

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

FEBRUARY | 2024



OLYMPIA DAYS

Growers make annual trip
to state capitol to speak
with legislators

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President's Perspective



A little planning goes a long way

By Anthony Smith

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Here we are in February already!

I'm busy tuning up tractors, changing oils and filters — all that fun stuff that needs to get done before getting out in the field. I'm also taking inventory on what spring seed, fertilizers, and crop protection products I'll need. While doing this, I always get distracted and start other small projects. But when spring field work does begin (in Benton County, that's fairly early in the year), I don't want to get off to a bad start. A little planning now goes a long way to ensuring a good start to my year.

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) is the same way. As the new year approaches, we start preparing our state and national legislative priorities. When we head to Olympia and Washington, D.C., we want to make sure we are familiar with our talking points, and we know the issues we want to discuss.

We had two big trips last month. The first was our annual Olympia Days trip, which was very successful despite the unusual freezing weather on the west side. We met with almost 50 legislators and agency representatives and had good discussions with most of them. We emphasized the need to be reimbursed for the carbon taxes we've paid on fuel and explained how the state's overtime law, which begins at 40 hours per week this year, is making producers cut workers' hours. We are supporting a bill that would allow farmers to implement a 12-week exemption when overtime would kick in at 50 hours to allow for the seasonal nature of agriculture. In my meetings, legislators were generally sympathetic, but I know both requests will take a lot of work, especially in this short session.

Our other big talking point was the lower Snake River dams. WAWG does not support the government's commitments in the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative. In meeting after meeting, we explained that agricultural stakeholders were excluded from the mediation process and were deeply disappointed by the lack of transparency in the proceedings. We took this same message to Washington, D.C., a week later, as part of the National Association of Wheat Growers' (NAWG) winter board meeting.

Besides participating in NAWG's committee meetings, we spent a day meeting with members of our congressional delegation. Besides the dams, we also discussed the farm bill and the need to protect crop insurance so it continues to be a viable safety net for producers; the importance of increased funding for market development programs; and the critical role pesticides play in maintaining a safe, affordable food supply. It was a good trip, and I always enjoy spending time with wheat growers from other states.

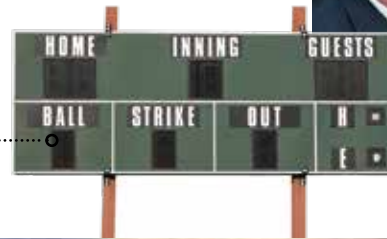
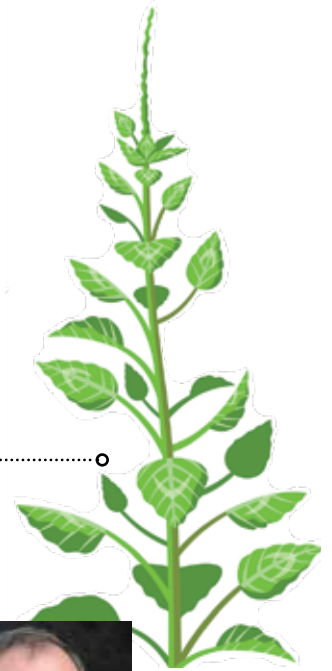
Our travels for the first part of 2024 are just beginning. We've got the NAWG winter conference at Commodity Classic in Houston later this month, a Columbia-Snake River System stakeholder fly-in, and at least one farm bill fly-in on the calendar.

WAWG's goal is to support our members and advocate for wheat growers' needs at both the state and national level. I encourage members to let us know what issues they are facing and how we can help by contacting the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610. ■

Cover photo: Last month, wheat growers spent two days in Olympia, meeting with legislators to talk about wheat industry priorities. See page 24. Cover photo courtesy of the Washington State Legislative Support Services. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

Inside This Issue

WAWG President's Perspective	2
Membership Form	4
WAWG at Work	6
Policy Matters	16
Washington Wheat Foundation	22
Olympia Days 2024	24
Growers take part in annual advocacy trip	
Weed alert!	30
Keep an eye out for Palmer amaranth	
Sound advice	36
AMMO session focuses on planning, taxes	
The Corporate Transparency Act	42
What growers need to know	
Profiles	44
Rick Williams, Risk Management Agency	
WGC Chairman's Column	49
Seeing green	50
Unique partnership is paying off	
Welcome	52
Ben Adams appointed to WGC	
Tallying up the score	53
Former commissioner looks at hits, misses	
Winter injury of wheat	55
Predictions could leave plans vulnerable	
Wheat Watch	58
Manhunt	60
Retracing Harry Tracy's footsteps	
The Bottom Line	64
Your Wheat Life	66
Happenings	68
Advertiser Index	70



TRACY SHOWS UP AGAIN
 Outlaw an Unwelcome Guest on Wenatchee Ranch—Gets More Food and Horses —No Posses Are Out.

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WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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January board meeting focuses on legislative priorities

The first 2024 board meeting of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) focused on getting ready for another year of advocating, with trips to Olympia and Washington, D.C., on January's calendar.

WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings presented the 2024 state and federal legislative priorities to the board and reviewed plans for the association's annual Olympia Days trip (see page 24 for more on the trip). Priorities include pushing the Washington State Department of Ecology to rebate farmers for carbon fuel charges that have been paid but not reimbursed; preserving the lower Snake River dams; supporting quick reauthorization of the farm bill; supporting a seasonal exemption for ag overtime; supporting voluntary conservation programs; supporting an increase in market development program funding;

Farm fair season is quickly approaching, and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers is looking for volunteers to man the wheat booth in March in the Tri-Cities and May in Spokane. Volunteers will share wheat facts and information with elementary school children and their teachers.

maintaining the current structure of crop insurance; and preserving a safe and secure food supply through the use of approved pesticides.

Board members heard a report from WAWG lobbyists Diana Carlen and Mark Strueli on the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session, which had just begun. Although this is a short, 60-day session, Carlen

said legislators have already dropped more than 1,100 bills. So far, the big news is that the secretary of state is in the midst of verifying signatures for six initiatives that could complicate this legislation session, including repealing the Climate Commitment Act (Washington's cap-and-trade law) and the capital gains tax. While the state's budget is in good shape, with extra money from the cap-and-trade auctions and the capital gains tax, the transportation budget is not. Carlen said there have been a number of project overruns.

"There's going to be a ton of activity. We've got to take every bill that drops seriously," Strueli added.

See an updated legislative report on page 16.

Two U.S. Department of Agriculture agency represen-

tatives provided updates. Roylene Comes at Night, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), said the state agency's bank account is healthy, and they are looking for opportunities to fund grower conservation projects as the window to use Inflation Reduction Act funds is short. Growers are able to electronically sign NRCS documents at farmers.gov. The state NRCS office is continuing to hire employees. Comes at Night said she is focusing on three priorities for her office: staff, training, and customer service and outreach. The office is partnering with other agencies and organizations to increase opportunities to help growers.

"If some things don't fit, now is the time to talk about it," she said.

One area that Washington growers have been consistently concerned about is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Comes at Night acknowledged that the program, as written, does not take into account regional differences and seems to be geared towards Midwest growers. She said individual states have little say in the program. Applications are ranked nationally, and she is working to address those concerns.

Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency (FSA) state executive director for Washington state, said there's lots of "moving and shaking" at his agency. Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program sign-ups are in full swing, and growers need to make their selections by March 15. There will be no registers, so he encouraged growers to make an appointment with their local FSA office as early as possible. If growers don't make a selection by the deadline, they will default to last year's selection.

Wyss was still waiting to hear if there would be a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up this year, and his staff was busy working on rental rates.

Most counties reported good stands of winter wheat, but little snow cover to protect the plants against the blast of Arctic air that would hit in the next week.

In the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) report, CEO Casey Chumrau said the commission is working with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) to advocate for increased funding for market development activities. Overall, sales of U.S. wheat are up 2% over last year, driven by China's purchases of soft red winter. Soft white

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wheat, however, is down 18% from last year, mainly due to a strong dollar and a lack of sales to China. Looking at the Pacific Northwest's top export markets, Chumrau said sales to the Philippines are up 10%; down 17% in Japan; down 13% in Korea; down 61% in China; and up 12% in Indonesia.

Mary Palmer Sullivan, WGC vice president, updated the board on the upcoming research review, which will be on Feb. 13, and the commission's recent review of its endowed chairs.

In national legislation, Nicole Berg, past president of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), talked about the farm bill, telling the board that if it doesn't get some traction in Congress soon, the industry is likely looking at another extension. Combatting threats to the crop insurance program continues to be one of NAWG's top priorities.

Before adjourning, the board of directors took care of some business. Ryan Poe from Grant County, Marci Green from Spokane County, and Leif Claassen from Asotin County were appointed to the executive committee. Committee chairs appointed were:

- Nicole Berg (Benton County) and Ryan Poe (Grant County) to the National Legislation Committee.
- Anthony Smith (Benton County) to the State Legislation Committee.
- Andy Juris (Klickitat County) to the Transportation Committee.
- Jim Moyer (Columbia County) to the Research Committee.
- Marci Green (Spokane County) to the Public Information/Public Relations Committee.
- Howard McDonald (Douglas County) to the Membership Committee.

WAWG board welcomes new officer

At the 2023 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, Washington wheat growers welcomed **Gil Crosby**, a grower from Spokane County, as the secretary/treasurer for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG).



Crosby grew up on his family's farm outside of Fairfield, Wash. After graduating from Liberty High School, he attended Washington State University and graduated from Eastern Washington University. In the 1990s, he spent nine months living in Germany, working odd jobs and living with a brother who was in the military. When the brother got shipped out to Macedonia, Crosby had to decide on his next step.

"I was going to go live with my sister in Seattle, but then she got engaged," Crosby explained. "I was talking to my mother, and she asked me if I wanted to farm and live in my grandma's old house. I never even thought about going back to the farm, but I've been here ever since."

Crosby runs the family's farm with help from his mother, who takes care of the finances, and an uncle. They raise wheat, lentils, garbanzo beans, and barley using a direct seed system. He first got active in WAWG by attending the county meetings, then became a state board member. He said he enjoys traveling to Olympia and Washington, D.C., to meet and talk with legislators about the issues farmers are facing.

"We are trying to be good stewards of the land, because if we harm the land, we can't make a living growing a crop," Crosby explained. "I don't think the public understands that."

Crosby said it is important for younger growers to get involved in industry organizations.

"Before I got more involved with the wheat growers, I had no idea how much influence the association has, and I'm still learning," he said.

In his spare time, Crosby enjoys traveling, golf, and winter sports. ■

- Andy Juris (Klickitat County) to the Marketing Committee.
- Nicole Berg (Benton County) and Larry Cochran (Whitman County) to the Natural Resources Committee.

The next WAWG state board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 5 in Ritzville, Wash., at the Wheat Foundation building. ■

Spokane County elects new board rep

Last month at their county meeting, Spokane County wheat growers elected Laurie Roecks as their new Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) board representative. Roecks replaces Gil Crosby, who joined the

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WAWG executive team as the new secretary/treasurer at the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention in November.

Over dinner at a Spangle restaurant, growers also heard updates from Casey Chumrau and Mary Palmer Sullivan, both from the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), and Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director.

The WGC just finished reviewing its six Washington State University (WSU) endowed chairs, and WGC CEO Chumrau told growers the endowed chairs are a “great investment of grower dollars.” In marketing, the WGC is asking Congress to increase overseas marketing development funding. Sales to date of U.S. wheat are up 2% over last year, but that’s mainly due to increased sales of soft red winter wheat to China. Soft white wheat sales are actually down slightly compared to last year. Palmer Sullivan, vice president of the WGC, encouraged growers to attend the annual research review, to be held Feb. 13, where growers will hear presentations from WSU researchers and vote on which projects will be funded with grower dollars. Palmer Sullivan also talked about the regional Herbicide Resistance Initiative, which has received \$3 million per year to address the growing problem of herbicide resistance.

Hennings reviewed WAWG’s state and federal legislative priorities, which include carbon taxes on ag fuels, ag overtime, the lower Snake River dams, and the farm bill. The 2024 Washington State Legislative Session had just started, and Hennings said bills were being dropped “like crazy,” and WAWG was busy getting ready for its annual Olympia Days visit (see page 24). Looking at the effort to protect the lower Snake River dams, she reviewed WAWG’s activities, which include writing letters to state and federal officials protesting the lack of stakeholder involvement in federal negotiations and working with regional congressional legislators to block any congressional attempts to fund dam breaching studies.

The meeting wrapped up with a discussion of the discovery of Palmer amaranth last year in Spokane County and the need for growers to be on the lookout for the noxious weed (see page 30 for more information on Palmer amaranth) and a review of the county association’s finances. ■

Spring wheat on agenda at Whitman growers meeting

Winter may still have Eastern Washington firmly in its grip, but at last month’s Whitman County wheat growers meeting, spring crops were the focus, thanks to a report

by Mike Pumphrey, Washington State University spring wheat breeder.

In his report, Pumphrey discussed a new variety of club wheat that has great potential and how his program is funded (through royalties and an endowed chair). Growers also discussed the potential market for organic hard white wheat and the need to have an active Extension office in the county.

Members of the Whitman County Grange also attended the meeting to voice support for the lower Snake River dams, support for a seasonal ag exemption to the state’s overtime law, opposition to a state bill that would ban some gas-powered outdoor equipment, like leaf blowers and lawn mowers, and opposition to the state’s Climate Commitment Act, which includes the cap-and-trade program.

Port Commissioner Tom Kammerzell updated the group on Columbia River Treaty negotiations, telling growers that the treaty will affect barging, irrigation, power generation, and fish on the Snake River.

Larry Cochran and Leslie Druffel reported on the recent Washington Association of Wheat Growers’ advocacy trip to Olympia (see page 24). During the trip, Druffel met with Jason Biggs from the Washington State Department of Transportation to thank his department for its speedy repair of the Winona trestle bridge, which was damaged last summer in a fire.

In county business, Kelli Weber was elected to the research chair. Growers also had a chance to bid on several items from the 2023 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention. Kammerzell had the top bid for tickets to the Marshall Tucker Band and a room at Northern Quest Casino, and David Swannack walked away with Gonzaga basketball tickets. ■

Growers asked to participate in climate resilience survey

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), in collaboration with Washington State University, is working on a Climate Resilience Plan to support agricultural producers through the effects of a changing climate. WSDA is asking Washington producers to fill out a short, anonymous survey by Feb. 23, 2024, to help the agency understand their concerns and where resources should be focused.

Go to wsdaclimateresiliencesurvey.my.canva.site to take the survey. Survey participants will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 VISA gift card. ■

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Winter wheat seedings in Northwest down slightly

Washington winter wheat growers seeded an estimated 1.80 million acres of winter wheat for harvest in 2024. This is unchanged from the area seeded in 2023 but 3% below 2022. Idaho growers seeded 740,000 acres of winter wheat for the 2024 crop, down 1% from 2023 and 4% below the 2022 crop. Oregon farmers planted 740,000 acres, unchanged from the 2023 crop but up 1% from 2022.

Nationally, hard red winter wheat seeded area is expect-

ed to total 24 million acres, down 5% from 2023. Planted acreage is down from last year across most of the growing region. The largest decreases in planted acreage are estimated in Kansas and Texas, while Montana is estimated to have a modest increase.

Soft red winter wheat seeded area totals 6.86 million acres, down 13% from last year. Compared with last year, the largest acreage decrease is expected in Michigan, while the largest acreage increase is expected in Pennsylvania.

White winter wheat seeded area totals 3.54 million acres, down 5% from 2023. ■

Remembering Jerry Sheffels, WAWG past president

Louis Jerald Sheffels passed away Dec. 26, 2023. He was born on July 21, 1932, to Louis and Lydia Sheffels, growing up on the family wheat farm originally homesteaded in 1889 in Wilbur, Wash. The farm was later designated a Washington Centennial Farm and was visited by the Prince of Norway as a model farm of the times in 1939 when Jerry was just 7 years old.



Jerry attended Wilbur schools, participating in 4-H and lettering in high school football. He graduated in 1950 and went on to attend Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) where he was a member of the Choir of the West. He also took night classes in welding, milling, and lathing at Tacoma Vocational Schools, building knowledge and skills he would go on to use in his later farming practices. He earned his business degree from PLU in 1954. From there he joined the Army, assigned as a dental assistant at American Hospital in Paris, where he was able to travel on weekends and explore much of Europe, as well as develop his passion for photography. When he returned to Washington, he took a number of short agricultural courses through Washington State University (WSU).

Jerry married Lois Beckemeier in 1957, and together, they had four children: Cathy, Susan, Roger, and David. As the family grew, they enjoyed adventuring to warmer regions: an RV trip riding the rails in Mexico, motorhome trips to Disneyland every other Christmas, and, later, winter vacations to Kahana Sunset in Maui. Summers were packed with activity as well: jet boating, water skiing, and camping on the 4th of July at Keller Ferry. As the children married and began families of their own, there were several extended family trips to Maui with Christmas Day dinners in the Keone Nui room. Grandpa could frequently be heard teasing the grandkids that they could “go to hell

just as quick for lying as for stealing” whenever they tried to pull one over on him.

Flying would always be Jerry’s true passion. He flew solo for the first time on his 16th birthday, earning his private pilot’s license at 18. His dad bought a new Piper Super Cub in 1950, and Jerry flew the plane all the way back to the farm from the factory in Pennsylvania. When his son, Roger, celebrated his birthday at Lost Lake during his sixth-grade trip, Jerry flew over the lake, dropping ice cream for the occasion. It became a highly anticipated tradition for subsequent classes. He shared his passion for flight with Roger, who would go on to continue the tradition of Lost Lake ice cream drops. Together, they would often survey the farm from the air or go on parts runs. A member of Flying Farmers, the family often joined Jerry on fly-in white water rafting trips or other events. He would own many planes throughout his life, donating a Seabee to the Evergreen Aviation Museum and a Piper J2 to the Bird Aviation Museum and Innovation Center.

As Jerry took over farming operations from his father, he would pioneer a number of firsts for the area. He was always looking to implement new technology and researching innovative farming techniques. He ran the first rotary combine in the Pacific Northwest and became one of the first in the area to embrace no-till farming, a practice the Sheffels farm has continued for over 35 years. He was also the first in the area north of Wilbur to install circle irrigation. Jerry often rallied the farming community to aid fellow farmers in need, once organizing 30 nearby farmers’ combines to harvest more than 500 tons of an injured neighbor’s barley in just two hours and often providing men and equipment to fight field fires. He was an active member of many farming associations throughout his life, including the Lincoln County Wheat Growers, where he served on several committees and in several officer positions, and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, serving as its president from 1973-74. He also served as

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chairman for the Washington Wheat Commission, working with research scientists at WSU and with state and national legislators and government agencies. He frequently traveled to seek out new markets for U.S. wheat and to represent the interests of Washington farmers. Although comfortable in a suit when the occasion required, Jerry was most at home in his trademark bib overalls.

Over his lifetime, Jerry would serve on the WSU Foundation, the Whitworth Foundation Board, the Kahana Sunset Board, the Wilbur School Board, and Lincoln County PUD. He served as chairman of Mountain States Legal Foundation and served on its board of directors. He was also a third-degree Mason, a member of Toastmasters, and a lifetime member of the Wilbur Lutheran Church. For his contributions to agricultural research and the construction of Roger's Shed on the WSU experimental farm in Davenport, he was awarded Philanthropist of the Year by the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at WSU. As someone who always valued education, together with his mom, Lydia, and his sister, Carol, he helped set up the annual scholarship fund in his dad's name for a Wilbur scholar to attend WSU.

A WSU football season ticket holder since the early 1980s, he would brave any weather to watch his Cougs. He loved Arby's, and even in his last months, he loved his escapes with Susan to get ice cream and roast beef sandwiches with horsey sauce. The grandkids would frequently pass him Diet Pepsis as if they were contraband.

Long Lake in Spokane would entice Jerry to leave Wilbur when Lois and he built their dream home. Once again embracing the forefront of technology, he built it to be entirely geothermal, and it has its own brain room. Many family memories have been made there over the years, from birthday parties to annual 4th of Julys, to Christmas Eve dinners and gift unwrapping mayhem. Jerry spent his last Christmas Eve at his home, drinking Diet Pepsi, looking out at the lake, devouring gifts of sausage and enjoying his family.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents, Louis and Lydia Sheffels, and his son, Roger Sheffels. He leaves behind his beloved wife of many years, Lois. He is survived by his sister, Carol Quigg of Woodinville, Wash. Jerry was the devoted father of three surviving children: Cathy Inouye and partner, Robert Clutter, of Spokane, Wash.; Susan Hegney and husband, Les, of Nine Mile Falls, Wash.; and David Sheffels and wife, Jenai, of Sammamish, Wash. He was also a cherished grandfather, leaving nine grandchildren: Jennifer Manley and husband, Ryan, of Pampa, Texas; Michael Schroeder and wife, Colleen, of Spokane, Wash.; Stephanie Spangler and husband, Sean, of Spokane, Wash.; Kyle Sheffels of Davenport, Wash.; Jessica Arruda and husband, Joseph, of Elk, Wash.; Melissa Inouye of Spokane, Wash.; Cody Sheffels and wife, Eliza,

of Vienna, Va.; Kaylee Sheffels of Sammamish, Wash.; and Garrett Sheffels of Lincoln, Wash. He also leaves a legacy of six great-grandchildren: Grady and Landry Claassen and Waylon and Cason Manley of Pampa, Texas; Lucian Sheffels of Davenport, Wash.; and Madeleine Spangler of Spokane, Wash.

Services were held at the Wilbur Community Church in Wilbur, Wash. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made in Jerry's name to the Wilbur Cemetery Association, Big Bend Historical Society Museum, Bird Aviation Museum and Innovation Center, or a charity of your choice. ■





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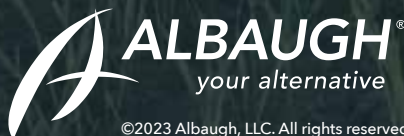


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POLICY MATTERS

Legislature busy hearing bills as 2024 session kicks off

By Diana Carlen

Lobbyist, Washington Association
of Wheat Growers

Editor's note: This report covers the 2024 Legislative Session up through Jan. 26. For updated reports, visit wawg.org.

Washington's 2024 Legislative Session began Jan. 8 and is scheduled to last 60 days. 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 introduced in 2023 that did not pass are automatically reintroduced for 2024. The first legislative deadline was Jan. 31, when all bills must be voted out of their respective policy committees to remain alive.

The first week of the session included public hearings on Gov. Inslee's proposed supplemental operating, capital, and transportation budgets. 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. While the Governor is not proposing any tax increases, his proposal does rely on the increased revenue the state has collected from new sources: the tax on capital gains and the state's Climate Commitment Act. 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. The Governor's budget is the first of three supplemental budget proposals we will see prior to the passage



of a final budget and Sine Die on March 7. Legislative supplemental budget proposals from both chambers are expected this month.

Looming over the session this year are six initiatives to the Legislature. The six initiatives would:

- Repeal the Climate Commitment Act (Washington's cap-and-trade law).
- Repeal the capital gains tax.
- Establish a bill of rights for parents with kids in public schools.
- Restore the authority of police to engage in a pursuit when there is reasonable suspicion that a person has violated the law.
- Allow for people to opt out of Washington's long term care payroll tax.
- Bar cities or counties from adopting an income tax.

If a 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. All initiatives have qualified for the ballot.

Legislative briefing held on Columbia River Operations Settlement Agreement. During the third week of the session, a legislative briefing was held to raise awareness among legislators of the commitments included in the Columbia River Operations Settlement Agreement. Washington state signed the agreement, which has far-reaching implications for many sectors of the economy, including agriculture and energy. Joining in the briefing were the Washington Public Ports Association, Northwest RiverPartners, Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Washington Association of Wheat

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Growers, the Washington Potato and Onion Association, and the Washington Public Utility District Association.

The sponsors of the briefing left state legislators with three questions related to how the state is going to manage the impacts of the agreement:

- How will we be included in the agreement’s implementation as it impacts millions of our members and your constituents?
- How much has Washington state committed to this agreement, what agencies have been identified as leads, and what other commitments have been made by the state?
- How will we be sure barge traffic remains safe and effective, that increased energy costs don’t impact our most vulnerable, and that the state continues to meet its decarbonization targets?

In addition to the briefing, a letter was sent to Gov. Inslee from nine associations asking for answers to questions related to Washington’s commitments. The letter raised concerns and questions about the impacts and commitments agreed to by Washington state included in the Dec. 14, 2023, settlement agreement issued as a result of mediation to resolve litigation over the Columbia River System Operations. The settlement paves the way for breaching the lower Snake River dams but stops short of committing to breaching, an authority held only by Congress.

Bill limiting the use of neonicotinoid pesticides passes out of committee. On Jan. 18, the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee passed out an amended version of Senate Bill 5972. In its original form, the bill would have prohibited anyone from using neonicotinoid pesticides on outdoor plants in this state, with limited exemptions, beginning in 2026.

In response to concerns raised from the agriculture community, the bill was amended to include an exemption for the application made by a licensed applicator or during the production of an agricultural commodity. The amended bill also removed the requirement that neonicotinoid pesticides be designated as restricted-use pesticides.

Legislation to ban new outdoor gas-powered equipment heard. On Jan. 11, a hearing was held on controversial legislation (HB 2051) to adopt California’s small off-road engine and equipment standards, except for chainsaws and generators. By adopting California’s standards, Washington state would be prohibiting new gasoline-powered outdoor equipment, including lawnmowers, leaf blowers, pressure washers, snow blowers, and other equipment with 25 horsepower or less starting in 2027.

The Farm Bureau testified against the legislation noting that while California has some exemptions for agricul-

ture, not all equipment is exempt. Concerns were also raised about the idea of Washington delegating legislative authority to California, which could make changes to the standards at any time and bind Washington. Several other groups also testified opposed including landscapers, utilities, construction, and the timber industry. WAWG signed in opposed to the legislation.

Legislation to extend paid family and medical leave for small employers heard. On Jan. 17, House Bill 1959, sponsored by Rep. Amy Walen (D- Kirkland), had a public hearing in the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee. The bill would remove the exemption allowing employers with fewer than 50 employees to not pay any portion of the premium for the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Program.

During the public hearing, a number of business organizations raised concerns that HB 1959 was going back on a careful and lengthy compromise that was negotiated under the initial legislation.

EPR bill passes out of committee. The EPR bill, known as the Re-Wrap Act (SB 6005), was heard in the Senate Environment, Energy and Technology Committee. The bill saw similar testimony to its House companion, which took place during the first week of session. The proposal would establish an Enhanced Producer Responsibility (EPR) program and set standards for post-consumer recycled content in consumer packaging and paper products. Agriculture continues to argue for an exemption from the bill for food touch packaging, and the business community still has concerns about cost of the program

The House bill (HB 2049) has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee but has not been scheduled for a public hearing yet.

Carbon market linkage bill continues to move through process. Governor-request legislation (SB 6058/ SHB 2201) to facilitate linkage of Washington’s carbon market under the Climate Commitment Act with California and Quebec have moved out of their respective policy committees in both the Senate and House. The committees passed out very similar substitute bills with one exception — the Senate version included an adopted amendment that specifies that Ecology is authorized to withdraw from a linkage agreement. Both bills are anticipated to be heard in their respective fiscal committees.

Right to repair legislation heard. Legislation aimed at ensuring farmers can fix their own farm equipment, known as a “right to repair” law, was heard in the House Consumer Protection and Business Committee on Jan. 12.

House Bill 1933, known as the Right to Repair Act, requires an original manufacturer of digital electronic products and parts first manufactured and first sold or leased on or after Jan. 1, 2021, to make available to independent



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repair providers and owners beginning Jan. 1, 2025, on fair and reasonable terms, any parts, tools, and documentation required for the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of such products and parts. The parts, tools, and documentation can be made available either directly from the manufacturer, an authorized repair provider, or an authorized third-party provider.

The Farm Bureau testified opposed to the bill noting that while they support the right to repair for farmers, this situation has been effectively resolved through an industry-led solution. In January of 2023, the American Farm Bureau negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with John Deere to allow farmers and independent repair shops to access tools to fix their equipment. Since then, the majority of other manufacturers have signed similar MOUs. The Farm Bureau has requested an amendment to exempt agriculture from the bill. ■

Washington legislators question commitment funding

Four members of Washington’s congressional delegation have sent a letter to the Council on Environmental Quality

questioning how the U.S. government plans to finance the commitments outlined in the lower Snake River dams settlement agreement, which was released in December.

The letter was sent by Reps. Kim Schrier, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, and Dan Newhouse.

“Some language in the settlement document does not adequately delineate or describe a commitment’s source of funding. For example, the document states that the actions taken under the Mid-Columbia Restoration Plan ‘will likely require at least doubling current levels of mitigation and restoration funding,’ which the Six Sovereigns have indicated ‘would likely cost upwards of \$200M/year in additional funding over the next 10 years.’ USG (the U.S. government) has not provided the programs or federal agencies that would supply this funding, nor the appropriations requests needed to fulfill these commitments,” the letter states.

The legislators also questioned what Bonneville Power Administration’s obligations are regarding the proposed Tribal energy program, and how those obligations might impact public utility rates and low-income ratepayers.

Read the full letter at <https://bit.ly/48KP808>. ■

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When it comes to diet, wheat doesn't have to be a nasty word

Diet. It's a word that we, as Americans, overuse, misuse, and simply don't understand. The late 20th century gave birth to the self-help and dieting phenomenon that is perfected today by thousands of "experts" on YouTube and TikTok. And are we any healthier? Yes, advancements in technology, healthcare, and medicine have been made over the years, but has constant dieting helped us become healthier? According to studies, no. In fact, the average American now eats roughly 3,600 calories a day. That's way more than we used to and way more than we need.

Obviously, "dieting" as an action verb isn't working. In fact, studies show that dieting can cause anxiety, depression, irritability, and an increase in cortisol (which, in turn, causes weight gain). If one of your New Year's resolutions was to adhere to a strict dieting practice, but now, a month later, you're frustrated and not meeting your goals, take heart. You're like many of us who have fallen victim to using the word "diet" wrongly.

Your diet isn't something you should focus on from Jan. 1 to — let's be real — Jan. 15. One definition of the word "diet" as a noun is the kinds of food that a person, animal, or community habitually eats. Diet is part of our life as humans. It's constant. It's our habits. What you eat daily shouldn't cause anxiety and daily stress. Your diet should never raise your cortisol levels just thinking about it.

While your diet doesn't have to be expensive or exciting, it can be delicious. Meats, vegetables, fruits, and grains all have a place in a healthy and balanced diet. Humans have been growing and eating wheat for more than 12,000 years, and the amount of goodness grains add to a balanced diet goes way beyond your favorite slice of sourdough.

"Wheat contributes more total protein to humans than any other food source, and the World Resource Institute awarded wheat the highest scorecard rating for the lowest carbon footprint per gram of protein, outscoring rice, soy,



corn, nuts, and all meat sources," explained registered dietician Craig Hunt.

Like anything, wheat products can become unhealthy when you add too much of a good thing. Our sweet tooth can get the better of us. That's where our brains should be the master of our stomachs. My guess is that everyone reading this knows the risk-benefit ratio of eating a breakfast of toast and eggs or a dozen doughnuts. If you eat a dozen doughnuts, just don't blame the wheat for how you feel afterward.

Diet is a noun, not a verb. There is no secret sauce to losing weight and getting healthy. And weight-loss pills have proven, well, scary. Live and eat for the long haul. Eat smart, exercise, and drink more high-quality H₂O. Your body will thank you now and in 20 years. ■

Sources:

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Olympia Days 2024

Wheat growers take part in annual advocacy trip to advance wheat's priorities

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Last month, 19 wheat representatives spent a day and a half visiting 49 state legislators and agencies to talk about the industry's priorities during the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) annual Olympia Days trip. Cookies were also involved.

"We had some very good discussions with legislators on both sides of the aisle," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director. "It's a short, 60-day session, and hundreds of bills have already been introduced, so wheat growers had their work cut out for them."

Before hitting the hill, growers had a planning meeting with lobbyists Diana Carlen and Mark Strueli to go over WAWG's priority list. Wheat growers handed out coffee and sugar cookies decorated as wheat stalks in the Capitol Building to legislators and staff. Legislators were also invited to an evening reception at a local restaurant where more informal discussions could be held. "A big thank you to all the growers who braved the weather and traveled to Olympia. Advocating for the wheat industry is a large part

of WAWG's mission, and it makes a huge impact when a legislator can interact directly with a grower," Hennings said.

The group included the 2024 Washington Wheat Ambassadors, Samantha Holling and Izabella Meyers.

WAWG's priorities for the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session include:

- **Carbon policies should ensure Washington state retains its economic competitiveness and does not disadvantage Washington farmers.** When the Legislature passed the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), it exempted fuel used on the farm and for transporting certain ag products. However, when the CCA became effective last year, many fuel suppliers began tacking on a carbon fuel surcharge for their compliance obligations under the law. Ultimately, that surcharge was passed onto consumers, including farmers who were supposed to be exempt. Many fuel suppliers and distributors have implemented their own methods of exempting farmers, resulting in a patchwork that does not cover all producers. WAWG



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The Washington Association of Wheat Growers' 2024 trip to Olympia featured more past presidents (and one current president) than ever. In front is Marci Green (2017-18). Second row, from left, is Larry Cochran (2014-15); Kevin Klein (2015-16); Ben Barstow (2010-11); Anthony Smith (2023-24); and Perry Dozier (2000-01). Third row, from left, is Ben Adams (2016-17); Howard McDonald (2021-22); Andy Juris (2022-23); and Ryan Poe (2019-21).

supports SB 5783/HB 1887 requiring the Department of Ecology to rebate farmers and haulers of farm products for carbon fuel surcharges they have paid but not been reimbursed for.

- **WAWG supports keeping the lower Snake River dams intact as they are vital to Washington and the nation's economy and transportation infrastructure.** WAWG also supports funding for maintaining the Columbia River System. Removal of the four lower Snake River dams would significantly increase carbon emissions that contribute to climate change and jeopardize health, safety, and livelihoods in already economically fragile local and regional economies. WAWG supports the findings in the Federal EIS and opposes any state, legislative, or administrative effort to remove or disrupt the Snake River dam system, including the recent U.S. government's commitments in support of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative. WAWG is deeply disappointed by the lack of transparency in the mediation process. Despite consistent efforts to engage, Washington's agriculture industry was effectively excluded from this process even though our members would be directly impacted by significant changes to the river system.
- **Access to pesticides is essential to keeping Washington agriculture productive and globally competitive.** WAWG supports the professional use of crop protection products, which have been shown to be safe and effective through science-based research.
- Agricultural workers became eligible for overtime pay in 2021 after the Legislature removed the agricultural overtime exemption and adopted a phased-in approach. In 2024, overtime kicked in after 40 hours in a week. Unfortunately, Washington's overtime requirement does not address the seasonal needs of agriculture. In addition, the overtime requirement has had unintended consequences for farmworkers. A recent examination of California's overtime requirement for agriculture, conducted by a professor at UC Berkeley, found that as a result of the overtime law, California farmworkers worked a total of 15,000 to 45,000 fewer hours and earned a total of \$6 to \$9

Thank you to all the growers, landlords, and industry leaders who participated in the 2024 Olympia Days trip:

- Ben Adams, Douglas County
- Ben Barstow, Whitman County
- Diana Carlen, WAWG Lobbyist
- Trista Crossley, *Wheat Life* Editor
- Casey Chumrau, WGC CEO
- Leif Claassen, Asotin County
- Larry Cochran, Whitman County
- Casey Cochran, Franklin County
- Sophie Doumit, WAWG Assistant Lobbyist
- Leslie Druffel, Whitman County
- KayDee Gilkey, WAWG Outreach Coordinator
- Marci Green, Spokane County
- Michelle Hennings, WAWG Executive Director
- Samantha Holling, Spokane County
- Andy Juris, Klickitat County
- Michele Kiesz, Adams County
- Kevin Klein, Lincoln County
- Jeff Malone, Douglas County
- Howard McDonald, Douglas County
- Jim Moyer, Columbia County
- Izabella Meyers, Spokane County
- Mary Palmer Sullivan, WGC Vice President
- Ryan Poe, Grant County
- Art Schultheis, Whitman County
- Anthony Smith, Benton County
- Mark Strueli, WGC Lobbyist
- David Swannack, Whitman County ■

million less. **WAWG supports legislation allowing farmworkers to earn money for up to 50 hours per week for 12 weeks of the year before overtime provisions kick in.** This legislation will allow agricultural employers limited flexibility to shape work schedules during a narrow window of time to best fit the peaks of labor demand, thereby providing them some ability to weather the unpredictability of agricultural work and ensure that Washington's second largest industry remains vital and strong while also ensuring security for farmworkers.

- **WAWG is supportive of voluntary conservation programs which offer flexibility and fairly compensate farmers for riparian protection.** WAWG stands in firm opposition to programs that mandate riparian buffers based on Site Potential Tree Height as it threatens the future viability of agriculture by removing significant portions of productive farmland out of production. WAWG supports the continuation of the governor's Riparian Task Force to continue discussions on protecting salmon while also ensuring the viability of agriculture. WAWG also supports full funding of voluntary conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- **Retaining all food and farm-related tax incentives are critical to the agricultural industry.** Ag tax incentives are a valuable benefit to our economy and offer farmers a more level playing field with other major ag production states. Incentives are intended to be a long-term state investment into the ag industry.

See photos of the advocacy trip on page 28. ■



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Watch for this weed

Palmer amaranth poses serious risks to broadleaf crops, is glyphosate resistant, spreads easily

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Ian Burke, weed scientist at Washington State University, has seen a lot of weeds in his career, but few worry him more than Palmer amaranth.

“In every metric possible, it’s capable of outcompeting other broadleaf crops. It’s not even a fair fight. It also appears to have methods of adaptive capacity that most other weeds do not,” he explained.

Palmer amaranth, also called Palmer’s pigweed, was one of the first weeds to evolve glyphosate resistance not long after glyphosate-resistant soybeans and cotton were introduced. Scientists working on the problem discovered that the genomes of resistant plants were dramatically changed, sometimes duplicating the glyphosate target gene over 100 times. Since then, the plant has developed resistance to eight different herbicidal modes of action.

“When glyphosate resistance happened, scientists in the Southeast worked really hard to try to find herbicides that would continue to work,” Burke said. “They realized that, yes, they could find them, but Palmer amaranth grows so fast in the spring, that the window to spray it after it germinates is two and a half days. This is a weed that would be very well at home in the irrigated Columbia Basin.”

A 2020 weed risk assessment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that about 81% of the U.S. is suitable habitat for Palmer amaranth. It is native to the Southwest, but has spread to at least 27 states; so far, the weed hasn’t gained a toehold in Washington. Palmer amaranth has an extended germination and emergence window, rapid growth rates, and high water-use efficiency. It can produce up to 250,000 seeds from one plant, and seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to five years. Palmer amaranth has a fast growth rate of approximately two to three inches per day and commonly reaches heights of six to eight feet. Yield losses have been reported up to 91% in corn and 79% in soybeans. Palmer amaranth can also be toxic to livestock due to nitrates in the leaves and is considered a noxious weed in Washington state.

Burke said there isn’t enough data to estimate the initial impact Palmer amaranth might have on wheat. Winter wheat is usually well established by the time the weed germinates, although spring wheat, especially during warmer springs, might fare worse. Burke points to a closely related species, redroot pigweed, as a guide to how much of a problem Palmer amaranth might be in a wheat crop. He said redroot pigweed is annoying and can be problematic in some areas, but in wheat, he doesn’t see nearly the kind of complaints that other crops have with it.

In 2023, two Palmer amaranth infestations were found in the Evergreen State. In Spokane County, Palmer amaranth was introduced via cover crop seed, resulting in hundreds of plants. In the Benton County instance, only two plants were discovered, and the source hasn’t been confirmed. In both cases, the plants were eradicated. Small infestations have also been found in Idaho and eastern Oregon.

In an effort to improve soil health, farmers may be unintentionally spreading a noxious weed through cover crops.

“Because there’s not enough cover crop seed in the country, the U.S. is im-



Palmer amaranth has a fast growth rate of approximately two to three inches per day and commonly reaches heights of six to eight feet (above), and the petiole (leaf stem) is longer than the leaf (below). Photos by Thurman Johnson, courtesy of the Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board.



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porting cover crop seed for use. So, there's a lot of seed moving around the country, and the cover crop seed itself is not as clean as some of our certified seed can be," Burke said.

Palmer amaranth is easily spread through contaminated seed or hay, as a hitchhiker on vehicles or equipment, and by water or wildlife. Burke said that in Southern Idaho, it was spread by trains carrying cottonseed. Other ways he said the seed could be easily spread in Washington are from uncommon oil seeds imported from Montana and the Dakotas and vehicles or other farm equipment, especially combines, purchased from the Midwest that haven't been meticulously cleaned.

To help identify Palmer amaranth, look for:

- Smooth stems with no hairs.
- A petiole (leaf stem) that is longer than the leaf.
- Nonwavy, diamond-shaped leaves with a small spine at the tip.
- Elongated seed heads, up to 24 inches long.

Seeds and seedlings require genetic testing for identification.

If a farmer finds a suspicious plant, they should report it to their county weed board as soon as possible. According to the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, small infestations of Palmer amaranth can be hand pulled or dug out, but larger infestations will need repeated cultivation. Mowing alone will not control Palmer amaranth, as plants will survive and just set seed closer to the ground. Prescribed fire will also kill Palmer amaranth.

"A lot of the weed identification apps you can put on your phone are pretty good," Burke said. "I encourage farmers to use that sort of technology in the moment. It only takes a few seconds to check." ■



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Invasive Weed Identification Guide - Palmer Amaranth

Palmer amaranth

Amaranthus palmeri S. Watson

Key Descriptors:

- Elongated seed head - up to 24" long
- Non-wavy, diamond-shaped leaves
- Petioles longer than leaf blades
- Smooth stem - thinner than Redroot pigweed
- Poinsettia-like leaf whorl
- Single plants can be more branched whereas monocultures tend to be single shoots
- Documented resistance to HRAC Groups 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, 27



Please report sightings to:

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Sound advice

Taxes, retirement planning kick off 2024 schedule of grower workshops

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

The 2024 Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's (AMMO) schedule kicked off last month with sound advice on financial planning, planning for retirement, and taxes.

Jordan Thayer, a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, and Joe Cerrillo, a CPA with CliftonLarsonAllen, presented the information to growers at the Washington Wheat Foundation building in Ritzville, Wash. Following the workshop, growers enjoyed a catered lunch. See page 40 for a list of upcoming AMMO seminars.

Preparing for retirement

Retirement can mean different things to different people, but the important thing, said Thayer, is that folks start preparing for it sooner rather than later.

"What does retirement mean to you?" he asked. "Picture collecting your last paycheck. How old will you be? How do you feel about working in retirement? How is your health? Have you thought about long-term care arrangements, and how you'll pay for them? All of these things need to be considered."

Targeting a retirement date is important, but it's also a good idea to be flexible. The longer one can delay collecting Social Security, the more it can pay. On average, every year Social Security is delayed, the benefits increase by 8%.

Calculating how much income one will need in retirement is a critical step. Thayer recommended that growers itemize their anticipated expenses. Nondiscretionary expenses include mortgage or rent, taxes, utilities, food, and insurance deductibles and premiums. Discretionary expenses include eating out, travel and vacations, hobbies, and entertainment. Next, growers need to identify income sources, including Social Security; pensions; wages (if working during retirement); retirement plan distributions; and investment income.

"As you calculate that nest egg, how much is tied up in heavy equipment, land, and so forth? A key component is liquidity. That sounds simple, but I can find a willing buyer for Costco stock in a split second. If you've got a used tractor, there's a limited market for that, and it may take a while for it to sell," he explained.

Thayer added that when calculating investment income,



Jordan Thayer, a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, was one of the presenters at last month's Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization workshop on financial planning, planning for retirement, and taxes

5% is usually a safe figure to use.

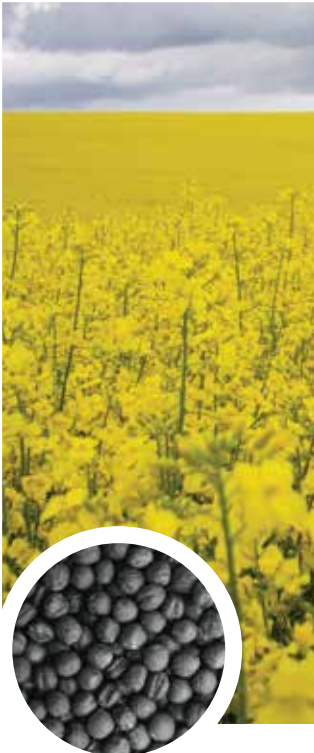
Asset allocation is also an important part of retirement planning. Asset allocation is the process of combining asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, and cash, in a portfolio in order to meet risk and return goals. As retirement creeps closer, generally, the focus in one's portfolio becomes more conservative, switching from being growth-oriented to more income-oriented. During this process, growers need to take into account factors such as age, withdrawal rates, and risk tolerance. A healthy, 65-year-old couple is expected to need almost \$400,000 in today's dollars for health care expenses in retirement.

Another factor to consider is supplementing retirement income by working. Not only will that make one's investments go farther, it may also be healthier.

"Medical studies have concluded that in retirement, if you've got a reason to get up and out, have a place to go, people to see, and things to do, you'll have a longer, healthier, happy retirement," Thayer said.

Contemplating Social Security and Medicare can strike fear into the hearts of the most courageous. Thayer recommended scheduling a phone call with a Social Security administrator to talk through details. He also advised doing a financial plan to map out when income should start, and how it will impact one financially. Medicare is

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more complicated, and growers need to be proactive about it, especially considering that if one doesn't file for Medicare by age 65, there are financial consequences. There are also supplemental plans that need to be considered, and not all doctors take Medicare.

"I know of multiple healthcare brokers in Washington who can help you price out supplemental health-care plans at no cost," Thayer said. "I won't lie. Medicare is particularly complicated. Does your current doctor take Medicare? I highly encourage you to double check. That will help narrow down which supplemental plans you look at."

Finally, Thayer advised growers to monitor their plan regularly and work with a financial advisor to adjust their plan as necessary.

Taxes and succession

Cerrillo tackled two financial subjects everyone has to deal with at one point — taxes and succession. He started out by asking growers if they run their farm like a business.

"You often work in your business, but do you work on your business?" he asked. "How do you maintain your records? Do you know your real income? Do you know your breakeven? Is there a plan to manage your debt? And do you make decisions based solely on income taxes?"

How to Calculate Deferred Tax

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 &+ \text{Other Receivables} \\
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 &* 37\% \text{ (37\% federal, 0\% State Tax)} \\
 &= \text{Deferred Tax Liability}
 \end{aligned}$$



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17

He recommended growers use the accrual accounting method versus cash accounting in the management of their business. The accrual method lets farmers match up crop years with income and expenses, reduces the time and effort required when renewing loans, gives a more accurate picture of one's progress and business value, and does not impact tax returns, which would still be filed using the cash basis.

Farmers have long deferred income as a way to manage (or avoid) taxes, but Cerrillo said payment is just a matter of time. Financial decisions need a business purpose beyond simply avoiding paying income taxes. His advice is to use tools like retirement plans, health savings accounts, gifts, charitable contributions, and managing tax brackets and Social Security limits.

Cerrillo said growers should know and understand what their deferred tax number is and the potential consequences of that number at retirement (see slide for formula. Note that the 37% rate is for illustration and may not necessar-



Joe Cerrillo, a CPA with CliftonLarsonAllen, was the other presenter at last month's Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization workshop on financial planning, planning for retirement, and taxes.

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ily apply to all situations).

“Avoidance is just kicking the can down the road,” he said. “The answer isn’t always ‘we should pay zero tax,’ it’s ‘maybe we should pay a little bit of tax.’ Continued deferral doesn’t end well. Payment is just a matter of time.”

Cerrillo also touched on estate and succession planning. Growers often get caught up in the perception of “fairness,” especially when there are farming and nonfarming heirs, but the key is to determine what the goals are and then to implement strategies to meet those goals. While starting succession planning can be overwhelming, Cerrillo had a few basics to help growers get started, including talking to a professional and discussing your goals as everything should be tailored to meeting those goals. Other tips include:

- Have a will that may include the additional implementation of trusts.
- Have a power of attorney document for property and healthcare.
- Be aware of the federal and state tax exemption limits and sunset-ting federal provisions at the end of 2025, which currently drops the individual federal lifetime exemption by more than half. In Washington state, investigate the agricultural exemption to see if it applies to your situation.

Growers need to understand these documents and what WILL happen versus what they WANT to have happen when they retire or die.

“Be leery of those bearing complicated trust structures,” he added. “Everything has to work, and it has to be explained to you how it works. You need to understand, and it needs to make sense to you. Have them draw you a map if you need to.” ■

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FEB 21 Understanding Today's Wheat Market

Speakers: Todd Hultman, DTN and Dr. Randy Fortenbery, WSU

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FEB 22 / 27 An Update from NRCS and FSA

Feb 22 • 10am - 2pm PST • NRCS and FSA State Office – 11707 E Sprague, Spokane Valley, WA

Feb 27 • 10am - 2pm PST • Pasco Red Lion – 2525 N 29th Ave., Pasco, WA

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Federal filing alert

What growers need to know about the Corporate Transparency Act

By Paul Nieffer

Reprinted from *farmcpareport.com*

Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, you are required to report online to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCen) any entity that is required to be filed with your state. That includes corporations, Limited Liability Companies (LLC), Limited Partnerships (LP), etc. If the entity was in existence before Jan. 1, 2024, the due date for this filing is Dec. 31, 2024. If you create a new entity in 2024, however, the filing must be done within 30 days.

You cannot do this manually and must use the FINCen website (fincen.gov/boi).

A large farm operation with more than 20 employees and at least \$5 million in gross receipts will be exempt from filing this information, but will be required to make a filing for all its other entities under that level. The company will be required to provide its legal name, current street address, the state in charge of its filing requirements, and taxpayer identification number.

All beneficial owners of the company will need to be listed. A beneficial owner is either of the following:

- Someone who exercises substantial control over the business entity (manager, officer, etc.).
- Anyone with at least 25% ownership in the entity.

For most farm operations, anyone owning at least 25% in the entity will automatically meet the first test, so you will likely list each of those owners. As far as we can tell, there are no related party rules on ownership. The following information must be listed for each beneficial owner:



- Individual's name, date of birth, and street address.
- A unique identification number from an acceptable identification document (driver's license, passport, etc. — not a social security number).
- The name of the state or jurisdiction that issued the identification document.

A copy of the identification document must also be uploaded. If you are opposed to uploading a copy of this document, remember, if you have flown on a plane in recent years and gone through security, the government already has a copy of your driver's license. It is scanned when you check in at security.

Some farmers might be inclined to not provide this information. Be warned, the penalty for not providing it can be up to \$500 per day and time in jail. This is something not to be taken lightly. ■



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Helping to ensure farmers' financial survival

Rick Williams, Senior Risk Management Specialist, Risk Management Agency

By Kevin Gaffney
Special to Wheat Life

Rick Williams, a senior risk management specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA), was raised on a wheat and barley farm near Reardan, Wash. And while he didn't take over the family farm, he put in many hours on tractors and combines over the years, even after launching his career in a different part of agriculture.

"I always wanted to work in the ag industry," said Williams. "As much as I enjoyed farming, there were other areas of agriculture that were very interesting to me to explore."

Williams and his sister, Traci's, parents are Vernon (Shelley) Williams and Buddi Williams. They farmed north of Davenport and are retired. The farm is now being operated by a nephew and a neighbor.

Williams had plenty of chores as a youth, including helping to care for a herd of 20-30 cattle. The cattle offered the opportunity for steer showing and livestock judging in both 4-H and FFA competitions.

"We had a very good FFA program at Reardan High School, and I was fortunate enough to place third in the Washington State FFA livestock judging contest, which allowed me to compete at the National FFA Convention in Kansas City," he said.

After high school, Williams attended Washington State University (WSU) where he earned a degree in ag economics in 1989. During his senior year, he took a paid internship position with Lewiston Grain Growers (now CHS Primeland). He worked in their seed plant, supervising seed field roguing crews and working with state seed certification fieldmen.

"I'd get up about 4 a.m. and have the roguing crews out there by 6:30 a.m. to avoid the heat of the day," explained Williams. "We'd come back in by about 2 p.m., and I'd work the rest of my day in the office. I got to know many of the grain farmers in the Lewiston area. They were great to work with."

About a month before graduation, he found out Jacklin Seed was looking for an intern. He applied for the position and was instead offered a full-time job. Williams worked as operations manager for their research department with Jacklin's three full-time plant breeders. Williams made sure the breeding nurseries were operated properly, and he oversaw the process of getting the varieties through the



greenhouses, into the field trials, and finally on to production for eventual sale to golf courses and other clients.

"I didn't know anything about turf seed when I joined Jacklin, but they quickly trained me up to speed. I enjoyed working with our growers, most of whom were in the Columbia Basin region. With modern grass varieties, they can plant and harvest turfgrass as an annual crop and can avoid the field burning issue. They plant in August and after harvest the following July, they rotate to another irrigated crop."

After 12 years with Jacklin Seed, Williams began to think about a career change. How did he end up at the RMA?

"It was just luck, really," insists Williams. "I applied for an opening with the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) and received an interview with the SCD board. A few days later, they called and said they had bad news and good news. I did not get the SCD post. However, one of the volunteer members on the board told me there was an opening with the RMA office in Spokane where he worked. I was told I had two days to apply before the position applications were closed. I got that application in immediately and was hired a month later. I've been with them for almost 23 years now."

Though Williams had no experience in risk management, he excelled due to an excellent training program.

"They quickly got me into seminars and out to field days. They provided very good tutelage at the local level and with training at the RMA headquarters in Kansas City," he said.

Williams works from home, as do most of the 12 Spokane RMA employees. Following COVID-19, most of RMA's employees now work remotely. The Spokane office services growers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska.

Federal crop insurance was created in the 1930s to serve American agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools. Agency revisions formed the RMA in 1996 to better serve agricultural needs. The intent is to strengthen the economic stability of the producers and rural communities. RMA manages the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to provide innovative crop insurance products for American farmers. The programs are sold and serviced by private sector insurance companies that work directly with producers and landlords.

"The private-public cooperative system works very well, I believe," said Williams. "The insurance companies are set up to provide the insurance, to do all the data work, and support the system. The RMA oversees the programs that the private companies service and sell. Essentially, we both do what we are best at doing. I can't say enough good things about the crop insurance companies we work with.

"I enjoy working with the policies and procedures of the system to provide what our growers want and need. We welcome the opportunities to present informational seminars and programs for grower meetings, ag organization board meetings, and conventions. We receive many inquiries from growers, landlords, insurance companies, and agents. I enjoy helping them by providing the correct answers to their questions and explaining the intricacies of the program."

The RMA system is set up on a county-by-county basis. Rates and yields are set separately for every county. A T-Yield (county average



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yield) is established for each county. This is used for growers who don't have a minimum of four years of yield history in a particular county. Growers can use the county T-Yield until they have enough production history on their farm to establish their own yield averages.

Once growers have established yield averages, they can insure that yield, depending on the crop, up to the 85% coverage level.

"In earlier years, there were only policies available for a few grain crops, mostly to protect growers against yield losses," explained Williams. "Now, the number of crops eligible for coverage is well over 100 nationwide. There is also a Whole Farm Revenue Program, which can also provide protection from commodity price declines and revenue losses. There are many options available to growers to help protect financial stability in the ag industry."

Williams lives with his wife, Sally, whom he met while both were working at Jacklin Seed. They have been married for 28 years and have three grown daughters.

Williams is not a farmer, but he seems to have learned to be proficient at many skills, like most farmers do. His special skill is carpentry, and he learned to enjoy it in an unusual way. When his family was growing and they needed a larger home, the prices were high at that time. Williams didn't want to pay that much for a new home.

"With my wife's encouragement, we built our own home working as our own contractor with several subcontractors doing their part," said Williams. "We saved about half of the cost of similar prebuilt homes and were able to customize it for our specific needs."

The Spokane RMA office is located at 11707 E. Sprague Avenue. Online, go to rma.usda.gov to access information. Rick Williams can be reached at (509) 228-6320. ■

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



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CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Ben Barstow



“Bash ‘Em, Burn ‘Em, Bait ‘Em - Integrated Snail Management in Crops and Pastures.” Now, there’s an Extension bulletin I’ll bet you haven’t read! Ask an Australian or European wheat grower about snail control, though, and you will be glad you haven’t heard of such a thing. The vineyard snail, *Cermeuella virgata*, is a native of Europe that has been introduced to Australia, where it feeds on wheat, barley, oats, peas, and canola. They crawl up the wheat straw at harvest time, and there will be so many that crushed snails will show up in your grain sample and even plug up your combine.

This pest has been in our state since 2005, but thanks to the Washington State Department of Agriculture, it has been confined to the initial site of infestation in the port of Tacoma. Originally found there on about 300 acres, their eradication efforts have reduced it to two small plots on less than one acre. The remaining snails are holed up in a wetland, where snail bait can not be used. One pesticide alternative has been tried without success.

Most of the pests we do have to protect our crops from every year are like the snail — they are not native to Washington, and they started in small areas. Imagine your life if cheatgrass had not been brought here from China in the 1800s. What if lambsquarter and dogfenel (aka. Mayweed chamomile), had stayed on their native soil in Europe? If we could have kept our other introduced problems, like Italian rye, jointed goatgrass, kochia, Russian thistle — it is a very long list — from becoming established here ... I can only imagine!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service looks for potential new pests constantly, hoping to find them before they spread. The entire infestation of yellow star thistle in Washington state was once in part of one canyon in Eastern Washington, but for a host of reasons, nothing was done. Looking back, with 20-20 hindsight, totally destroying the ecosystem in that one canyon would have

been a bargain compared to the millions of acres of rangeland where the deer won’t even walk because of yellow star thistle.

Sometimes, it comes down to money. A little over 100 years

ago, there was a proposal to the Idaho State Legislature to eradicate Canadian thistle in the state, but the \$16,000 price tag at the time was deemed to be too high. I know it was a large sum in those days, but every July, after a day with a backpack sprayer in pursuit of Canadian thistle, it sure looks like it would have been money well spent.

Whenever new species become established outside their native habitat, they outcompete the native flora or fauna and change the ecosystem forever. Of all the things man can do to alter natural ecosystems, nothing is more destructive and permanent than introducing a new species. A new species almost always arrives without the diseases, predators, or parasites that evolved with it for thousands of years in its native habitat. Without those diseases or insects keeping the introduced species in control, the native species, who do have their natural controls in place, cannot compete.

I have personally witnessed in my lifetime the permanent ecosystem changes that result from introduced species in rangeland, forest, and agricultural ecosystems. I also am aware that numerous non-native species have been introduced into the Columbia and Snake rivers as well. I never studied aquatic biology, but based on my experience with other ecosystems, I have a hard time believing that the river systems, with all these introduced species, are ever going to be what they once were.

However, invading species caught early, like the vineyard snail infestation in Tacoma, can be eradicated, but only if we have the political will and financial wherewithal to do so. Far too often, early detection has not been followed up with eradication, because to do so seemed too heavy-handed. Is destroying an acre of wetland in the port of Tacoma more environmentally destructive than allowing a new species to become established and spread, crowding out and pushing native species toward extinction?

So, to get to the point of all my soapbox preaching, I ask you, as a fellow cereal grain grower, if the situation arises, should we spend your assessment dollars trying to prevent a pest like this from becoming established? There is a process by which wetlands can be destroyed if they are mitigated by creating wetland habitat elsewhere. I believe it would fit our mission, but it is not the kind of spending we have ever done before, and it could set a precedent. Who can say if past eradication opportunities that were missed would have been successful or not, but the question we may face is, should we try? ■



Solid investment is paying off

Greenhouse expansion was created through unique partnership between WGC, WSU, USDA

By Seth Truscott

Public Relations and Communications Coordinator, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, Washington State University

A decade ago, wheat breeders at Washington State University (WSU) were feeling the squeeze. Their 1990s-era greenhouse facility was too small to serve expanding spring and winter wheat breeding programs.

Realizing the need, WSU leaders, members of the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), and counterparts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) came together to build a modern greenhouse expansion. From initial discussions in 2012, the resulting Plant Growth Facility opened in 2015. Now fully paid off, the facility is contributing to faster, more efficient breeding and competitive new wheat varieties.

“The three-way partnership that built the Plant Growth Facility was unique,” said Wendy Powers, the Cashup Davis Family Endowed Dean of WSU’s College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). “It showed that growers, researchers, and agencies can do more when they work together and has become a model for meeting our critical infrastructure needs.”

Proven partnership

The seeds of the partnership were planted in a 2012 conversation between WSU wheat breeders Arron Carter and Mike Pumphrey and Washington Grain Commissioner Dana Herron.

“His questions were, ‘What challenges do you face? What do you need?’” said Carter, WSU’s O.A. Vogel Endowed Chair of Winter Wheat Breeding and Genetics. “More greenhouse space,” came the answer.

“We’d made some major moves in the wheat breeding program,” recalled Dan Bernardo, provost emeritus and dean of CAHNRS from 2005-2013. “We had great breeders, excellent lab facilities, great staff — but the pinch point was plant growth facilities to grow out the selections.”



The Plant Growth Facility is a popular stop during trade team tours. Here, Mike Pumphrey (left), Washington State University winter wheat breeder, talks to members of a Philippine group.

Working with the commission, Bernardo helped develop the private-public partnership to expand and update WSU’s growth facility. In spring 2012, the commission pledged \$3 million for construction, later adding another \$2 million. The university pledged \$5 million from royalties on future wheat variety releases.

“This project proved Washington growers’ commitment to research,” said Mary Palmer Sullivan, WGC vice president. “It also illustrates how farmers are proactive.”

The commission was instrumental in gaining \$5 million in support from USDA, which was used to equip the building with state-of-the-art growing chambers, seed storage, a dedicated spray facility, and other furnishings.

“When we ask for help, we come in with solutions,” Palmer Sullivan said of the effort to secure additional funding. “This reiterates our ability to leverage opportunities and show we are real partners.”

Faster results, better varieties

Attached to the original 15,000-square-foot facility on Wilson Road, the expansion added 7,200 square feet of greenhouse areas that tripled growing space for new wheat lines, enabling WSU wheat breeders to shave two

years off the four previously needed to increase stable seed for field observation and selection.

“It’s a compound effect,” said Pumphrey, WSU’s O.A. Vogel Chair of Spring Wheat Breeding and Genetics. “With more space, we could plant multiple generations and fix and screen traits in the greenhouse before we send them to the field. It’s increased, by about 40%, our ability to generate materials that are stable and ready to be evaluated.” The spray chamber was another major timesaver, cutting a year off the time involved in confirming herbicide resistance.

Greenhouse space, seed storage, the dedicated spray chamber, and the ability to perform double-haploid wheat breeding more quickly are the areas where the building has made the biggest difference, Pumphrey said. “We can point directly to a number of varieties that were started at the same time as the growth facility, and we’ve already released them,” he said.

Since expansion, WSU breeders have released nearly 10 competitive varieties, including Piranha CL+, the top-planted soft white winter wheat in Washington; top-10 winter wheats Stingray CL+ and Sockeye CL+; top-six hard winter red Scorpio; Hedge CL+, the top-planted soft white spring club wheat; hard red spring wheat Net CL+; Butch spring wheat; and Nova AX and Devote winter wheats, among others. Promising new variety WA 8351, expected to become the leading soft white spring wheat, will release next spring.

“For farmers, the impact is on the time to release,” Pumphrey said. “For us wheat breeders, it’s the reduced time to make the next cross. That’s what determines our potential. By reducing cycle time, we’re able to get desirable traits stacked up more and more with every generation.”

When buyers from overseas visit Washington, commissioners make a point of visiting the Plant Growth Facility and showing the work happening there.

“We’re proud of the building and the partnership; it’s where everything starts,” Palmer Sullivan said. “It’s something I hope will carry on into perpetuity.”

With the building paid off, WSU is planning to put future royalties to work to improve wheat breeding and research. Royalties will be used to modernize infrastructure at WSU’s Spillman, Wilke, and Lind research farms and to develop a new fellowship program training the next generation of wheat researchers and professionals. Every investment will directly impact wheat growers in Washington.

The success of the Plant Growth Facility partnership set a precedent that’s most recently exemplified by the new USDA-ARS Plant Sciences Building being constructed at Pullman.

“This novel approach is our future,” Powers said. “Support from our partners is an investment in research that continues to pay forward for Washington grains.” ■



WGC gains new commissioner

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Ben Adams** as the WGC commissioner for District 4 Wheat, representing Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties. He succeeds Mike Miller, who retired from the commission at the end of 2023.



“I love the lifestyle it affords me and my family,” Adams said. “It’s both challenging and rewarding to work and run a family business with primarily family members every day, but I wouldn’t change it. I know it’s a cliché to say, but, my favorite part is watching the whole crop cycle from seeding to harvest.”

Their farm, Adams Farm Partnership, follows primarily conventional practices with some acres under a reduced tillage program, and they are taking steps towards a direct seed program.

“Our reduced rainfall area does make the transition a little more challenging. I think one of the top concerns in my area would be farm sustainability,” Adams said. “Farm sustainability can mean a whole host of things, but in this case, it’s the ability to pass it on to the next generation. If our farms are not profitable, it’s hard to look the next generation in the eyes and say it’s worth it. I believe the commission does a lot to help in this regard through its efforts in market development, grower support, and research.”

Adams will tell you his time revolves around family, faith, and the agricultural community. He also serves on the boards of HighLine Grain Growers, Inc., a cooperative grain handler, and Valley Wide Cooperative, an agricultural supply organization. He previously served on the board for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, serving as president in 2017, and also served for several years as boardmember and president for the Douglas County Wheat Growers Association. Ben is also a past boardmember of the Washington Wheat Foundation. ■

The WGC board of directors is made up of 10 members, which includes seven producer members representing 20 Eastern Washington counties, two representatives of allied industries, and one representative from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Producer commissioners are nominated by constituents in their respective districts for appointment by the WSDA. Industry representatives are recommended by the board for WSDA appointment, and the WSDA director appoints his representative directly.

Adams begins his term with the calendar year and assumed his seat at the WGC board meeting in January.

Adams grew up in Coulee City, Wash., and received his bachelor’s degree in accounting and business management from Whitworth University in Spokane. After college, he obtained his certified public accountant (CPA) license and has worked part time for the CPA firm J.R. Newhouse & Co. PLLP for over 30 years. Ben is a fourth-generation dryland and irrigated farmer in Douglas and Grant counties, an area that receives around 7 to 10 inches of annual rainfall. He farms with his wife, Jenny; his two grown daughters, Morgan and Jessica; his sister, Mary Dunkin; and mother, Joyce Adams.

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Grain commissioners receive reappointment

In addition to Ben Adams joining the Washington Grain Commission this year, three board commissioners received reappointment letters from Washington State Department of Agriculture Director Derek Sandison in October.

District 1 Wheat (Spokane, Lincoln, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille): Mike Carstensen. Carstensen is a Lincoln County wheat grower. He was appointed to the commission in 2018 and served as chairman from 2021-22. He also serves on the U.S. Wheat Associates board of directors and the National Wheat Improvement Committee.

District 7 Barley (Lincoln, Spokane, Ferry, Stevens,

Pend Oreille, Adams, Grant, Douglas, Okanogan, Chelan, Kittitas): Kevin Klein. Klein is a Lincoln County wheat and barley grower and one of two barley representatives for the WGC. Klein was appointed to the commission in 2018 and currently serves as vice chairman.

Wheat Industry Representative, Position 1: Brian Liedl. Liedl is currently the director of merchandising for United Grain Corporation, based in Vancouver. Liedl has served on the commission since 2021.

For more information on the Washington Grain Commission board and a map of districts, visit our website at <https://bit.ly/2UL0P5I>. ■

Tallying up the score

FORMER COMMISSIONER REFLECTS ON SOME HITS, MISSES DURING HIS TIME



By Mike Miller
Former Washington Grain Commissioner

Looking back on the last 13 years, there are a lot of things your Washington Grain Commission (WGC) has been involved in that have helped either shape the future of the industry or, in some cases, missed the mark or potential for small grains' long-term competitiveness and profitability. That doesn't mean the book is closed; the ending on these issues has yet to be written. But let's talk a little about a couple of the many

WGC efforts that you wouldn't normally read about in the papers or even here in *Wheat Life*.

They say luck favors the prepared. In the case of the WGC, its attempts to be positioned to address long-term competitiveness and profitability of the Washington wheat and barley grower has paid back luck in dividends on some issues. It is also important to be frank, as life isn't always roses. There have been some misses over the years that I hope we all can take as opportunities for improvement, and I'm including myself here.

GRAND SLAM: JFMA club wheat letter of intent

The memorandum of understanding between the WGC and the Japan Flour Millers Association (JFMA) was one of the highlights of my time on the commission. This effort was promoted as a collaboration between the WGC and JFMA to strengthen the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) club wheat breeding program in Pullman.

Our motivations behind pursuing a formal agreement came from the commission looking at what were some ideas or programs to build on the relation-



One of the many trade teams who visit Eastern Washington to meet with producers and learn how the wheat their country or company purchases is grown.

ship with our Japanese customers that could also prove to them that a sustainable program and collaboration between the WGC and JFMA could provide political leverage if ever needed. This came from the WGC trying to look beyond the current state of affairs to anticipate industry needs and in anticipation of any future trade barriers.

As it turns out, this common recognition of the value and importance of a U.S./foreign trade partnership and agreement for cooperation ended up being an example of how the WGC provided assistance to our government. At that point in time, we were not comforted with the idealism "that we grow the best so our customers will buy it." Some of us felt the need to prepare for bumpy trade or political barriers was going to be crucial to maintaining a better wheat price for Western White. By creating a sound strategy going forward, it set the tone for easier trade negotiations between the two countries. Ultimately, it was a benefit to Washington's farmers.

MISS: Undervalued tri-state collaboration

We've come a long way, but we need to communicate more often and work together better as a region. We have learned the political climate has changed. Without a strategy to deal with unforeseen hurdles, we will fail. The Pacific Northwest (PNW) needs to work as a more formidable unit going forward. Wheat has three of the best state commission leaders in Amanda, Britany, and Casey. We need to be more consistent with planning, messaging, and activities across all our wheat organizations from all PNW states. ▶



Mike Miller hosts millers from the SPC Group, a large-scale baking company headquartered in South Korea, at his farm in Ritzville.

And we need to get out of our own way. These efforts have already started happening, so we need to work together and let our hired people do their jobs. To accomplish our objectives in the national and global industry landscape, there is strength in numbers, and we should be leaning into this.

HIT: GMO wheat event crisis response

Washington growers will probably remember reading about this one. But what is noteworthy here is what went on behind the scenes of this massive crisis response effort. WGC built trust and working relationships with many government agencies, including USDA, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), overseas embassies, and Foreign Agricultural Service offices around the world. The WGC worked simultaneously with Director Derek Sandison and his team at the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and this was pivotal in coordinating amongst all agencies.

We were able to create a tight-knit group that had 100% trust in each other and were able to have completely honest discussions that were very difficult at times. But the respect never wavered, and we were prepared to address any curve balls thrown at us. Friendships were made, and some friendships were lost. But every morning at 0500 when we had our first group call of the day, the goal never wavered — keep the vessels moving and keep the markets open.

This foundation and network have been a springboard for further collaborative efforts, most recently with the PNW Herbicide Resistance Initiative that I'll get to in a minute. Other examples of what this collaboration looks like include the Washington State University Plant Growth Facility and recent USDA-ARS Plant Sciences Building in Pullman, our presence in D.C. for education and marketing, and the ability to keep the WGC's phones ringing as a trusted source of information and common sense to deal with sensitive issues (i.e. Congress, U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, the Washington State Legislature).

MISS: Marketing our regional advantages

As a region, we haven't properly branded ourselves. Our competitors are aiming to take our market-share, and it's going to get rough and more competitive in the future. We want the world to recognize our "brand," and we should be capitalizing on our competitive advantage: we are the only region that grows club wheat.

Other states, regions, and countries are finding success in branding efforts. This is something we can learn from and adapt for our own benefit.

HIT: PNW Herbicide Resistance Initiative

Having the connections around the country to hear what kind of chemical issues U.S. farmers were having and working with APHIS on what they are dealing with regarding plant issues gave us a perspective to see a potential need to prepare for herbicide resistance. This effort was built off the relationships developed during the GMO event and has truly been a multistate effort that also includes an unnamed official at USDA-APHIS, as well as Undersecretaries Greg Ibach and Ted McKinney who were the drivers of the Herbicide Resistance Initiative program.

The PNW land-grant universities and three regional USDA-ARS units are coming together to create an interdisciplinary, systems-based approach to managing herbicide resistance in weeds. *Wheat Life* will cover this ongoing initiative in a future issue. Stay tuned.

The Washington wheat industry is becoming more diversified with multicrop rotations, and the WGC will have an opportunity to engage with an expanded set of producers to work together to create the next hit and avoid the next miss. ■

Winter injury of wheat

Predicted increase of winter rain vs. snow could leave plants more vulnerable

By Kimberly Garland-Campbell

Research Plant Geneticist, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service

Winter injury continues to be a major wheat production risk in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and globally. Although future climate models predict a 1-2 degree Fahrenheit increase in annual mean temperatures between 2010 and 2039, much of this increase is expected to occur during the summer months, which will cause the crop to mature more rapidly. The predicted increase in winter rain and decrease in snow cover will leave crops more vulnerable to sudden temperature drops during the fall and winter. We recently experienced severe winter weather in December 2022. Many growers lost stands along Highway 2 and on the north slopes of exposed fields.

After planting, winter wheat emerges and goes through a gradual reduction in temperatures during the fall. Ironically, winter wheat requires this cold acclimation, which is called vernalization, before switching from vegetative to reproductive growth. Once the vernalization requirement is met, cold tolerance decreases, and reproductive growth begins. In Washington, most winter

wheat requires about eight weeks of vernalization, so the vernalization requirement is met during the month of January.

Flowering doesn't occur in January, however, because winter crops also regulate their switch to reproductive growth using photoperiod, a requirement for a specific day length. The photoperiod requirement protects the wheat from responding to sudden warm temperatures in January and February when the probability of severe winter weather is still high. The photoperiod requirement is correlated to latitude and finely tuned so that wheat in Oregon will begin reproductive growth earlier in early February when days are still short, while wheat in Washington waits until days are longer in late February and March.

Wheat is particularly susceptible to extreme cold at specific time points in crop development. One is soon after planting, before the crop is adequately acclimated to colder weather. In the PNW, this often occurs in late November. After about four to five weeks of freezing weather, winter wheat is maximally tolerant to freezing temperatures. Then, after eight weeks, when the vernalization requirement is met, winter wheat be-



Winter injury on winter wheat in Anatone, Wash., in spring 2020.

comes vulnerable to cold again. In Washington, this usually occurs in late January and early February when the switch to reproductive growth has occurred, but the crop is being held back by its photoperiod requirement. Drive along any of the east-west highways in Eastern Washington in the spring, and you can often see loss of exposed stands due to winter injury that occurred with freezing temperatures on exposed ridges.

Sudden temperature swings in February and March damaged the crop in Washington in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2023 and are a problem in parts of the wheat-growing region every year. Screening for winter hardiness in the field is difficult because winter-kill varies across a field. We developed artificial freezing trials that are correlated with freeze injury due to winter injury. We have used these artificial screening trials in the Washington State University (WSU) Plant Growth Facility to assess cultivars and breeding lines in the WSU Cereal Variety Trials since 2001. We have also used these trials to select for cold tolerance among winter wheat breeding lines for the WSU and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) breeding programs, to rate lines for resistance and to evaluate spring variety trials and to conduct basic research to identify genes and genetic interactions affecting freezing tolerance in winter wheat. Winter survival is under genetic control, and we can breed for better winter survival in wheat and barley.

Our most recent survival ratings are listed in Tables 1-3. We test the winter wheat at minus 13 degrees C to get a good spread in the survival data. This is a more severe temperature than wheat will experience in the field, so the most susceptible lines in our trials have no survival,

Table 1: Percent survival of soft winter wheat breeding lines and cultivars in freezing trials, 2023. Test Temperature -13 degree C. Field cold injury averaged from Lind, Reardan, and Ritzville variety trials

Name	Percent Survival	Field Cold Injury	Name	Percent Survival	Field Cold Injury
Devote	100	2	Resilience CL+	58	
GS Bounty	99	2	UIL 16-478001	58	2
Mela CL+	97	2	ARS-Selbu 2.0	57	
Piranha CL+	95	1	Castella	54	2
ARS Crescent	93	2	AP Dynamic	53	2
VI Frost	91	2	UIL 14-211120A	49	2
Otto	89	2	LCS Dagger AX	47	2
Curiosity CL+	88	2	WA8397	44	
ARS12X097-12C	84	2	VI Presto CL+	42	2
WA8332	82	2	Jameson (WA8290)	42	2
ARS14X1114RS-3CBW	81		ORI2190016CL+	41	
Nimbus	80	2	Stingray CL+	40	2
WA8345 AX	80	2	09PN118-02 CL2	37	
AP Olympia	78	3	SY Dayton	36	
WA8362	78	1	LCS Shine	35	2
WA8395	76	1	Purl	35	
WA8398	75		LWW19-5862	34	3
Norwest Duet	74	2	ARS09X500CBW	29	
Sockeye CL+	74	2	TMC M-Press	29	2
WA8310	74		Appleby CL+	28	4
WA8349 AX	73		Cameo	28	
WA8364	71	1	SY Assure	27	
YSC-93	71	2	LCS Hydra AX	26	2
WA8404	70		TMC M-Pire	24	3
Inspire (WA8307)	70		Rollie (WA8334)	22	2
WB1621	69	2	LWWA19-0287 CLAX	22	2
AP Exceed	68	2	LCS Blackjack	20	2
WA8348 AX	68	2	LWW20-2383	19	5
LCS Kamiak	67	4	OR5180072	17	2
Pritchett	65	1	LCS SCORPION AX	15	2
WA8346 AX	65	2	OR2160243	14	
LCS Kraken AX	65	2	WB1922	12	2
LWWA19-0293 CLAX	65	2	AP Iliad	10	6
LWW19-6219	65	3	LCS Artdeco	6	
LCS Jefe	64	3	ORI2190025CL+	6	3
ARS15X1460-8CBW	64	2	WA8403	5	
YSC-217	64	3	LWWC21-5070 CLAX	4	2
UIL 17-995133B	63	2	UI Magic CL+	4	3
WA8347 AX	63	2	WB1720	3	2
LWWA19-0294 CLAX	63	2	VI Voodoo CL+	2	4
LWW19-3371	63		LWW20-2867	1	6
WA8405	63		ORI2190027CL+	1	4
OR5180071	62	2	UIL 17-7706 CL+	1	2
LCS Hulk	62	2	Checks		
Norwest Tandem	61	2	Eltan	95.00	
YSC-215	60	2	Norstar	90.00	
WA8394	58	2	Stephens	31.00	
LSD (0.05)	32	1	LSD (0.05)	32	1

Table 2: Percent survival of hard red winter wheat breeding lines and cultivars in freezing trials, 2023. Test temperature -13 degrees C. Field cold injury averaged from Lind, Reardan, and Ritzville variety trials

Name	Percent Survival	Field Cold Injury Rating
Canvas	100	2
WB4303	99	2
WB4510CLP	95	2
WA8367	95	2
Whistler	90	1
Guardian	88	2
Sequoia	87	2
Kivari AX	84	2
Battle AX	82	2
MT51908	82	2
MT2128	81	2
MTC520158	80	2
MTV2164	75	2
WA8396	74	2
LCS Helix AX	71	2
Keldin	67	2
WB4394	61	3
Milestone	54	3
LWH20-0490	48	2
LCS Eclipse AX	44	2
LCS Jet	37	2
WA8401	35	2
LCS MISSILE	34	3
WA8369	32	
Scorpio	30	3
WA8399	29	
WA8400	26	
WB4311	24	3
LCS Evina	21	3
WA8368	21	
LCS Blackbird	17	4
Kairos	17	
OR2190064R	16	2
OR2190160R	15	2
WA8340	14	
LWH20-4802	5	2
LWH19-5663	3	3
LCS Rocket	1	4
Checks		
Eltan	95	
Norstar	90	
Stephens	31	
LSD (0.05)	37	1

while they often would be expected to have 30-50% survival in the field. It's important to compare our results to the survival of the resistant check, Eltan, and the susceptible check, Stephens, to correctly interpret the data. These data are updated each year as a part of the WSU Extension small grains variety selection tool (<https://varietyselection.cahnrs.wsu.edu/>).

Following the severe winter weather in December 2022, WSU Cereal Variety Testing Lead Clark Neely was able to rate cold injury in the 2023 variety trials at Reardan, Lind, and Ritzville on a 1 to 9 scale, where 1 equaled no cold injury. The winter survival ratings that we achieve with our artificial screening system are correlated to field results.

Due to the interest in planting hard red spring wheat in the fall, we also screen the spring wheat and are beginning to screen winter barley breeding lines for Oregon State University and WSU. We learned that the lowest freezing trial test temperatures of minus 6 to minus 9 C are best for the spring wheat and barley. We kill everything at lower test temperatures. While there are differences in survival among spring wheat and winter barley lines, none of them are as tolerant as even our susceptible winter wheat check, Stephens.

In general, susceptible winter wheat and all spring wheat and winter barley are riskier to plant north of Highway 26, but other winter wheat will generally survive unless there is severe disease pressure such as snow mold. Root and crown diseases, like snow mold and fusarium crown rot, will kill wheat off regardless of its winter injury rating, so breeding for resistance to those diseases is also important for winter survival. ■

Table 3: Percent survival of hard red spring wheat breeding lines and cultivars in freezing trials, 2023. Test temperature -13 degrees C

Name	Percent Survival
CP3322	100
AP_Venom	63
WB9636	62
AP_Renegade	56
WA8374	45
WB9662	43
WA8373	32
WA8342R	27
WB9623	26
WB9303	19
WA8376	11
CP3055	10
WA8413	9
Glee	7
CP3530	6
WA8372	5
MT1939	3
Kelse	3
Dayn	3
ID02202_CL2+	3
WA8412	3
ID021055	2
WA8387_CL+	2
WA8414	2
Alum	1
Chet	1
CP3119A	1
Hale	1
MT1809	1
Net_CL+	1
WA8356	1
WA8358_CL+	1
WA8411	1
WB9668	1
Checks	
Eltan	100
Norstar	96
Stephens	92
SY Gunsight (HRS)	6
LSD (0.05)	23

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

US growers plant less winter wheat in 2023



By Mike Krueger
Founder, The Money Farm

The U.S.
Department
of Agriculture
(USDA) released

their January series of reports that included “final” 2023 corn, soybean, and sunflower production estimates, plus the first estimate of winter wheat seedings. They also released the quarterly stocks estimates as of Dec. 1 and revised the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimate (WASDE) numbers. The reports were all neutral to slightly bearish EXCEPT the winter wheat seedings numbers. Farmers planted much less winter wheat than expected.

In retrospect, with the exception of the drought-plagued southern Plains’ hard red winter wheat crop, 2023 North American crop production was much better than most expected given what was generally a warmer and drier growing season. The USDA increased the corn and soybean yield estimates slightly from their last estimates. The result was that corn production set a record at 15.3 billion bushels. That was up 108 million bushels from their previous estimate. The corn ending supply estimate was increased 31 million bushels. The USDA increased the soybean yield, and production was up 36 million bushels. That supply increase went directly to the bottom line, and the soybean ending stocks estimate was increased from 245 million bushels in the December WASDE to 280 million bushels in January.

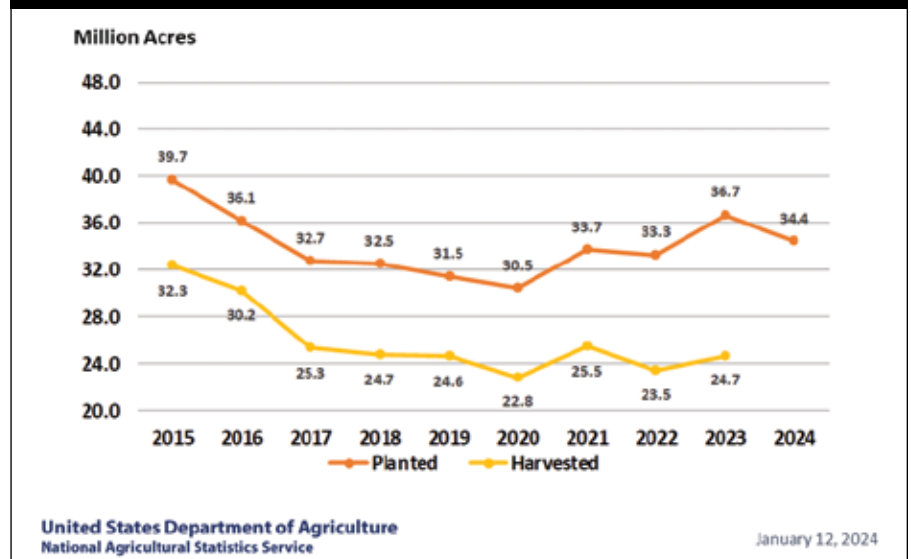
There were no adjustments to 2023 U.S. wheat production. The Dec. 1 quarterly stocks number was slightly lower than expected. That prompted the USDA to reduce wheat ending stocks for this marketing year (ends May 31) from 659 million bushels to 648 million bushels. This is an insignificant change.

The more important number for wheat was the winter wheat planting estimate, the first official one for the 2024 U.S. winter wheat crop. All winter wheat acres were projected at 34.425 million acres. That is well below what the trade was expecting (35.7 million acres). Last year’s winter wheat acreage was 36.7 million acres. White winter wheat seeded area is projected to be 3.54 million acres, down 3% from 2023. Hard red spring wheat acres should also be down from last year. They will be replaced by soybean and canola acres. The USDA releases their planting intentions estimates for all spring-planted crops on March 31. Keep in mind, smaller winter wheat acres don’t necessarily mean a smaller 2024 crop, because the past two seasons’ yields were reduced by drought.

Chart 1 shows U.S. winter wheat acres, including the January estimate.

The next major market factor will be weather and crop production in Brazil and Argentina through May. Argentina is in the midst of a much better growing season following two years of La Niña-influenced drought. Their wheat crop was hurt again because conditions were still dry during its maturation period. Corn and soybean crops are now projected to return to more “normal” levels. Brazil, however, had a very interesting start to its growing season. Super wet weather across the southern areas delayed planting and resulted in a significant amount of replanting. Central and northern Brazil suffered extremely hot and dry weather into early December. That caused farmers to

Chart 1: U.S. winter wheat acres





wait for rain. Conditions improved significantly through December and into early January. The problem is that much of the soybean crop was planted 30 days (or more) later than normal. No one knows today what, if any, impact that will have on yields. Late soybean planting also means late second crop corn planting. Second crop corn planted following soybean harvest (called the Safrinha crop) accounts for about 70% of Brazil's total corn production. Late planting can push corn pollination into a typically hot and dry weather period. Again, no one knows today what the impact on the corn yield might be.

The USDA did reduce their estimate of Brazil's corn and soybean crops in the January report, but these reductions were minimal and smaller than many other private analytical groups. They trimmed soybean production from 161 million metric tons (mmt) in December to 157 mmt in January. They trimmed corn production from 129 mmt in December to 127 mmt in January. These are small adjustments relative to the crop sizes.

The world's geopolitical situation has gotten worse over the past weeks and months. The Russia/Ukraine war drags on and on, but has had little or no impact on grain shipments from either Russia or Ukraine. Russia continues to be the cheapest seller of wheat. Attacks on vessels in the Red Sea that have slowed shipments through the Suez Canal have also had no impact on agricultural commodity prices. Crude oil prices have been impacted. Once upon a time, war and shipping disruptions were bullish on agricultural commodities. That hasn't been the case the last 18 months.

U.S. exports of wheat, corn, and soybeans have also

remained slow. Tightness in world wheat supplies (with the exception of Russia) has yet to translate into more U.S. wheat exports. China has, at least temporarily, left the U.S. soybean and corn export markets.

The markets have become lethargic despite the disruptive "outside" market factors. This can change quickly if perceived threats to supply chains become real threats or if potential threats to crop production in Brazil change to real threats. Markets will remain lethargic with a bearish bias barring any of these things happening.

The next focus will, of course, be potential North American crop production in 2024. We are already starting to see guesses of what U.S. producers will plant this spring. The winter wheat acreage guesses are "in" and won't change much. Corn and soybean plantings will be the important numbers. Most analysts are looking for a 1.5 to 2 million acre reduction in corn plantings and similar gains in soybean plantings. Most analysts will start the 2024 production game by using record yield estimates. If these scenarios play out, soybean ending supplies would double in the 2024-25 marketing year. Corn ending supplies would drop slightly, but still be big. The point is the markets' initial view of 2024-25 production and supply and demand will have a bearish slant. Weather and demand will have to prove that viewpoint incorrect. ■

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

MANHUNT

In 1902, the pursuit of outlaw Harry Tracy ends in a wheat field in Creston

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

In August 1902, Washington's Lincoln County briefly became famous for more than just its grain when the manhunt for escaped convict Harry Tracy ended in a wheat field southeast of Creston.

Tracy was born Harry Severns in 1875 in Wisconsin to Sarah Catherine Atkinson and Orlando Nye Severns. Details about his early life are conflicting, but Tracy was in serious trouble with the law by the time he was in his early 20s. He had already been sentenced to prison in Utah — which he escaped from — and was involved in a saloon hold-up in Colorado Springs where two lawmen were killed. Tracy bounced around the West, reportedly spending time at a logging camp on Loon Lake north of Spokane and marrying his hometown sweetheart, Eugenie Carter, and briefly settling down on a small ranch in Idaho. A few months later, Carter was killed in a gunfight when vigilantes surrounded their cabin in pursuit of two of Tracy's acquaintances who'd been accused of stealing horses.

Tracy traveled throughout the West, stealing, getting caught and sent to jail, and then escaping. Eventually, he ended up in Portland, Ore., in the company of another outlaw, David Merrill. They became known as the Black Mackinaw Bandits for their habit of wearing black mackinaw raincoats while committing robberies. The law finally caught up to the bandits, and they were sentenced and sent to the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. Three years later, Tracy and Merrill escaped from the penitentiary, kicking off a two-month regional manhunt that became national news.

On the morning of June 9, 1902, Tracy and Merrill used smuggled guns to fight their way out of the penitentiary, killing at least three guards in the process. Once



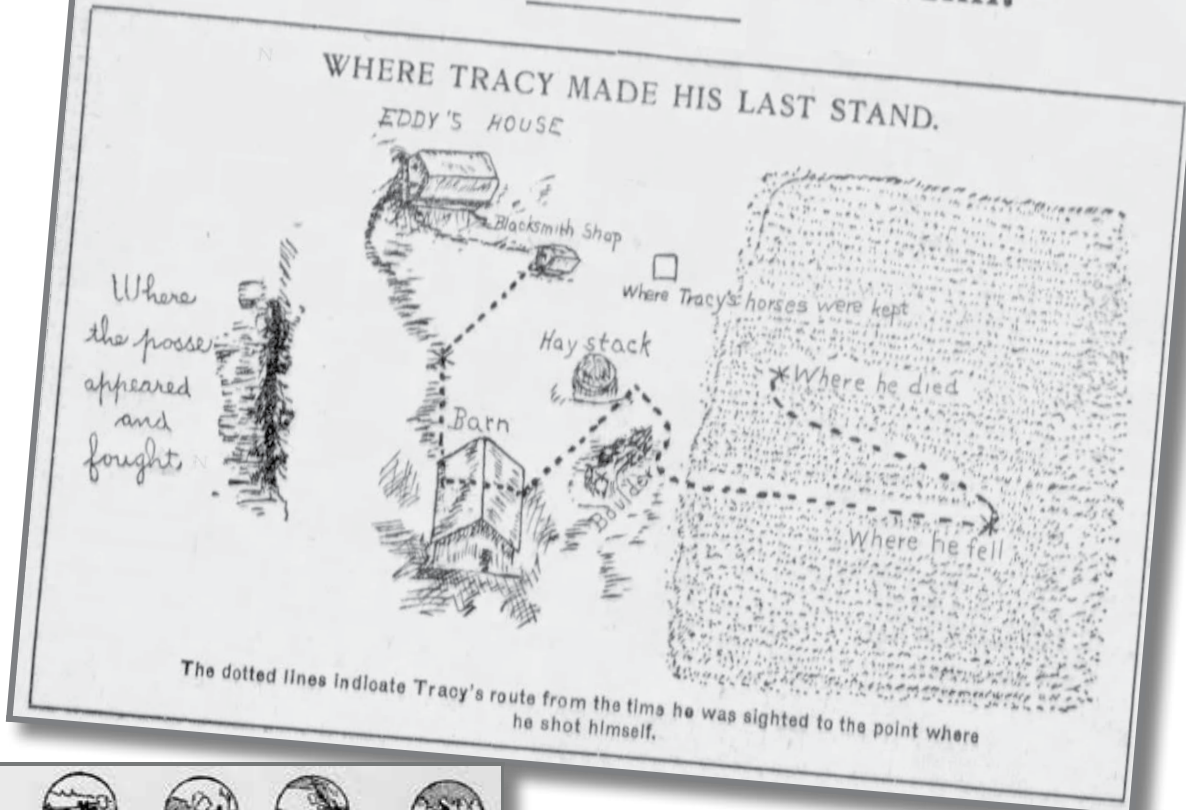
free, the men headed north. In Chehalis, Wash., Tracy confronted Merrill about a newspaper report that Merrill's mother turned Tracy in so Merrill could receive a lighter sentence. Tracy challenged Merrill to a duel, but cheated and shot Merrill in the back, killing him.

Tracy continued north, reaching Olympia a few weeks later. He hijacked a launch and forced the ship's captain and several other men to sail him up to Seattle. Tracy got off the boat north of Ballard and headed to Bothell. Just outside of Wayne, Tracy got into a gunfight with a posse, killing Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff Charles Raymond and seriously wounding one other. Tracy escaped and headed back towards Seattle. He took refuge — and hostages — at the home of Mrs. R.H. Van Horn near Woodland Park, where he walked in with guns drawn, said "I am Tracy," and asked for a meal and clothing.

By many accounts, Tracy could be very courteous as long as he wasn't crossed. He reportedly told Mrs. Van Horn that, "I do not kill for the pleasure of killing, but only when I am attacked."

News of Tracy's whereabouts quickly became public, and several local lawmen and residents made their way to the Van Horn house to try to ambush him as he was leaving. In the ensuing gunfight, two more of the vigilantes were killed, one by Tracy and one by friendly fire. In the chaos, Tracy escaped, made his way to Ballard, hijacked another boat, and landed on Bainbridge Island. He took refuge at the home of John Johnson, again demanding food, clothing, and bedding. That evening, Tracy took

Desperate Outlaw, Run to Earth at the Eddy Ranch, Gives Fierce Battle, but Nervy Pursuers Totally Disable Him.



The manhunt for Harry Tracy was national news in the summer of 1902, with newspapers from coast to coast covering the search.

TRACY SHOWS UP AGAIN

Outlaw an Unwelcome Guest on Wenatchee Ranch—Gets More Food and Horses —No Posses Are Out.

TRACY PENNED AND BATTLE IS ON

Sheriff Gardner and Posse Have the Outlaw Surrounded in Swamp Southeast of Creston—Reinforcements Hurry to Scene.

one of Johnson's rowboats and forced the Johnson's hired hand, John Anderson, to row him back to King County. By the time Johnson was able to alert authorities, Tracy had already slipped past them.

Three days later, on July 8, Tracy reached Renton, still with Anderson in tow. He took refuge in the Gerrells home. When his threats against several children brought Mrs. Gerrells to tears, he said, "That was only a bluff. Mother, you have nothing to fear from me. I have a mother. She is reading the papers every day to see if I am caught." Reportedly, Tracy calmed Mrs. Gerrells with tales of his own mom, and Mrs. Gerrells later said she saw tears in his eyes.

While Tracy was eating, a small posse was slowly surrounding the Gerrells' house. Before the trap could be sprung, however, Tracy was able to steal away in the dark, after leaving Anderson tied up in the Gerrells' chicken coop. Even with bloodhounds on his trail, Tracy was able to evade capture.

Tracy began making his way east, taking over the E. M. Johnson home near Kent for a day. He was next seen near Covington, then Black Diamond on July 11, before reappearing near Wenatchee on July 31 and crossing the Columbia River two days later. The next sighting of Tracy was near Coulee City.

On Aug. 3, 18-year-old George E. Goldfinch was stopped by Tracy outside of Creston and asked where the nearest ranch was. Goldfinch took him to the Eddy ranch, which was run by two bachelor brothers, Lou and Eugene Eddy. Tracy let Goldfinch go after warning him that if he alerted authorities, Tracy would kill the brothers. Tracy stayed at the ranch for a few days, even helping the brothers repair

their barn. Goldfinch, however, didn't follow orders and alerted authorities. On Aug. 6, a five-man posse was formed in Creston and headed out to the ranch. When confronted, Tracy went inside the barn for his guns. The Aug. 7, 1902, edition of *The Spokesman-Review* detailed what happened next:

"Sighting the men and securing his rifle, Tracy sought cover behind a haystack, escaping several rifle bullets. The posse then found cover behind a large rock, and, for a while, it looked like a siege. Then Tracy broke for a large boulder lying on the edge of a small wheat field, and this dash was his undoing. For just as he came to the rock, he fell forward, a rifle bullet having broken his leg. He plunged into the wheat, and his bloody trail here shows the savage determination of the man. For, after receiving this wound, he crawled 75 yards on his hands and feet in order to reach a spot that would command the posse and enable him to pour a merciless fire upon them. But, once only was he able to fire from this vantage point. Then, weakened by loss of blood, he tried to staunch his cruel wound, failed, and with his revolver, sent a bullet through his brain."

Unaware Tracy was dead, the posse took up positions around the field and waited until dawn to follow the trail.

Tracy's body was taken to Davenport. Charles May Anderson was 11 at the time and remembered seeing the body driven through town and put into a back room of a drug store. A crowd broke in and started cutting off parts of Tracy's clothing, hair, and gun belt for souvenirs.

"After things quieted down, the sheriff permitted my brother and me to view Tracy's body. There was a large wound in the right forehead and the left leg below the

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knee was shattered, with the tourniquet, his leather belt, still in place. He was a sandy-haired man about five feet eight inches tall, well muscled, and weighing about 160 pounds. His blood-stained clothes were torn in places," Anderson recalled.

A few days later, Tracy's body was sent back to the penitentiary in Salem, Ore., where chemicals were used to destroy the body (to stop the remains from being stolen) and buried.

The rock where Tracy was shot still stands. In 2020, The Washington State History/Geology Facebook page visited Tracy Rock and posted a video at [facebook.com/watch/?v=305075124062874](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=305075124062874). ■

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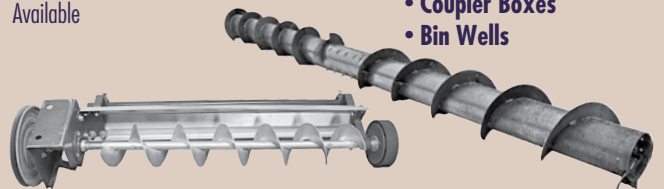


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THE BOTTOM LINE

What makes a well-designed revenue policy?

By Curtis Evanko
McGregor Risk Management Services

Glad tidings readers!

I trust all is well, and you are enjoying the start to 2024. Don't forget your sweetheart, as it always seems to sneak up on me! The theme of this article is what makes a well-designed revenue policy. In my humble opinion, it depends. We all have a different appetite for risk, and that tolerance will dictate some of one's policy option choices.

Multiperil crop insurance for wheat in our region has the option of yield protection (YP), which is based on bushels only, or revenue protection (RP), which is a combination of bushels and price. I believe producers in the Pacific Northwest have access to very solid RP policies, and I fully endorse this coverage. Naturally, there is room for some minor improvement tweaks, which, realistically, requires congressional action and/or Risk Management Agency (RMA) language changes. I digress.

Chart 1: Subsidy factors

Coverage Level	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	
Subsidy	Basic Unit	67%	64%	64%	59%	59%	55%	48%	38%
	Optional Unit	67%	64%	64%	59%	59%	55%	48%	38%
	Enterprise Unit	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	77%	68%	53%

Let's focus on these items:

- Coverage level — up to 85% of historical yields.
- Unit structure — enterprise units, optional units, or a combination of both.
- Policy options.

Realistically, coverage is at the 80% or 85% level. Anything less than this is catastrophic protection, in my opinion. My experience suggests a higher coverage level will correlate to a greater frequency of loss payment. The question is, do you want the maximum protection that 85% offers, or are you willing to share in the risk and pay less premium for 80% coverage? Chart 1 shows the premium subsidy differences by coverage level, which correlates to premium calculations — a lower coverage level is offered a higher subsidy rate.

Unit structure is also a decision that considers one's appetite for risk. Optional units (OU) structure can be as simple as a different, separate unit by section or farm location. This means that the production of one OU does not impact the production of another OU.

Enterprise units can be defined as all like crop in the county — all fall wheat acres for example — are in a single unit. EU will have the exact same liability coverage as OU but enjoys a premium discount from RMA by sharing in the risk coverage. EU has the same dollars of coverage as OU, yet can have up to a 30% premium savings due to a higher premium subsidy. The amount of premium savings is dependent upon the number of acres and locations: the greater of each, the greater the premium discount.

A recent policy change now allows EU structure by wheat type, i.e., fall wheat and spring wheat, which could be two separate EU in the county. Additionally, one could mix and match — EU for all fall wheat acres, and OU for all spring wheat acres, or vice versa.

The last item for consideration would be what I call alphabet soup; there are a host of acronym policy coverage options that I feel are mandatory to the policy:

- **QL** (quality loss). This allows net bushels for production history; think falling numbers discounts.
- **TA** (trend adjustment). This takes into account today's potential for higher yields vs. the current historical yield average due to advances in fertility, genetics, and plant health.
- **YA** (yield adjustment). If the harvested yield is less than 60% of the county T-Yield, the factored T-Yield is used to maintain a higher actual production history database average.

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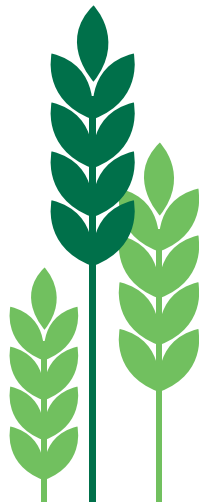
- **YC** (yield cap). When a new yield is added to the database, this prevents the average yield from declining more than 10% and helps maintain a higher, historic average yield.
- **YE** (yield exclusion). This allows a yield year, as determined by RMA, to be excluded from the 10-year database. If there is a year excluded, 2021 for example, the database becomes a nine-year historical average.
- **WCE** (Winter Coverage Endorsement). This option would allow additional policy choices in the event fall-planted crop does not survive the winter.

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In short, risk appetite determines policy coverage options. Depending on one's location and rotations, I would entertain an 85% coverage level along with the EU structure and alphabet soup for options. I'd want the highest coverage level available, providing the most dollars of liability at an affordable price.

I wish all a great spring season. Until next time, square corners. ■

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

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It's not harvest without a combine tire picture of Addison (6) and Maverick (1½) Prather.
Photo by Alyssa Prather.



Dylan Schwick and son, Owen (8 months), in Endicott at Sonray Farms. Submitted by Lorraine Jordan.



2023 wheat harvest at Larry H. Kruger Inc., near Rocklyn. Photo by Carolyn Kruger Wesselius.



(Above) Blake Wolf and his son, Tucker (8), at the southernmost point of Whitman County overlooking the Snake River Canyon and Clarkston. Blake is with Wolf Corporate Farms in Uniontown. Photo by Mike Kramer. (Left) In Pomeroy, Nash Heitstuman (2) takes a morning nap in the combine while dad cuts spring wheat. Photo by Hannah Heitstuman.



Harvest at Onecho west of Pullman. Photo by Ben Barstow.

HAPPENINGS

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

FEBRUARY 2024

1 HOW WEATHER, GEOPOLITICS, AND OTHER FACTORS ARE INFLUENCING AG PRICES. AMMO webinar with Shawn Hackett. 10 to 11:30 a.m.. 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/.

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

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

13 RESEARCH REVIEW. Washington growers are invited to engage with WGC-funded scientists on their research progress. Contact mary@wagrains.org.

14 SMOOTH SCOURINGRUSH AND REAL TIME SITE SPECIFIC WEED MANAGEMENT. AMMO workshop with Washington State University researchers, Doug Finkelnburg, Drew Lyon, and Ian Burke. Pesticide credits have been applied for. 9 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 mail form from wawg.org/ammo-workshops/.

21 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 at (509) 659-0610 or mail form from wawg.org/ammo-workshops/.

22 WHAT LIES AHEAD: AN UPDATE FROM NRCS AND FSA. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the USDA state office in Spokane Valley, 11707 E Sprague. Lunch is provided. No charge for WAWG members; cost for nonmembers is \$25. Preregister by calling (509) 659-0610 or mail registration form from wawg.org/ammo-workshops/.

22-25 HOME AND YARD SHOW. Features hundreds of displays and demonstrations of home and yard-related products, services and improvements. Spokane Fair and Expo Center, Spokane, Wash. custershows.com

27 WHAT LIES AHEAD: AN UPDATE FROM NRCS AND FSA. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Red Lion in Pasco, 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/.

MARCH 2024

1-3 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW. Professional artists and crafters from across the Northwest will display and sell their fine art, hand crafts and specialty foods. Spokane Fair and Expo Center, Spokane, Wash. custershows.com

12 LANDLORD/LANDOWNER WORKSHOP. AMMO workshop 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 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/.

13 STOP FIGHTING ON THE WAY TO THE FUNERAL HOME. AMMO workshop with Jolene Brown 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 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/.

15-17 SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW. Professional artists and crafters from across the Northwest will display and sell their fine art, hand crafts and specialty foods. HAPO Center, Pasco, Wash. custershows.com ■

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Advertiser Index

Accucon	63	Corteva Agriscience	9	Pomeroy Grain Growers	48
Ag Enterprise Supply	35	Country Financial	65	R & H Machine	23
AGPRO	63	Custom Seed Conditioning	48	Soilcraft	17
AgraSyst	13	Edward Jones	45	Spectrum Crop Development ...	20
AgWest Farm Credit	32	Eljay Oil Company	14	State Bank NW	43
Albaugh	15, 25	Farm & Home Supply	21	T & S Sales	48
Bank of Eastern Washington	31	Frank's Boot Company	33	Tankmax	39
Barber Engineering	37	Great Plains Equipment	11	The McGregor Company	72
BASF	5	HighLine Grain Growers	43	Tri-State Seed	33
Bayer CropScience	7	J & M Fabrication	65	Vantage-PNW	69
Big Iron Repair	38	Jones Truck & Implement	63	WestBred	71
Butch Booker	65	Kincaid Real Estate	65	Western Reclamation	31
Byrnes Oil Company	47	McKay Seed Company	23	Western Trailers	42
Central Machinery Sales	70	Mike's Auto	23	Wheatland Bank	19
Class 8 Trucks	33, 38	Morgan Stanley		Wilbur-Ellis Agribusiness	46
CO Energy	35	Wealth Management	21	Washington State Crop	
Coldwell Banker Tomlinson	43	Northwest First Realtors	39	Improvement Association	21
Coleman Oil	37	Odessa Trading Company	69	Yunker Brothers	31
Connell Grange Supply	68	Photosyntech	37		
Correll's Scale Service	43	PNW Farmers Cooperative	35		



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