For more information and facts about agriculture, visit [farmpolicyfacts.org](http://farmpolicyfacts.org). ■



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## Snow, rain form the water cycle that allows wheat to grow

Water comes to us in many forms. We receive it through our water taps from pipes that connect to rivers, reservoirs, and aquifers. We also receive various forms of precipitation, including rain from the clouds. We even receive it frozen, in the form of snow in the winter!

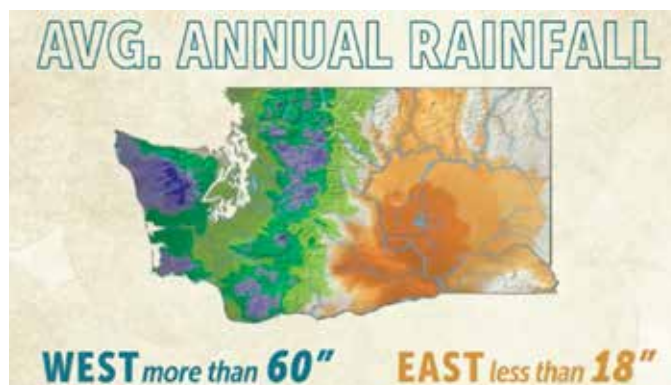
In Washington state, different parts of the state get different amounts of precipitation. The areas west of the Cascade Mountains tend to get up to 50 or 60 inches of rainfall, and the areas east of the mountains usually get less than 18 inches of rainfall each year!

On the farms of Eastern Washington, precipitation in the forms of rain and snow are very important to help grow wheat. In the winter months, snow builds up on the fields. As the winter warms up and turns into spring, our snow melts and turns into water droplets that drop down into whatever surface they were resting on during the winter. In this case, the water drops into the farmer's soil. This is known as moisture in the soil. In the spring, we often get more precipitation that adds to the other moisture.

When the soil is ready in the spring, wheat farmers plant their spring wheat crop. They put the seed at just the right depth in the moisture, so that the seeds can have a nice, moist place to grow. As the seeds sit in the soil, some moisture tends to evaporate into the air. This moisture collects and makes droplets again, and they end up forming clouds. The rest of the water drops that remain in the soil begin dropping slowly down within the soil.

After a few days in the moist soil, the wheat seed germinates, which means that the seed has started to grow and has broken the seed coat.

Roots form, and the first shoot, also called a tiller, grows up from the ground. The roots' job is to feed the plant. They start to follow the moisture level further down into the soil. As the wheat plants continue to grow, they start the jointing and booting process. During jointing, the shoots continue to grow, forming nodes and eventually leaves. During booting, the head of the wheat plant grows from the top of the stem and has



the last leaf wrapped around it. Meanwhile, underground, the roots continue to chase the moisture level downward.

Now the plant has grown large enough to start producing a head. That's where the kernels are kept. Again, the roots grow deeper, chasing the moisture level down.

Sometimes we get spring rains that help keep the soil moist near the top of the surface so the roots don't have to grow so deep to find water. But, sometimes, we don't get enough rain in the spring, and farmers face what's called a "drought." During an average year, the wheat plants grow big, plump heads, and the plants stay green for awhile. During a drought, when the plants have gotten very little water to drink, the plants have tiny heads and the leaves are thin.

Once the wheat plant is ripe, it is ready to be harvested. Farmers use a big machine called a combine to cut and separate the kernels from the stalk and leaves. Meanwhile, the leftover water that we received from snow continues its journey down into the ground. It travels hundreds of feet over a long period of time, eventually arriving at our underground river system, called the aquifer. While in the aquifer, our snowdrop could become drinking water for our homes through the pipes that pump water up from the aquifer to the surface. Or it could continue along the aquifer and eventually make its way to the ocean. Once at the ocean, it could stay there for a long time, OR, it could evaporate up into the air and form a cloud. And eventually end up as another snowflake or rain drop, ready to help our wheat farmers again! ■

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# Stakeholders dispute dam agreement

MEDIATION RESULT PUTS FOCUS ON FISH, INCLUDED LITTLE INPUT FROM REGIONAL USERS

By Trista Crossley  
Editor, *Wheat Life*

The fight over the lower Snake River dams reached a milestone in mid-December when the Biden Administration officially announced an agreement with plaintiffs to the litigation regarding the lower Snake River dams that prioritizes fish recovery and was written with little to no input from agricultural stakeholders.

“The plan announced by the Biden Administration regarding the Columbia River Basin is incredibly concern-

In return for up to a 10-year stay of litigation, the federal government plans to invest more than \$1 billion in fish restoration efforts in the Columbia River Basin. The government also commits to supporting the development of Tribally sponsored clean energy production projects that could eventually replace the energy generated by the dams, even as the government acknowledges that the power to breach the dams can only come through Congress.

“These resources provide the region options should Congress choose to consider dam breach while still meeting clean energy, energy reliability, and other resilience imperatives. The Administration, however, is not making a judgment on whether to breach the dams, nor does it have the authority to do so; that authority resides with Congress,” the Biden Administration said in a press release.

The agreement is based on the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI), a proposal to the Biden Administration from the states of Oregon and Washington and four Pacific Northwest Tribes (collectively called the Six Sovereigns), that asserts that breaching of the lower Snake River dams must happen to restore wild salmon and steelhead stocks to healthy, harvestable populations. The CBRI relies on a single National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) study and the August 2022 Sen. Murray-Gov. Inslee report and requires extreme actions to address fish recovery to satisfy and honor the U.S. government treaties with the Tribes.

The agreement also includes commitments to:

- Making adjustments in the operations of the federal hydrosystem to deliver a net benefit for fish while maintaining grid reliability and upholding health and safety requirements.
- Studying or helping fund studies of how the transportation, irrigation, and recreation services provided by the dams could be replaced if the lower Snake River dams are breached.
- Working with the Six Sovereigns to address rail, road, and culvert upgrades and/or removals as necessary for improving transportation infrastructure while protecting and rebuilding fish populations.

Funding is allocated for reintroduction of salmon in the upper Columbia River Basin, mid-Columbia River salmon stock improvements, and improved ecosystem function in the Columbia River Basin for other native fish. ►



ing for Washington wheat growers. Agriculture voices were largely excluded from discussion of impacts and any commitments for funding and mitigation, even though we were ready and willing to share perspectives and insights to help find a solution,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). “We firmly believe that the dams and salmon health are not mutually exclusive, and any future actions must be based on sound science and reliable data. Ultimately, the decision to breach the dams will take an act of Congress; therefore, we remain committed to working with our allies in Congress to ensure the integrity of the lower Snake River dams.”

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## Stakeholder response

While WAWG appreciates the acknowledgement that the dams can only be breached by an act of Congress, the association is concerned that the U.S. government's commitments within the document would put dam breaching advocates in a new position of power with regard to the future of the river system. This is extremely concerning for agricultural groups and other stakeholders who rely not only on the barging and irrigation provided by the dams, but also the low-cost, renewable energy that contributes to food security and the regional economy. Furthermore, the agreement calls for a comprehensive strategy to restore salmon and steelhead populations that largely ignores the stated mediation goals of meeting the many resilience needs of stakeholders across the region. The U.S. government has chosen to negotiate a settlement in secret and leave farmers behind, Hennings said.

Besides the fact that the proposal didn't take into account the needs of all river system users and relies on a single NOAA study, WAWG and agricultural stakeholders have other concerns about the agreement, including:

- How the terms "healthy and abundant" are defined in regard to fish populations.
- The Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) financial exposure.
- No stop to potential litigation in other proceedings.
- A requirement for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update/conduct engineering analyses for dam breaching, which are a prerequisite for Congress to vote to breach the lower Snake River dams.

The agreement largely follows a confidential draft proposal that was made public in late November as part of a letter from members of the Pacific Northwest Congressional delegation to the Biden Administration. It was the first public glimpse into the U.S. government's position in the mediation efforts. WAWG joined with other Pacific Northwest agriculture groups and stakeholders to issue a press release criticizing the secretive nature of the settlement and opposing the draft agreement.

Alex McGregor, chairman of The McGregor Company, reiterated that farmers work hard to be good stewards of the land and its waterways. "Sound science and meaning-

*"Sound science and meaningful dialogue must be the cornerstones to real progress, not lawsuits, secret negotiations, and ignoring concerns of those who would be harmed. The benefits of the dams are substantial and shutting us out from consultations won't make them disappear."*

—Alex McGregor,  
chairman,  
The McGregor  
Company

ful dialogue must be the cornerstones to real progress, not lawsuits, secret negotiations, and ignoring concerns of those who would be harmed. The benefits of the dams are substantial and shutting us out from consultations won't make them disappear," he said in the press release.

"We have not been party to the conversation and are concerned with lack of attention to food security. The loss of ag lands should have the region very concerned," said Matt Harris, director of governmental affairs for the Washington State Potato Commission.

Other stakeholders who contributed comments included the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) and the Washington State Farm Bureau. The full press release can be found at [wawg.org/white-house-negotiated-settlement-in-secret-leaves-farmers-behind-impacts-pnw-economy/](http://wawg.org/white-house-negotiated-settlement-in-secret-leaves-farmers-behind-impacts-pnw-economy/)

WAWG has also spearheaded a letter to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee expressing concern that his administration has been privately engaging with the U.S. government and excluding agricultural stakeholders who would be directly impacted by significant changes to the river system.

"Now that the 'package of actions and commitments' has been daylighted, our organizations are frustrated that nobody representing the state of Washington in these private negotiations has provided any meaningful or direct briefings on the substance and the impacts to the agriculture community," the letter states.

Concerns cited in the letter include:

- Neither the "transportation upgrades" nor the "water supply analysis" include stakeholder engagement despite the fact any modifications to the existing systems should require agricultural input.
- Numerous other objectives outline the "Six Sovereigns" as leads, representing a shift in how decisions have been made under the current river operating system.
- While the document suggests dam removal is up to Congress, included therein is a requirement that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct dam breaching "feasibility studies," not only attempting to bypass Congress but reflecting on the longstanding stated goals of removal by many of the Six Sovereigns.
- There are no caps on costs particularly related to funds



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expended by BPA, and, therefore, what increases will be passed on to ratepayers.

- Littered throughout the document is vague language regarding governance and dispute resolution and, therefore, little understanding of how, or even if, stakeholder input would even be considered.

Signees to the letter include the Columbia Basin Development League, Far West Agribusiness Association, Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Winegrowers Association, and the Washington State Dairy Federation. A full copy of the letter can be read at [wawg.org/washington-ag-industry-pens-letter-to-governor-on-dam-agreement/](http://wawg.org/washington-ag-industry-pens-letter-to-governor-on-dam-agreement/).

## Congressional hearing

In the wake of the publication of the draft agreement, the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources' Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries Subcommittee held an oversight hearing in mid-December titled, "Left in the Dark: Examining the Biden Administration's Efforts to Eliminate the Pacific Northwest's Clean Energy Production." Neil Maunu from PNWA, Humira Falkenburg from the Pacific

County PUD, Lindsay Slater from Trout Unlimited, and Scott Simms of the Public Power Council all testified.

"We are frustrated. We have made it clear to CEQ (the Council on Environmental Quality), FMCS (the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service), and to anyone who will listen that we are tired of not being represented in this mediation process; we are tired of not being able to take part in meaningful negotiations," said Maunu. "A critical reassessment of this process is essential. The (U.S. government) commitments lack specificity, rely on flawed science, and completely overlook the vital transportation, supply chain, and resiliency concerns of our membership. We demand a seat at the table. The CRSO BiOp and Record of Decision exemplified a sound approach to navigating complex issues and diverse stakeholder perspectives, and we advocate using that as the benchmark for ensuring a fair and transparent process. Beyond the immediate risks to river transportation, navigation, and safety, the very livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands reliant on this river system hang in the balance."

A recording of the hearing can be found at [youtube.com/watch?v=hK7xGZ94O5o&t=3s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=hK7xGZ94O5o&t=3s). ■





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# Warning ... Advocacy ahead

WAWG WILL BE WORKING AT STATE, NATIONAL LEVELS ON BEHALF OF WASHINGTON WHEAT GROWERS

As the 2024 legislative season begins, leaders and staff of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) are kicking up advocacy efforts at both the state and national levels.

“Over the next few months, we’ll be traveling between Olympia and Washington, D.C., to present the concerns and issues that Washington wheat growers are facing,” said Michelle Hennings, WAWG’s executive director. “Our overriding message to legislators will be that America’s farmers need less regulation and more support in order to ensure that our food system remains safe and secure.”

Protecting the lower Snake River dams against breaching is a critical issue for wheat growers and is one of WAWG’s top priorities at both the state and national levels. WAWG will continue to work with state and regional partners to inform members of Congress of the critical role the dams play in carbon-free, low-cost energy generation; irrigation; transportation; and recreation. See more on the dams on page 22.

The 2024 Washington State Legislative Session may be a short, 60-day session, but growers will still be watching for harmful bills, as well as championing several holdovers

from previous sessions. Hennings said WAWG will be working on implementing a seasonal agricultural exemption to the state’s overtime law, picking up the effort from last year, when bills in both the House and Senate failed to pass out of committee.

Another issue continued from last year is the exemption on surcharges related to the state’s cap-and-trade program for fuel used in agriculture. The program went into effect January 2023, and many fuel suppliers began tacking on a fuel surcharge in order to pay for their allowances. Ultimately, that surcharge was passed onto consumers, including farmers who were supposed to be exempt when purchasing fuel to be used in agricultural operations. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is responsible for implementing and managing the cap-and-trade program, but when the legislation went into effect, no exemption mechanism was in place. The 2023 session ended with lots of finger pointing and no clear solutions.

Following the 2023 session, WAWG leaders participated in a workgroup held by Ecology to come up with workable solutions, but in the end, they felt the workgroup fell short.

“We’d like to see Ecology step up to the plate and find a





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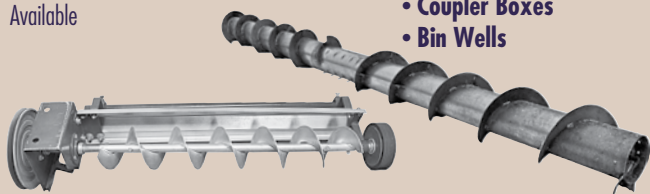


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fix that applies uniformly across the state,” Hennings said. “We are also working to make sure that farmers who were mistakenly charged the surcharge are fully reimbursed, either by the state or by the fuel suppliers. In some situations, such as buying fuel at certain roadside stations, it’s still very difficult for a farmer to have the exemption applied.”

Wheat growers will be heading to Olympia for the annual Olympia Days advocacy trip Jan. 14-16, 2024. Small groups of growers, armed with handouts on wheat industry priorities and talking points, will meet with as many legislators from both sides of the aisle as possible. WAWG will also be handing out cookies and coffee in the Capitol Building during the trip. WAWG members who want to participate in the Olympia Days event, especially those who live on the west side, should contact the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610 for more information or email [kgilkey@wawg.org](mailto:kgilkey@wawg.org).

“Legislators always want to hear from their own constituents, so we want to include WAWG members from as many districts as we can in our Olympia Days trip,” Hennings explained. “Legislators from urban areas probably don’t realize how many ties they have to agriculture through retired farmers and landlords who live in their district.”

See page 16 for a preview of the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session.

At the federal level, much of WAWG’s attention will be focused on farm bill legislation. Although the 2018 Farm Bill expired at the end of September 2023, Congress passed a one-year extension, meaning they have until September 2024 to pass new legislation. While the extension was welcome news to wheat farmers, it pushes the debate into an election year. During a break-out session at November’s annual Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, Keira Franz, environmental policy advisor for the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), pointed out that running for election takes legislators away from D.C. more, plus things tend to get more political, which can create delays and turmoil in Congress.

WAWG’s priorities for the farm bill include protecting and enhancing crop insurance; instituting a meaningful reference price increase; doubling trade promotion funding; continuing voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs; and opposing conservation compliance requirements.

“We will be working closely with NAWG to monitor progress on the farm bill and to provide any data we can that bolsters support for wheat industry priorities,” Hennings said. “We’d really like to see the wheat reference price increased to bring it more in line with the corn and

soybean industries, but even a small increase has a big price tag on it.”

Other national priorities for WAWG include herbicide and pesticide regulations, climate, and transportation.

WAWG leaders and staff will be traveling to Washington, D.C., at the end of this month to participate in NAWG’s winter conference. While there, they will spend a day on the Hill, meeting with members of Washington state’s federal delegation. ■





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	Shelley Kloba	D-Kirkland		Paul Harris	R-Vancouver		Mia Su-Ling Gregerson	D-SeaTac
2	Andrew Barkis	R-Lacey	18	Stephanie McClintock	R-Vancouver	34	Emily Alvarado	D-West Seattle
	J.T. Wilcox	R-Mckenna		Greg Cheney	R-Battle Ground		Joe Fitzgibbon	D-Burien
3	Marcus Riccelli	D-Spokane	19	Jim Walsh	R-Aberdeen	35	Dan Griffey	R-Allyn
	Timm Ormsby	D-Spokane		Joel McEntire	R-Cathlamet		Travis Couture	R-Allyn
4	Suzanne Schmidt	R-Spokane Valley	20	Peter Abbarno	R-Centralia	36	Julia G. Reed	D-Seattle
	Leonard Christian	R-Spokane Valley		Ed Orcutt	R-Kalama		Liz Berry	D-Seattle
5	Bill Ramos	D-Isaiah	21	Strom Peterson	D-Edmonds	37	Sharon Tomiko Santos	D-Seattle
	Lisa Callan	D-Isaiah		Lillian Ortiz-Self	D-Mukilteo		Chipalo Street	D-Seattle
6	Mike Volz	R-Spokane	22	Beth Doglio	D-Olympia	38	Julio Cortes	D-Everett
	Jenny Graham	R-Spokane		Jessica Bateman	D-Olympia		Mary Fosse	D-Everett
7	Jacquelin Maycumber	R-Republic	23	Tarra Simmons	D-Bremerton	39	Sam Low	R-Lake Stevens
	Joel Kretz	R-Wauconda		Greg Nance*	D-Bainbridge Island		Carolyn Eslick	R-Sultan
8	Stephanie Barnard	R-Pasco	24	Mike Chapman	D-Port Angeles	40	Debra Lekanoff	D-Bow
	April Connors	R-Kennewick		Steve Tharinger	D-Sequim		Alex Ramel	D-Bellingham
9	Mary Dye	R-Pomeroy	25	Kelly Chambers	R-Puyallup	41	Tana Senn	D-Mercer Island
	Joe Schmick	R-Cofax		Gynda Jacobsen	R-Puyallup		My-Linh Thai	D-Bellevue
10	Clyde Shavers	D-Oak Harbor	26	Spencer Hutchins	R-Gig Harbor	42	Alicia Rule	D-Blaine
	Dave Paul	D-Oak Harbor		Michelle Caldier	R-Port Orchard		Joe Timmons	D-Bellingham
11	David Hackney	D-Tukwila	27	Laurie Jenkins	D-Tacoma	43	Nicole Macri	D-Seattle
	Steve Bergquist	D-Renton		Jake Fey	D-Tacoma		Frank Chopp	D-Bremerton
12	Keith Goehner	R-Dryden	28	Mari Leavitt	D-University Place	44	Brandy Donaghy	D-Everett
	Mike Steele	R-Chelan		Dan Bronoske	D-Lakewood		April Berg	D-Mill Creek
13	Tom Dent	R-Moses Lake	29	Melanie Morgan	D-Parkland	45	Roger Goodman	D-Kirkland
	Alex Ybarra	R-Quincy		Sharlette Mena	D-South Tacoma		Larry Springer	D-Kirkland
14	Chris Corry	R-Yakima	30	Jamila Taylor	D-Federal Way	46	Gerry Pollet	D-Seattle
	Gina Mosbrucker	R-Goldendale		Kristine Reeves	D-Federal Way		Darya Farivar	D-Seattle
15	Bruce Chandler	R-Zillah	31	Drew Stokesbary	R-Auburn	47	Debra Entenman	D-Kent
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Congress in 2024:

U.S. House of Representatives



213(D)

221(R)

1(V)

U.S. Senate

48(D)

49(R)

3(I)

State Legislature in 2024:

State Senate

29(D)

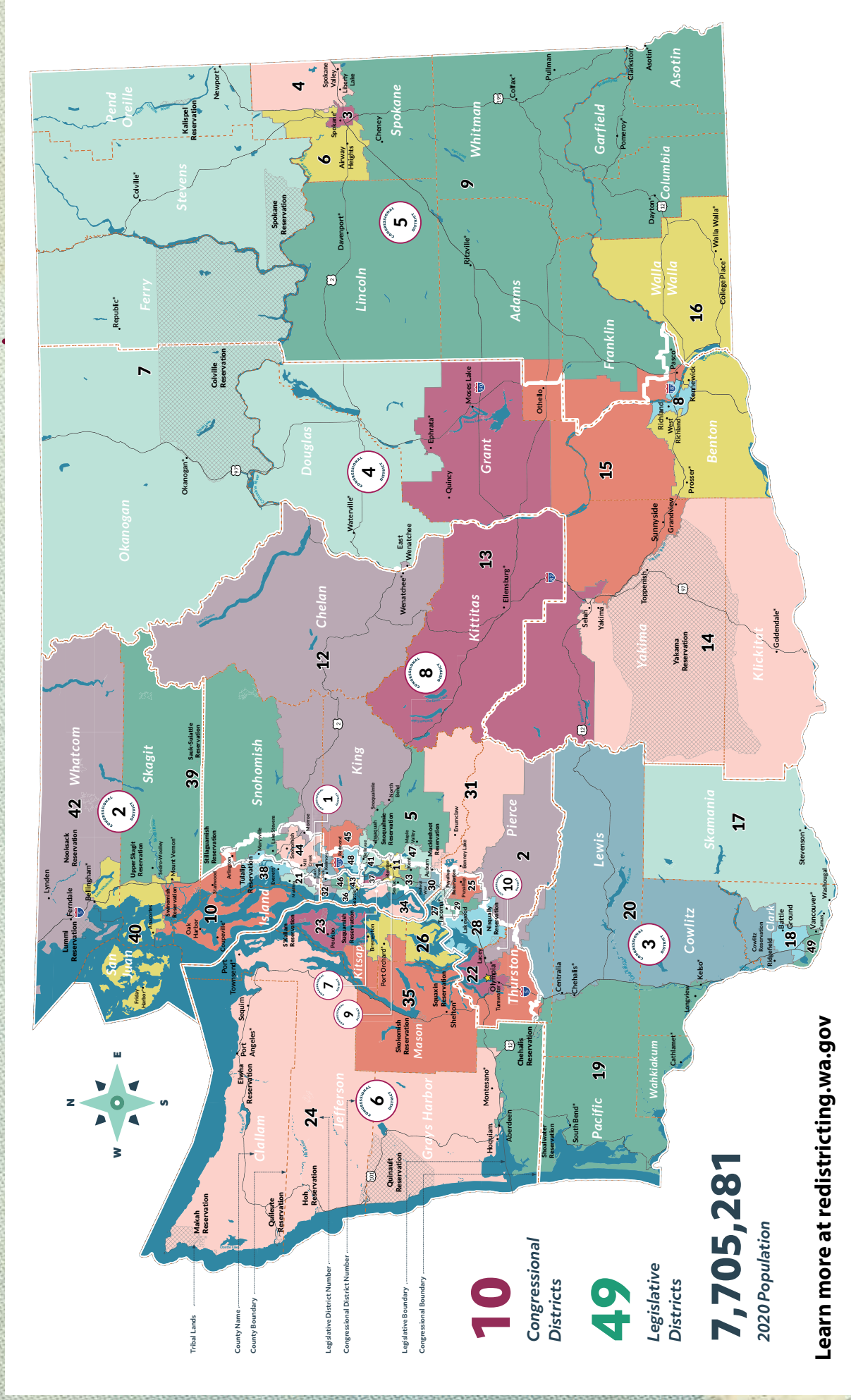
20(R)

State House of Representatives

58(D)

40(R)

7	Shelly Short	R-Addy	23	Drew Hansen	D-Poulsbo	39	Keith L. Wagoner	R-Sedro-Woolley
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13	Judy Warrick	R-Moses Lake	29	Steve Conway	D-South Tacoma	45	Manka Dingra	D-Redmond
14	Curtis King	R-Yakima	30	Claire Wilson	D-Federal Way	46	Javier Valdez	D-Seattle
15	Nikki Torres	R-Pasco	31	Phil Fortunato	R-Auburn	47	Claudia Kauffman	D-Kent
16	Perry Dozier	R-Walla Walla	32	Jesse Salomon	D-Shoreline	48	Patty Kuderer	D-Seattle
						49	Annette Cleveland	D-Vancouver





# COMING THIS MONTH

## 2024 AMMO SCHEDULE WILL COVER VARIETY OF GROWER TOPICS

By Trista Crossley  
Editor, *Wheat Life*

You don't need a crystal ball to predict how informative this year's Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization (AMMO) schedule will be. The program, which celebrates its 15th year in 2024, will cover popular topics such as weather and marketing, but will also include something special for landlords.

"We are putting together a session specifically about the issues landlords deal with, such as landlord/tenant relationships, land values, and leases," said KayDee Gilkey, outreach coordinator for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). "This is the first time we've dedicated an entire AMMO session to our landlords, and I hope it proves popular."

While plans are still being finalized, seminars will generally run from 10 a.m. through lunch. Seminars (and lunch) are free to WAWG members; nonmembers pay \$25 per session. Preregistration for all seminars will be required. More information is available at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/) as well as a registration link. Growers can also call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610 to register. AMMO has offered grower education programs since 2009. It provides education opportunities

and an avenue for growers to connect with professionals and experts on many of the challenges facing agriculture.

The seminars kick off Jan. 23 with Jordan Thayer, a Morgan Stanley financial advisor, and Joe Cerrillo from CliftonLarsonAllen. Other AMMO workshop topics will include an update by U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, research (along with pesticide credits), a landlord session, and a family business workshop with Jolene Brown.

"We are planning to have one virtual session, while the others will be in-person. I hope members take advantage of these free, educational opportunities, not only for the information, but also for networking opportunities and a free lunch," Gilkey said.

Wheat College, also part of the AMMO offerings, is scheduled for early June, with the location to be determined. Wheat College will offer a mix of indoor and outdoor presentations, providing interactive demonstrations on the latest agronomic research being conducted in the Pacific Northwest. Besides a keynote speaker, personnel from WSU Extension will provide localized presentations. Registration reminders will be mailed prior to the event to WAWG members. Unlike the regular AMMO sessions, admittance for Wheat College is free of charge to both

WAWG members and nonmembers.

### Investments, Financial Planning and Taxes with

Jordan Thayer from Morgan Stanley and Joe Cerrillo from CliftonLarsonAllen. Session begins at 10 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Washington Wheat Foundation Annex Building in Ritzville.

**How Weather, Geopolitics, and other Factors are Influencing Ag Prices** with Shawn Hackett. Thursday, Feb. 1. Webinar starts at 10 a.m. A link will be

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emailed prior to the webinar.

**Research Update** with Washington State University researchers, Mark Thorne and Ian Burke. Pesticide credits have been applied for. Session begins at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 14, at the Courtyard By Marriott in Pullman.

**Understanding Today's Wheat Market in a Rapidly Changing World** with Todd Hultman from DTN. Washington State University's Randy Fortenbery will also speak on marketing wheat. Session begins at 10 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Hampton Inn in Spokane.

**Landlord/Landowner Workshop.** Session begins 9 a.m., Tuesday, March 12, at the Hampton Inn in Spokane.

**Family Business** with Jolene Brown. Session begins at 9 a.m., Wednesday, March 13, at the Hampton Inn in Spokane.

**USDA Program Updates** with NRCS and FSA. Date and locations to be announced.

**Wheat College** with Ray Archuleta as the keynote speaker. Tuesday, June 4. Location to be announced. ■

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## Educator works with region's farmers, ranchers

Mark Heitstuman, Washington State University Extension

By Kevin Gaffney  
*Special to Wheat Life*

Growing up on a farm near Uniontown, Wash., **Mark Heitstuman** determined his career goal early on. Active in his FFA group at Colton High School, he envisioned working in agricultural education.

After high school graduation, Heitstuman attended Washington State University (WSU) and earned his degree in ag education in 1987. Understanding that continuing his studies could offer better opportunities in that field, he earned his master's in agricultural vocational technical education in 1989 at WSU. To enter the working world, Heitstuman returned home and taught agricultural science and was the FFA advisor at Colton High School for almost five years, from 1989 to 1994.

"My experiences on our farm and in high school FFA gave me the incentive to have a career in ag education," said Heitstuman. "It was fulfilling for me to come back to my own high school and help the students develop leadership skills they could use throughout their lifetimes, regardless of what they chose to do for a living."

In 1994, the University of Idaho offered Heitstuman a position in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He worked in student recruitment, scholarships, and alumni affairs for over six years. In November of 2000, Heitstuman accepted the WSU Extension County Director position in Asotin County. Since 2012, he has also served as director of the Garfield County WSU Extension office in Pomeroy.

Heitstuman has many responsibilities, as he has also been serving as the Interim State Director for the Washington State 4-H program since June 2022 where he has worked at expanding participation of 4-H teens in both state and national level programs after COVID-19.

In his 23 years of service with WSU Extension, Heitstuman has focused much of his work on youth livestock education, organizing youth camps, and STEM programs. He has worked extensively with area 4-H groups



and other volunteer organizations.

"4-H participation can make a real difference in the lives of young people," he explained. "It starts with building strong leaders that provide mentorship and help develop skills for students. Some folks think 4-H is just showing animals or other projects at county fairs. It involves much more than that."

4-H in Washington is delivered by WSU Extension. It is a part of a nationwide network of land-grant universities that serve over 6 million youths.

"I guess I'm somewhat old-school. I am sort of a generalist. I have knowledge and experience in many facets of agriculture. This actually has been advantageous since there is such a multiplicity of ag production sys-

tems and commodities in Asotin and Garfield counties," Heitstuman said.

Having been involved with wheat farming and raising sheep, swine, and cattle as a youth, Heitstuman works closely with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) and with cattle organizations all over the region. One of the toughest challenges he and other WSU Extension agents face is not having as many Extension educators as they used to.

"WSU Extension is currently in the process of prioritizing and supporting the agricultural industry with less individuals. There is always strong competition for limited dollars," he said. "The state also sometimes has a tough time competing with the salaries available in the private sector. We just try to accomplish as much as possible using what we have to work with."

The WSU Extension offices in the area all do regional work across the Blue Mountain region. They have programs and outreach in Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Whitman, and Walla Walla counties in Washington, along with collaborating on programs in Nez Perce and Latah counties in Idaho and Umatilla County in Oregon.

At the state 4-H level this past year, Heitstuman supported more members competing in livestock judging, meats judging, and shooting sports to increase advancement to state and national competitions. He is proud of



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the students and the volunteers who have worked very hard for their accomplishments. The Asotin and Garfield County Extension offices also help promote the annual WSU Variety Selection and Testing Trials that are held in both counties.

Both Asotin and Garfield counties are test sites for individuals needing Washington State Department of Agriculture Private Applicator Licenses. They also offer an annual five-credit pesticide recertification program both online and in-person each December with over 175 participants.

Asked about the challenges to small grains farmers in the Pacific Northwest, Heitstuman listed four main items:

- The rising input costs farmers face, especially for fuel and farm chemicals.
- The need to grow and innovate. That might mean expanding the farm, adding higher value crops to the rotation, or even using different farming methods.
- Wise use and management of agricultural tools and technology. This can be a challenge for an older farming generation to embrace.
- Dealing with the stress of farming and having producers maintain good mental health can be a difficult challenge for many individuals connected to agriculture.

Heitstuman has led the local WSU Master Gardener programs since he started with WSU Extension. He coordinates Master Gardener horticultural training across five counties in southeastern Washington and Northern Idaho. WSU Master Gardener volunteers receive over 50 hours of training to get certified. Graduates of the program can then work in the local county plant

diagnostic clinics, lead school gardening programs, and provide community outreach to people interested in horticulture. Both Asotin and Garfield counties have a solid base of volunteers involved in this program.

Heitstuman's wife, Michele, is a teacher at Colton High School. In their rare spare time, they raise 4-H and FFA show lambs and have a few head of Charolais cattle on their family acreage. Their son, Michael, has followed the family tradition. He is the ag science teacher and FFA advisor at Colfax High School, where he has developed a very successful FFA program.

The Asotin County WSU Extension office is online at [extension.wsu.edu/asotin](http://extension.wsu.edu/asotin). Their phone number is (509) 243-2009. The Garfield County WSU Extension office is at [extension.wsu.edu/garfield/](http://extension.wsu.edu/garfield/). Their phone number is (509) 843-3701. ■



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## WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Ben Barstow



The Washington Grain Commission, through its education and grower services budgets, supports the advocacy work that the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) does on behalf of the industry, and right now, they are frantically busy. This is the season of the annual lobbying trip to the state Legislature, and this year, there is a farm bill, a national commodity meeting, and Snake River dams to deal with. This is critically important work, and more of us need to be involved. Let me tell you why.

It was a long, long time ago, and far, far away on a WAWG Olympia Days lobbying trip, and I was the only wheat grower who was able to show up at a scheduled appointment at a senator's office. The senator, however, was held up on the floor and was expected to be back any minute, so I waited. The people from the appointment before me, an older couple, were waiting, also. They were a ranching couple from Benton County, and we had a nice chat about our respective issues and all of us bemoaning the lack of understanding of agriculture on the west side of the mountains.

I was not surprised that they were cattle people, but I was surprised that they were from Benton County. Without irrigation, I didn't think there was enough grass in Benton County for two cows to fight over, let alone to feed enough cows to support a ranching family. After 20 minutes of great conversation and no sign of the senator, we all went on to our next appointments.

Later that day, I was walking down the sidewalk between two legislative office buildings on the capitol campus with a group of wheat growers, and I was telling a young grower who also has cows about my conversation with the cattle people from Benton County. Being that we were in Olympia and surrounded by a crowd of people who probably did not drive three to five hours to be there, I referred to them as "cattle people." I was trying to be sensitive and not use the sexist term, "cattle-MEN," especially in this case, as it was apparent that the woman was every bit as important to the operation as the man.

After I had repeatedly referred to the wonderful couple I had just met as "cattle people from Benton County," I heard someone behind me say, with an incredulous

tone in her voice, "cattle people?" I turned around to this total stranger and said, "Do you know cattle people from Benton County, too?" Her reply left me speechless — and totally confused. This time her tone was not just incredulous, but a bit indignant, too, when she said, "Well, I think that's terrible!"

I turned back around and continued my conversation with my friend who had not heard my bewildering exchange. It was sometime later when it finally came to me that this person, who thought I was so terrible, had no concept of people who make their living caring for cattle and the land they graze. For this woman, who thought I was so terrible, it was much more believable that she would run into someone who believed that some people were no better than cattle.

That was a shock to me. To witness firsthand how isolated agriculture is from the rest of society — so isolated that we can't even understand each other's conversations — I was literally stunned. To have the friendship and respect I felt for that couple, who have dedicated their lives to the care and feeding of their cows, so grotesquely misinterpreted, haunts me to this day. I find the idea that any person deserves to be denied their humanity and treated like cattle just as abhorrent as the lady in Olympia did. Furthermore, in all my contact with agriculture, I have never met anyone who would think such a thing could be okay under any circumstances.

The gap between urban and agriculture is wider than I thought. I suppose I should not have been surprised. It is just 2% of us in agriculture trying to have conversations with the 98% who merely eat what agriculture produces, but it is even worse than that. Think about how many of us stay on the farm and refuse to get involved. It must be mere fractions of a percentage of farmers who make the time to have the conversations, to get off the farm and meet the 99%+ who are so far removed from agriculture that they so easily and so erroneously misunderstand what we do and why we do it.

I also believe that most people do want to understand. They do want to meet someone who grows things, but there aren't enough of us having the conversations, and without the conversations, some horrible assumptions are being made. ■

## Part 2: From elevators to export centers

Following the management of low falling numbers throughout the 'grain chain'



**Alison L. Thompson**  
*Research Biologist,  
U.S. Department  
of Agriculture's  
Agricultural Research  
Service*



**Amber Hauvermale**  
*Research Assistant  
Professor, Washington  
State University*

The dynamic landscape of logistics for wheat export in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) make up the complex system we call the "grain chain." To improve methods for testing and managing low falling numbers, it is important to first understand the history of the current system. Read our article that introduced this series at <https://bit.ly/3Rm7nBy>.

The farm-to-export process is streamlined for efficiency to increase PNW grain value in the global market. The chain starts at the farm with the important step of variety selection, which impacts grain management downstream. The logistics of grain management become complicated as varieties with differing quality are mixed upon receipt at elevators and export terminals. Smaller capacity, regional, "country" elevators and larger, consolidated grain cooperatives are used to collect, store, and handle nearly 250 million bushels of soft white and club wheat in the PNW annually<sup>1</sup>. Truck, rail, and barge shipping networks transport grain to export terminals to fulfill contracts negotiated earlier in the year, typically 120 days prior to harvest. The term, "turning the house," describes how efficiently a location fills, empties, and refills its elevators again, and locations that turn the house most efficiently can capture a larger share of total revenues. But low falling numbers and the available tools to manage this problem threaten this efficiency.

### Falling numbers at the elevator

Sales contracts drive grain management. A falling number is one of the quality market specifications for export sales contracts. If the falling number specified cannot be met, the export centers will renegotiate sales prices. During our interviews last spring, everyone identified the same logistical challenges tied to postharvest management of grain with low falling numbers — regardless of operation size or geographical footprint, challenges were slow testing and limited storage that constrained segregation of good grain from bad. To tackle these challenges, grain handlers will use early testing and blending. There are two types of blending. Unintentional blending is simply the result of our current receipt process, where thousands of bushels of different varieties, with unknown quality are delivered to a few central locations (elevators). In contrast, intentional blending occurs when different lots of grain with known quality are mixed to meet contract specifications and is used at elevator and export centers.

To regulate unintentional blending, early testing for falling numbers is routine. If low falling numbers are detected, testing continues throughout harvest and attempts to segregate based on location or even by grower may occur. Common practice is to send composite samples to outside labs, and falling number results are reported back within 24-48 hours. These results are used to determine any related price discounts. Compared to other tests that measure protein and moisture content in under 90 seconds, a 24-48-hour timeline is extremely slow and impractical for use with every truckload. The lack of a rapid falling number test limits the ability for grain segregation and can increase the time to turn the house.

Only two companies interviewed were performing onsite falling number tests for intentional blending. These onsite tests are performed specifically to blend lots or bins for export, not to

<sup>1</sup>Wheat Facts: [https://wagrain.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WEB\\_wheat-facts.pdf](https://wagrain.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WEB_wheat-facts.pdf)



assess price discounts. Testing procedures vary by elevator based on whether the grain will be resold to another, larger warehouse or managed by the same company all the way to the export terminal.

Blending and testing steps may be repeated six to eight times before export because of the exponential increase in volume as grain travels to its final destination (Figure 1). While intentional blending is routinely used, there are important considerations that affect successful blending. These include barometric pressure and protein, which can cause unexpected falling numbers if not properly accounted for, and a larger amount of good grain is needed to blend away bad grain.

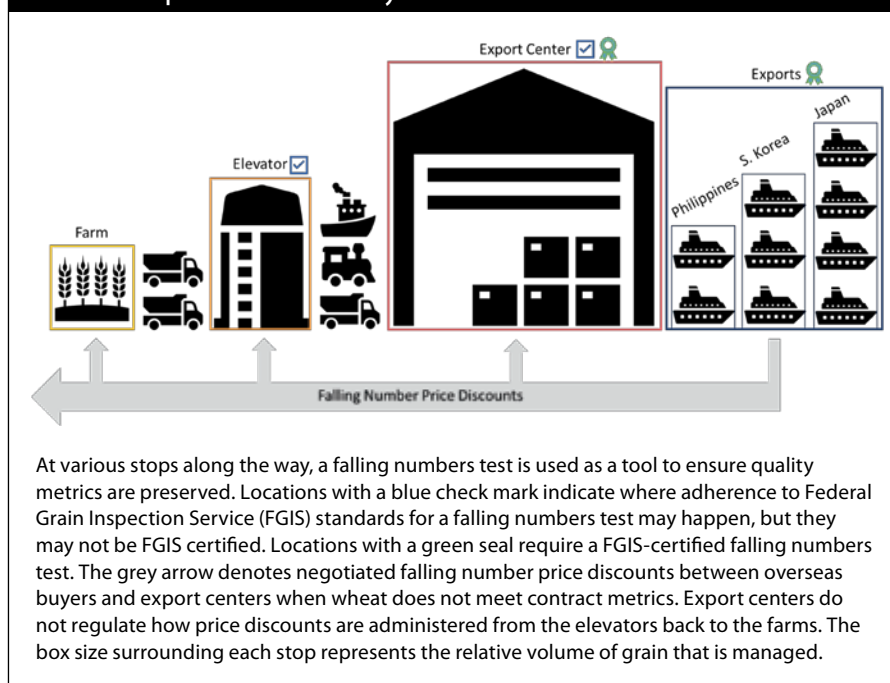
### Testing and requirements

During our interviews, we were made aware of distrust in the falling number method due to contrasting results across the grain chain. To better understand the falling number test within the grain chain, we spoke with members of the grain industry, including state and private testing facilities. While we confirmed the method is regulated and monitored at the federal level, Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) regulations may not necessarily be applied at the state and local levels.

Understanding the regulations, how and when they are applied, and how to interpret them involves four key aspects:

- FGIS protocol states a valid test must have two samples from the same lot run at the same time. These samples must be within 5% of their average and be mathematically corrected for moisture content and barometric pressure<sup>2</sup>. A valid test is not required for intentional blend-

**Figure 1.** An overview of how wheat moves through the “grain chain” to the top three overseas buyers of Pacific Northwest soft white wheat.



ing; however, it is required for all other purposes, including assessing price discounts.

- Falling number testing facilities are not required to be FGIS certified. Noncertified facilities can still provide valid tests following the FGIS protocol but may not include the ability to audit test results with an officiating system or provide consistent, repeatable results that are common with certified locations.
- A FGIS-certified falling number test is required at time of export to ensure market contract specifications are met. If the FGIS-certified number does not meet contract specifications, export centers will reblend, when possible, or establish a discounted sales price based on market demand. For example, a 25-cent discount per 25 seconds varies based on the overall health of the crop in the given year.
- When contracts are renegotiated due to low falling numbers, FGIS and the export centers do not control how price discounts are assigned and distributed back to growers; this is at the discretion of the elevators.

Management of low falling numbers varies and depends on who is managing the grain and for what purpose. Limitations in the current falling number test, storage capacity, and other logistics force the industry to be reactive, and opportunities to be proactive are limited. The falling number method is regulated at the federal level, and a FGIS-certified falling number is only required at time of export.

The next article will highlight the common needs communicated, along with current research focused on improving pre- and postmanagement opportunities that mitigate loss due to low falling numbers. ■

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FGIS9180\\_38.pdf](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FGIS9180_38.pdf)

# 2023 spring variety testing

RESULTS SHOW BRIGHT FUTURE FOR NEW WHEAT LINES

By Clark Neely

*Extension Agronomist and Cereal Variety Testing Lead, Washington State University*

The 2023 season was a bit of a mixed bag this past year in terms of spring wheat performance. While the vast majority of trials were down 20% to 30% on average for yield compared to the 2022 season, there were a few bright spots, including yields that were 59% higher at Almira and 36% greater at Fairfield. Planted acreage for spring wheat in Washington in 2023 was up about 5% over 2022 to around 500,000 acres according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Roughly 74% of those acres went to soft white spring, while the remainder went to the hard red spring class.

One of the newer hard red spring wheat releases from WestBred, WB9623, may be in the hunt for some of these acres. It has consistently yielded above the trial average in all zones with close-to-average test weight in the trials. While it certainly has a yield advantage over WB9668 and WB9303, do not expect the same high levels of grain protein seen in those varieties. Like with test weight, grain protein levels for WB9623 are typically close to the trial average, similar to other high yielding varieties like Hale. While WB9623 has a solid agronomic package for Hessian fly and aluminum tolerance, recent stripe rust screenings rank it as moderately susceptible.

After an initial delay in seed production, certified seed of Hale should be widely available for growers interested in hard red spring wheats in 2024. This rela-



Washington State University (WSU) spring wheat breeder, Mike Pumphrey, talks about Hessian fly resistance with growers attending the WSU Variety Testing Field Day at the Reardan spring wheat trial in June 2023.

tively new variety, released by Washington State University (WSU) in 2022, maintains the best two- and three-year yield average in all but the lowest precipitation zone. Growers will notice that Croplan submitted a number of new varieties that were consistently at the top of the trial in 2023, including CP3055, CP3119A, CP3322, and CP3530. While some of these lines beat out Hale and other high yielding varieties in many cases, growers should pay close attention to test weights on these lines as they regularly came in below 60 pounds per bushel. CP3322 was the best of the group and might be considered acceptable test weight, though it was still routinely below the trial average. CP3322 did receive a moderately resistant score for stripe rust.

Under irrigation, AP Venom continues to lead the released hard red spring varieties for yield, but has competition from some advanced breeding lines, specifically WA8373 and WA8342R, which are outyielding it by four to eight bushels on the multiyear averages. These lines have similar protein and straw strength as AP Venom, but have better test weight. On the soft white spring side, Tekoa and UI Cookie continue to lead the released soft white spring varieties for yield under irrigation. While experimental line WA8327 has shown similar high yield potential as these two varieties, straw strength does not appear to be quite as good.

For fall planted hard red spring wheat, AP Venom and SY Gunsight continued neck and neck for the top yield on the three-year average. While SY Gunsight has a slight advantage on test weight, AP Venom maintains a slight advantage on grain protein. The 2023 Moses Lake trial offered a unique op-



Table 1. 2023 WSU Extension Spring Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=Irrigated						
VARIETY	MOSES LAKE	PASCO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
Tekoa	149	127	138	136	63.3	12.2
WA8327	146	128	137	136	62.6	12.0
UI Cookie	150	121	136	135	63.3	12.2
TMC Lochaven	145	117	131	130	62.7	12.4
IDO1902S	141	113	127	131	64.2	12.0
WA8379 CL+	140	109	124	125	63.2	12.4
WA8351	129	110	120	122	63.9	12.2
Melba <sup>1</sup>	136	103	119	--	61.5	11.3
Seahawk	137	100	119	--	62.3	12.6
Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+)	136	97	116	121	61.3	12.3
Roger <sup>1</sup>	126	99	112	118	62.5	11.2
WA8383	122	97	109	113	62.0	12.0
Ryan	114	101	107	--	60.8	12.5
WA8380 CL+	116	98	107	107	61.0	12.3
WA8384	112	97	105	105	61.9	12.8
C.V. %	6	8	4	4	0.7	1.7
LSD (0.05)	10	12	5	4	0.4	0.2
Average	128	105	117	123	62.2	12.1
SOFT WHITE SPRING						
	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
Dayn <sup>2</sup>	156	133	145	--	63.5	13.8
WA8373	146	124	135	133	63.8	13.2
WA8374	146	119	132	129	63.0	13.8
AP Venom	141	120	130	125	61.7	13.6
WA8342R	142	118	130	129	62.7	13.7
CP3119A	145	112	128	--	59.3	12.9
WA8372	136	120	128	127	64.5	14.0
WB9662	140	112	126	124	63.3	15.1
WB9636	138	113	126	--	62.3	14.9
AP Renegade	137	113	125	125	62.9	15.0
CP3322	137	109	123	--	62.6	13.6
WA8376	131	111	121	121	63.2	13.8
WB9668	127	106	116	116	62.9	15.3
CP3530	118	104	111	113	62.6	15.0
CP3055	115	105	110	113	59.8	13.8
WA8356	120	93	107	110	61.8	15.4
C.V. %	5	6	2	3	0.4	1.7
LSD (0.05)	9	9	3	3	0.3	0.2
Average	134	110	122	122	62.8	14.3
HARD RED SPRING						
	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Jet (HRW Check)	143	117	130	--	61.3	12.9
WA8374	126	82	104	121	64.2	15.1
WA8342R	123	82	103	122	64.0	15.1
WA8375	126	75	100	115	63.9	15.2
AP Venom	129	68	98	126	62.6	15.0
SY Gunsight	114	66	90	128	63.6	15.0
WB9636	107	68	87	--	63.9	16.2
WB9662	101	70	85	112	64.2	16.7
WB9668	98	59	79	102	64.1	17.3
C.V. %	4	6	5	7	0.7	1.8
LSD (0.05)	7	6	5	6	0.5	0.3
Average	118	75	97	118	63.6	15.6
HARD RED SPRING						
	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Jet (HRW Check)	143	117	130	--	61.3	12.9
WA8374	126	82	104	121	64.2	15.1
WA8342R	123	82	103	122	64.0	15.1
WA8375	126	75	100	115	63.9	15.2
AP Venom	129	68	98	126	62.6	15.0
SY Gunsight	114	66	90	128	63.6	15.0
WB9636	107	68	87	--	63.9	16.2
WB9662	101	70	85	112	64.2	16.7
WB9668	98	59	79	102	64.1	17.3
C.V. %	4	6	5	7	0.7	1.8
LSD (0.05)	7	6	5	6	0.5	0.3
Average	118	75	97	118	63.6	15.6
Precipitation Zone=Fall-Planted Irrigated						
VARIETY	MOSES LAKE	OTHELLO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	---Yield (Bu/A)---			Lb/Bu	%	
LCS Jet (HRW Check)	143	117	130	--	61.3	12.9
WA8374	126	82	104	121	64.2	15.1
WA8342R	123	82	103	122	64.0	15.1
WA8375	126	75	100	115	63.9	15.2
AP Venom	129	68	98	126	62.6	15.0
SY Gunsight	114	66	90	128	63.6	15.0
WB9636	107	68	87	--	63.9	16.2
WB9662	101	70	85	112	64.2	16.7
WB9668	98	59	79	102	64.1	17.3
C.V. %	4	6	5	7	0.7	1.8
LSD (0.05)	7	6	5	6	0.5	0.3
Average	118	75	97	118	63.6	15.6

<sup>1</sup>Club Wheat <sup>2</sup>Hard white wheat

portunity to rate emergence this past year on the fall-planted spring wheats due to delayed emergence from the early cold snap experienced in fall of 2022. Of these two varieties, AP Venom clearly had the advantage over SY Gunsight for emergence. WB9636 and WB9662 received some of the best emergence ratings, while WB9668 received one of the lowest ratings in the trials, similar to SY Gunsight.

When looking at the soft white spring wheat results, some varieties that traditionally are high yielders struggled somewhat in 2023, including Ryan, in some cases, and especially Seahawk. The biggest takeaway for me, however, was looking at what is coming down the pipeline for future releases.

If you spent any time looking at the 2023 variety testing summary tables, you might have noticed that WA8351 was leading the pack both on the 2023 and the two-year yield averages in nearly every instance, and in many cases, it was even statistically superior to all released commercial varieties. In addition to exceptional yield potential, test weight for WA8351 was also above the trial average in every zone and consistently produced 1 to 1.5 pounds per bushel more compared to Ryan. Furthermore, threshing ability is superior to Ryan, which is one of the few complaints growers have with that variety. With strong resistance to stripe rust, Hessian fly, and moderately good aluminum tolerance, it is safe to say WA8351 has a solid agronomic package to back up its yield and test weight potential. This line comes from a cross with Tekoa and also has Louise and Alpowa in its pedigree. While final approval is still needed, foundation seed will be available in 2024 and expect an official name to be announced this coming spring.

As exciting as WA8351 is, Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+) is also likely to grab some acres in the coming year. Released in 2023, Butch CL+ is the first two-gene Clearfield soft white spring wheat released by WSU. While it struggled a little in 2023



**Table 2. 2023 WSU Extension Spring Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=>20"									
VARIETY	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PALOUSE	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%			
WA8351	98	73	53	63	<b>72</b>	<b>81</b>	60.8	9.2	
WA8327	101	65	47	63	<b>69</b>	<b>80</b>	59.9	9.3	
Roger <sup>1</sup>	91	67	47	64	67	76	61.0	9.4	
Hedge CL+ <sup>1</sup>	93	60	49	62	66	74	61.2	10.1	
Tekoa	92	65	50	52	65	76	60.4	9.7	
Melba <sup>1</sup>	85	66	44	63	64	74	59.6	9.5	
TMC Lochaven	91	61	49	56	64	73	61.1	10.1	
Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+)	87	65	51	54	64	73	60.6	10.0	
IDO1902S	91	61	43	61	64	73	<b>61.6</b>	10.0	
Ryan	91	51	49	59	63	76	60.1	10.6	
WB6211CLP	86	51	49	59	61	70	58.4	10.3	
UI Cookie	83	53	45	64	61	73	59.3	10.5	
Louise	88	53	44	52	59	69	59.2	9.4	
Seahawk	81	52	43	59	59	73	60.3	9.9	
AP Mondovi CL2	86	56	44	44	57	67	59.6	11.1	
C.V. %	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	
LSD (0.05)	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	
Average	<b>91</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>9.8</b>	
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%			
Hale	93	58	50	59	<b>65</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>61.2</b>	12.4	
WB9623	94	57	48	56	<b>64</b>	71	59.2	12.3	
WA8358 CL+	98	55	46	56	<b>64</b>	73	60.3	12.8	
WA8387 CL+	90	56	46	57	62	70	<b>61.2</b>	12.3	
CP3055	92	59	40	55	61	69	55.5	12.0	
Kelse	90	58	44	53	61	67	59.8	13.1	
Net CL+	92	52	41	59	61	68	<b>61.3</b>	12.5	
Alum	91	54	39	59	61	67	60.0	12.3	
Glee	87	59	47	49	61	70	<b>60.7</b>	12.0	
WA8356	84	57	45	54	60	67	60.3	12.5	
CP3322	87	58	39	55	60	--	58.7	11.6	
Chet	85	55	40	47	57	67	<b>60.7</b>	12.8	
CP3119A	88	51	37	49	56	--	54.4	12.2	
WB9668	80	48	45	50	56	68	60.1	<b>13.5</b>	
WB9303	75	51	45	48	55	69	<b>60.9</b>	<b>13.6</b>	
CP3530	76	45	36	49	51	58	59.4	12.6	
AP Renegade	80	37	36	46	50	64	58.9	<b>13.4</b>	
C.V. %	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.3</b>	
LSD (0.05)	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.3</b>	
Average	<b>88</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>12.5</b>	

Precipitation Zone=16-20"									
VARIETY	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	PLAZA	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%			
WA8351	46	43	67	56	83	<b>59</b>	<b>66</b>	61.9	10.3
Roger <sup>1</sup>	46	38	61	63	83	<b>58</b>	63	62.6	10.0
WA8327	48	39	66	62	74	<b>58</b>	<b>65</b>	61.3	10.4
Ryan	48	34	61	65	80	<b>58</b>	<b>65</b>	61.1	10.6
Melba <sup>1</sup>	47	41	49	64	81	<b>57</b>	60	60.8	10.3
TMC Lochaven	45	42	60	60	77	<b>57</b>	60	61.8	11.5
Hedge CL+ <sup>1</sup>	46	35	57	57	79	55	59	62.0	10.9
Louise	41	34	52	67	76	54	56	60.5	10.5
WB6211CLP	44	33	52	61	75	54	57	59.2	11.5
UI Cookie	44	30	62	56	71	53	62	60.8	11.5
IDO1902S	43	32	55	61	73	53	60	<b>63.0</b>	11.0
Tekoa	41	25	61	59	78	53	60	61.4	10.6
Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+)	41	40	50	57	75	52	61	61.3	11.0
Seahawk	42	35	51	57	75	52	61	61.4	11.0
AP Mondovi CL2	36	19	49	57	70	47	55	60.1	12.4
C.V. %	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>
LSD (0.05)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Average	<b>44</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>10.8</b>
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%			
CP3119A	45	40	59	68	78	<b>58</b>	--	56.8	12.1
CP3055	43	43	66	58	75	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	57.8	12.1
WA8358 CL+	44	34	72	55	71	55	<b>57</b>	<b>62.6</b>	13.2
WA8387 CL+	44	36	69	51	71	54	<b>58</b>	<b>62.6</b>	12.9
CP3322	44	35	55	62	74	54	--	61.0	12.1
Hale	45	38	64	49	74	54	<b>59</b>	<b>62.4</b>	13.2
Net CL+	44	35	60	58	72	54	<b>57</b>	<b>62.7</b>	13.1
WB9623	43	35	60	56	71	53	<b>58</b>	61.3	13.0
Alum	43	30	56	59	70	52	56	62.2	13.1
Chet	39	32	60	57	69	51	55	<b>62.7</b>	13.5
Kelse	43	32	59	52	70	51	56	62.0	13.5
WA8356	39	30	61	49	65	49	54	61.7	13.6
Glee	39	31	58	51	63	48	56	<b>62.4</b>	13.2
AP Renegade	38	34	50	54	59	47	55	60.9	14.1
WB9668	36	32	56	45	58	45	51	62.1	<b>15.2</b>
CP3530	33	25	48	42	62	42	48	60.8	13.8
WB9303	33	18	56	40	56	41	49	62.0	14.9
C.V. %	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>
LSD (0.05)	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Average	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>13.3</b>

<sup>1</sup>Club Wheat

compared to previous years, it still maintains a three-to-six-bushel-per-acre yield advantage over WB6211CLP and AP Mondovi CL2 in the higher precipitation zones, with comparable yields in lower precipitation zones. It generally has a one-to-two-pound per bushel test weight advantage and lower protein than the other Clearfield varieties as well.

The newest spring club wheat, Roger, continues to outyield Melba in the high precipitation zones with better test weight and lower protein. Its Hessian fly resistance is also sure to help it pick up acres from Melba in the coming years.

Tables 1-3 show a quick summary of variety performance in 2023; however, growers are encouraged to visit



**Table 3. 2023 WSU Extension Spring Wheat Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=12-16"									
VARIETY	ALMIRA	ENDICOTT	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
WA8351	70	37	50	63	<b>55</b>	<b>54</b>	63.1	10.1	
Melba <sup>1</sup>	73	40	46	55	<b>54</b>	51	62.2	10.5	
Tekoa	73	34	43	54	52	51	62.8	10.6	
TMC Lochaven	70	38	50	49	51	50	63.0	11.2	
WA8327	64	36	48	60	51	<b>52</b>	62.1	10.1	
WB6211CLP	71	34	41	56	51	48	60.5	11.5	
Roger <sup>1</sup>	64	37	44	52	50	<b>52</b>	63.2	10.4	
Louise	66	37	42	51	49	47	61.6	10.5	
Ryan	64	34	45	51	48	51	62.1	10.6	
Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+)	61	31	42	55	47	49	62.5	10.9	
Hedge CL+ <sup>1</sup>	64	34	35	52	47	47	62.7	11.3	
Seahawk	66	35	34	48	46	47	62.2	10.7	
UI Cookie	66	31	43	46	46	47	61.7	11.5	
ID01902S	63	30	41	49	45	46	<b>63.9</b>	10.8	
AP Mondovi CL2	60	29	39	45	43	45	61.7	12.1	
C.V. %	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>	
LSD (0.05)	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	
Average	<b>67</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>	
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
CP3119A	66	36	43	59	<b>51</b>	--	57.6	12.0	
CP3055	68	34	38	58	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	58.6	12.1	
CP3322	59	31	38	57	46	--	61.3	12.1	
WA8387 CL+	61	33	43	46	46	46	<b>63.1</b>	13.0	
Net CL+	65	33	36	48	46	46	<b>63.4</b>	12.9	
Kelse	62	35	40	43	45	<b>47</b>	62.6	13.3	
WA8358 CL+	57	32	41	48	45	<b>47</b>	63.0	13.2	
Alum	62	30	39	46	44	46	62.7	12.7	
Chet	56	30	43	46	44	45	63.0	13.4	
WB9623	63	31	37	45	44	46	62.3	12.8	
Hale	57	31	38	43	42	<b>47</b>	63.0	13.6	
Glee	56	28	36	49	42	46	62.9	12.7	
WA8356	61	28	37	40	42	45	62.0	13.6	
AP Renegade	53	29	35	43	40	43	61.9	13.8	
WB9668	49	27	34	37	37	41	62.5	14.8	
CP3530	50	22	32	39	36	39	61.2	13.3	
WB9303	50	19	35	36	35	41	62.3	<b>15.2</b>	
C.V. %	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	
LSD (0.05)	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	
Average	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>	

Precipitation Zone=<12"									
VARIETY	BICKLETON	HORSE HEAVEN	LIND	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN		
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
WA8351	35	37	12	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	62.8	10.7		
Hedge CL+ <sup>1</sup>	37	32	11	<b>27</b>	29	62.5	11.3		
Tekoa	34	34	11	26	29	62.3	11.0		
WA8327	31	36	10	26	<b>30</b>	62.4	11.2		
ID01902S	32	31	11	25	27	<b>63.5</b>	11.3		
Louise	31	30	12	24	28	61.6	10.9		
Melba <sup>1</sup>	29	31	11	24	28	62.0	10.7		
Seahawk	35	26	10	24	27	62.1	11.0		
TMC Lochaven	30	31	10	23	27	62.8	12.0		
Ryan	33	30	6	23	27	62.3	11.6		
Butch CL+ (WA8354 CL+)	30	32	8	23	25	62.0	11.4		
AP Mondovi CL2	30	28	10	23	26	61.5	12.8		
Roger <sup>1</sup>	30	28	8	22	26	<b>63.4</b>	10.4		
UI Cookie	29	27	7	21	25	61.4	12.1		
WB6211CLP	27	27	9	21	24	60.5	11.9		
C.V. %	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>		
LSD (0.05)	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>		
Average	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>11.2</b>		
	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
CP3119A	--	37	14	<b>25</b>	--	57.5	13.8		
CP3055	--	34	16	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	58.9	14.0		
CP3322	--	33	14	<b>24</b>	--	60.6	14.4		
Net CL+	--	33	11	22	26	62.7	15.4		
Hale	--	31	10	21	24	<b>63.0</b>	15.7		
Chet	--	32	9	21	25	<b>63.3</b>	15.7		
WA8358 CL+	--	28	12	20	24	62.6	15.7		
WB9623	--	29	10	19	25	62.4	15.0		
Kelse	--	28	9	19	23	62.5	15.8		
Alum	--	28	8	18	23	<b>63.0</b>	15.2		
WA8387 CL+	--	26	9	17	22	<b>63.4</b>	15.3		
Glee	--	26	7	16	22	62.8	15.4		
WA8356	--	25	8	16	22	61.0	16.4		
CP3530	--	23	8	15	21	60.9	15.6		
AP Renegade	--	22	6	14	21	61.4	16.7		
WB9668	--	22	5	13	18	62.5	<b>18.2</b>		
WB9303	--	21	3	12	15	60.0	17.5		
C.V. %	--	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>		
LSD (0.05)	--	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>		
Average	--	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>15.5</b>		

<sup>1</sup>Club Wheat

our website at [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety) if they want to view additional information on long term yield averages, plant height, heading dates, and a multitude of other agronomic and disease resistance ratings. The Variety Testing Program would like to thank the Washington Grain Commission for the funding to conduct these trials as well as all of our grower cooperators that host the

trials on their farms. Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge the many research programs involved in the generation of the many variety ratings developed each year to provide the most information possible to growers to help them make the best informed decisions for their operations. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [clark.neely@wsu.edu](mailto:clark.neely@wsu.edu) or (509) 335-1205. ■

# What's new with barley

By Clark Neely

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Spring barley saw a nice bump in acres throughout the Inland Pacific Northwest in 2023 thanks, in part, to some better prices. Unfortunately, yields did not follow the same trend due to dry conditions for much of the region throughout the spring. In the spring barley variety trials, the number of entries in 2023 remained the same at 24 total with eight malt varieties and seven feed barley varieties. There were also seven experimental malt and two experimental feed barley lines tested at each site.

Starting with the malt varieties, LCS Diablo, KWS Fantex, and KWS Thalix were all relatively new in 2023; however, all three had previously been tested in 2020 and/or 2021, so there is a gap in their long term averages. In general, LCS Diablo, KWS Willis, and KWS Fantex all had a good showing in 2023, particularly in locations below 20 inches of annual precipitation. Growers should pay attention to test weight with LCS Diablo, though. While it generally landed above 48 pounds per bushel, it doesn't always make that threshold, and it often comes in last in the trial for test weight. BC Lexy and KWS Jessie continued to do well in the over-20-inch zone, however, their performance really dropped off in the lower precipitation zones. Both BC Leandra and KWS Thalix landed solidly in the middle of the pack in each zone falling within 60 pounds per acre of each other.

For the feed barleys, there were several newer entries entered this year. HO516-429 is a second-year entry from Highland Specialty Grains that took the number one spot in 2023 in the high rainfall zone overall. It also beat

the trial average in the other precipitation zones as well. It received a resistant rating for barley stripe rust and shows good straw strength. Carleton (HO517-245) tied Altorado for the number one feed barley in the 16-to-20-inch zone, though it fell below the trial averages in the other precipitation zones. It has strong stripe rust resistance and typically comes in with the lowest protein in the trial. The other newcomer to the trial was the OSU entry, OSU Successor. This release is another IMI-tolerant variety intended to replace Survivor; however, yields were consistently 600 to 800 pounds per acre less than Survivor, and it was dead last in the trial in most cases. It typically had one of the best test weights in the trial, and heading dates were typically five to seven days earlier for OSU Successor compared to Survivor.

New in 2023 are variety trials comparing winter barley varieties and breeding lines. This is to address an expanding focus by the Washington State University (WSU) barley breeding program to develop better adapted winter barleys for Eastern Washington. The trials occurred beside all winter wheat variety trials at locations over 16 inches of average annual precipitation. These trials only had two commercial checks, Wintmalt and Thunder, and four experimental lines submitted by WSU in 2023. The number of entries did increase to eight for the 2024 season, which included the addition of LCS Saturn and BC Clementine.

In general, Thunder was numerically higher yielding than Wintmalt at all but one of the published trial sites. Data was not published from Dayton or St. John as varieties were not significantly different from one another in those trials. Winter injury was observed at

**Table 4. 2023 WSU Extension Winter Barley Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=>20"							
VARIETY	COLTON	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PULLMAN	AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu	%	
Thunder	4320	4490	5040	6290	<b>5030</b>	52.3	11.8
Wintmalt	2870	4280	4310	6110	4390	51.3	12.6
EXPERIM. DH161619	3970	3860	4600	6030	4620	<b>53.1</b>	12.9
EXPERIM. DH162310	3690	3560	4290	5420	4239	52.2	14.2
EXPERIM. DH170826	3300	3840	4290	5400	4210	51.5	13.6
EXPERIM. DH141364	3510	3970	4240	5010	4180	52.4	13.4
C.V. %	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2.5</b>
LSD (0.05)	<b>720</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Average	<b>3610</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>4460</b>	<b>5710</b>	<b>4450</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>

Precipitation Zone=16-20"					
VARIETY	MAYVIEW	WALLA WALLA	AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	Yield (Bu/A)		Lb/Bu	%	
Thunder	3220	2030	2620	53.2	13.9
Wintmalt	2640	2230	2440	52.4	14.5
EXPERIM. DH161619	3050	2840	<b>2950</b>	<b>54.6</b>	14.5
EXPERIM. DH170826	2940	2670	<b>2800</b>	53.3	15.3
EXPERIM. DH162310	2860	2450	2660	53.6	16.1
EXPERIM. DH141364	2660	2410	2540	53.3	14.9
C.V. %	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>
LSD (0.05)	<b>300</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Average	<b>2900</b>	<b>2440</b>	<b>2670</b>	<b>53.4</b>	<b>14.8</b>



**Table 5. 2023 WSU Extension Spring Barley Variety Trial Summary**

Precipitation Zone=>20"								
VARIETY	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PALOUSE	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN	
	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu		%	
<b>MALT</b>								
LCS Diablo	5290	3690	3170	<b>4050</b>	--	47.5	11.0	
BC Lexy	4860	3680	3300	3950	<b>5060</b>	48.8	11.0	
KWS Jessie	5050	3540	3140	3910	<b>5160</b>	48.9	10.6	
KWS Fantex	4750	3590	3040	3790	--	49.1	<b>11.4</b>	
KWS Thalix	4620	3170	3410	3730	--	49.9	10.9	
BC Leandra	5200	2950	3000	3720	4840	48.8	10.7	
AAC Connect	4310	3040	3050	3470	4280	49.0	<b>11.3</b>	
KWS Willis <sup>1</sup>	4610	--	3380	--	--	--	--	
<b>FEED</b>								
H0516-429	5680	3370	3530	<b>4200</b>	4970	50.7	10.8	
Claymore	5530	3630	3320	<b>4160</b>	<b>5010</b>	50.1	10.5	
Lenetah	4690	3920	3320	3970	4720	50.8	10.9	
Survivor	4720	3870	3130	3900	4520	<b>51.7</b>	11.0	
Oreana	4980	3080	3500	3850	4940	50.5	<b>11.1</b>	
Altorado	4900	3270	3380	3850	4950	50.9	10.7	
Carleton (H0517-245)	4990	2600	3250	3610	--	50.8	10.1	
OSU Successor	3830	2750	3150	3240	--	51.0	10.8	
<b>C.V. %</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	
<b>LSD (0.05)</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	
<b>Average</b>	<b>4800</b>	<b>3320</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>3770</b>	<b>4840</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>11.0</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Insufficient seed to replant entry at Farmington

both St. John and Walla Walla sites in 2023 where Thunder appeared to be the most sensitive, while all four experimental lines appeared more tolerant of the cold temperatures compared to either commercial variety. Another interesting observation was that the winter barley entries were roughly two weeks ahead of winter wheat varieties in heading.

While a summary of 2023 and two-year yield data are presented in this article, growers are always encouraged to spend more time looking at multiyear data for a better representation of variety performance when available. Additional information, ratings, and yield data can be found on our website at [smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety](http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [clark.neely@wsu.edu](mailto:clark.neely@wsu.edu) or (509) 335-1205. ■

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Precipitation Zone=16-20"								
VARIETY	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu		%	
<b>MALT</b>								
KWS Willis	3370	2920	4520	5950	<b>4190</b>	<b>4950</b>	50.5	11.3
LCS Diablo	3240	2890	3990	5730	3960	--	49.8	10.8
KWS Fantex	3070	2880	4240	5560	3930	--	51.6	<b>11.6</b>
KWS Thalix	3150	2420	4430	5290	3820	--	52.8	11.3
BC Leandra	3220	2590	4160	5170	3780	4420	51.0	10.9
BC Lexy	3410	2600	4140	4780	3730	4580	51.4	11.3
AAC Connect	3130	2590	3900	4810	3610	3920	51.2	<b>11.6</b>
KWS Jessie	3100	2570	3660	5040	3590	4630	51.8	11.4
<b>FEED</b>								
Altorado	3190	2850	4680	5600	<b>4080</b>	4660	52.4	11.2
Carleton (H0517-245)	3370	2810	4450	5680	<b>4080</b>	--	52.1	10.6
Oreana	3370	2960	4360	5600	<b>4070</b>	<b>4840</b>	52.6	11.4
Lenetah	3440	2820	4350	5600	<b>4050</b>	4470	52.7	10.8
H0516-429	3110	2980	4800	5250	4030	4670	51.6	11.0
Survivor	3270	3020	4250	5430	3990	4180	52.6	11.3
Claymore	3050	2840	4150	5200	3810	4570	50.9	11.0
OSU Successor	2790	1490	4330	4790	3350	--	<b>53.5</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>C.V. %</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>LSD (0.05)</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>3180</b>	<b>2680</b>	<b>4190</b>	<b>5300</b>	<b>3840</b>	<b>4540</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>11.3</b>

Precipitation Zone=<16"								
VARIETY	ALMIRA	ENDICOTT	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVG. YIELD	2-YEAR AVG. YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu		%	
<b>MALT</b>								
KWS Fantex	5050	2510	2990	2830	<b>3350</b>	--	52.4	11.5
KWS Willis	4980	2570	3110	2490	<b>3290</b>	<b>3670</b>	51.7	11.2
LCS Diablo	5250	2030	2680	3030	<b>3250</b>	--	51.5	11.5
BC Leandra	4720	2460	2890	2580	3160	3490	51.3	10.8
KWS Thalix	5190	2310	2680	2450	3160	--	<b>53.2</b>	11.2
BC Lexy	4920	2450	2540	2680	3150	3470	52.0	11.5
KWS Jessie	4760	2350	2780	2400	3070	3490	52.3	11.5
AAC Connect	4230	1950	2550	2130	2710	2950	52.0	<b>12.0</b>
<b>FEED</b>								
Survivor	4760	2830	3310	2600	<b>3370</b>	<b>3610</b>	<b>53.5</b>	11.5
Lenetah	4950	2730	2870	2400	<b>3240</b>	3500	<b>53.4</b>	11.0
H0516-429	4950	2410	2570	2790	3180	3530	52.9	11.1
Altorado	4730	2620	2610	2710	3170	3540	<b>53.3</b>	11.4
Oreana	4840	2150	2880	2690	3140	<b>3600</b>	<b>53.2</b>	11.7
Carleton (H0517-245)	4600	2240	3170	2260	3070	--	52.9	10.2
Claymore	4520	2300	2680	2660	3040	3400	52.0	11.4
OSU Successor	3300	2190	3010	1630	2530	--	<b>53.5</b>	11.5
<b>C.V. %</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>LSD (0.05)</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>4640</b>	<b>2390</b>	<b>2830</b>	<b>2520</b>	<b>3090</b>	<b>3480</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>11.4</b>

# WHEAT WATCH

## WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

### White wheat markets lagging last year's pace

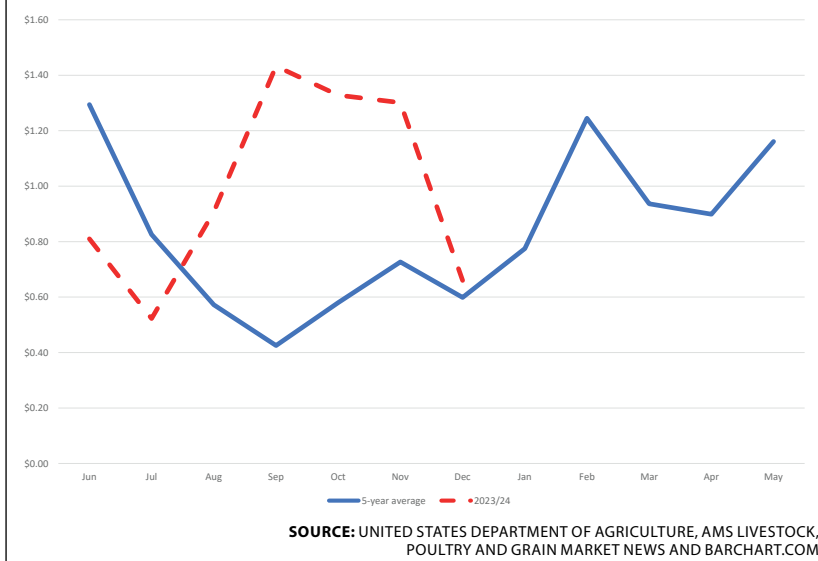


By T. Randall Fortenbery  
Professor and Tom B. Mick  
Endowed Chair, School  
of Economic Sciences,  
Washington State  
University

Soft white wheat prices were quite strong relative to soft red futures prices through the second quarter of the marketing year (Sept. 1 through Dec. 1) but returned to more normal levels in December (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The good news is the basis correction did not happen by cash prices falling in early December, but rather by futures prices rising. The bad news is that Washington producers received little benefit from the December futures rally. However, with basis levels closer to their long-term averages, it is more likely that any appreciation in futures prices going forward could have a positive impact on local cash prices as well. From Figure 2, one can see that almost all the local basis volatility following the 2023 wheat harvest has come from changes in Chicago futures prices. Soft white wheat cash prices in Portland have been quite stable since harvest.

Despite cash prices for soft white wheat holding up well as futures prices were falling through the fall months, the market for soft white does face some headwinds. In September 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) forecast that 170 million bushels of white wheat would be exported in the 2023-24 marketing year. In the December World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), USDA reduced the forecast to 155 million bushels, a reduction of 9%, and 18% less than exported in the 2022-23 marketing year. Further,

**Figure 1: Portland soft white wheat basis**  
(Portland cash price minus Chicago soft red wheat futures price)



export pace through mid-December suggests that even the 155-million-bushel forecast may be optimistic. Through the week of Dec. 15, U.S. average weekly exports of white wheat were 2.4 million bushels. To hit the December USDA forecast of 155 million total bushels for the marketing year, we need to ship at least 2.6 million bushels a week going forward. This is an increase of almost 8% over the weekly average through the first half of the marketing year.

Figure 3 shows the weekly cumulative U.S. white wheat shipments through Dec. 15, 2023, compared to the weekly export pace from previous marketing years. The dark green portion of the 2023-24 marketing year line represents the future pace needed to meet the current USDA forecast.

A couple of features jump out from Figure 3. First, the export pace in the second quarter this year lagged the pace in previous years by a substantial amount. This is particularly troublesome when compared to the 2021-22 marketing year. USDA's most recent forecast for 2023-24 exports represents an increase of 5% over the total exports in 2021-22. However, through mid-December, white wheat exports this year were running behind the 2021-22 pace by 4%.

White wheat exports in 2021-22 represented the lowest volume exported since 2001-02. Thus, if the export pace this year does not pick up in the third and fourth quarters, 2023-24 exports will be at the lowest level in 22 years.

<sup>1</sup>The difference in a local cash price and futures prices is referred to as the basis. Soft white wheat basis is defined as the local cash price (in the example here, Portland cash price) minus the soft red wheat futures prices for the contract closest to delivery.



Historically, the largest markets for U.S. white wheat have been the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and, recently, China. Through the first half of the 2023-24 marketing year, however, the only major market that increased deliveries of U.S. white wheat compared to year ago levels was the Philippines. Philippine deliveries through mid-December totaled just under 20.6 million bushels, a year-over-year increase of 6%. Other destinations reporting significant year-over-year increases in white wheat deliveries were Taiwan (up 71%) and Chile (up 30%).

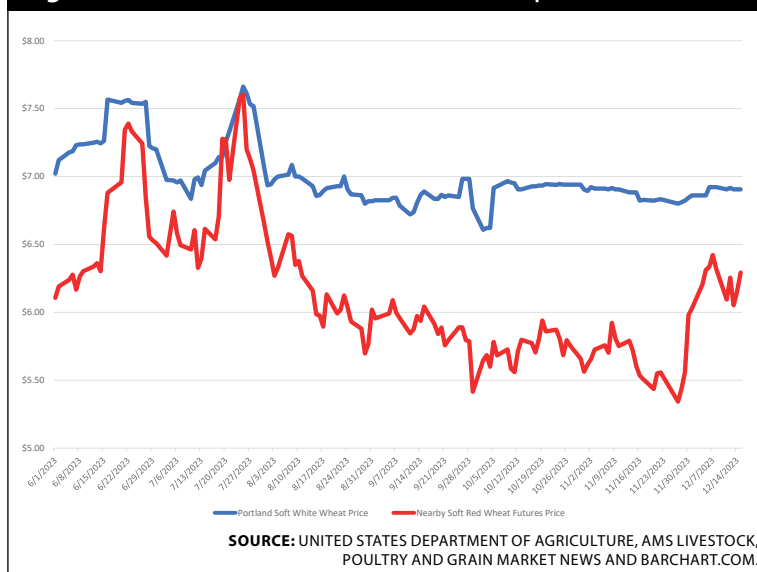
Other major markets are lagging last year's white wheat import pace. Shipments to Japan through midmarketing year were down 14%, to South Korea 13%, 11% to Indonesia, and off over 93% to China. In contrast, China has been very active in the U.S. soft red wheat market, taking delivery of over 10.2 million bushels through mid-December, compared to only 5.8 million bushels through mid-December last marketing year. If we aggregate across all classes of wheat, total U.S. wheat shipments through the first half of the 2023-24 marketing year were down about 16% compared to 2022-23. However, year-over-year increases were reported for durum, hard red spring, and soft red winter, so the entire decline in wheat export volume this year comes from reductions in white wheat and hard red winter.

According to the December 2023 WASDE, USDA is forecasting just a 4% reduction in total U.S. wheat exports this year compared to last. Consistent with the current export pattern, they are forecasting increases for durum, hard red spring, and soft red winter, but a year-over-year reduction in hard red winter exports of 35%.

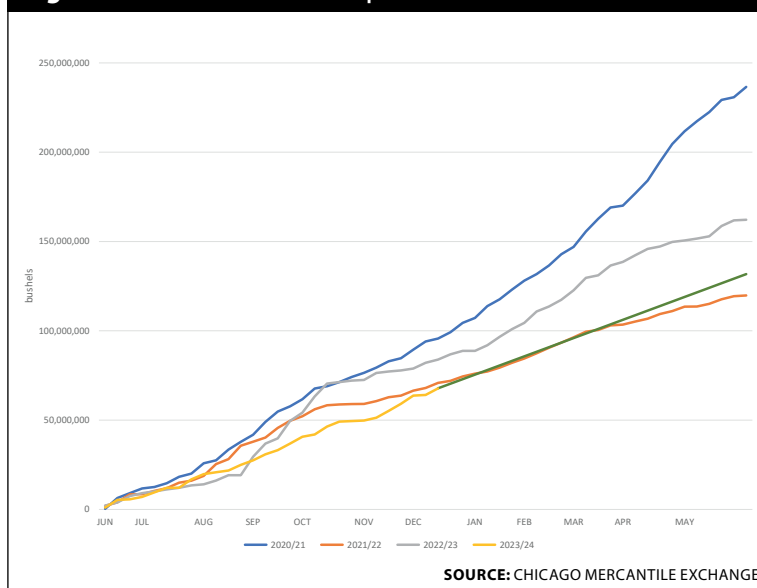
The International Grains Council (IGC) estimates total world trade of wheat this year is expected to lag last marketing year by about 6%. Further, IGC estimates from mid-December suggest U.S. hard red winter prices are trading at a significant premium over competitors' prices for export.

Increases in export volume this year compared to last are projected for Argentina, Russia, Brazil, and India. The European Union's wheat exports are expected to be essentially unchanged from year-ago levels. Despite the drop in U.S. exports projected this year, however, the U.S. share of world exports is not expected to decline appreciably and remain at about 10%.

**Figure 2: Portland vs. futures market wheat prices**



**Figure 3: U.S. white wheat exports**



It appears that wheat markets have discounted any supply chain issues associated with wheat shipments out of the Black Sea region. Ukrainian exports are projected to be lower this year compared to last and match a nine-year low. Current market prices already reflect the reduction in Ukrainian exports. Unless there is some sort of incident that impacts the abilities of Russia and Ukraine to export wheat, any price improvement for U.S. markets in the late winter/early spring will likely require some improvement in the current export pace for U.S. wheat. ■

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# Northcentral Washington settles down

## Early resident reminisces about the early days, Douglas County

*In 1936, the state of Washington began a project to preserve the lore of its earliest pioneers. Elderly people receiving old age assistance through the State Department of Public Welfare were interviewed, and excerpts from those interviews were published in three volumes, the last one in 1938. "Told by the Pioneers. Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington," aimed to preserve, in the language of the pioneers or their children, the household tales of early days and to inspire in students the desire to unearth other stories to be preserved in the future. Here is an excerpt by Henry C. Godlove from Volume 3, pages 35-37, which talks about the settling of Douglas County.*

The 80s were restless times in the middle west. There was still plenty of room there, but all our lives, we had been hearing tales of the far west, beyond the Rockies. I think many of us were tired of the flat country and the short grass of the prairies and plains.

Out there were mountains, lakes, forest. There were mines, rich farming lands, so many ways of making a fortune. In 1883, I was living in Pottawatomie County, Kan.,

where I was born, when a party of men were leaving for the Black Hills to mine.

I knew a man in Ellensburg, Washington Territory, and decided to visit him, traveling part of the way with the party bound for the Black Hills. When I reached The Dalles, Ore., I boarded the stage for Ellensburg.

It was in April, and the road over the Simcoe Hills was in bad shape. I walked most of the way, finally reaching my destination, where I filed on a homestead in what was soon to become Kittitas County. I didn't prove up on this land, but crossed the Columbia in 1885 and filed on a timber tract east of Moses Coulee in Douglas County. My home was at Palisades, where I bought railroad land and raised stock. I had brought a few cattle over from Ellensburg, swimming them across the Columbia River. There was no ferry at the crossing, but Indians paddled us across in their canoes.

Douglas County was organized in 1883, and there was one settlement at Okanogan, the county seat. In locating



Pioneer Picnic on Crab Creek, 1904. The Odessa Pioneer Picnic was held on Crab Creek annually and included the communities of Ritzville, Sprague, and Odessa. Photo shows something in progress, perhaps a horse race. Unknown photographer. Photo courtesy of the Odessa Historical Society. (OHM0090, washingtonruralheritage.org).





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

this town, the founders omitted the most important detail — water. There was no water there, and no matter how deep they dug or bored, they never reached water. There was a good well on a ranch a few miles from there, and the ranchers coming there for water named the place, “Waterville.” It seemed the logical place for a town, and the man who owned the ranch, A. T. Green, released 40 acres to the government to be platted for a government townsite since the land had not been surveyed. That was quite a drawing card and drew the county seat away from Okanogan in 1886, leaving the town Okanogan “high and dry” to the winds of fate. Freighting was done from Spokane Falls, but for a long time, the settlers drove once or twice a year either to Ellensburg or to Ritzville for supplies.

In 1885, the year I came to Douglas County, I took a long trip on horseback through the Okanogan. A military road crossed Douglas County, and the soldiers had wintered at the mouth of Foster Creek in 1879-80. That country was not settled in 1885, and I just saw a few people. Since then, it has become a farming section. The little settlement of Bridgeport on the Columbia was afterwards financed by men of Bridgeport, Conn. There wasn’t a settler in the Methow Valley. The Indians were away on their summer pilgrimage, but their sweat houses remained, mute evidence of their belief in a ruling spirit.

I traveled up the Okanogan Valley as far as Lake Soyoos, where I saw Okanogan Smith’s ranch, but I didn’t stop there. Smith came there in 1858 and located on 600 acres of land. Later he bought 300 acres from Chief Tonasket. He set out an orchard, which became famous through the whole northwest. There were 1,200 apple trees, and he was the father of



Jack and John Long on horse-drawn combine near Waterville, Washington circa 1950-1953. Unknown photographer. Photo courtesy of the North Central Washington Heritage and the private collection of Paul Hinderer. (iris0161, washingtonruralheritage.org)

irrigation in Washington, teaching the Indians farming practices.

The old customs house was still standing, not far from the lake and near the boundary line.

Most of the cattle men of Douglas County were in the section which was cut off in 1909 to form Douglas County. I knew “Portugese Joe.” He had a ranch in the Crab Creek country and was probably the first white man there. Tony Richardson was there, also, and had 3,000 head of horses. The Hutchinson brothers, both of whom were nearly seven feet tall, had a ranch about where Neppel is located. Blythe had a hay ranch farther south, and McManiman had horses and cattle. The Urquhart boys were farther north. There was a stock ranch at McEutee Springs where Coulee City is now.

*Editor’s note: Neppel was the original name of the town on Moses Lake. In 1938, it was renamed Moses Lake.*

Where Ephrata stands was the big round-up camping grounds. The springs there were called “Indian Grave Springs” because of the number of Indian graves in the hills. The ground at the springs was an old meeting place for the various tribes. Frank Beasley located there for awhile, and the springs were afterwards known as the Beasley Springs. He moved on, and it was left for others who settled there to realize on the townsite, which was platted with the coming of the railroad.

Tom and Bill Eden ran sheep in that country at one time and were in the cattle business.

When the Great Northern Railway was building through to the coast, Dan Paul and T.S. Blythe, who had cattle in the Moses Lake country, had the contract for furnishing beef to the construction camps. As the camps moved west, they



moved their cattle, swimming them across the Columbia River.

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# THE BOTTOM LINE

## Farm bill implications for farmland owners

By Tim Cobb

*Owner, Farmland Company*

It isn't uncommon for farm bills to move past their legislative expiration as was the case this past September when the fiscal expiration of the current 2018 Farm Bill occurred. It also isn't the first time Congress has moved to enact a short term, one-year extension to keep the current law from reverting to mid-1900s level provisions. The Congressional Research Service has indicated, "Recent farm bills have faced legislative hurdles for enactment, such as insufficient votes to pass the House floor, presidential vetoes, and delays resulting in short-term extensions. The 2002 Farm Bill expired at the end of 2007, and parts were extended in the spring of 2008. The 2008 Farm Bill expired at the end of 2012 and was extended for one year in 2013..."<sup>1</sup>

Even with a similar extension now occurring and initial relief to operate as we have for the past five years, many warn that now is the time to keep the momentum and the debate alive to ensure the needed updates to provisions and programs will be agreed upon and completed by the fall of 2024.

A current and renewed farm bill is critical legislation to direct and fund a wide range of agriculture and food-related programs. For a closer look into how changes or delays in funding can impact farmland owners, let's consider just a few of the most relevant components.

### Commodity and Conservation Programs

Farm bills typically include provisions related to commodity programs that provide support to farmers based on factors such as price fluctuations and income variability. The most critical of these are risk mitigation and crop input baseline support. For example, over the past few years, crop input costs have risen well above the baseline support levels included in the 2018 Farm Bill. Without renewal of the farm bill this year, it means producers and landowners with crop share leases will continue to operate with undermarket value support.

Landowners who opt for a direct cash rent model for farmland and who allow their tenant to receive the undermarket commodity support benefits will begin to feel the downward impact of an inability for the operator to raise cash rental rates.

Conservation programs aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices will continue to operate during the extension period. Landowners will continue to be eligible for incentives or payments for implementing conservation practices on their land, such as cover cropping, wetland preservation, or wildlife habitat enhancement (depending on the type of farmland and variability of topography and crop production). These programs have continued to be a source of both sustainable soil practices and incentivized income for farmland owners to increase the care and longevity of the land.

### Crop Insurance

In recent years, farmland owners with crop share leases have increased their

utility of crop insurance coverage. The revenue protection insurance product is specifically aimed to protect from yield and income losses associated with inclement weather or other crop market factors.

Changes to crop insurance programs are often part of renewing farm bills, which impact landowners by influencing the availability, cost, and terms of insurance coverage for their crops.

Even though the crop insurance program falls under the "permanent funding" category of the extended farm bill, it is imperative we understand that all potentially beneficial or progressive updates to the program could be stalled without the passing of a new farm bill. Our encouragement should be to Congress to renew this legislation that has, over time, become the safety net for owners, producers, and consumers alike.

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<sup>1</sup>CRS Report R47659; August 21, 2023, pg. 2.



## Research, Extension, and Rural Development

Functioning and extended farm bills include considerations for rural development programs, impacting landowners in rural areas by providing resources for infrastructure, community facilities, and economic development.

The allocation of funds for agricultural research and Extension services benefits landowners through the development of new technologies and practices. Education in agriculture has historically provided our country and

its brightest minds with the tools necessary to nutritiously and efficiently feed more people on less acres. Without these important yield advances, the overall productivity and global reach of our country would be greatly diminished.

Lastly, certain farm bills have included measures to support beginning farmers and ranchers, impacting the transition of land, access to capital, and generational tenure. As farmland values continue to trend upward, these farm bills are vital to the ability of younger producers to create a land base of their own.

There is a positive impact that comes to farmland owners from a renewed farm bill that supports the continuation of profitable agriculture production. The thoughtful owner in the coming months will be paying close attention to how our elected officials work to pass this most important legislation. ■

**Tim Cobb** is a farm kid from Eastern Washington and is the owner of Farmland Company, based in Spokane, Wash. Farmland Company specializes in direct farmland management, real estate brokerage, and consulting across the Pacific Northwest. For more information, visit the company's website at [farmlandcompany.com](http://farmlandcompany.com).

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Ruark Century Farm in Pomeroy on the Snake River breaks. Photo by Tanner Cranor.



Nothing says farm kids like watching harvest from the pool! Colton (9) and Waverly (7) Birrenkott watching Scott Roecks harvest winter wheat outside of Plaza. Photo by Sarah Birrenkott.

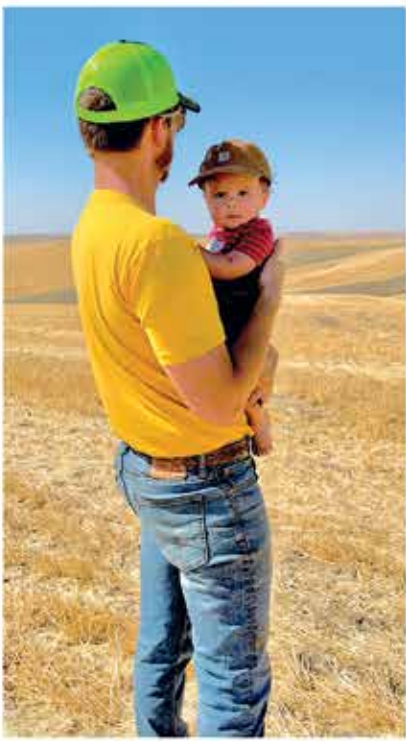


Adalynn Strohmaier (10 months) learning how to drive grain cart in Benge. Photo by Shane Strohmaier.

Email pictures to [editor@wawg.org](mailto:editor@wawg.org). Please include location of picture, names of all people appearing in the picture, and ages of all children.



# Your wheat life...



Dylan Schmick sharing the joys of harvest with his son Owen (9 months) who is the 5th generation at SonRay Farms outside of Endicott. Photo by DaShari Schmick.



Mayson Yager (7) helping Mike Glorfield in Lamont. Photo by Kerri Mays.

Joel Klein (12), grain cart driver for Walli Farms south of Ritzville, is the 5th generation on the farm. During harvest, Joel brings his lawn chair so if it's a slow day, he can sit in the shade ... if there's shade available. Photo by Jake Klein.





# HAPPENINGS

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

## JANUARY 2024

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

**9-10 2024 CROPPING SYSTEMS CONFERENCE.** Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Wash. Registration and more info at [directseed.org](http://directseed.org)

**12-21 LAKE CHELAN WINTERFEST.** An event for the whole family! Ice sculptures, fireworks, snow slide, music! Chelan, Wash. [lakechelan.com/winterfest/](http://lakechelan.com/winterfest/)

**14-16 OLYMPIA DAYS.** WAWG's annual advocacy trip to Olympia needs grower participation from every county. Call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610.

**13 WINTERFEST.** Experience the fun and excitement of winter games in Deer Park! Entertainment, cake walk, vendors. A community celebration with events for the whole family. Deer Park, Wash. [facebook.com/DPWAKiwanis/?fref=tag](https://facebook.com/DPWAKiwanis/?fref=tag)

**17-18 2024 NORTHWEST HAY EXPO.** Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash. For info visit [wa-hay.org/northwest-hay-expo.html](http://wa-hay.org/northwest-hay-expo.html)

**23 INVESTMENTS, FINANCIAL PLANNING AND TAXES.** AMMO

workshop with Jordan Thayer from Morgan Stanley and Joe Cerrillo from CliftonLarsonAllen. 10 a.m. to noon at the Washington Wheat Foundation Annex Building in Ritzville, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister by calling (509) 659-0610 or print out and mail registration form online at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

## FEBRUARY 2024

**1 HOW WEATHER, GEOPOLITICS, AND OTHER FACTORS ARE INFLUENCING AG PRICES.** AMMO webinar with Shawn Hackett. 10 a.m. to noon. Link will be emailed prior to workshop. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister by calling (509) 659-0610 or print out and mail registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

**6-8 SPOKANE AG SHOW.** The largest farm machinery show in the Inland Northwest. More than 250 agriculture suppliers and service companies all under one roof. Held at the Spokane Convention Center. [agshow.org](http://agshow.org)

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

**14 RESEARCH UPDATE.** AMMO workshop with Washington State University

researchers, Mark Thorne and Ian Burke. Pesticide credits have been applied for. 10 a.m. to noon at the Courtyard By Marriott in Pullman, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister by calling (509) 659-0610 or print out and mail registration at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

## 22 UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S WHEAT MARKET IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD.

AMMO workshop with Todd Hultman of DTN and Washington State University's Randy Fortenbery. 10 a.m. to noon at the Hampton Inn in Spokane, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister by calling (509) 659-0610 or print out and mail registration form at [wawg.org/ammo-workshops/](http://wawg.org/ammo-workshops/).

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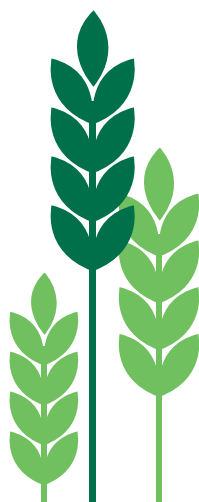
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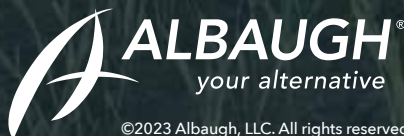
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