

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

APRIL | 2024

Spring blossoms across Eastern Washington

IN THIS ISSUE:

AMMO session recaps: Wheat as a political currency, catching up with FSA, NRCS

NASS releases 2022 Census of Ag data

Preferred Wheat Varieties Brochure

PNW's transportation infrastructure keeps the grain flowing

Stripe rust, Italian ryegrass updates

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President's Perspective



Weathering Mother Nature's whims

By Anthony Smith

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Here we are in April! Spring wheat planting and weed control in fallow and winter wheat crops are moving along across the Horse Heaven Hills. I wanted to talk about the good and the bad of weather, and how it affects wheat crops. Farmers already know this, but it may be interesting to others.

Let's start with rain. The saying, "no rain, no grain," is quite true. Timely rains are critical in growing an average to above-average wheat crop. Obviously, no rain isn't good, but sometimes you can have too much rain! When it's too rainy, you can't get into the field to spray or plow or whatever it is your farm needs done. Rain during harvest will also set you back, and the worst case is when it rains right before harvest, causing grains to start sprouting. You don't want that, because it hurts the grain quality and causes problems for millers and bakers. Let's not forget about stripe rust, a disease caused by cool, rainy weather in the spring. We joke in Benton County that stripe rust means a good crop is brewing.

How about snow? A blanket of snow will protect your wheat crop in cold and windy conditions. On the other hand, if that blanket of snow lays too long on the wheat, it will create a fungus called snow mold, which can wipe a crop out. I've seen photos of wheat fields infected with snow mold, and it's not a pretty sight. Washington State University (WSU) researchers do a phenomenal job breeding snow mold-resistant varieties.

Freezing temperatures in spring, when wheat is in the boot stage, aren't good either. The boot stage is when the head is formed but hasn't emerged yet. The wheat will have empty, white-colored heads. We'll joke about 40-bushel straw with 10-bushel yield, but it's not really funny.

Wind can wear you out working in it. It saps away at you all day and can hamper spraying for days on end. Wind can be helpful, however, as good airflow will help ripen your wheat when it's close to harvest.

Then there's hail. You just don't want that.

I can go on and on about the weather, and like many farmers, I'm constantly monitoring it. I look at the three-day forecast, the 10-day forecast, and WSU's weather stations in our area.

Farmers can't control the weather, but what they can control is protecting their crops with crop insurance. In most cases, a farmer who has to turn to crop insurance because of a crop failure is hoping to break even. They'll be lucky to get just enough money to plant next year's crop. The farm bill safety net programs are also extremely important. Again, they generally don't make farmers a profit; they just help pay the bills. Without these programs, one crop failure can be enough to put a farmer out of business, so that's why we spend so much time lobbying for them, especially during farm bill years.

We have a long way to go until we harvest, but knowing I'm protected in case the crop is damaged keeps me going. ■

Cover illustration: Spring has finally sprung. The next few months will see seeding and spraying taking place across Eastern Washington. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

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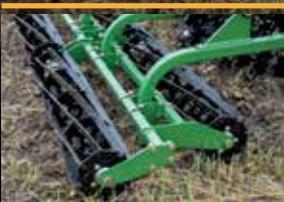
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Wheat growers meet ahead of spring seeding

In mid-March, Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) board members fit in one more meeting before spring seeding begins in earnest.

Jon Wyss, state executive director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA), zoomed into the meeting with special guest John Berge, FSA acting deputy administrator for farm programs. Berge was part of a national team that was at the state FSA office to help with staff training. He talked about the farm bill, telling the board that nobody knows what will happen with the legislation this year. Berge would like to see a permanent disaster program to replace the ad hoc disaster programs that are currently being used, and he'd also like to see an increase in the Conservation Reserve Program acreage cap, which is set at 27 million acres. The agency is currently within 2 million of the cap; this could limit sign-up opportunities. Improving crop insurance and making it more accessible to growers are also on his list of farm bill priorities.

"There's some concern that anything that adds to outlays will be hard to move through Congress. There's not a lot of appetite to expand the size and scope of programs by Congress," he added.

Berge also addressed staffing issues at FSA offices, saying it's tricky to deliver programs without people in the field. The agency is struggling to attract and retain

employees, but is working to expand in-house promotion opportunities.

Dennis Koong, regional director of the National Agricultural Statistics Service; Keith Griswold, assistant state conservationist for programs for the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Ben Thiel, director of the Risk Management Agency's Spokane Regional Office, were also in attendance and gave short updates on their respective agencies.

In county issues, most growers reported signs of winter damage, but the extent is still unknown. Most of the winter wheat was greening up nicely, and the southern counties were well into spring fieldwork.

In state legislation, wheat lobbyists Diana Carlen and Mark Strueli called in to report on the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session, which ended on March 7. Carlen said it was a short but intense session, with the six initiatives looming over the Legislature the entire time. Legislators ended up passing three of the initiatives and letting three of them go to November's ballot for voters to decide on. The linkage bill, which would let the Washington State Department of Ecology start talking to California and Quebec about linking carbon credit markets, passed. Prices for carbon allowances at the state's first auction of 2024 dropped from \$62 to \$25.

Of particular interest to wheat growers was the \$30 million included in the state operating budget to rebate farmers and haulers who paid fuel surcharges due to the Climate Commitment Act. While the Department of Licensing hasn't released any details yet about applying for the rebates, Carlen encouraged farmers to turn in paperwork as soon as possible. For more on the end of the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session, see page 14.

Looking ahead to the interim, Carlen said the riparian taskforce is due to submit a report in June, and the agriculture industry will be watching that closely.

In national legislation, WAWG Past President Andy Juris updated the board on the recent trip to Houston for the National Association of Wheat Growers' (NAWG) annual conference. Juris chairs NAWG's Domestic Trade and Policy Committee, which spent time talking about foreign ownership of U.S. farmland. Juris said the issue isn't as straightforward as it seems, since many research and



SCIENCE STRIKES! Grady Hillhouse, a civil engineer, is well known for his YouTube channel, Practical Engineering, which is all about infrastructure and the human-made world. In March, he partnered with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to look at how fish survive hydro turbines. He visited McNary Dam on the Columbia River to get the details. Find the video (and many others) at his YouTube channel, youtube.com/@PracticalEngineeringChannel.

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development companies, such as Syngenta, are foreign-owned, and need small parcels of land in the U.S. in order to do research and testing. Some of the proposed legislation could hurt that research. In the end, the committee confirmed that there is an adequate approval process in place for foreign-owned entities buying these smaller acreages, but the committee members feel that the Secretary of Agriculture should be involved in the approval process. During the NAWG meetings, growers heard from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Robert Bonnie and USDA agency representatives Zach Ducheneaux, Farm Service Agency; Terry Crosby, Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Marcia Bunger, Risk Management Agency. See page 10 for photos.

WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings gave a report on the river fly-in to Washington, D.C., that happened in February. She said the group, which represented users up and down the Columbia-Snake River System, was very well received. The group concentrated on meeting with Midwest legislators and legislators that represent districts along the Mississippi River.

“We talked about how what’s happening with the lower Snake River dams could set a precedent, and how we as the U.S. river system can work together as a coalition to advocate together to protect our river infrastructure,” Hennings said. “We got to meet with many Republicans and Democrats and got a great response.”

Hennings also talked about the Columbia River Treaty, which is set to expire in September. There is still no agreement between the U.S. and Canada, and if the treaty expires, the system will be operated under a “called upon” scenario, details of which are extremely murky.

In the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) report, Commissioner Ben Adams reported on the recent WGC meeting where the commissioners heard from Wendy Powers, dean of Washington State University’s (WSU) College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). Powers said while enrollment in CAHNRS is up, overall enrollment at WSU is down, and departments have been told to prepare for cuts. Going forward, WSU’s research ask from the WGC will be reduced by \$250,000, thanks to seed royalties. Commissioners are working on this year’s budget. Assessments are down due to low wheat prices. WGC Chairman Ben Barstow answered questions and addressed concerns from the board about the WGC signing a four-month contract with former commissioner Mike Miller.

“We see a value in having that kind of government experience and connections,” Barstow said, adding that he would be happy to attend county grower meetings to answer questions.

There will be no WAWG board meeting in April. ■

Whitman County growers hear from FSA state director

Jon Wyss, Farm Service Agency (FSA) state executive director, attended the March meeting of the Whitman County wheat growers to answer growers’ questions about staffing at county offices, programs, and ongoing issues with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Wyss told producers that an audit of CREP turned up a number of Whitman County contracts that were erroneously approved. He has been working with the national office and thinks they’ve found a solution for most of them. He also reviewed the recently released Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental rates. Wyss has designed a spreadsheet that uses U.S. Department of Agriculture data to calculate a county’s recommended rate, which should stop rental rates from fluctuating by more than 5% up or down. One change producers need to be aware of when visiting their county office is that staff will no longer be able to fill out forms because of liability issues. Staff can help producers, but the producer is responsible for filling out the form.

Washington Grain Commissioner (WGC) Gary Bailey reported on his recent advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. One of the main topics he discussed with legislators was the need to increase market promotion funding.

Kelly Weber gave a report on the WGC Research Review. She asked the other producers who attended to send her a copy of their rankings so she can compile them.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May. ■

USDA designates 22 counties as natural disaster areas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated 22 counties in Washington as natural disaster areas for excessive heat experienced in the summer of 2023. The designation allows USDA’s Farm Service Agency to extend emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through emergency loans. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation, or to refinance certain debts. FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability.

The primary counties are Adams, Benton, Chelan,



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Commodity Classic

To finish out February, Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) leaders and staff traveled to Houston to attend the Commodity Classic and participate in the National Association of Wheat Growers' annual conference.



U.S. Department of Agriculture agency representatives updated growers on their respective agencies. From left is Zach Ducheneaux, Farm Service Agency; Terry Crosby, Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Marcia Bunger, Risk Management Agency.



The Washington Association of Wheat Growers who attended Commodity Classic and the annual National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) annual meeting in Houston were (front row, from left) Michelle Hennings, executive director; Marci Green, past president; Gil Crosby, secretary/treasurer; and Jeff Malone, vice president. Back row, from left, are Andy Juris, past president; Nicole Berg, past president and past president of the National Association of Wheat Growers; and Anthony Smith, president.



U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Robert Bonnie (left) spoke during the National Association of Wheat Growers' board of directors meeting.

Washington Association of Wheat Growers' Past President Andy Juris (third from left) chairs the National Association of Wheat Growers' Domestic Trade and Policy Committee. The committee spent quite a bit of time discussing foreign ownership of U.S. farmland. See page 6.



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More information is at farmers.gov. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. ■

NAWG elects new slate of leaders at annual meeting

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) elected Keff Felty as president during their 2024 Annual Conference in Houston, Texas.

Felty is a fourth-generation farmer in the Altus area of Oklahoma. He farms cotton, sesame, and pastureland along with his wheat crops. He brings experience from

his time with the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association and the Oklahoma State Support Committee Cotton Incorporated, and he has served on various commodity committees within the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

“I am looking forward to working with wheat growers and lawmakers to ensure wheat voices are heard during the renewal of the farm bill,” said Felty. “As we continue into 2024, it is critical that the industry continues to urge lawmakers to consider a farm bill that protects crop insurance, strengthens the farm safety net, and increases funding for our trade promotion programs. It is an honor to be elected as president of NAWG, and I look forward to working with commodity leaders to support agriculture and rural America.”

The national association’s board of directors elected its new board of officers with Pat Clements of Kentucky elected as vice president, Jamie Kress from Idaho as treasurer, and Nathan Keane of Montana as the new secretary. Brent Cheyne of Oregon transitioned into the past president position. ■



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

Why Support the Washington Wheat PAC?

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

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POLICY MATTERS

Washington Legislature wraps up 2024 session

By Diana Carlen

Lobbyist, Washington Association of
Wheat Growers

The Washington State Legislature adjourned on the 60th day of the 2024 Legislative Session on Thursday, March 7, at 5:50 p.m. In the final week of the session, the Legislature adopted the supplemental operating, capital, and transportation budgets. The Legislature also continued to pass bills. In total, the legislature passed 381 bills during this short, but intense session.

Final budgets adopted

The Legislature adopted 2024 supplemental budgets, which make mid-biennial budget adjustments to the 2023-25 budgets that were adopted in April 2023.

The 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget spends \$1.1 billion to maintain existing programs and an additional \$1 billion to fund new policy expenditures. The supplemental operating budget does not increase any taxes.

The 2024 Supplemental Capital Budget allocates \$1.3 billion in total funds, with \$130.6 million from debt limit bonds and \$1.2 billion from other resources including \$688.4 million in Climate Commitment Act accounts and \$307.5 million from the Common School Construction Fund. Several of the appropriations are contingent on voters rejecting Initiative 2117 (repeal of the Climate Commitment Act). The budget also does not appropriate revenue generated from the capital gains tax beyond November 2024.

The Operating Budget includes



\$30 million in one-time payments to farmers and haulers who bought fuel for agricultural purposes but had to pay a surcharge due to the Climate Commitment Act (CCA). Under the CCA, fuel used for agricultural purposes is supposed to be exempt from these kinds of added fees. The rebates would begin being issued by Sept. 1 by the Department of Licensing based on a tiered system. The \$30 million is well below the \$150 million that the Farm Bureau estimates is needed to cover the carbon surcharges paid by farmers since the CCA went into effect.

Legislative retirements announced

Following the conclusion of the 2024 Legislative Session, legislators will transition to focusing on election season. All members of the House of Representatives and roughly half the members of the Senate will seek re-election. The end of the 2024 session brought about several announcements of legislators that do not plan to seek re-election including the following:

- Rep. Frank Chopp (D-Seattle) has served in the Legislature since 1994. He served as co-speaker and speaker from 1999-2019.
- Sen. Andy Billig (D-Spokane) has served in the Legislature since 2010 and currently is the Senate majority leader. Rep. Marcus Riccelli has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 3rd Legislative District.
- Sen. Karen Keiser (D-SeaTac) has served in the Legislature since 1995 and currently serves as the chair of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee. She will serve out the remainder of the year. Her term is not up until 2026 so it is likely the King County Council will appoint her replacement (required to be a Democrat) from a list provided by Democrat precinct committee officers. ▶



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- Sen. Lynda Wilson (R-Vancouver) has served in the Legislature since 2015 and is currently the ranking member of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Paul Harris has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 17th Legislative District.
- Sen. Sam Hunt (D-Olympia) has served in the Legislature since 2000. Rep. Jessica Bateman has announced that she will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 22nd Legislative District.
- Rep. JT Wilcox (R-Yelm) has served in the Legislature since 2011 and is the former House minority leader.
- Rep. Joel Kretz (R-Wauconda) has served in the Legislature since 2005 and is the former House deputy minority leader.
- Rep. Spencer Hutchins (R-Gig Harbor) has served in the Legislature since 2023.

There are also several legislators who have announced they plan to run for higher office, and as a result, will not be seeking re-election to their current positions:

- Sen. Mark Mullet (D-Issaquah) is running for governor and is currently the chair of the Senate Capital Budget. Rep. Bill Ramos (D) is running for Sen. Mullet’s seat.
- Sen. Kevin Van De Wege (D-Sequim) is running for commissioner for public lands and is currently the chair of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee. Rep. Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles) plans to run for the position, leaving an open House seat in the 24th Legislative District. Rep. Chapman is currently the chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, so there will be new chairs next session for both the Senate and House agriculture and natural resource committees.
- Rep. Jacquelin Maycumber (R-Republic) is running for the 5th congressional seat. Rep. Maycumber is currently the House minority floor leader.

Additionally, there are legislators who are running for a statewide position, but if they are unsuccessful in winning those races, will be able to return to the Senate to continue out the remainder of their term (two more years):

- Sen. Manka Dhingra (D-Redmond) is running for attorney general.
- Sen. Patty Kuderer (D-Bellevue) is running for the Office of Insurance commissioner.
- Sen. Emily Randall (D-Bremerton) is running for the 6th congressional seat.
- Rep. Drew MacEwen (R-Shelton) is running for the 6th congressional seat. ■

Industry priorities funded in ag appropriations bill

On March 9, President Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024 into law, which included six Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriation bills, including the agriculture appropriation bill. It passed the Senate by a vote of 75 to 22 and the House of Representatives by a vote of 339 to 85.

Specifically, the agriculture appropriations component maintains the FY2023 funding levels. Included is funding for one of the National Association of Wheat Growers’ (NAWG) appropriations priorities, the Wheat Resiliency Initiative, which increases federal funding for pest and disease challenges facing producers. Additionally, the bill maintains funding for the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative and Small Grains Genomic Initiative.

“NAWG is glad to see the FY2024 appropriations package includes several wheat priorities, including funding for the first time the Wheat Resiliency Initiative,” said NAWG Vice President of Policy and Communications Jake Westlin. ■

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What are conventional, minimum, no-till farming?

Farming practices have evolved significantly over the years, with different approaches aiming to balance productivity, soil health, and environmental sustainability. Three common methods used in agriculture are conventional tillage, minimum tillage, and no-till farming. Each method has its own set of benefits and challenges, and the choice of method often depends on factors such as soil type, climate, and farmer preference.

Conventional tillage is a traditional method that involves using mechanical implements to work the soil. After harvest, a large harrow is used to break up the stubble and spread it evenly across the field. In the spring, a cultivator is used to turn the top few inches of soil and incorporate the organic material into the soil. Weeds are controlled mainly by mechanical process and tilling the soil. This method provides good seed-to-soil contact, creating an optimal seedbed for crops like wheat. However, conventional tillage can lead to soil erosion and loss of organic matter over time.

Minimum tillage, as the name suggests, minimizes soil disturbance compared to conventional tillage. Some herbicides and pesticides are used to control weeds and pests, reducing the need for multiple trips around the field with mechanical cultivation. At seeding time, a quick cultivation of the soil is done to prepare the seedbed, followed by seeding the crop immediately. This



approach helps to conserve soil moisture and reduce erosion, while also saving time and fuel compared to conventional tillage.

No-till farming is a practice that eliminates mechanical soil disturbance altogether. Instead of plowing or cultivating the soil, no-till farming relies completely on herbicides and pesticides to control weeds and pests. A specialized drill is used to seed the crop directly into the untilled soil. The drill has a sharp spade that cuts through the stubble and soil, placing the seed directly behind it. No-till farming helps to improve soil health by reducing erosion, preserving soil structure, and retaining moisture. It also reduces fuel and labor costs associated with tillage.

Each of these farming practices has its own set of advantages and challenges. Conventional tillage provides good seedbed preparation but can lead to soil erosion and loss of organic matter. Minimum tillage reduces soil disturbance and conserves moisture but may not be as effective in controlling weeds. No-till farming helps to improve soil health and reduce erosion but may require more herbicides and pesticides to control diseases and weeds.

The choice of farming method depends on various factors such as soil type, climate, crop type, and farmer preference. Some farmers may choose to use a combination of these methods, known as conservation tillage, to achieve the right balance of productivity and sustainability. Ultimately, the goal of all farming practices is to produce healthy crops while preserving the health of the land for future generations. ■

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AMMO 2024

Session focuses on global, US markets

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

When Todd Hultman, lead analyst for DTN, wanted to know why U.S. wheat prices were so low despite low ending stocks, all roads seemed to lead back to Russia.

“It doesn’t make sense to me for wheat prices to be this cheap,” he said. “But when you look at the market, next to Ukraine, Russia has the lowest wheat prices in the world. They’ve basically sucked the export air out of the market.”

Hultman was speaking to growers as part of an Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization seminar in February. He was followed by Dr. Randy Fortenbery, an economics professor at Washington State University, who gave a Washington-centric market forecast.

Wheat as a political currency

In order to put today’s global wheat market in context and look at Russia’s role, Hultman went back to the late 1940s. After World War II, the U.S. was the country that fed the world, holding 30 to 40% of the world’s wheat export market share. Canada and the EU were the other major wheat exporters. In 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin started a major drive to increase wheat production in his country by devoting more land to the crop and giving farmers more resources. Since then, Russia has almost doubled production and built a big surplus of wheat. Today, the U.S. market share of world exports has dropped to less than 10%. With all that wheat, though, wouldn’t Russia welcome higher wheat prices?

“It was a national agenda for other than economic reasons,” Hultman said. “He (Putin) saw that wheat has more value than just supply and demand.”

That value, Hultman believes, is in using cheap wheat as political currency in unsettled, strategically located countries. By keeping prices low, Russia is able to gain influence selling cheap wheat and keeping the leaders in power dependent on Russia to help feed their people. He said Russia and Iran are gaining greater influence near the world’s key trade chokepoints, such as the Suez Canal and the Turkish Straits.

“Why would he want wheat prices to come down? It’s giving him political currency in the world. That is advancing Putin’s influence in very sensitive areas that are dangerous to us,” Hultman said. “That’s why wheat prices have fallen lower than I say they should have. I’m concerned this is going to be a huge dampener on keeping wheat prices down around the world.”

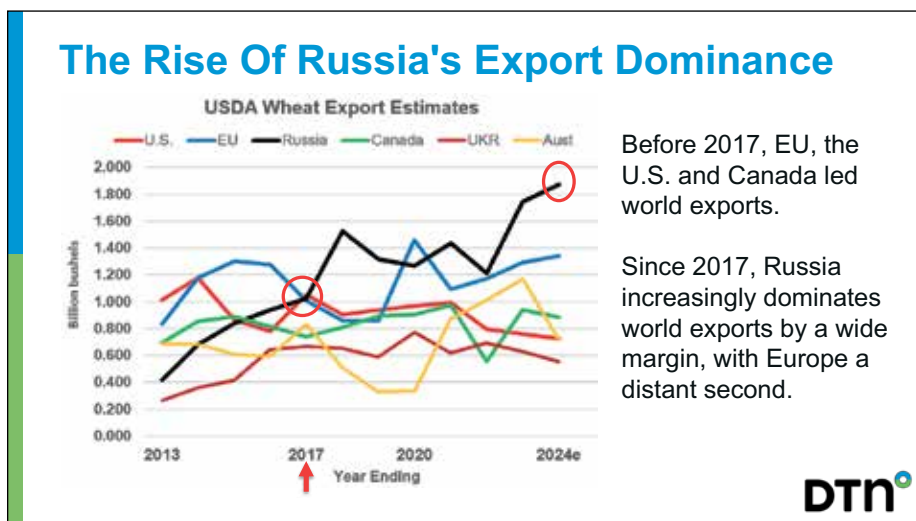
Looking ahead, Hultman said his best guess for white wheat prices for the year ahead is between \$5 and \$7 per bushel, but there would need to be a big weather event to hit that \$7 mark, adding, “It’s best if that weather event happened in Russia.”

He warned white wheat growers not to try to correlate ending stocks-to-use ratios to U.S. wheat prices, but said there are three somewhat useful groupings. If the ratio is less than 20%, white wheat value tends to be higher. The value is lower when the ratio moves above 40%. Anything between 20% and 40% is random.

“I don’t spend a lot of time painfully examining all the estimates of what the wheat crop will be because it’s a loose connection to prices,” he said. “There’s so much uncertainty, emotion, and, honestly, wheat price correlates to things happening in the



Todd Hultman, lead analyst for DTN.



world that don't show up on supply and demand tables. It's a tough market to predict."

Hultman wrapped up his presentation by listing three things he thought could help counter Russia's influence:

- Political attention is needed to counter Russia's strategy with U.S. offers of cheap wheat, especially to key strategic areas. "We don't need to give it (wheat) away for free. Putin isn't giving it away for free. We just need to match his price or cut it a little bit," he said.
- Work with Europe to join the U.S. effort. Support Ukraine's resistance to keep 1.2 billion bushels of wheat production out of Russian hands.
- Urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to ban exchange accounts affiliated with Russian nationals. U.S. futures markets are woefully vulnerable to foreign manipulation.

"This is not your typical wheat market," he said. "The only thing I can see is we have to come up with our own way to counter, but first, we need a political atmosphere that understands wheat has a value in the world that goes way beyond the price you are paying right now. We need a different political understanding."

Lower stocks may favor growers

Fortenbery brought the market closer to home, cautioning white wheat growers not to expect a price premium like last year's. Based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) February numbers, he is forecasting a \$6.03 average price per bushel for winter wheat for 2024-25, adding that if Washington white wheat growers have perfect condi-

tions and harvest 98% of the crop, they are probably looking at prices well below 2023-24 prices.

"As you are looking to start pricing the crop that's in the ground, for, let's say, a September or October delivery, you want to beat the average. So, if the average is \$6, if somebody is offering you 60 cents or 70 cents over that, is it time to maybe take some price risk out of the market and sell something, even though it's not the \$7.50 you might have gotten a year ago?" he asked.

Other points Fortenbery presented were:

- Net farm income decreased in 2023 by 16%, following record income in 2022. USDA has forecast an additional decline of 24% in 2024. ▶



Dr. Randy Fortenbery, economics professor at Washington State University.

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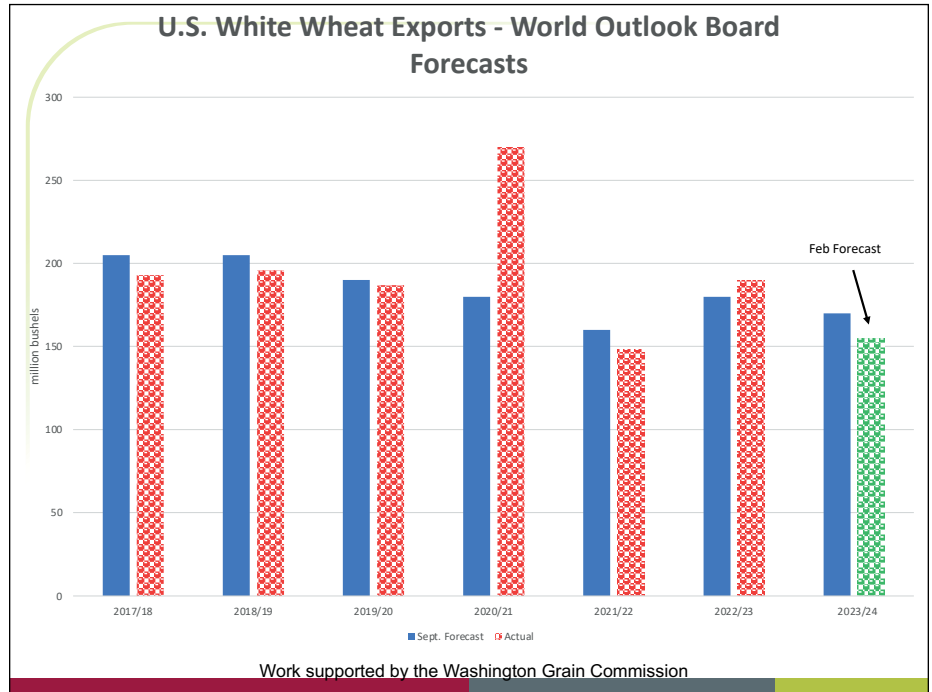
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- Wheat farmers, in general, will do better on a year-over-year basis than Midwest corn and soybean producers.
- Based on current futures price expectations, commodity prices may improve a bit over the next several months, but input costs remain at challenging levels despite some reprieve from year-ago levels.
- The markets appear to be discounting any significant trade disruptions resulting from current conflicts.

Factors in wheat growers' favor include:

- A year-over-year reduction in world ending stocks.
- Lower stocks for most major exporters.
- Ocean freight rates down significantly relative to a year ago.



- The value of the dollar trading within its previous 12-month range.

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And risks and opportunities moving forward include:

- A new farm bill with newish ag committee members. The Pacific Northwest is under-represented on the ag committees, and there's lots of political animosity and budget fights happening.
- U.S. trade policy. What is the U.S.'s trade position on China and Russia?
- Economic environment (inflation, fed policy, and consumer sentiment). ■

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AMMO 2024

USDA agencies update growers

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Two U.S. Department of Agriculture state leaders teamed up in February to update growers on the latest agency information as part of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's winter schedule. Jon Wyss, state executive director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Roylene Comes At Night, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), presented at workshops in Spokane Valley and the Tri-Cities. This article reflects the Spokane Valley workshop.

Farm Service Agency

The Washington State FSA is working hard to make sure growers get the service they need by taking more of a business model approach to staffing, said Wyss.

"I believe we need to do a better job of training and promoting within," he said. Wyss explained he's been able to add extra positions within his budget to prepare for coming retirements, so that "when a person retires, trained staff is already in place."

Another approach Wyss is taking to improve service is

sharing some staff between counties. For example, Port Angeles hasn't had any FSA staff since 1995, but this year, FSA is preparing to have personnel from the Snohomish County office spend a few days every month in the town to work with producers.

The agency continues to move towards a paperless office. Beginning in June, producers who go into their local office to sign documents will be doing so through a kiosk. Eventually, the agency will be able to send documents to producers via email and have them sign those documents electronically before sending them back.

Program-wise, the state office is discussing changes and updates to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract stand requirements and how to work with owners who have tried to — and can show intent — but don't meet the contract requirements. For growers who initially bid at a 50, at re-enrollment, if the stand has at least three of the five required species, producers will be allowed to re-enroll, but at a 20, "... because we know, after 10 years, the five aren't going to grow, and you've done everything. I think that is a pretty fair compromise instead of kicking everybody out," Wyss explained. ▶



Roylene Comes At Night, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Jon Wyss, state executive director for the Farm Service Agency, presented at Agricultural Marketing and Management workshops in Spokane Valley and the Tri-Cities in February.

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Another change to CRP is when emergency haying and grazing can take place. If a parcel in a county reaches a D2 on the national Drought Monitor, the county is eligible for emergency haying and grazing on that date.

The state FSA's troubles with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) continue. Wyss said they've completed their CREP audit and found additional contracts that were approved but shouldn't have been, but he's hopeful they've found a workaround that will avoid cancelling contracts. Producers who might be impacted will be contacted before any action takes place.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

According to Comes At Night, NRCS's whole world changed when the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) quadrupled the agency's funding from \$4 billion to \$19.5 billion. The agency must spend the funds by 2031. In 2023, NRCS-Washington received approximately \$10 million. In 2024, they have been allocated \$40 million.

"We have a really short window to make sure this funding gets to you to put good conservation practices on the ground. This is massive funding. Unbelievable funding," she said. "I haven't seen this in my 35 years."

The IRA funding doesn't create new programs; it expands existing climate programs. Five resources concerns have been identified with 34 practices to choose from. The money will be spread across five programs:

- The Conservation Technical Assistance Program helps producers develop a conservation plan that is voluntary and nonregulatory.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This is the program to help growers install conservation practices. Applications are accepted all year, with the application batching period usually happening in October. Examples of EQIP practices are improving nutrient management or using a precision pest management system.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). This program helps maintain those conservation practices installed with EQIP by making an annual payment to producers. CSP enrolls your entire operation into the program, not just one specific field or tract. Examples of CSP practices are adding a conservation crop rotation or planting a cover crop.
- The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. This program helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.
- The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). This program funds regional conservation practices with partners that offer value-added contributions. Comes At Night said if producers don't get EQIP or CSP funding, they should look at RCPP as

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Identify Problems and Opportunities	Determine Objectives	Inventory Resources	Analyze Resource Data	Formulate Alternatives	Evaluate Alternatives	Make Decisions	Implement the Plan	Evaluate the Plan
Initial opportunities and problems are first identified while working with the customer.	The customer identifies their objectives, while the planner guides the process so that it includes the customer's needs and values, the resource uses, and on-site and off-site ecological protection.	Natural resource, economic, and social information for the planning area is collected to further define problems and opportunities, develop alternatives, and evaluate the plan.	The planner studies the resource data and defines existing conditions for all the identified natural resources, including limitations and potentials for the desired use.	Alternatives are formulated that achieve the customer's objectives, solve identified concerns, and take advantage of opportunities to improve or protect resource conditions.	Alternatives are evaluated to determine their effectiveness in addressing the customer's problems, opportunities, and objectives.	The customer selects their preferred alternatives and works with the planner on practice implementation.	The customer implements the selected alternatives. The planner provides the land manager with detailed practice implementation information.	The planner evaluates the effectiveness of the plan in solving the resource concerns and works with the customer to make adjustments as needed.

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there may be a group that can fund their practice.

To get the funding on the ground effectively, NRCS-Washington will be concentrating on filling positions, training staff, and outreach and communications. They are asking producers to contact their local working group with any resource concerns they want NRCS to address. "We are asking producers to come back to the table and let us know what didn't work, what we can do differently. I feel like we have the support to make changes," Comes At Night said.

More information and fact sheets can be found at farmers.gov and wa.nrcs.usda.gov. ■



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WHEAT LIFE | APRIL 2024 27

Grower groups key to identifying resource concerns

By Nick Vira

Partnership Liaison, Natural Resources Conservation Service-Washington

Local Work Groups (LWGs) are composed of agricultural producers, owners/operators of nonindustrial private forest land, professionals representing agricultural and natural resource interests, and individuals representing a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, wetland, plant, forestry, and wildlife sciences who are familiar with agricultural and natural resource issues in the local community. Currently, Washington has 10 LWGs and one tribal LWG for all tribes. LWGs provide annual recommendations on a variety of natural resource issues to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).

LWG membership should be diverse and focus on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the local community. Membership should include agricultural producers representing the variety of crops, livestock, and poultry raised within the local area; owners of nonindustrial private forest land, as appropriate; representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations;

and representatives of governmental agencies carrying out agricultural and natural resource conservation programs and activities.

Individuals or groups wanting to become members of a LWG may submit a request that explains their interest and outlines their credentials for becoming a member to the chairperson of their LWG and the NRCS district conservationist (or designated conservationist). The district conservationist (or designated conservationist) will assist the soil and water conservation district in making decisions concerning membership of the group. LWG input and recommendations can assist the U.S. Department of Agriculture in identifying any of the following conditions:



- Identifying significant local and statewide geographic areas of concerns.
- Identifying significant local and statewide natural resource concerns.
- Technical programmatic recommendations.

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- Need for statewide public information and outreach campaigns.
- Guidelines for developing ranking criteria for evaluating applications.
- Guidance on eligible conservation practices.
- Technical guidance on conservation practices, including new, innovative practices.
- Identifying, monitoring, and analyzing performance indicators.
- Evaluating and reporting program impacts on natural resources and the environment.

This year, LWGs had the opportunity to submit proposals for needed program fund pools using Inflation Reduction Act funding. Projects will be accepted under the following categories:

- Soil health.
- Nitrogen management.
- Livestock, grazing, and pasture.
- Energy, combustion, and electricity efficiency.
- Agroforestry, forestry, and upland wildlife habitat.

For more information on NRCS-Washington's Local Working Groups, such as upcoming meeting dates, visit wa.nrcs.usda.gov, scroll down a bit, and there's a link to the Local Working Group page. Or, use a modern cell-phone camera to follow the QR code. ■

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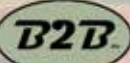
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A numbers game

NASS RELEASES 2022 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE SURVEY RESULTS

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Back in February, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the mother of all agricultural surveys, the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Decision-makers will use that data to help set farm policy and allocate money across the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other federal agencies.

“The census of agriculture is conducted once every five years,” explained **Dennis Koong**, regional director of NASS’s Washington state field office. “It really gives us the ability to look at trends over time and get a comprehensive look at various aspects of the agriculture industry. There are millions of data points.”

The 2022 census showed that the number of farms in Washington and the amount of land in those farms continues to decline. The number of farms in Washington in 2022 was 32,076, a 10% decrease from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Land in farms was 13.9 million acres, down almost 6% from 2017. The average age of Washington farmers continues to increase. In 2022, the average age was 59.3 years, up from 58.1 in 2017 and 56.8 in 2012.

Koong highlighted several Washington state-specific tidbits from the census. Grant County, in terms of the total value of agricultural production, was the No. 10 county in the entire U.S. The top nine counties are all in California.

“There’s a lot of diversity in that county,” he said. “Yakima County is close with all their fruit production.”

Another interesting fact that shows up in the data is that out of the 32,076 farms in Washington, almost 14,000 of them have less than \$2,500 in sales. Farms with \$1 million or more in sales account for 13% of the farms in the state, Koong said. Washington’s total value of agricultural production is about \$12.8 billion. Farms with \$5 million or more in sales account for almost \$7.7 billion of that. Farms that are between \$1 million and \$5 million in sales account for another \$3.3 billion. When you add up those top two size groups, economically, they account for 96% of the state’s value of production.

“It really means that a small number of farms account

for a large percentage of the value of Washington’s production,” Koong explained. “When you are looking at the big economic impact, it’s really coming from only 13% of the farms accounting for 96% of the production.”

Focusing on wheat, the 2022 Census of Agriculture showed that 2,505 Washington farms produced wheat, down ever so slightly from 2017, which showed 2,506 farms. But harvested acres were up from 2.2 million in 2017 to 2.4 million in 2022. Whitman County had the highest number of acres harvested for grain at 498,473 acres, which was 21% of the state total. In 2017, Whitman County accounted for 24% of the state total in terms of harvested acres. Lincoln County was next highest county for acres harvested for grain at 367,986.

“The value of wheat sales in Whitman County in the 2022 census was \$337 million. That was up from \$167 million five years ago in 2017. The interesting part about that is Whitman County is the No. 1 county in the U.S. for value of wheat sales. Second in wheat sales in dollars was Polk County in Minnesota, and they had just under \$178 million in sales. Lincoln County (in Washington) was actually 4th in the U.S. with \$156 million,” Koong said. “Whitman County isn’t just barely No. 1 in the U.S. It’s by quite a bit.”

Other Washington facts from the 2022 Census of Agriculture include:

- Washington farms with internet access continued to rise from 84% in 2017 to 86% in 2022.
- A total of 2,645 Washington farms and ranches used renewable energy-producing systems compared to 2,215 farms in 2017, a 19% increase. Of the Washington farms with renewable energy systems, 88% reported using solar panels.
- In 2022, 3,564 Washington farms sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$98.7 million. Value of sales increased 44% from 2017.
- There were 17,355 Washington farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 1%. Beginning farmers in Washington are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 48.1.
- The number of Washington producers under age 35 was 3,930, comprising 7% of all Washington producers. The 2,998 Washington farms with young producers making decisions tend to be larger than average in





ACH22-1/February 2024

The overall value of agricultural production and income increased between 2017 and 2022. Increases remained concentrated by farm size, location, and industry. The number of large farms increased in 2022, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, while the number of mid-size and small farms declined. The largest operations and a small number of states accounted for the majority of agricultural production and sales. Five commodities accounted for two thirds of the value of agricultural production.

1.9 million farms



\$543.1 billion in agricultural products



880.1 million acres

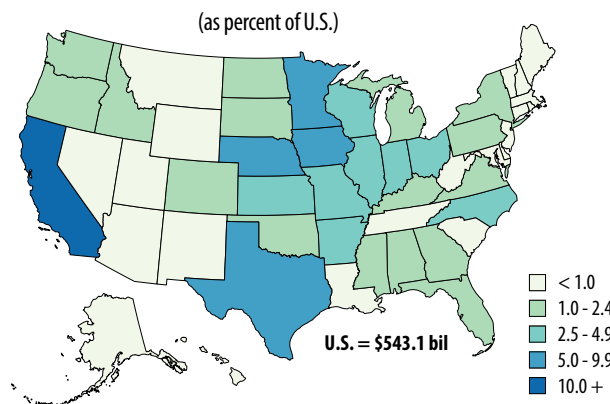


U.S. Production by State

The top 10 states accounted for 55% of sales in 2022. As in 2017, California was the largest provider of agricultural products, with sales of \$59 billion, 11% of the U.S. total.

The top nine U.S. counties are in California, and the top county, Fresno, had larger agriculture sales than 23 individual states.

Agriculture Sales by State, 2022



Top States	(\$ bil)
California	59.0
Iowa	43.9
Texas	32.2
Nebraska	29.4
Minnesota	28.5
Illinois	26.4
Kansas	24.0
North Carolina	18.7
Indiana	18.0
Wisconsin	16.7

Top Commodities

Cattle and calves was the top ranked commodity, with \$89.4 billion in sales. Texas was the top state in cattle and calves sales, accounting for 17% of the U.S. total.

The top five commodities accounted for \$363 billion in sales, 67% of U.S. total agriculture sales.

Top Commodities, 2022

	(\$ billion)	Top State	% of U.S.
Cattle and calves	89.4	Texas	17
Corn	88.5	Iowa	18
Poultry and eggs	76.5	North Carolina	12
Soybeans	55.4	Illinois	15
Milk	52.8	California	18

Income and Expenses

Farm income includes not just sales but also government payments and earnings from farm-related activities. With these items included, total U.S. farm income in 2022 was \$576 billion. With farm production expenses of \$424 billion, U.S. farms had net cash income of \$152 billion.

At the farm level, average income in 2022 was \$79,790, up 85% or almost double from 2017.

	All U.S. Farms	
	(\$ bil)	% change since 2017
Income		
Value of ag products sold	543.1	+40
Government payments	10.4	+17
Farm-related income	22.3	+32
Production expenses	424.1	+30
Net income	151.6	+72

Production Expenses	(\$ bil)
Feed	88.4
Livestock purchased	51.4
Hired labor	41.8
Fertilizer	36.1
Cash rents	27.3
Supplies and repairs	25.9
Seeds	25.6
Chemicals	23.6
Fuels	18.4
Interest	13.4
Other	72.2

both acres and sales.

- In 2022, 25,477 female producers accounted for 42% of all Washington producers. Seventy-one percent of all Washington farms had at least one female decision maker.

For more on the 2022 Census of Agriculture, visit nass.usda.gov/agcensus/.

Agriculture Resource Management Survey (ARMS)

NASS is in the final stages of gathering financial information about the 2023 crop. The ARMS measures the financial well-being of producers and their households by collecting detailed information on revenue, expenses, debts, and assets. The sensitivity of the information can sometimes trouble farmers, but

Koong emphasizes that the data is kept anonymous and is not shared.

“This information is secure and confidential by law,” he said. “NASS can’t even share it with any other federal agency. So we don’t share this information with the Farm Service Agency. We don’t share it with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. We don’t share it with any government organizations

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outside of USDA, either. The Internal Revenue Service has no access to this information. It is completely protected within NASS.”

Only aggregate totals are published, so if there’s data that might disclose information about an individual operation, the data is not published, Koong explained. The data is used to help make policy decisions that will directly affect farmers. It is also used to inform the farm sector portion of the national gross domestic product. The data will be published in the annual Farm Production Expenditures report in July.

“This survey provides factual information that tells the story of U.S. agriculture as a whole from an economic standpoint and allows policymakers to make better informed decisions from actual data that is reported by farms in the U.S.,” Koong said. ■

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By Ben Barstow



On this page back in January, I told a story about coming face to face with the vast gap in understanding between those who make a living in agriculture and everyone else. If you missed it, I encourage you to go to wheatlife.org, click on “past issues,” and check it out, even though it’s probably not going to tell you anything you don’t already know, that we all really need to step up and tell everyone else about what we do for a living.

Closely, but maybe not obviously related to that, you may have noticed the special section about spring work in the March *Wheat Life*. There are two purposes of that, “puff piece,” as some may call it, and one is to help us, who are steeped in wheat farming from birth, think about how to communicate with better clarity so that the other 98+% of the population can understand what we do and why.

I say 98+% because as of 2022, direct on-farm employment accounted for just 1.2% of U.S. jobs. This is not to be confused with the slogan for the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement, “We are the 99%,” nor the progressive social media advocacy group, “The Other 98%.” Case in point on clarity: there is a lot of muddy water out there. I’ll call them what they are: nonfarmers.

The gap in understanding is so big, that nonfarmers don’t even know what to ask, and they are easily led to misperceptions about what we do. One of the questions that often comes up to me is, “how many acres do you farm?” It’s often an innocent, conversation-making kind of question, but it can also be a, “is this one of those big farmers I’ve heard tell of?” question. Telling them a number does not really answer their question, because what they really want to know is how many acres it takes to support a family. That number has far more meaning than how many acres you operate. Even if you operate tens of thousands of acres, what they are really asking is, “how many households does an operation your size support?”

Of course, how many acres per household depends on where you farm, and that is another complexity. I’ve talked to college students who have often driven through Othello, but didn’t realize that dryland wheat in Othello normally gets about 10 inches less rain than wheat growing in Pullman. It is not that they were not intelligent enough, it is just not something they have ever

considered before. I remember remarking to my Indiana brother-in-law about a good-looking corn field we were passing while driving to his brewery, and he had never even noticed that he was passing a field, let alone what was growing in it, and if the field looked like money or a crop insurance claim.

This nonfarmer-focused *Wheat Life* series that debuted in March delivers messages on three themes defining “sustainable agriculture” for a nonfarm audience: safety (including how we use pesticides), precision agriculture (technology), and quality (consistent, high-quality wheat for wholesome, nutritious food).

To help *Wheat Life* find the best clarity for nonfarmers, a guest writer from a different industry was hired to write about pesticides. I was interviewed for it. During our interview, I paused and said the same thing over and over: so, it is a simple question, but the full answer is really complicated. I wished the author good luck in boiling my explanations down to fit the allowed space, and I think the result was good.

For the Washington Grain Commission, another very important audience that needs that kind of fundamental explanation is our customers, especially those who come here as members of trade teams. Most of them are from densely populated regions of the world, and our open spaces are a very different experience for them.

Last month’s spring work section was about the seasonal cycles of our farming operations and meant to give us farmers, who take it all for granted, some examples of answers to the questions our customers, and even our city cousins have about our life’s work. We know what we need to be doing every month of the year, but nonfarmers do not, and most of them are afraid to ask, in part, because we tend to speak farmer jargon to them and not consumer jargon (what they speak).

So, I encourage you to study up on your nonfarmer vocabulary and have a conversation with a nonfarmer, which includes state and federal lawmakers, public agency employees, and landlords who all also get *Wheat Life*. The Seasons of Farming series will continue in the August-September issue, but certainly not in every issue. *Wheat Life* will continue to remain focused on Washington grain producers and continue to be the premier grower publication in the U.S. grain industry. ■

REPORTS

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

2024 variety quality rankings released

The Washington Grain Commission is pleased to provide the 2024 wheat quality rankings for the Pacific Northwest (PNW). Considering about 80% of PNW wheat production is exported each year, producing a high-quality crop that meets customer demands is critical to maintaining export markets.

The Preferred Wheat Varieties Brochure ranks Eastern Washington, Oregon, and Northern Idaho wheat varieties using six components to evaluate end-use quality. Washington was the first state in the U.S. to rank varieties for quality, with Oregon and Idaho joining the effort soon after. Wheat growers are encouraged to reference these rankings when deciding between varieties.

End-use quality determinations were based on results from grain, milling, and product quality tests. The most desirable ranking characterizes varieties that have high test weights, appropriate protein content (kernel properties), and excellent milling and end-use properties. Desirable ranked varieties range from good to very good kernel, milling, and end-use qualities. Acceptable varieties have qualities ranging from acceptable to good and may contain potential minor flaws but are acceptable in international trade.

Of the components used in evaluating quality, 10% of the score is assigned to a variety's test weight and protein, while milling attributes receive 30% of the focus. The largest consideration is end-use functionality (baking performance), where 60% of a variety's score is assigned. The scores are reviewed yearly as new data becomes available and are subject to change.

There are 16 new entries to the Preferred Wheat Varieties Brochure for 2024. The new entries for soft white winter are Nova AX and WB1621 — Most Desirable; VI Encore CL+, TMC M-Pire, WB1922, Rollie, and YSC-93 —

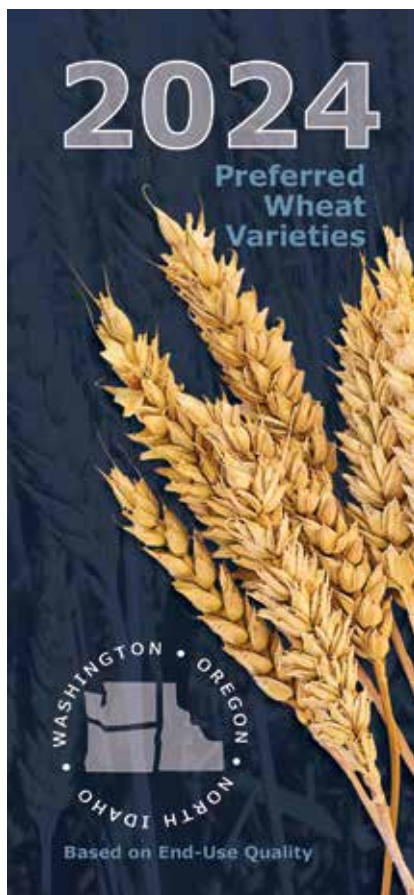
Desirable; LCS Kamiak — Acceptable. There were four hard red winter entries: LCS Missile and Gemini — Most Desirable; Battle AX — Acceptable; LCS Blackbird — Least Desirable. There were three new soft white spring entries: Butch CL+ — Most Desirable; TMC Lochaven — Desirable; WB6211CLP — Acceptable. There was one new hard red spring entry: WB9303 — Desirable. Most of the new entries are at the Desirable and Most Desirable levels, so we continue to hold steady with the high quality varieties in the Pacific Northwest that our customers expect and appreciate.

These rankings are based on the results of the genotype and environment study (G&E) quality testing conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Western Wheat Quality Laboratory, the Washington State University Wheat Quality Program, the University of Idaho Wheat Quality Laboratory, and the Oregon State University Cereal Quality Laboratory, including relevant breeding nurseries.

The quality scores presented here reflect a minimum of three years' data in the G&E study, using a reference variety for each class. Therefore, varieties may be in commercial production before they are included in the list. The list is reviewed annually and includes the top varieties currently in production. Varieties not listed have not been tested or have less than three years of data. For complete results, visit wwql.wsu.edu.

All classes have shown dramatic improvements in quality since the G&E study first began gathering data in 1997. The Preferred Wheat Varieties Brochure is provided courtesy of the Washington Grain Commission, the Oregon Wheat Commission, and the Idaho Wheat Commission. ■

Alecia Kizonas, USDA's Agricultural Research Service research biologist, contributed to this article.



2024 Quality Rankings

Varieties are listed by statistical quality rankings by class. When making a decision between varieties with similar agronomic characteristics and grain yield potential, choose the variety with the higher quality ranking. This will help to increase the overall quality and desirability of Pacific Northwest (PNW) wheat.

Most Desirable (MD)—These varieties generally have high test weights, appropriate protein content (kernel properties), and excellent milling and end-use properties.

Desirable (D)—The kernel, milling, and end-use qualities of these varieties range from good to very good. The quality attributes of these varieties are desirable in international trade.

Acceptable (A)—The kernel, milling, and end-use qualities of these varieties range from acceptable to good. Individual varieties may possess minor flaws. The quality attributes of these varieties are acceptable in international trade.

Least Desirable (LD)—These varieties have displayed low quality characteristics for this class of wheat. The intrinsic quality of PNW wheat will be improved if these varieties are not planted.

Hard Red Spring

Jefferson	UI	MD
Hale	WSU	MD
SY605 CL	AP/SY	MD
Net CL+	WSU	MD
SY Selway	AP/SY	MD
Glee	WSU	MD
SY Coho	AP/SY	MD
Alum	WSU	MD
SY Gunsight	AP/SY	MD
Chet	WSU	MD
AP Renegade	AP/SY	D
WB9303	WB	D
Kelse	WSU	D
WB9668	WB	D
WB9662	WB	LD

Hard White Spring

UI Platinum	UI	MD
WB-Hartline	WB	D
Dayn	WSU	D

Hard Red Winter

LCS Missile	LCS	MD
Guardian	PG	MD
Scorpio	WSU	MD
Gemini	WSU	MD
Sequoia	WSU	D
WB4311	WB	D
SY Touchstone	AP/SY	D
Keldin	WB	D
LCS Jet	LCS	A
WB4303	WB	A
WB4623CLP	WB	A
LCS E vina	LCS	A
LCS Rocket	LCS	A
WB4394	WB	A
LCS Helix AX	LCS	A
Battle AX	Montech	A
LCS Blackbird	LCS	LD

Hard White Winter

UI Silver	UI	MD
Millie	OSU	MD
Irv	OSU	MD
Earl	WSU	A

Spring Club

Roger	WSU	MD
Melba	WSU	MD
JD	WSU	MD
Hedge CL+	WSU	MD

Winter Club

Cameo	ARS	MD
Castella	ARS	MD
ARS Crescent	ARS	MD
Cara	ARS	MD
Pritchett	ARS	D
Bruehl	WSU	D

Soft White Spring

Tekoa	WSU	MD
Diva	WSU	MD
WB6341	WB	MD
Butch CL+	WSU	MD
Louise	WSU	MD
UI Cookie	UI	MD
Alturas	UI	MD
AP Mondovi CL2	AP/SY	MD
Ryan	WSU	MD
Seahawk	WSU	MD
WB6121	WB	D
TMC Lochaven	TMC	D
WB6211CLP	WB	A

Soft White Winter

VI Frost	LCS/UI	MD
YSC-215	YSC	MD
Sockeye CL+	WSU	MD
Bobtail	OSU	MD
UI Vixen	UI	MD
LCS Shine	LCS	MD
YSC-201	YSC	MD
Nixon	OSU	MD
Nova AX	WSU	MD
Nimbus	OSU	MD
WB1621	WB	MD
AP Exceed	AP/SY	MD
Jameson	WSU	MD
Piranha CL+	WSU	D
LCS Jefe	LCS	D
VI Encore CL+	LCS/UI	D
VI Bulldog	LCS/UI	D
OR2X2 CLP	OSU	D
VI Presto CL+	LCS/UI	D
Devote	WSU	D
UI Magic CL+	UI	D
SY Ovation	AP/SY	D
LCS Drive	LCS	D
Norwest Duet	OSU/LCS	D
Appleby CL+	OSU	D
TMC M-Pire	TMC	D
WB1922	WB	D
Stingray CL+	WSU	D
LCS Blackjack	LCS	D
Rollie	WSU	D
VI Voodoo CL+	LCS/UI	D
SY Assure	AP/SY	D
TMC M-Press	TMC	D
Inspire	WSU	D
YSC-93	YSC	D
Stephens	OSU	D
LCS Hulk	LCS	A
SY Dayton	AP/SY	A
AP Dynamic	AP/SY	A
AP Iliad	AP/SY	A
LCS Artdeco	LCS	A
Curiosity CL+	WSU	A
Norwest Tandem	OSU/LCS	A
Rosalyn	OSU	A
LCS Kamiak	LCS	A

Abbreviations

- AP/SY:** AgriPro/Syngenta
- ARS:** Agricultural Research Service
- LCS:** Limagrain Cereal Seeds
- OSU:** Oregon State University
- PG:** PlainsGold
- TMC:** The McGregor Company
- UI:** University of Idaho
- WB:** WestBred/Bayer Crop Sciences
- WSU:** Washington State University
- YSC:** Yield Star Cereals
- Montech:** Montech Seed Group

* Hard white wheats are scored for export quality requirements such as bread quality and potential noodle quality. ** Analysis parameters for dough mixing strength have been modified to better reflect suitability in commercial bakeries. Quality designations of the strongest and weakest mixing lines have changed because of this.

Keeping the grain flowing

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL FOR WHEAT INDUSTRY

Getting the food we grow to tables around the world is a fundamental element to the long-term profitability and competitiveness of Washington small grains. There are several groups working on behalf of our state's wheat and barley farmers to keep grower concerns top-of-mind for the decision-makers of the agriculture and food production industries. The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) works closely with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and our national wheat organiza-

tions, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). USW is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry.

"I think it is relevant for grow-

ers to know there is a working group out there fighting for improved transportation opportunities," said Steven Mercer, vice president for communications at USW.

Part of the USW efforts to maximize the competitiveness and sustainability of U.S. wheat growers is through its Transportation Working Group. The purpose of this permanent committee is to examine and address the infrastructure factors impacting the competitiveness of U.S. wheat, both domestically and globally.

Recent news

RAIL "Encompassing the largest share of inland logistics, the railroads are a critical component for moving U.S. wheat to export," wrote USW Market Analyst Tylor Ledford in a Wheat Letter Blog series last September. "After last year's service disruptions, steps have been taken to help address the root issues, such as hiring additional crew and investing in infrastructure. U.S. railroads are committed to moving U.S.-grown commodities."

BNSF representative Brendan Camey presented an update on rail service to the USW Transportation Working Group in Cincinnati. He reported that BNSF planned a tariff reduction of \$500 per car effective Jan. 1, 2024. According to Camey, the tariff reduction would equate to about 13 cents per bushel for shipping wheat. Camey also said BNSF hoped this tariff reduction would

stimulate movement. He reported that BNSF volume was down overall, including 4.3% in agriculture.

The decrease in tariff rates helps boost the competitiveness of U.S. wheat to importers and especially helps us compete with Canada.

COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM BARGING The WGC is also a member of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan trade association that advocates for federal policies and funding and works to ensure that our waterways are efficient, reliable, and environmentally sustainable.

The Columbia-Snake River System has been a topic of controversy and discussion for the last 50 years. The four dams with navigation locks and sophisticated fish passage systems managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) along the lower Snake River were once again thrown into the spotlight this past year.

Attention on the critical infrastructure within the Columbia-Snake River System, also known as Marine Highway 84 (M-84), has potentially serious implications for the essential services the lock and dam system provides for the state, region, and U.S. exports. Washington state small grains farmers rely on M-84 for shipping agricultural inputs in a fuel efficient and environmentally friendly manner up the river, and its mass transit capacity to move the high-quality food they grow down the river for export. Approximately 10% of all U.S. wheat exports moves through the lock and dam system by barge. Washington wheat organizations have served as thought leaders on national media outlets and to federal policymakers on this topic.

A federal judge in Oregon approved a long-term pause in Snake River litigation on Feb. 8, 2024. The ruling means a tribal-state plan and U.S. government commitments to restore the Columbia River Basin will continue as proposed in December 2023. The court case concerning the decline of salmon populations in the Columbia and Snake rivers in the western U.S. has been put on hold for a minimum of five years, and a \$1 billion agreement for fish restoration and clean energy projects has been initiated.

"As the administration and signatories to this agreement move forward on the initial phase of their commitments, it's vital that we stay active. We are committed to ensuring accountability from all decision-makers and will continue to bring attention to our concerns at both the regional and national levels," PNWA Executive

Washington grower representatives on USW board of directors

- Gary Bailey, District 2 – Whitman County
- Mike Carstensen, District 1 - Spokane, Lincoln, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille counties



Director Neil Maunu said. “The producers can contribute by joining us in reaching out to leaders outside the Pacific Northwest whose areas would feel a direct impact if the lower Snake River dams are breached.”

In the meantime, scheduled maintenance on the system continues and remains on schedule. The USACE Portland District announced on Feb. 1, 2024, the closure of three navigation locks for annual inspections and maintenance. The Dalles, John Day, and Bonneville dams closed beginning on March 2 and reopened on March 16.

The Walla Walla District’s lock closure began Jan. 14 and ended Mar. 29. The navigation locks within the USACE Walla Walla District include the McNary Dam, located on the Columbia River, and the Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite dams, located on the Snake River.

“The industry prepared for the closure by proactively positioning grain, and the Portland district coordinated their closure to minimize trade disruptions, which has been successful,” said Casey Chumrau, CEO of the WGC.

OCEAN FREIGHT As of mid-February, attacks on ocean-going vessels in the Red Sea are becoming less frequent, with multiple days between incidents. However, major carriers are increasingly opting to reroute around South Africa via the Cape of Good Hope. In January, the Suez Canal, which connects the northern end of the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, saw a significant decrease in traffic with only 51 ships passing through compared to more than 300 in previous years.

Due to longer transit times to the U.S. East Coast resulting from the Red Sea disruptions, more carriers are considering routing from the West Coast. Longer transit times around the Cape of Good Hope mean that containers are tied up for longer periods, reducing their availability for other routes and decreasing capacity by as much as 30%. This leads to increased demand on the West Coast being met with the same number of ships as

before, resulting in higher costs.

In addition, the situation with low water levels at the Panama Canal is not expected to improve in the next several months. With disruptions in both the Panama and Suez canals, demand is outstripping supply, leading to increased costs. In November 2023, 67% of shipping routes used the Suez Canal, 20% used the Panama Canal, and 13% used the Cape of Good Hope. Currently, only 9% of routes use the Suez Canal, 20% use the Panama Canal, and 71% use the Cape of Good Hope¹.

Keeping growers informed

“It is beneficial for U.S. wheat importers to be aware of transportation trends, as seasonal shifts and potential issues have a direct influence on export basis and the Free-on-Board export price,” writes Ledford.

This is also sage advice for farmers, as supply chain issues have the potential to trace all the way back to their local county elevators. With our partners on the local and national levels, the WGC continues to ensure that Washington helps U.S. wheat remain the most reliable choice for world importers.

Growers with questions related to market development can contact the Washington Grain Commission office at wgc@wagrains.org or (509) 456-2481. For Washington growers who are interested in getting involved in the greater efforts to support the wheat and barley industries, the best way to get started is to attend local county grower meetings and become members of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

For those who are interested in being more involved, consider volunteering at WAWG’s community outreach events or with the Washington Wheat Foundation. For more information on these opportunities contact KayDee Gilkey at kgilkey@wawg.org or (509) 659-0610. ■

¹North America Freight Market Update Live Feb 2024. Flexport, Inc. Webinar accessed 2/16/2024. <https://www.flexport.com/webinars/north-america-freight-market-update-live-feb-2024/>

Disease appears to be back for 2024 crop

PREDICTION, OBSERVATION, AND MANAGEMENT OF WHEAT STRIPE RUST



By Xianming Chen
*Research Plant Pathologist,
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Agricultural Research Service*

After the low levels of stripe rust in the past three years due to the long drought and hot conditions in 2021, cold winter for 2022 and 2023, plus the drought conditions for 2023, the disease appears to be back in the Pacific Northwest region for the 2024 wheat crop season.

For 2024, stripe rust was forecast to be in the severe epidemic range based on the weather data from November and December 2023, with highly susceptible varieties to potentially have a yield loss of 43%. Based on the weather data of the entire winter from November 2023 to February 2024, we have predicted that stripe rust will likely cause 51% yield loss on highly susceptible varieties. Under such a level of epidemic, commercially grown varieties would suffer yield losses ranging from 0 to 33% depending upon varieties, or 8% on average, if not sprayed with fungicides.

Our field surveys support the prediction. On Nov. 14, 2023, we found stripe rust in a commercial wheat field in Lincoln County (Figure 1). Although the incidence of stripe rust was below 0.1 percent, stripe rust was quite easy to find with two to four leaves infected in some spots. That was the first time since 2018 we've seen stripe rust infection in the fall. The fall infection of the stripe

rust fungus shows the existence of the fungal pathogen in the field, but may not survive the winter, depending upon how cold the winter is and whether the field is covered with snow.

When we were checking this field on Feb. 29, 2024, we found stripe rust again, showing that the fungus has successfully overwintered and is ready to produce spores for infecting the wheat crops in the region and beyond (Figure 2). We also found stripe rust in another commercial wheat field further south in Adams County along Highway 21. When I stopped in our stripe rust monitoring nursery in Walla Walla on Feb. 23, I easily found several spots of stripe rust on the first or second leaves actively producing new spores and some spots had three to six sporulating leaves (Figure 3). Such early appearance of stripe rust in multiple locations in the State of Washington east of the Cascade Mountains was not seen from 2011 to 2023 and indicates a potentially severe epidemic of stripe rust in 2024 in the wheat growing areas of Washington and other areas in the eastern Pacific Northwest.

The early appearance of stripe rust and predicted potential severe epidemic make it necessary to spray a fungicide in fields planted with moderate (rating 5), moderately susceptible (ratings 6, 7), or susceptible (ratings 8, 9) varieties of winter wheat at the time of herbicide application and select resistant (ratings 1, 2) or moderately resistant (ratings 3, 4) spring wheat varieties to plant. It is best to avoid planting susceptible and moderately susceptible spring wheat varieties. Table 1 on page 42 lists





Figure 1: Stripe rust observed in a winter wheat field in Lincoln County on Nov. 14, 2023.



Figure 2: Stripe rust observed in the same field as in Figure 1 on Feb. 29, 2024.



Figure 3: Stripe rust observed in a monitoring nursery in Walla Walla County on Feb. 23, 2024.

winter and spring wheat varieties in each of the categories of stripe rust ratings.

A large number of chemicals with different trade names are available for selecting to control stripe rust (Table 2 on page 43). Most of the fungicides listed in the table have been tested through our programs during the past two decades. These chemicals can be classified based on their modes of actions or active ingredients. Relatively old fungicides, such as Tilt belonging to the triazole class and Headline in the strobilurin class, have only one active ingredient. Some recently developed fungicides, such as Absolute, Prosaro, and Quilt Xcel, have two active ingredients. The more recently developed fungicide Trivapro has three active ingredients. In general, fungicides with two or more active ingredients have better efficacies on control of stripe rust than the ones with only one active ingredient.

Although we have found mutants with some tolerance to propiconazole fungicides in the stripe rust pathogen population, the frequency of mutant isolates is still low, and use of this class of fungicides at the labeled rates still reduces stripe rust. However, it is recommended to rotate fungicides with different modes of action or use fungicides with combined modes of action to reduce the selection pressure for tolerance to a particular chemical like propiconazole. Every fungicide listed in Table 2 has a total limit quantity, and most of them cannot be used more than two times during a single crop season.

As stripe rust has started very early, two or more applications could be needed for fields grown with susceptible varieties depending upon the weather conditions in the late spring and early summer. ▶

Selecting fungicides with a longer protection period could reduce the number of applications. In general, fungicides marked with excellent (E) for control effect last longer than those marked with very good (VG), and those containing two or more active ingredients provide longer protection than those containing only one active ingredient (Table 2). In addition to the total limit quantity, every fungicide also has a restriction on use beyond a crop growth stage or number of days before harvest. Read the chemical labels for safe and effective use of fungicides in managing stripe rust in your fields.

In summary, please use stripe rust ratings in Table 1 or the Seed-Buying Guide to select resistant spring wheat for planting and for the winter varieties planted in your fields to determine whether fungicide application is needed at the time of herbicide application and later in the crop season. Check fields for re-emergence of stripe rust to determine if a second application is needed. The information provided in Table 2 can be used to select fungicides. We will continue providing rust updates and related recommendations throughout the crop season.

If you have any questions for stripe rust management, please contact me through email (xianming.chen@usda.gov or xianming@wsu.edu) or phone (office: 509-335-8086; cell: 509-432-5852). ■

Table 1. Stripe rust ratings of winter and spring wheat varieties

Market type	Rating ^a	Varieties
Hard red winter	R (1, 2)	AP Octane, Farnum, Kairos, LCS Blackbird, LCS Eclipse AX, LCS Evina, LCS Missile, LCS Rocket, LCS Zoom, Norwest 553, Sprinter, SY Clearstone CL2, WB4311, WB4510CLP, WB4623CLP
	MR (3, 4)	AP Redeye, AP Venom, LCS Helix AX, UI Bronze Jade, Whetstone
	M (5)	AP503 CL2, Guardian, LCS Aymeric, SY Touch-stone, WB4394
	MS (6, 7)	Canvas, Keldin, LCS Fusion AX, Milestone, Scorpio, Sequoia, Whistler
Hard white winter	S (8, 9)	Battle AX, Brawl CL Plus, CP7010, CP7909, LCS Jet, Kivari AX, WB4303, WB Rimrock
	R (1, 2)	LCS Yeti
	MR (3, 4)	Millie
Soft white winter	S (8, 9)	Snowmass 2.0
	R (1, 2)	aMaze, AP Dynamic, AP Exceed, AP Iliad, AP Olympia, Appleby CL+, ARS-Selbu 2.0, Bobtail, In-spire, Jameson, Jasper, LCS Artdeco, LCS Bian-cor, LCS Blackjack, LCS Drive, LCS Hulk, LCS Je-fe, LCS Kamiak, LCS Scorplon AX, LCS Shark, LCS Shine, LCS Sonic, Legion, Madsen, M-Press, Nim-bus, Nixon, Norwest Duet, Norwest Tandem, OR2x2 CL+, Resilience CL+, Rosalyn, Sockeye CL+, SY Assure, SY Banks, SY Dayton, SY Ova-tion, SY Raptor, VI Bulldog, VI Frost, VI Presto CL+, WB1529, WB1604, WB1720
Winter club	MR (3, 4)	ARS Selbu, LCS Ghost, LCS Kraken AX, Masami, Mela CL+, Stingray CL+, TMC M-Pire, UI-WSU Huffman, WB1376CLP, WB1621
	M (5)	AP Badger, GS Bounty, Mary, ORCF102, Otto, Pi-ranha CL+, Puma, Stephens, SY107, SY Command, UI Castle CL+, UI Sparrow, WB1783
	MS (6, 7)	AP700 CL, AP Legacy, Curiosity CL+, Devote, El-tan, Irv, LCS Hydra AX, Purl, UI Palouse CL+, WB1532, Xerpha
	S (8, 9)	LCS Dagger AX, ORCL103, UI Magic CL+, VI Voo-doo CL+, YSC-215
	R (1, 2)	ARS Castella, ARS Crescent, Bruehl, Cameo, Cara, Chukar
	MR (3, 4)	Coda, Pritchett
	Hard red spring	R (1, 2)
Hard white spring	MR (3, 4)	Cabernet, CP3322, LCS Iron, Net CL+, SY Coho, SY Selway, SY Steelhead, WB9668
	M (5)	AP Venom, Buck Pronto, Bullseye
	MS (6, 7)	Hollis, Jefferson, Jefferson HF, LCS Luna, Kelse, WB9303, WB9623
	S (8, 9)	CP3530, SY605 CL2
	R (1, 2)	Dayn, SY Teton
Soft white spring	MR (3, 4)	UI Platinum
	R (1, 2)	Seahawk, Tekoa, TMC2021, TMC Lochaven, WB6121, WQL008, WQL195, YSC-605
	MR (3, 4)	Diva, Ryan, UI Stone, SY Saltese, UI Cookie, YSC-603
	M (5)	AP Coachman, Louise, WB6341, Whit
	MS (6, 7)	AP Mondovi CL2
Spring club	S (8, 9)	Babe, WB1035 CL+, WB6211CLP
	R (1, 2)	JD, Melba
	MR (3, 4)	Hedge CL+, Roger

^a R = resistant (ratings 1, 2), MR = moderately resistant (3, 4), M = Moderate (5), MS = moderately susceptible (6, 7), and S = susceptible (8, 9).

Table 2. Fungicides that can be used to control stripe rust

Trade name	Active ingredient(s) (%)	Application rate (fl. oz/a)	Control effect ^a	Total Limit Per crop (fl. oz/a)	Application restriction (no later than)	Trade name	Active ingredient(s) (%)	Application rate (fl. oz/a)	Control effect ^a	Total Limit Per crop (fl. oz/a)	Application restriction (no later than)
Absolute 500 SC	Tebuconazole 22.6, Trifloxystrobin 22.6	5.0 - 7.7	VG	32	35 dbh ^b	Priaxor 500 SC	Fluxapyroxad 14.3, Pyraclostrobin 28.6	8	VG	16	Feekes 10.5
Aframe Plus	Azoxystrobin 13.5, Propiconazole 11.7	10.5 - 14	E	28	Feekes 10.5.4	Proline 480 SC	Prothioconazole 41.0	4.3 - 5.0	VG	9.37	30 dbh
Alto 100 SL	Cyproconazole 8.9	3.0 - 5.5	VG	5.5	30 dbh	Propiconazole E-AG 41.8 EC	Propiconazole 41.8	4	VG	8	Feekes 10.5
Aproach SC	Picoxystrobin 22.5	6.0 - 12.0	VG	36	Feekes 10.5	PropiMax 3.6 EC	Propiconazole 41.8	4	-	8	Feekes 10.5
Aproach Prima SC	Cyproconazole 7.17, Picoxystrobin 17.94	3.4 - 6.8	E	6.8	45 dbh	Prosaro 421 SC	Prothioconazole 19.0, Tebuconazole 19.0	6.5 - 8.2	E	8.2	30 dbh
Aprovia Ace	Propiconazole 12.07, Benzovindiflupyr 7.24	9.45	E	18.9	Feekes 10.5.4	Quadris 2.08 SC	Azoxystrobin 22.9	4.0 - 12.0	E	24	45 dbh
Avaris 2XS	Propiconazole 11.7, Azoxystrobin 7.0	10.5 - 14.0	E	56	30 dbh	Quilt 200 SC	Propiconazole 11.7, Azoxystrobin 7.0	10.5 - 14.0	E	28	Feekes 10.5
Bumper 41.8 EC	Propiconazole 41.8	4	VG	8	Feekes 10.5	Quilt Xcel 2.2 SE	Propiconazole 11.7, Azoxystrobin 13.5	10.5 - 14.0	E	28	Feekes 10.5
Caramba 0.75 SL	Metconazole 8.6	10.0 - 17.0	E	34	30 dbh	Stratego 250 EC	Prothioconazole 11.4, Trifloxystrobin 11.4	10	VG	20	Feekes 10.5 and 35 dbh
Custodia	Tebuconazole 18.3, Azoxystrobin 11.0	6.4 - 8.6	E	8.6	Feekes 10.5	Stratego YLD	Prothioconazole 10.8, Trifloxystrobin 32.3	4	VG	8	Feekes 10.5 and 35 dbh
Embrace	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh	Tebucon 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh
Equation 2.08 SC	Azoxystrobin 22.8	4.0 - 12.0	VG	24	Feekes 10.5.4	Tebustar 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh
Evito 480 SC	Fluoxastrobin 40.3	2.0 - 4.0	VG	8	Feekes 10.5 and 40 dbh	Tebuzol 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh
Fitness	Propiconazole 41.8	4	VG	8	Feekes 10.5	Tegrol	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh
Folicur 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	E	4	30 dbh	Tilt 3.6 EC	Propiconazole 41.8	4	VG	8	Feekes 10.5
Fortix	Fluoxastrobin 14.84, Flutriafol 19.80	2-3	VG	12	Feekes 10.5	Toledo 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh
Headline SC	Pyraclostrobin 23.6	9	VG	18	Feekes 10.5	Topguard	Flutriafol 11.8	10.0 - 14.0	E	28	30 dbh
Lucento	Bixafen 15.55, Flutriafol 26.47	2-3	E	6	30 dbh	Topguard EQ	Azoxystrobin 25.30, Flutriafol 18.63	3-4	E	9	30 dbh
Miravis Ace	Pydiflumetofen 13.7, Propiconazole 11.4	13.7	E	27.4	Feekes 10.5.4	Trivapro	Benzovindiflupyr 2.9, Azoxystrobin 10.5, Propiconazole 11.9	9.4 - 13.7	E	27.4	10.5.4
Monsoon	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh	Twinline 1.75 EC	Metconazole 7.4, Pyraclostrobin 12.0	7.0 - 9.0	E	18	Feekes 10.5
Muscle 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	E	4	30 dbh	Vertisan	Penthiopyrad 20.6	24	E	48	Feekes 10.5.1
Onset 3.6 L	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh	Viathon 5.1 SC	Tebuconazole 3.3, Potassium phosphite 49.0	2.0 pt	E	16.5	30 dbh
Orius 3.6 F	Tebuconazole 38.7	4	-	4	30 dbh	Zolera FX	Fluoxastrobin 17.76, Tetraconazole 17.76	3-5	VG	5	Feekes 10.5
Preemptor	Fluoxastrobin 14.84, Flutriafol 19.30	2-3	G	12	Feekes 10.5						

^a E = excellent; VG = very good; and - = no data as not tested through our program.

^b dbh = days before harvest.

Integrated approach needed

ITALIAN RYEGRASS MANAGEMENT IN WHEAT CROPPING SYSTEMS

By Mark Thorne
 Research Associate, Washington State University

By Drew Lyon
 Professor, Endowed Chair Small Grains Extension and Research, Weed Science, Washington State University

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

“Ryegrass wasn’t a problem 30 years ago, we just kept using Hoelon¹, until it didn’t work anymore.” That was the message I heard from a Pullman-area farmer a couple of years ago when we were working to understand patterns of ryegrass seed shatter in wheat crops. This farmer spoke from wisdom, experience, and a deep concern over the future of farming as he was keenly aware that Italian ryegrass was going to change farming for him as well as all his neighbors. Italian ryegrass (*Lolium perenne* L. ssp. *multiflorum* (Lam.) Husnot) is a feral version of annual ryegrass, which is sold in lawn seed mixes and ground cover mixes to prevent soil erosion on road cuts and construction areas. In Oregon’s Willamette Valley, it is grown for seed and for winter pasture for sheep and cattle. However, in Eastern Washington, Italian ryegrass is a serious weed in the mid- to high-rainfall areas, not just because it can substantially reduce crop yield, but because it is now genetically resistant to many of the herbicides that once controlled it, and it has the potential to become resistant to all the herbicides that are still effective. This is more than just concerning; this is a highly probable outcome. Compounding this issue is the reality that the development of new herbicide

Table 1. Italian ryegrass control in spring canola*

Herbicide Treatments, Rates (oz/A), and Timing**			Italian ryegrass control 2 weeks after LPOST applications as the % of the nontreated check		
PPI	EPOST	LPOST	YR2021	YR2022	YR2023
None	PowerMax (44)	none	100 a	100 a	100 a
Treflan	PowerMax (44)	none	100 a	97 a	100 a
None	none	PowerMax (22)	88 bc	100 a	98 b
Treflan	none	PowerMax (22)	93 b	100 a	100 a
None	PowerMax (22)	PowerMax (22)	100 a	100 a	100 a
Treflan	PowerMax (22)	PowerMax (22)		100 a	100 a
Treflan	Liberty	none	84 c	79 b	100 a
Treflan	none	none		83 b	99 ab
None	Liberty	Liberty		73 b	
None	Liberty	none	68 d		90 c
Treflan	none	Liberty	59 d		
Nontreated check			0	0	0

*InVigor® LR344PC and LR345PC TruFlex/LibertyLink spring canola.

**PPI=preplant incorporated; EPOST=early postemergence canola 3-4 leaves; LPOST=late postemergence canola 6 leaves to bolting. PowerMax=Roundup® PowerMax. Treflan was applied at 7.5 lb dry granules/A in 2021 and 24 fl oz/A in 2022 and 2023 and incorporated 2x with a field cultivator. Liberty was applied at 22 fl oz/A in 2021 and 2022, and 29 fl oz/A in 2023.

***Numbers in each column with the same letter are not statistically different, that is, we are not certain that the numerical difference is the result of a true treatment difference or if it is the result of experimental error or variability between replications.

chemistries is limited in the near future.

Management of Italian ryegrass in wheat cropping systems needs to include all weed control strategies. Herbicides applied in wheat have shown mixed results. Group 15, pyroxasulfone (Zidua or Anthem Flex), which needs rain for activation, is most effective when applied preemergence or just when Italian ryegrass coleoptiles begin to emerge, with control averaging 80% or greater. Products that combine pyroxasulfone with flumioxazin, Group 14, (Fierce) have also been effective. However, Group 1 and Group 2 herbicides are largely ineffective where resistance has developed. Some examples of Group 1 herbicides include Aggressor AX (quizalofop), a component of the CoAXium wheat production system, and Axial XL (pinoxaden). Some examples of Group 2 herbicides include Beyond (imazamox), a component of the Clearfield Plus production system for wheat, Osprey Xtra (mesosulfuron + thien carbazon), PowerFlex HL (pyroxsulam), and Outrider (sulfosulfuron). To delay or prevent developing more resistance, combining and/or rotating sites of action is critical.

Controlling Italian ryegrass in all phases of the crop rotation is equally important. Reducing the number of seeds entering the seedbank will help reduce population density in future years. In our region, Italian ryegrass can still be controlled in canola as glyphosate-resistant ryegrass has not yet developed

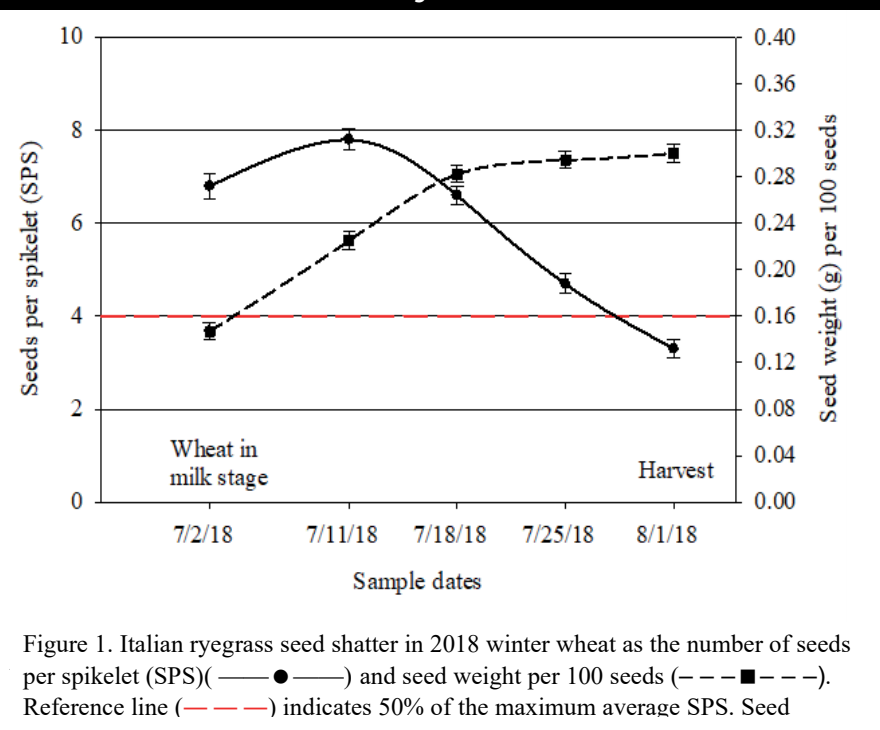
¹Hoelon (diclofop-methyl) is no longer registered for use in wheat in the U.S. or Washington state.

but does exist in orchards in both Oregon and Washington. In our research, glyphosate (PowerMax), Group 9, is very effective for Italian ryegrass control when applied to Roundup Ready TruFlex canola (Table 1); however, relying solely on glyphosate increases the potential of developing glyphosate-resistant ryegrass. An effective strategy for delaying resistant ryegrass is to target two effective sites of action. Applying a preplant Group 3 herbicide like trifluralin (Treflan HFP) can help reduce the number of plants that the postemergence glyphosate application will encounter. Also, glufosinate (Liberty 280 SL), Group 10, can be used in place of glyphosate in LibertyLink canola, but works best when combined with an herbicide that targets a different site of action. In addition, controlling early flushes of Italian ryegrass before seeding reduces the number of plants that in-crop herbicides encounter, which will help increase overall control (see results from YR2023 in Table 1).

Controlling Italian ryegrass in pulse crops is a greater challenge than in canola because of the resistance to Group 1 herbicides and the lack of any glyphosate-resistant cultivars. Currently, Group 15 S-metolachlor (Dual II Magnum) and Group 14 flumioxazin (Valor EZ) provide control and suppression, respectively, of Italian ryegrass in pulse crops. Group 3 trifluralin and ethalfluralin (Sonalan HFP) and Group 14 triallate (FarGo) are labeled for preplant or pre-emergence applications. Also, Outlook (dimethenamid-P), Group 15, is effective preplant or pre-emergence, but is only labeled for use in chickpeas and lentils.

Cultural control methods are also important in a wheat production system. In Australia, rigid ryegrass, a species similar to Italian ryegrass

Chart 1. Seed shatter and seed weight



in our region, is now resistant to most all herbicides used in crop production. This has led to the development of harvest weed seed control (HWSC), which focuses on techniques to control or destroy seeds during and following harvest before they enter the seedbank. Two techniques used for HWSC are impact mills (Seed Terminator or Redekop Seed Control Unit) attached to combines to grind up seeds going through the machines, and chaff lining, where all chaff is diverted into a windrow behind the combine. Seeds in the chaff line experience a micro-environment not favorable for germination or establishment, or, if they emerge, the chaff line can be sprayed with a burn-down herbicide like Gramoxone SL 3.0 (paraquat). However, rigid ryegrass plants retain more than 75% of the seed at harvest, which works well for HWSC because most of the seeds can then go through the combine. In contrast, Italian ryegrass seed in our region is mostly shattered out by the time of wheat harvest (Chart 1). This may make HWSC more difficult to implement; however, HWSC would target the largest and most developed seeds remaining on the plant at harvest. Larger seeds could produce more vigorous and productive plants in the following crop and controlling them would be of benefit. One strategy to increase HWSC success is to plant an earlier maturing winter wheat cultivar so that harvest occurs sooner. With the current available cultivars, this would possibly gain about a week, but depending on the year, could help capture a few more seeds. An added benefit of HWSC is that it also targets crop seeds that go out the back of the combine, thus reducing future volunteer issues.

Management of Italian ryegrass in wheat cropping systems includes an integrated approach to reduce the development of even more herbicide resistance than already exists. Reducing seedbank density with good management in all phases of the crop rotation and rotating mode of actions are two important components, but finding ways to implement HWSC may be very strategic moving forward. ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Bearish news moves wheat prices higher



By Allison Thompson
Owner, *The Money Farm*

Since the start of 2024, wheat prices have been in a general downtrend despite supportive fundamentals and logistical concerns. On paper, global and U.S. supply outlooks are not necessarily bearish, especially compared to corn and soybeans. Unfortunately, this narrative has become repetitive, which has failed to threaten supply and demand prospects. The trade has also become immune to the headline noise as topics that once sparked sizable rallies over the past couple of years have created little price movement. This has fed the doom and gloom attitude consuming the wheat market to start the year, but there are signs the market sentiment is shifting. Interestingly, it is bearish news sparking the change. A rally or turn higher on bearish news is typically a good sign lows have been printed.

Domestically, headlines lately have been consumed by Chinese export sale cancellations. If you remember, this past fall, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported large Chinese soft red wheat sales to China, which helped futures rally following fall lows. The marketing year for wheat runs from June 1 to May 31, which is quickly approaching, with a large amount of these sales outstanding. Weekly export inspection reports have proven this point, which had rumors circulating that cancellations would be possible. This pushed wheat exchanges to fresh lows before cancellations were even confirmed by the USDA.

This fact was further found in the latest round of monthly USDA reports. U.S. export demand dropped by about 15 million bushels, which resulted in an increase to U.S. ending stocks by the same amount. This caused a resurgence of headlines declaring total U.S. wheat exports are at their lowest

Chart 1: U.S. all wheat ending stocks

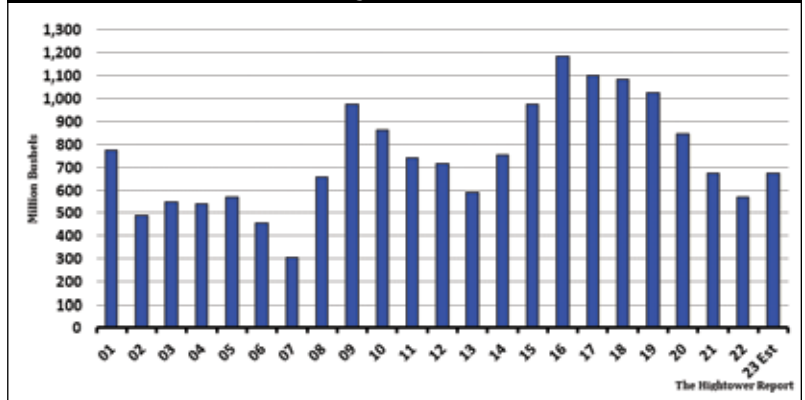
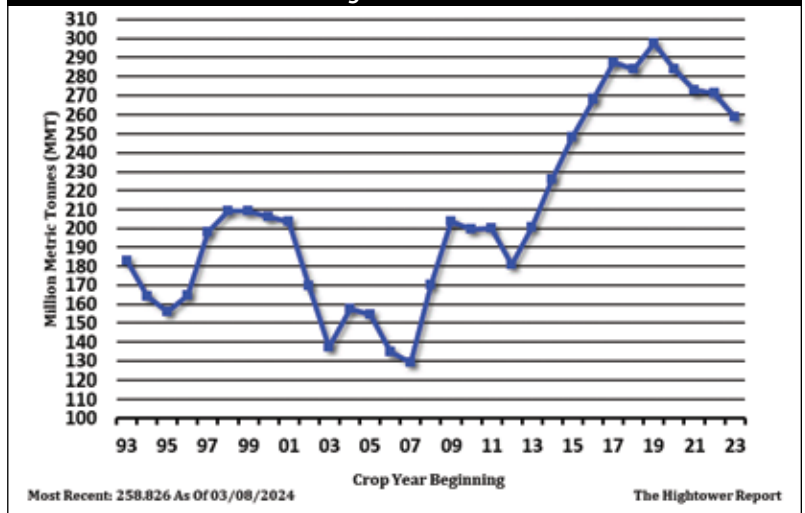


Chart 2: World wheat ending stocks



level since 1971-72. If you remember, these same headlines surfaced this past fall, which clearly didn't surprise the trade. The market has been here before. As a result, U.S. wheat ending stocks for 2023-24 are now reported at 673 million bushels. While higher than last year, it is still slightly lower than 2021-22. See Chart 1.

China is known as a shrewd buyer of grains, and the move seemed unsurprising to the trade given lower global wheat prices. Again, due to an oversupply and intense export market competition, wheat prices in Russia, Europe, and the U.S. have all experienced price declines. The March USDA report increased global wheat production by citing increases in Argentina, Australia, and Russia. However, this was offset by increased demand and ending stock reductions in Canada, the EU, Ukraine, and China, resulting in lower global ending stocks. This marks the fourth consecutive season the USDA

is anticipating tighter global wheat stocks which are now expected to hit eight-year lows. See Chart 2

Going into the latest USDA report, the wheat market had much of the bearish domestic data priced into the futures market. Without any surprises to keep the bears fed, the friendly global numbers allowed wheat exchanges to rally following the report. On top of that, wheat markets are taking note of some other market developments, including weather, logistical issues, geopolitical tensions, and fund movement. These will be key moving forward in 2024.

El Niño's transition to La Niña is going to be a major topic this year for grain markets. According to forecasters, the current El Niño weather pattern, which caused hot and dry weather in Asia and heavier rains in parts of the Americas, is likely to turn neutral during April-June 2024. The turn to La Niña is expected late summer to early fall. As a global weather event, timing will be critical for this year's production. La Niña typically produces higher precipitations to Australia, Southeast Asia, and India while drier weather favors North and South America. How the weather will impact the coming year's wheat production is unknown as every year is different. Still, it will have implications beyond production.

Over the past year, there have been multiple logistical concerns impacting grain movement. The Panama Canal has dealt with drought conditions that have resulted in fewer ships moving through daily. In fact, over the past two months, total shipping volume through the Panama Canal has fallen by almost 32% compared to last year. This, on top of attacks in the Red Sea, has led to many global vessels rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope. As a result, longer shipping times and higher costs have become a global market factor. While the weather pattern has the potential to ease some of these concerns, geopolitical issues are going to be a wild card.

This year also marks the start of the third year of the Russia/Ukraine war. Despite the lack of a Black Sea shipping corridor, Ukrainian wheat continues to enter the global market. While this has caused tensions in the EU, supply and demand are working to move the grain. As a result, Black Sea headlines regarding ongoing tensions have done little to excite the market. The same is true in regard to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Available supply concerns were a major bullish factor pushing wheat prices higher. Now that supply has been rerouted, those concerns have eased and have had less of an influence on price movement.

Another major factor that has been influencing price movement has been the investors that trade commo-

ties, often referred to as "the funds." They have been overall net sellers of grains since the start of 2024, which has us watching the influence of money flow. To start the month of March, they have made new record short positions in corn and soybeans while adding to short positions in wheat exchanges.

Short-covering price rallies have been the only relief, which is keeping those price points that the futures market has trouble breaking above, known as resistance levels, important across the board. When they start to waver, it could be a sign the funds are moving on. Remember, they are strictly trend followers and will quickly move on to the next trend if they believe more money can be made.

Right now, the crowd is rushing to the U.S. stock market. As of this writing, the S&P 500 has climbed to 15 record closes since the start of 2024. If you are looking for bull markets, look at other commodities. Gold has been a major headline recently as it traded to all-time record highs over \$2,100 per ounce. The risk isn't "how high can it go," it's what will happen if/when the trend reverses.

Believe it or not, it stems back to inflation. To keep it simple, the momentum is stemming from ideas of a soft landing leading to lower interest rates. The bullish bandwagon seems fully loaded, and, inevitably, the road will get bumpy. When the confidence gets shaky, movement will take place as they look for other areas to invest. If the Fed keeps rates high to fight inflation, the cost of borrowing money is going to remain relatively high. There is a very small chance this may spark interest in physical assets as a hedge against inflation. Generally, this sparks renewed interest in hard and soft commodities. Inflation is a big "what if" worth watching in 2024. It might be the push to spark buying interest in grains again. Key word: might.

With grain prices at multiyear lows, funds sitting extremely short, and the entire growing season ahead, could grain futures be the next buying opportunity? With so much uncertainty, it certainly seems possible.

Overall, it seems anything and everything that could be bearish to wheat futures has been thrown at the market. I am having a difficult time finding anything else that could justify new contract lows across all three wheat exchanges. It seems the trade agrees, as the recent bearish news has caused grain prices, including wheat, to move higher. ■

Allison Thompson is the owner of The Money Farm, a grain marketing advisory service, located in Ada, Minn. She is also still actively involved in her family's grain farm, where her husband and father grow corn, soybeans, and wheat.

Retirement leads seed dealer to new business venture

Dana Herron, WAWG Past President 1986-87

By Kevin Gaffney
Special to Wheat Life

Most Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) past presidents from the 1980s are now at least semiretired. Not **Dana Herron**, who served from 1986-87.

A native of Connell, Wash., Herron grew up in a farm family founded by his grandfather in 1896 near Kahlotus. Herron's brother, Chris, still farms that homestead land as well as their farm near Connell. Born in 1950, Herron attended schools in Connell before matriculating to Washington State University (WSU) in 1969.

"My father encouraged me not to choose farming as a career due to my allergies," said Herron. "He thought I should become a doctor or a lawyer to establish a successful career. For that and other reasons, I pursued a degree in political science at WSU.

"Unfortunately, just as I was finishing up my studies at college, my father passed away at the age of 52. This derailed my plans to attend law school. I stayed at WSU to earn an additional degree in ag economics. I paid my way through school working for Palouse Producers, an agriculture fertilizer and crop protection company.

"It is my belief that God guides our lives in ways that we are often unaware of until we look back at a later time. My father's passing guided me back to the farm, and my work at Palouse Producers allowed me to acquire a lot of knowledge about farming. It also allowed me to graduate from college debt-free."

Herron worked for the agricultural company full time for two years before coming home to take over the family farm in the spring of 1977. The first few years were not easy ones, as the price of wheat was poor, and in 1979 and again in 1981, there was considerable winterkill in southeast Washington.

"I remember a morning in February 1979 when it was 20 degrees below zero, and the wind was blowing 30 miles per hour," noted Herron. "I knew right then that we would need a whole lot of spring wheat seed to replant."

After finding out the local cooperative had no spring seed available, Herron began diligent efforts to acquire seed. After extensive research, he was able to obtain and sell 33 train cars of spring wheat seed that year. Faced with a similar winterkill situation in 1981, Herron secured 38 semitruck loads of spring seed for his farm and for retail and wholesale sales. This was the motivation for the founding of Kaysons Seed. Herron founded it with his



mother, Kay Herron, in 1982. Over the years, sales continued to grow, and the seed business was soon bringing in \$2 million of annual revenue while the farm was bringing in just several hundred thousand.

"At the same time, my brother Chris was interested in farming, so it was the perfect time to hand the farm operation over to him. This also allowed our mother to retire. Chris has done an excellent job operating the farm ever since."

It was around this time that Herron became more involved with the Franklin County Wheat Growers Association, chairing several committees. His parents had stressed the importance of advocating for the wheat industry. Herron eventually moved on to the state level with WAWG. He was approached by past president Stephen Naught to consider going through the WAWG leadership chairs. Herron took over as president for the 1986-87 term. The biggest issue at that time was the negotiations over the 1985 Farm Bill.

"I believe I traveled to Washington, D.C., 12 times during my year as president," recalled Herron. "Fortunately, we still had house speaker Tom Foley in office at that time. I remember the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) being an important issue in our getting the farm bill passed through an increasingly urban Congress. We were working closely with Gene Moos, Rep. Foley's aide. He was very helpful for the ag industry. It was an eye-opening education for me about how the legislative system works in our nation's capital.

"My dad said something many years ago that I never forgot — 'Walk fast, talk loud and carry your files with you.' That advice served me well, especially in Washington, D.C. ▶

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“There have been criticisms of the farm bill over the years that it is simply an income transfer device. I would argue that you can call it whatever you want: revenue protection, a soil conservation bill, a crop insurance program, that’s fine. But the bottom line is that the American people enjoy the highest quality and lowest food prices in the entire world.”

Herron is a strong supporter of WAWG and its mission. He would like to see the membership built back up. He believes that the annual dues members pay should be increased to reflect the excellent return growers get from WAWG lobbying at the state and national levels. He thinks more personal contact by member growers selling the value of the organization’s work to nonmember farmers could accomplish that.

As the volume of Kaysons Seed business grew, Connell Grain Growers (CGG) made Herron an offer he couldn’t refuse. He sold the business to them and took over as their seed sales manager. Herron stayed with CGG for 11 years, expanding their seed sales into 17 states and four foreign countries. Eventually, CGG became a part of Cenex Harvest States. After the merger, disputes over managerial policies convinced Herron that he would be better off financially operating his own company again.

Herron and his partner, Craig Teel, established Tri-State Seed with the assistance of Dave Gordon, then manager of Northwest Grain Growers in Walla Walla, and financing from CoBank, a branch of the Farm Credit System.

“Our new business started well. We only lost money once, in our second year of existence,” said Herron. “Since I had to personally cover part of that loss, I made sure that never happened again. Dave Gordon was an amazing mentor for our company getting properly established. Central Washington Grain Growers and Tidewater Barge were also contributors to the successful implementation of our business plan.”

Herron and Teel continued to expand the business over the years, selling mostly wheat, barley, alfalfa, and Conservation Reserve Program seed products to retail and wholesale clients. They eventually added liquid fertilizer and crop protection products to their inventory.

“Our most important mission was to always provide superior customer service for our clients,” emphasized Herron. “We established strong, personal relationships with our clients, and I think that was a large part of our success over the years. I always have tried to make growers think outside their normal parameters, to get them to question how they operate their farms and perhaps find more efficient ways to do things.”

Herron retired from Tri-State Seed in 2020. Before leav-

ing, Herron negotiated an agreement that allowed him to keep his fertilizer and crop protection clients, while not competing with Tri-State’s seed customers. Soon after, his current company, Seed Logic LLC, was launched. When he started out, he expected he would have a couple dozen customers. Seed Logic LLC now has over 100 clients. His office and warehouse facility are located on the family farm. Asked about the biggest changes over his years in the seed business, Herron points to consolidations and mergers of the small companies and to the domination of private sector seed companies in small grains variety breeding.

“The private companies can research, develop, and have a new variety planted in farmers’ fields at least twice as fast as the university systems,” said Herron. “We have excellent facilities and grain breeders at WSU, but it simply takes longer in that system to bring new varieties to the farmer.”

Herron has an affable and upbeat attitude for a man confined to a wheelchair. Two years ago, Herron was injured in an ATV accident and was partially paralyzed. He has not let this slow him down.

Herron’s partner through all of these years has been his wife, Valerie. They met at WSU, another life event that



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Herron believes was guided by a higher power.

“Distinguished WSU professor emeritus Ken Casavant actually introduced us,” said Herron. “We were married in 1975. She has provided me with strength and support. I could not have had the successes in my life or my career without her by my side.”

Herron is actively involved with the Connell Food Bank. Just a few years ago, they were only serving 30-40 families. Now they are serving around 1,000 people, distributing \$21,000 worth of food on a monthly basis.

“We serve people who are on limited incomes, those under the poverty level, and with the recent increases in food prices on so many items, there is more need than ever before. We also have folks who deliver groceries to homebound folks or those unable to drive and come to the food bank.”

The Herrons have two daughters, Karma and Keva. Both are married, and they have brought three grandchildren into the family. Seed Logic LLC can be contacted at dana@seedlogicllc.com or (509) 546-1300. ■

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Finding the right financial advisor for you

Undoubtedly, most farmers would prefer to focus solely on the physical aspect of being a farmer, but unfortunately, there's a whole other side to the occupation that needs regular attention. Bookkeeping, taxes, and legal planning are a big part of a successful operation, and many farmers have a team of professionals to help them. A financial advisor can be a valuable part of that team, but finding one who fits you and your investment style is critical.

Jordan Thayer, a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley, has some suggestions about when a farmer might consider adding a financial advisor to their team, and what to look for when selecting one.

What are a financial advisor's responsibilities, and when would a farmer need one?

A financial advisor's primary responsibilities are to help you determine and prioritize your financial goals, craft a portfolio that will move you further along in a financial plan, and keep you updated on a regular basis. Furthermore, a financial advisor should be prepared to make recommendations or provide feedback when you are facing significant financial decisions in your life, such as:

- How do I plan the buy-out of my farm business?
- I received an inheritance, what should I do with it?
- Should I purchase more land, more equipment, or diversify my investments into something else?
- How can I structure my estate to help ensure as much of it passes to my kids and grandkids as possible?

Financial advisors can't give legal or tax advice, but they can connect with your legal and tax professionals and integrate their experience into recommendations about what the most financially efficient course of action is, based off your desired outcome. Financial advisors become especially helpful during big life events, like getting married or divorced, having a baby, buying a house or land, taking care of aging parents, or selling a business.

What kind of questions should a client be asking themselves when considering a financial advisor?

Do I want or need a traditional, in-

person advisor? Am I willing to use an online advisor or robo-advisor and possibly pay less in fees?

What should a prospective client be looking for in a financial advisor?

Ideally, someone who always puts your interests first. I emphasize to many farmers who are looking for a financial professional that this is someone you will be talking to about your money and your family's future, so you should enjoy conversations with this person! You should be able to have candid, enjoyable conversations with them and not walk away from every interaction exhausted or dread upcoming meetings. When I go to my physician, we catch up on each other's families, hobbies, and many other subjects, albeit briefly. I can tell he cares and is interested in my well-being. That is why I keep returning to him as my practitioner. I trust him. Your financial advisor should rank in similar esteem with you and your loved ones.

What kind of questions should a client be asking a prospective advisor?

Ask them about their experience. How do they get paid? What are the total fees? What is their investment philosophy? Have they worked with people who do what you do or who are in similar circumstances?

What is the client's responsibility in the relationship, and what kind of information should they expect to provide?

The client should be honest and clear about what they want and their expectations. Just as in any employer/employee relationship, you need to clearly communicate your expectations so your employee knows how to meet your standards. Additionally, the client really should read their statements. I have worked with clients who tell me they don't read the statements, and one of the first things I do is open a statement with them and walk them through it and explain what each item means. They may not look at every detail, but every effort at transparency should be made.

Assuming a foundation of trust has been built, the client should be pre-

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pared to share detailed information about their finances with the advisor. A mechanic can't diagnose an issue on a tractor if they don't pop the hood and get a look at things. A basic summary of annual income, debts that are being paid off, and a list of assets that make up someone's net worth are very common to review when beginning the financial planning process. Depending on the specific questions of the client, reviews of business assets, cash flow, wills, estate planning documents, tax returns, and other relevant information may be requested.

What are some of the mistakes you see people make with regard to financial advisors?

Many small mistakes or personality mismatches can be avoided by thinking about what you want from the relationship. A little bit of preparation when interviewing financial advisors can avoid many pitfalls throughout your search and help make it far more efficient. Have a few questions prepared and written down in advance. Having an idea of what you want, what services you would get value from, and communicating that clearly is a great way to establish if the financial advisor you're interviewing will be a good fit. For example:

- "I appreciate simple explanations — I don't like it when too many financial terms are used in conversation because it confuses me." This is a reasonable request! That advisor should remember to speak in terms that you understand and feel comfortable with.
- "I would like to know all of the fees that I could be charged." Also a very reasonable request! If it were me, anyone I would care to do business with should feel comfortable disclosing what they charge, and when they charge it.
- Lastly, if you have an investment philosophy that you

adhere to, be very up front about it. "I prefer to invest in U.S.-headquartered companies," or "I prefer to not own any tobacco companies" are several examples I've encountered. You should determine if the financial advisor is able to accommodate your risk tolerance and investment preferences.

When I was a company commander in the Marine Corps, there was always the concept of "commander's intent," meaning at the end of the mission, I want this specific outcome. My Marines knew that no matter what difficulties they had to work through, they were working toward a very specific outcome that I had made the effort to communicate to them. If a farmer has an idea of their own "commander's intent," it creates a very clear direction, both for themselves and the advisor helping them.

Other "best practices" farmers should employ.

Trust your gut. You've built a wonderful life for you and your family with the help of your finely tuned intuition. It has been calibrated from your years of life experience. If you've asked your questions and yet you feel like the match isn't right, then feel free to interview another advisor. Again, this is someone you should enjoy talking to or at least not dread talking to as you seek to optimize your finances. ■

Jordan Thayer is a financial advisor with the Global Wealth Management Division of Morgan Stanley in Seattle, Wash. The information contained in this article is not a solicitation to purchase or sell investments. Any information presented is general in nature and not intended to provide individually tailored investment advice. The strategies and/or investments referenced may not be appropriate for all investors as the appropriateness of a particular investment or strategy will depend on an investor's individual circumstances and objectives. CRC6318074 2/24

Your wheat life...



By the light of the moon, Marcus Swift (14) watches grandpa, Chet Swift, unload in Lamont. Photo by Stacey Swift.



Avery (12) and Beau Blank (16 months) at Brian Blank Farms and Silzel Farms. Avery and Beau will be the 6th generation of this farm family. Photo by Suzanne Silzel.



Unloading the combine at Nick Johnson Farms in Oakesdale. Photo by Kris Johnson.

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



Drone footage of canola harvest 2023 at Haden Farms in Wilbur.
Photo by Braidy Haden.



Zeke (2.5) and Zach Zaring on the last day of harvest 2023 at Zaring & Zaring in Dusty. Photo by Katie Zaring.



It's a family affair at Nick Johnson Farms out of Oakesdale. Nick, his wife, Katie, and their three daughters, Kendra (8), Kylie (4), and Karly (2), are fifth generation farmers. Photo by Marianne Dudley.



Charlie Mead and son, Chase (10), at Mead Ranch near Dayton. Photo by Julia Mead.

HAPPENINGS

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

APRIL 2024

13-14 EASTERN WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM HORSE AND MULE FARMING. Free family event. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Pomeroy, Wash. Camping available. Call 509-843-3701. ewamuseum2008@gmail.com

19-20 COMMUNITY FAIR. St. John, Wash. stjohnwa.com

26-27 30TH ANNUAL FRONEN STEPPDECKER ODESSA SPRING FLING QUILT SHOW. Featured Quilter is Shelley Sieverkropp, an accomplished machine quilter. A Hoffman Challenge Trunk Show and over 200 quilt entries, merchant mall are included in the show. A craft market and car show are planned by the Parent Teacher Organization plus yard sales around town. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day at the Odessa High School Gym. Admission is \$5. odessaquiltclub.com

25-MAY 5 WASHINGTON STATE APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL. Parade, carnival, golf tournament, apple pie and dessert bake-off, live entertainment, auction. Wenatchee, Wash. appleblossom.org

MAY 2024

1-4 JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW OF SPOKANE. Spokane County Fair and Expo Center. juniorshow.org

4-5 RENAISSANCE FAIR. Music, entertainment, food, arts and crafts and maypole dances. East City Park, Moscow, Idaho. moscowrenfair.org

5 BLOOMSDAY. Spokane, Wash. bloomsdayrun.org

10-12 WINTHROP '49ER DAYS. Parade, cowboy songs and poetry, dancing, Saturday dinner, Sunday cowboy breakfast. Winthrop, Wash. winthropwashington.com/events/old-west-festival/

16-19 SELAH COMMUNITY DAYS. Carnival, car show, entertainment, vendors. Selah, Wash. selahdays.com

17-19 WAITSBURG CELEBRATION DAYS. Classic car show, cornhole tournament, street dance, vendors, parade, soap box derby, music. Waitsburg, Wash. waitsburgcd.com

18 WATERVILLE COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE. Event runs from 9 a.m. to approximately 3 p.m. Maps and a list of

addresses will be available for pick up on W. Locust Street. The event is sponsored by Waterville Main Street Association. historicwatervillewa.org/

23-26 MOSES LAKE SPRING FESTIVAL. Three on three basketball tournament, car show, parade, carnival, entertainment. McCosh park in Moses Lake, Wash. springfestivalinmoseslake.com

24-26 LAST STAND RODEO. Cowboy breakfast, fun run, parade, entertainment. Coulee City, Wash. laststandrodeo.com

25-26 METHOW VALLEY RODEO. Saddle bronc, bareback, bulls, barrel racing, team roping and junior events. Held at the rodeo grounds, about halfway between Twisp and Winthrop beginning at 1 p.m. methowvalleyrodeo.com ■

Submissions

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

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