

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

MAY | 2024

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on legislative process

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Washington Association of Wheat Growers
109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, WA 99169

WHEAT LIFE

Volume 67 • Number 05
wheatlife.org

The official publication of



109 East First Avenue
Ritzville, WA 99169-2394
(509) 659-0610

WAWG MEMBERSHIP

(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666
\$125 per year

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CIRCULATION

Address changes, extra copies, subscriptions
(509) 659-0610 • (877) 740-2666
Subscriptions are \$50 per year

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Wheat Life (ISSN 0043-4701) is published by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG):
109 E. First Avenue • Ritzville, WA 99169-2394

Eleven issues per year with a combined August/September issue. Standard (A) postage paid at Ritzville, Wash., and additional entry offices.

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President's Perspective



From mishap to mistake

By Anthony Smith

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

We all have mishaps in farming. Say you spray 100 acres of fallow for weed control, but you forgot to add the herbicide, or you forgot to unplug hydraulic lines while unhooking from an implement. These are definitely a couple of farm mishaps that may or may not have happened to me.

Think about some of the mishaps you may have had on your farm. They were no fun at the time, but looking back, you think maybe they weren't THAT bad. It's when a mishap becomes a mistake that the consequences turn from inconvenient to serious.

Here at the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), we try to avoid mishaps, and by mishaps, I mean mistakes. One of the biggest mistakes on our radar is removal of the lower Snake River dams. We would lose hydro-power, irrigation, barge transportation, and recreation, just to name a few essential services the dams provide. Removing the dams would be a major mistake, and some mistakes can't be fixed. It would cripple not just the farming economy, but the economies of the communities that rely on the river system. It would also doom many ag-centered businesses in the region.

WAWG has been very vocal in our support for the river system. Michelle Hennings, our executive director, has become something of an expert on the dams, with many state and national legislators calling her for information, and news outlets interviewing her. She's working with a team of stakeholders that represent river users from the mouth of the Columbia all the way to Lewiston, Idaho. She and that team have made great progress reaching legislators outside the Pacific Northwest and explaining that this is a national issue.

Another mistake, rather than mishap, is not getting a new farm bill passed. The 2018 Farm Bill expired in September 2023, and it was extended to September 2024, but with only temporary legislation to rely on, farmers are left in limbo, waiting. Without a new farm bill, important programs may begin to run out of funding. We haven't stopped working with the National Association of Wheat Growers on wheat's farm bill priorities, which include raising the reference price and keeping crop insurance affordable. Not passing a farm bill was a mistake, but hopefully, it can be fixed sooner rather than later.

WAWG is a member-driven association, and we need our members to help guide us, to steer us in the right direction. Are there issues we should be pursuing? I encourage anyone who has a question or a comment to contact the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610. If we can address an ag-related issue before it turns from a mishap to a mistake, we'll all be better off in the long term. ■

Cover photo: A Whitman County spring morning. Photo by Lori Maricle, Washington Grain Commission. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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Non-Voting Membership						
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Industry Associate \$150	X	X	X			

WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

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- Greensheet ALERTS • WAWG updates
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Cox hired as new conservation coordinator

Andrea Cox has joined the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) team as the new conservation coordinator.



She will assist Washington small grain farmers in learning more about the additional Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding opportunities provided through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

"I'm thrilled to be part of the WAWG team and have the opportunity to utilize my background and passion for agriculture in addition to my experience in conservation. I'm looking forward to collaborating with both our Eastern Washington producers and NRCS counterparts and serving as a liaison between the two to increase awareness and utilization of available programs," Cox said.

Cox grew up on a dryland wheat and barley farm and has spent her career in a variety of roles supporting agriculture: as a program technician at the Farm Service Agency and in recruitment for Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, as well as working with farmers in a past role as an operations specialist at Northwest Farm Credit Services (now known as AgWest Farm Credit). She helps coach her children's sports teams and serves on the Pasco and Kennewick ag education advisory

committees. She and husband, Ben, and their three children live in Kennewick.

"We are so excited to have Andrea join our team. She comes with a wealth of ag experience and will be able to hit the ground running in this new role. This is a position WAWG has looked forward to filling to provide grassroots education to our membership on NRCS conservation practices," WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings explained. "I'm looking forward to introducing her to our wheat growers. These new conservation funds are in addition to NRCS' farm bill funding and are targeted at climate-smart mitigation activities and other voluntary conservation activities that facilitate them." ■

PNW wheat acres up, barley acres down

From the National Agricultural Statistics Service

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, all wheat acres planted in the Pacific Northwest is up slightly from 2023, while barley acres are down 9% from last year. ▶



TRI-CITIES FARM FAIR. In March, volunteers Laurie Roecks (left) and Andrea Cox (middle), joined Marci Green, chair of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers' (WAWG) Public Information Committee, at the Tri-Cities Farm Fair. Approximately 350 fifth grade students visited the WAWG booth to learn about how wheat is grown in Eastern Washington and some of the products wheat flour is used in. Pencils and wheat booklets were handed out to students, and teachers received the Wheat Facts publication.

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In Washington, wheat producers expect to plant 2.33 million total acres of wheat in 2024, up 1% from last year. Winter wheat planted acres are expected to total 1.85 million acres for this year, up 3% from 2023. Spring wheat area planted is estimated at 475,000 acres, down 5% from last year. Wheat producers in Idaho expect to plant 1.16 million acres of wheat, down 1% from 2023. Winter wheat acres planted are estimated at 750,000 acres, unchanged from last year. Spring wheat planted acres, excluding durum, are expected to total 410,000 acres, unchanged from last year. Total acres planted to winter wheat in Oregon are estimated at 730,000 acres for 2024, down 1% from 2023.

Nationally, all planted wheat acres are expected to total 47.5 million acres, down 4% from 2023. Winter wheat acres are estimated at 34.1 million acres, down 7% from 2023. Durum wheat planted acres in the U.S. for 2024 are estimated at 2.03 million acres, up 21% from the previous year. All other spring wheat is estimated at 11.3 million planted acres, up 1% from 2023.

In Washington, acres planted to barley are estimated at 95,000 acres, unchanged from the previous year. Barley planted area in Idaho for 2024 is estimated at 510,000 acres, down 11% from 2023. Oregon barley growers are expected to seed 35,000 acres, down 15% from last year. Total barley planted acres in the U.S. is estimated at 2.57 million acres for 2024, down 17% from 2023. ■

EPA to update Herbicide Strategy draft after feedback

In April, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released an update to its draft Herbicide Strategy, which is part of the agency's plan to improve how it meets its Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations. The update described some improvements EPA plans to make to increase flexibility and improve ease of implementation while still protecting federally listed species. The EPA expects to publish the final strategy in August 2024.

The draft strategy, released in July 2023, describes whether, how much, and where mitigations may be needed to protect listed species from agricultural uses of conventional herbicides. By adopting these early mitigation strategies, EPA can begin protecting listed species while U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service are making their Endangered Species Act determinations.

EPA will use the strategy to inform mitigations for new active ingredient registrations and registration review of conventional herbicides. Mitigations from the strategy will

not become effective until EPA adopts labels (following public comment) for that herbicide as part of a new active ingredient registration or registration review decision.

After receiving public feedback, EPA plans to make improvements to the draft strategy in three categories:

- Making the strategy easier to understand. Many commenters noted the complexity of the strategy to determine the amount of mitigation a label requires for a particular pesticide. EPA is simplifying its approach to describe the amount of mitigation that may be needed for each herbicide. EPA also plans to create educational materials that concisely explain the four-tier mitigation approach.
- Increasing flexibility for growers to implement the mitigation measures in the strategy. EPA expects to expand its mitigation measures, especially for specialty crops, to include new measures such as erosion barriers, reservoir tillage, and soil carbon amendments. EPA is also working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other organizations to identify other measures to add to the mitigation menu that can reduce pesticide runoff and erosion.
- Reducing the amount of mitigation that may be needed when growers have already adopted voluntary practices to reduce pesticide runoff or where runoff potential is lower due to geography. EPA is also considering whether growers could meet any necessary mitigation requirements if they participate in agricultural conservation programs or work with qualified experts to design and implement mitigation measures.

In addition to these types of improvements, EPA is also working on other changes to the Herbicide Strategy and how it is implemented. For many listed species, the maps used in the draft strategy for determining where mitigation measures would apply are often too broad, covering areas not needed to conserve the species. EPA is working with FWS and others to develop a process for refining maps for hundreds of species.

More information is in the public docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0365 at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and on EPA's website at [epa.gov/pesticides](https://www.epa.gov/pesticides). ■

How we are doing

Like something you read in *Wheat Life*? Disagree with something you read in *Wheat Life*? Let us know by emailing your comments and suggestions to editor@wawg.org or mail them to 109 East First Avenue, Ritzville, Wash., 99169-2394. Please keep submissions less than 350 words. Submissions may be edited for length. ■



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WAWG remembers long-time county wheat association officer

William (Billy/Bill Jr.) George Harder Jr. died April 1, 2024, at the age of 62, in Kahlotus, Wash.

Billy was the first child born to Bill Harder Sr. and Vivian (Hamilton) Harder on Dec. 16, 1961. He was joined by his brothers, Kurt and Eric, in 1964 and 1969. The boys were raised on their family's Kahlotus, Wash., wheat and cattle ranch, partaking in chores and taking on responsibilities from an early age. Billy proved his toughness in his youth by getting bucked off a horse and then pitched from a four-wheeler. Never a quitter, he always got right back up and kept going, never complaining.

Billy was the quiet, even-keeled one in the family. If you knew his father and brothers, you know there was no point in competing in those volumes. Billy's quiet strength gave him fortitude and made him resilient, both traits he would draw on for years to come.

Billy attended school in Kahlotus for all 12 years, as did many of his classmates, several of whom remained his closest and most cherished friends his entire life.

Billy and his family had many close friends in the Kahlotus community. The adults in their circle of family friends became extended parents to Billy and his brothers just as their children became extended siblings. The families enjoyed many years and many adventures together, including camping trips, Sundays at the river, clam-digging trips, and RV adventures.

Billy's was a close family unit. The family worked together, vacationed together, and often argued "together." It was a true testament to their fondness for one another that they spent their free time together attending NASCAR races and Cougar football games, playing Texas Hold 'em or visiting casinos, and vacationing in Mexico together.

Following in his mother's footsteps, Billy graduated from Washington State University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics. In particular, he studied and excelled at accounting, a career path suggested to him by one of his Kahlotus high school teachers. And this path served him well as he developed into the business manager for his family's diversified agriculture business.

Billy was also the "parts" guy, constantly dispatched to pick up parts here, there, and, without fail, back to here



again. He took this role seriously, often bringing back five of any given item instead of the one requested, eating at the best restaurant nearest the parts dealer, and making friends with every vendor along his way. If you've spent any time at all on highways between Kahlotus and the Tri-Cities or Spokane, surely, you'll remember seeing Billy zoom by with his proud "WSU 84-Ag" license plates.

After his brothers passed, Billy took a more active role in the operation of the family business, and, following his dad's passing, became the primary decision maker. He welcomed bringing

his nephews and niece into the family business just as his father had welcomed him and his brothers. There were many stories, histories, rituals, habits, and routines to pass on to them, and he was so excited to extend the legacy.

Following in his father's footsteps, Billy was a dedicated man of service. He took pride in his community, serving on the Kahlotus School Board and taking his father's founding commissioner seat for the Port District of Kahlotus.

He was a member of and served terms as treasurer for the local Lyons Club, the Franklin County Wheat Association, and the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association. His many years of service also included memberships to the Washington Cattlemen's Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, and the Kahlotus city council.

Billy was preceded in death by his parents, Bill Sr. and Vivan; and by his brothers, Kurt and Eric. He is survived by his sister-in-law, Terri (Dusty Roller); his niece, Nicole; his nephews, Eric Max (Ally) and TJ; and Max's son, Eric Andrew, whom Billy adored. He is also survived by his uncle, Clarence Hamilton, and Clarence's wife, Laura, as well as numerous cousins in the extended Hamilton and Harder families.

A memorial service was held on April 12 at the Kahlotus Grange Hall, followed by a graveside service at the Harder Family Cemetery. Memorial gifts may be made in Billy's memory to Washington Cattlemen's Association, PO Box 96, Ellensburg, WA 98926, or the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, 109 E. First, Ritzville, WA 99169. ■



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POLICY MATTERS

NAWG urges enhanced trade policies in letter to Tai

Last month, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and over 30 agriculture organizations sent a letter to United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai urging enhanced engagement on trade policies to bolster our global competitive standing around the world. Recommitting to an aggressive trade agenda, holding parties accountable to commitments, and improving trade enforcement mechanisms are critical steps that need to be taken.

“We request the administration recommit to an aggressive trade agenda to meaningfully expand export opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products,” the letter said. “Export markets are essential for our survival, and comprehensive trade agreements and elimination of tariff and nontariff barriers help ensure that U.S. agriculture can compete on an even playing field in our export markets.”

The organizations call for active enforcement of trade rules to ensure U.S. farmers capture the full scope of market access benefits within existing trade agreements. U.S. agricultural products often face import restrictions and trade-related market distortions that are not in compliance with existing trade agreements, and some governments impose arbitrary protectionist measures to benefit domestic producers, while other governments use nonscience-based sanitary and phytosanitary measures to create unjustifiable barriers for imports.

On April 16 and 17, Tai testified be-



fore the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, respectively. Her testimony focused on how the Biden-Harris administration's trade agenda is supporting economic growth from the middle out and the bottom up by empowering workers both at home and abroad, rebuilding American manufacturing, and strengthening the resilience of U.S. supply chains. ■

Wheat groups welcome food aid funding

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) and the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) are pleased that U.S. wheat farmers can help increase global food assistance under a new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding program announced last month.

USDA and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will invest \$1 billion in Commodity Credit Corporation funding to provide for the purchase, shipment, and distribution of U.S. wheat and other commodities for USAID international food assistance programming.

“American wheat farmers are proud to step up to the plate to provide critical food resources to address global needs,” Oklahoma wheat farmer and USW Chairman Michael Peters said. “This funding will provide wheat and other commodities to address food insecurity. These additional resources will help the U.S. wheat industry, and U.S. agriculture, continue to be a reliable source of food for the world.”

USW and NAWG thank Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack for releas-



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be better if it
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— Jerry McReynolds,
past president of the National
Association of Wheat Growers

ing the new funds that will directly benefit U.S. wheat farmers and people affected by hunger in several countries. Additionally, the organizations thank Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and John Boozman (R-Ark.) for a letter they sent to Vilsack this past fall formally requesting additional support for food assistance.

U.S. wheat farmers have been partners in U.S. food assistance programs for more than 70 years and take pride in sharing their harvest to address critical hunger needs. Through the USDA's Food for Progress and USAID Food for Peace programs, the American people have donated more than 1 million metric tons of wheat annually for the past three years.

"Additional funding for food assistance programs will help address the most urgent humanitarian needs in a generation. USW and NAWG look forward to working with USDA and other partners to ensure additional food donations generate the significant benefits where they are needed," said NAWG President Keeff Felty. "As NAWG works with Congress to reauthorize the farm bill, we continue to advocate for strengthening the in-kind commodity donation program and additional investments in the

existing trade promotion programs."

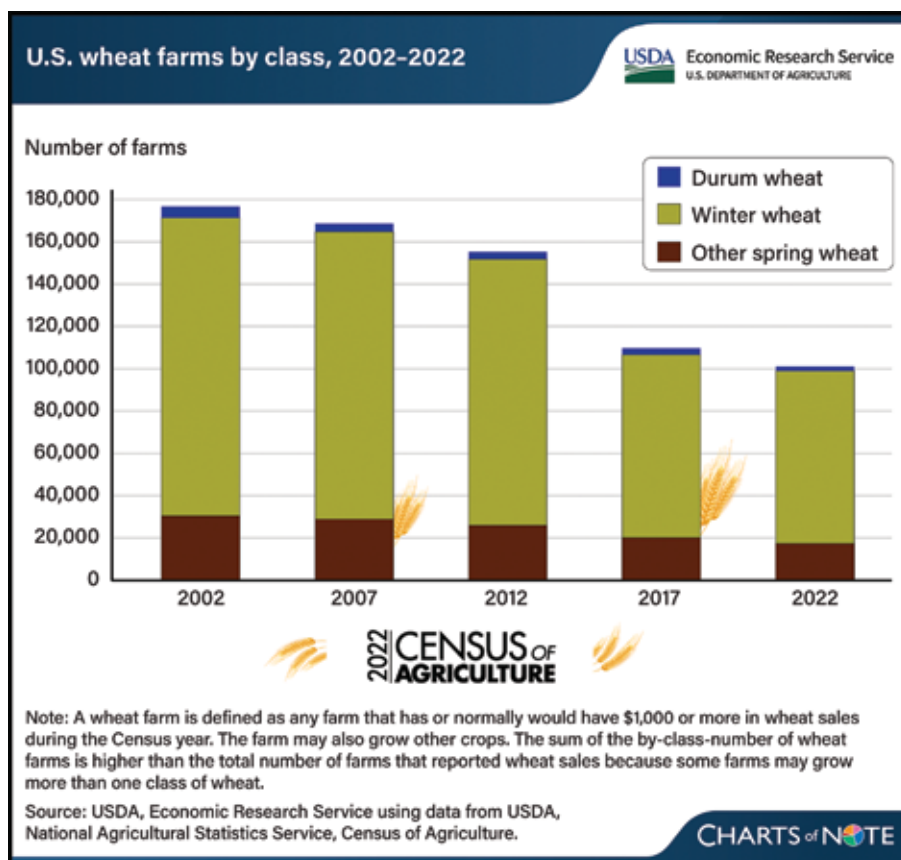
Members of the USW and NAWG Food Aid Working Group are proud of the wheat provided through these food aid programs and believe that commodity donation is an effective portion of the whole effort.

"Wheat makes up the largest portion of emergency food assistance managed by USAID's Food for Peace office," said Amanda Hoey, CEO of the Oregon Wheat Commission and chair of the USW Food Aid Working Group. "It is a natural demonstration of the generosity of U.S. farmers and their ability to produce an abundance of commodities that can be shared around the world." ■

Are you receiving your ALERT?

With their annual membership, Washington Association of Wheat Growers members can receive industry updates through the weekly digital Greensheet ALERT via email. If you are not receiving this ALERT, either we don't have your current email address, or our ALERT is going into your spam folder. Call our office at (509) 659-0610 to make sure we have your current email address. ■

WHITTILING DOWN WHEAT FARMS. The number of farms producing wheat for grain declined substantially from 2002 to 2022, according to new data from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. In 2022, the number of U.S. farms reporting wheat production was 97,014, a 43% decrease compared with the 2002 Census, when 169,528 farms reported wheat production. The reduction in the number of farms producing wheat was spread across all classes of wheat. The number of farms producing winter wheat — 84% of U.S. wheat farms in 2022 — dropped by nearly 60,000, or 42%, between the 2002 and 2022 censuses. Farms producing durum wheat decreased by the largest percentage, down 59% from 2002. The number of farms growing spring wheat (other than durum) declined 43% from 2002 to 2022. During the same time period, total volume of U.S. wheat produced trended down slightly, largely because of less acreage being harvested. As the profitability of other crops rises, wheat is increasingly planted in rotation with more profitable corn or soybean crops. Among major wheat-producing states, Kansas, which accounts for 15% of all U.S. wheat farms, saw a reduction of 9,716 farms — a 40% decrease from 2002 to 2022. Texas and Oklahoma reported decreases of 54 and 47%, respectively, between 2002 and 2022. Together, these three states harvested nearly 32% of the volume of winter wheat produced in 2022, according to data reported by the National Agricultural Statistics Service in the Small Grains Annual report.





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The vital role crop protection, pest control play in agriculture

In the world of agriculture, the journey from seed to table is often fraught with challenges. Among these, perhaps none are as persistent and potentially devastating as the battle against weeds, pests, and, subsequently, protecting crops. Farmers across Washington, the stewards of our agricultural lands, employ various crop protection practices to ensure that the food that reaches our tables is of the highest quality. Truth be told, the safeguarding journey food takes before arriving on your plate is not unlike the care a homeowner takes in maintaining their lawn or garden, though usually on a vastly larger scale.

Weeds and pests, if not treated or managed efficiently and safely, can truly decimate crops. Weeds compete with crops for sunlight, nutrients, and water, significantly reducing yields. Pests, on the other hand, can destroy crops by eating leaves, stems, and roots, or even by spreading diseases. To combat these threats, farmers employ strategies that can include the careful application of herbicides and pesticides. This is akin to a homeowner pulling weeds from their garden. In agriculture, however, the stakes are generally much higher. A well-maintained lawn is a matter of pride and ecosystem management, but a well-protected crop is a matter of survival and financial livelihood for both the farmer and the consumers who depend on their produce.

The well-planned use of crop protection practices is a testament to farmers' commitment to producing high-quality food. It is a delicate balance to maintain; the goal is not merely to eliminate pests and weeds, but to do so in a way that keeps the earth as healthy and nutrient-filled as possible. Using proper application rates for pesticide distribution is one key in ensuring both safety and efficiency in crop protection practices.

For example, most lawn and garden stores sell pre-mixed pesticides and herbicides. A common household herbicide is mixed with 2 to 3% of the active ingredient, the rest is water (~98%). That's the same in agriculture!

These ingredients are mixed together then generally added to a sprayer for distribution. The mixture is mostly water, and the pesticide is added according to strict instructions on the label, which have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Both organic and conventional farmers use pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides to provide protection for their crop.

Other alternatives include using natural predators to control pest populations or planting cover crops that suppress weeds and improve soil health.

Each of these strategies contributes to the overarching goal of protecting crops while minimizing environmental impact.

While it might sound scary to have chemicals applied to the crops that end up on our tables, regulations from the EPA ensure the safe use of pesticides through rigorous testing and evaluation prior to ever being sold or made available for use.

High-quality food is essential, not only for nutrition, but also for the economic well-being of communities around the world. Farmers are on the front lines of the battle against food scarcity, working to ensure that their crops reach harvest. By employing a variety of crop protection practices, they are able to increase the quantity and quality of their produce. This not only benefits the consumers who enjoy healthier, more abundant food, but also contributes to the sustainability of agriculture as a whole.

Crop protection practices are a critical component of modern farming. Without protection from weeds and pests, our food supply would suffer. The tools and strategies our farmers use are designed to ensure that crops not only survive, but thrive from a safety, quality, and economic standpoint. The end goal is to produce high-quality food that can nourish the world's growing population while preserving the health of our planet, and doing so in a cost effective way. Through careful management and the continued advancement of agricultural technologies, farmers are taking significant steps toward achieving this goal. Crop protection practices are not just about safeguarding plants; they are about securing our future. ■



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The misdiagnosis that's harming fish recovery

PREDATION BY SEA LIONS, HARBOR SEALS EATING AWAY AT CHINOOK RESTORATION EFFORTS

By Gerald Baron

Research Director, Save Family Farming

Wheat growers and other farm producers throughout our state are well aware of the great harm that would be done to farming, power generation, and greenhouse gas emissions if the lower Snake River dams are removed. But what they may not realize is if that disaster should happen, it will do very little to restore the runs of Chinook salmon.

Chinook are the salmon of greatest concern, and Chinook are uniquely affected by two very harmful ocean factors. One is ocean warming, particularly in the North Pacific. The other is the massive amounts of predation targeting Chinook, mostly in our local northwest Washington waters. Scientific studies make these simple facts very clear. Habitat, while critical for salmon, is not the limiting factor today. Salmon recovery advocates calling for dam removal and other habitat solutions are actually harming Chinook recovery. It's as if you go to the doctor with a stomachache, and they amputate your leg. Your stomach still hurts, and now you can't walk.

There are numerous studies and data that point to what is being called "the great misdiagnosis." These are documented in an extensive report prepared by Save Family Farming, which can be found at savefamilyfarming.org/misdiagnosis. A quick review of key reports and studies makes the situation clear.

River systems without dams are faring worse than the Snake River. This is documented by Kintama Research from Canada. They studied numerous Chinook-bearing river systems from Alaska through Washington and found that all were suffering from reduced numbers of Chinook, and that the Snake River was doing better than many, including those without any human-created obstacles.

Except for Chinook, Pacific salmon are at record numbers, and the commercial fishery is in crisis

because of the resulting low prices. Numerous scientific studies show how the "Blob," an area of the North Pacific with elevated temperatures, affect Chinook. Other species, such as sockeye, benefit from a warming ocean, but the unique lifecycle of Chinook means their survival and reproductive success is harmed by it.

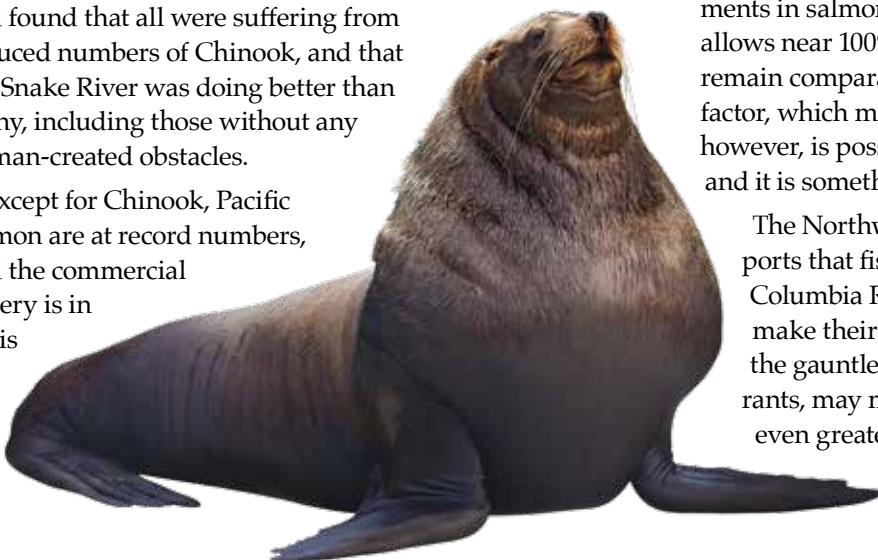
Chinook production, both hatchery and wild production, nearly doubled between 1975 and 2015. This was documented in a study published in *Nature* led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Brandon Chasco. The Snake River dams are among the very best at allowing fish passage, and NOAA reports all these dams exceed the target of 96% survival.

Dam removal advocates, and the media reports that take them at their word, say that salmon numbers are 10% of what they were before the dams went in. This is completely wrong and dishonest. It's true that prior to 1860, millions of salmon returned to the Columbia and Snake rivers. In 2000, wildlife and fish biologist John McKern reported that over 1 million returned to the rivers and 2.4 million in 2014. These numbers need to be compared to 1939, the first official salmon count, when the returning salmon were fewer than 500,000. Overharvesting and habitat loss by that time had greatly reduced numbers. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on stream habitat recovery, including about 1,000 miles of riparian buffers, on Washington streams. But, as the Washington State Conservation Commission reported in 2013, these successful restoration efforts have not resulted in significant returns of salmon.

Chinook production is up, massive habitat improvements in salmon streams have been made, fish passage allows near 100% survival, and yet, Chinook numbers remain comparatively low. Ocean warming is one critical factor, which may take many years to improve. Predation, however, is possibly an even greater cause for concern, and it is something we can do something about now.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council reports that fish-consuming birds eat up to 35% of Upper Columbia River smolts — juvenile fish — as they make their way down to the Pacific. A smolt running the gauntlet of hungry birds, such as terns and cormorants, may make it to salt water, but now they face an even greater challenge: harbor seals and sea lions.

These mammals are protected by the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act, an



example of well-intended legislation with disastrous unintended consequences. The Chasco study documented that since then, predators of Chinook have increased, in some cases, by many times over. Killer whales target the largest adult Chinook and have more than doubled to about 650 whales in 2015, consuming the most Chinook biomass — 11,000 metric tons. Harbor seals come next, but consume far more numbers because they target smolts entering the ocean from the rivers. From Alaska to California, harbor seals consume 27.4 million Chinook, a nearly 10 times increase compared to the 3.5 million Chinook eaten by these hungry animals in 1975.

Of greatest concern to those wanting to see Snake and Columbia river Chinook return is the fact that by far, the most harm done to Chinook returns is in the Salish Sea, that area between the Strait of Georgia and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, or what used to be called Northern Puget Sound. Here, harbor seals have increased from 8,600 in 1975 to 78,000 in 2015. Of all Chinook consumed by harbor seals in the North Pacific, an astounding 86.4% are eaten in this small area alone — 24 million Chinook!

Much attention has been paid to the plight of the Southern Resident killer whales. Unlike their Northern and resident neighbors, this pod does not prey on harbor

seals. Their “picky eater” habits, as called by a leading marine scientist, means that harbor seals do not have a natural predator in this area, accounting for the huge increase in consumption. There’s not enough Chinook to feed both mammals, and the seals are winning.

A reasonable question is why the many advocating for dam removal are not aware of the two primary causes of Chinook recovery disappointments. They are aware, but these causes are ignored for one reason: money. The focus on habitat has resulted in hundreds of people employed in what might be called the salmon recovery industry. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on habitat alone. Over \$24 billion was spent on fish passage. Take the focus off habitat, and a great many jobs will be lost, along with the political influence that comes with fighting for an iconic endangered species. To return to the doctor and misdiagnosis analogy, it is as if the doctor found his livelihood depends on removing limbs and not curing stomachaches.

The inappropriate focus on habitat as the only solution to Chinook recovery is an issue that can unite farmers and growers across the state and region. False claims of habitat problems are at the root of many issues facing farmers. In Eastern Washington, particularly southeast Washington, dams may be the primary concern. But in Whatcom

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County, farmers are being forced out by the state adjudication of water rights. Claiming farming affects habitat and tribal treaty rights, the state is suing all water rights holders. The impact on farmers was shown in a recent documentary called "Losing the Farm." In Skagit County, salmon advocates are trying to undermine the dike and drainage infrastructure essential to keeping farmland productive. The call for massive buffers on all streams and ditches in our state that repeatedly shows up in Olympia is another example of misguided recovery solutions based on the misdiagnosis.

Farmers and growers have the opportunity to unite around a very positive message. They have been leaders for years in salmon protection and recovery efforts, even while advocates work to put many out of business. There are positive steps to be taken to restore the Chinook, such as working with all salmon recovery groups to focus attention on the disastrous consumption of Chinook in the Salish Sea by out-of-control predators. Increasing awareness of the great misdiagnosis is something all concerned about farming can and should do. Uniting to help recover salmon by drawing attention to predation would be a great and positive step forward. ■

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Wheat College preview

SOIL WILL BE FOCUS OF ANNUAL GROWER EDUCATION WORKSHOP

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Next month, Washington wheat growers will have the chance to hear about regenerative agriculture principles from the soil guy himself at the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's annual Wheat College.

Wheat College will be held June 4, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Lincoln County fairgrounds in Davenport, Wash. Ray Archuleta is the featured speaker. Admittance is free of charge, and Wheat College is open to all growers, not just Washington Association of Wheat Growers members. Preregistration is required, and lunch will be provided. Two pesticide credits are being applied for, and there will be door prize drawings.

Archuleta is a certified professional soil scientist with the Soil Science Society of America and has over 30 years of experience working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). After he retired from the NRCS, Archuleta established the Soil Health Academy to teach biomimicry strategies and agroecology principles for improving soil function. He currently lives in Missouri where he owns and operates a family farm.

"We call soil the foundation resource. Without the soil, you don't have life on the planet. Period. It's as simple as that," Archuleta explained. "The most beautiful thing

about soil is it's the most complex ecosystem on the planet. You have more biodiversity (in the soil) than in any other ecosystem. Farmers and ranchers interface with that incredible ecosystem and know very little about it. My aim is to stress that it is alive, just like we are, and the way we treat it, with our tillage, our chemicals, the fertilizers, the herbicides and just leaving it fallow, is just absolutely atrocious for a living system."

At Wheat College, Archuleta will be focusing on biomimetic agriculture, or imitating natural designs and solutions to grow a crop while reducing the cost of inputs. One of those solutions is to introduce biodiversity, especially on fallow fields, which he equates to starving the soil ecosystem. Archuleta grew up in New Mexico and has spent years working in the West, including eastern Oregon. He's worked with dryland growers in low rainfall zones in multiple states who have eliminated their fallow rotations, primarily by introducing animals, which he says bring a rest period so those systems can recharge. Crop rotations and cover cropping are other ways to introduce biodiversity.

"There are other ways of looking at things. But the current system isn't working. It is destructive towards biology, and it's destructive towards the climate," he said. "When you farm contrary to nature, it degrades the system, becomes more costly, and increasingly sickly. It becomes ad-

dicted to fertilizers, chemicals, and pesticides. My whole message to the wheat growers is how you can improve your system and bring more biodiversity to enhance your soil health and reduce costs. It's tapping into nature's wisdom."

Microbes are another area Archuleta plans to explore at Wheat College. He explained that microbes help create nutrient/water cycles and build soil aggregation, but "if you put microbes in there, but they are starving and you don't have a plant in there, you are missing the whole point." He added that studies have shown that microbial communities in the soil enhance water capture and help plants use less water. Archuleta knows farmers can be skeptical of his message, and he's heard most of the excuses, especially farmers telling him he doesn't know their soils. He presents the science and the information, and it's up to growers to act on it.

"I say there's microbes in your soil too. The soils function the same everywhere in the world. The only difference is that you are dryer, and microbes run on water. So, you still have the same microbial communities that do the same function. Your issues are logistical issues and mindset issues," he said. "But it still wants biodiversity. It still runs on microbes."

Archuleta hopes Wheat College attendees leave his presentation with new ideas on how to tap into nature. He said this system requires a different way of thinking and includes more study and management.

"This regenerative system isn't for everybody, but if they want financial freedom, this is the way to go," he said. "Regenerative agriculture starts with renewal. Regeneration means renewal. And renewal happens in your heart and mind. It's kind of like I tell farmers — what do you want, a regenerative marriage or a sustainable marriage? If you have a sustainable marriage, that sucks. You are just sustaining and tolerating each other. But a renewable marriage is you wake up the next morning and go 'Oh my God, I love that man,' or 'I love that woman.' It's based on love, life, and growth. It depends on what you want."

Wheat College will include industry updates and wrap up with presentations on the latest agronomic research including emerging herbicide resistance issues, roots and pest identification, soil pH, and soil compaction.

To register for the 2024 Wheat College, go to wawg.org/ammo-workshops/ or call the Washington Association of Wheat Growers office at (509) 659-0610. ■



2024 Wheat College



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Our featured speaker, Ray Archuleta is a Certified Professional Soil Scientist with the Soil Science Society of America and has over 30 years' experience as a Soil Conservationist, Water Quality Specialist, and Conservation Agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). During his tenure with the NRCS Ray served in New Mexico, Missouri, Oregon, and North Carolina.

Additional speaker topics:

- Derek Sandison, *Director, Washington State Department of Ag* – Industry updates (Invited)
- Scot Hulbert, *Senior Associate Dean, Washington State University* – Industry updates
- Anthony Smith, *President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers* – Industry updates
- Doug Finklelnburg, *University of Idaho extension* – Emerging herbicide resistance across the PNW
- Ric Wessleman, *Syngenta* – Roots and pest identification
- Rachel Wieme – Soil PH
- Haly Neely – Soil compaction



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AMMO 2024

Business-first or family-first farming?

Popular speaker helps producers find their way when family and farming come into conflict

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

The title of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization's last winter workshop might have made attendees laugh, but the subject was anything but funny.

Led by popular ag speaker **Jolene Brown**, "Stop the Fighting on the Way to the Funeral Home," focused on doing business the right way in an industry known for its focus on families.

"What kind of business do you want to be?" Brown asked growers. "Do you want to be a family-first business or a business-first family? Ninety-eight percent of every phone call, email, conversation, question that I get comes from people operating as a family first. (People say) 'we don't want to rock the boat. We don't want to get dad mad. We think there's a will. We get along fine. We love each other. We'll be okay.' You are basing your future on a habit, an assumption, a hope, or a tradition. Sometimes that works. I call that lucky. If you want to be a family-first business, that is okay, as long as the business can be a hobby. But don't count on it for productivity, profitability, peace of mind, or sitting together happily at the holiday table."

In her presentation, Brown highlighted several points growers need to consider when operating as a business-first family. She acknowledged that some people don't like to think of their farm as business first, but said thinking that way doesn't demean the family. It means respecting the family by getting the business right and choosing to operate as a business.

"If not, you may lose both the family and the business," she said.

Assuming all genetic relationships equal good working relationships. Acceptance in a family is unconditional. Acceptance in a business is not.

"A family business is not a place to rehabilitate a family member. If someone in your family is lazy, addicted, arrogant, etc., why would you hire them? Someone else wouldn't," she pointed out.

Brown suggested answering three important questions. The first is **what** (do the existing owners want the integrity of the business to continue?), followed by **when** (when will



ownership of the business transition to the next generation?), and then **who** (who will own what parts of the operation?).

Believing the business can financially support any and all family members who want to work together. Questions growers need to ask include has the senior generation secured their financial future? Are the financial resources and performance level of the business strong? Are estimates and expectations based in reality? Will money, land, and equipment be loans or gifts?

"Don't loan money to someone you aren't willing to take to court, otherwise, it's a gift," Brown said. "Don't rent to family members you aren't willing to make sure honor the contract. Treat things as a business."

Brown also advised growers to make sure their books are accurate, timely, and transparent.

Assuming others will/should/must change and not me. "If the achievement of your goal depends upon the assets or power which someone else has and they do not have your same goal, they do not have the problem."

Presuming a conversation is a contract. Three of the biggest "lies" farmers often tell are:

- “Work hard, and someday, this will all be yours.”
- “I’m going to retire.”
- “You don’t have to worry about your brothers and sisters. They have their jobs. They aren’t interested in the business.”

Good businesses have written leases and contracts; employee documents such as reviews, job descriptions, and benefits; a written mission statement and a long-term plan; meeting minutes; an updated will; business and contingency plans; powers of attorney for finances and healthcare; and organization papers that detail the business structure.

“If it’s not in writing, it doesn’t exist,” Brown said.

It’s also important to write down prerequisites for own-

ership in the family business. Brown said owners transition three things in a legacy business: education, experience, and hard assets. She suggested having requirements for education; experience; a minimum personal financial investment in the business; sweat equity; compliance, adherence to and support of existing policies and management; and a positive reflection of the family, the business, and the industry.

She explained that fair and equal are not the same. Using a pie analogy, equal means everybody gets the same size slice of the pie. Fair means rewarding the person who made the pie (or the investment of time and resources) with a larger slice.

Failing to build communication skills and meeting tools when the times are good so they’ll be in place

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to use when the times get tough.

Brown suggested short daily “huddles” to spread information, to coordinate the day’s activities, and to appreciate each other. Schedule monthly meetings, with an agenda, to discuss important issues and make larger decisions. Annual meetings should include an annual review, reporting, and celebration.

Ignoring the in-laws and off-site family. What is the role of the spouse in the business? What are the spouse’s expectations of the business? Does off-site family play a role in decision making?


“They can be your best friends or worst enemies,” Brown said.

Having no legal, discussed, and revised estate, management, and ownership transfer plan and a buy/sell agreement that trumps a will. In Brown’s opinion, parents don’t “owe” their children a business, but they do owe children morals and values; an opportunity for education, “which doesn’t mean you have to pay for it”; a legal, discussed, revised estate plan; an ownership and management transfer plan and a buy/sell agreement; and a listing of details beyond the will.

Brown’s final point was to appreciate and celebrate. She listed three things that can bring joy, laughter and celebration into growers’ lives: accept things you can’t control or change, look for humor every day, and associate with folks who are enjoying themselves.

“Without communication, cooperation, and commitment, you can count on resistance, resentment, and revenge,” she said.

More information about Brown can be found at jolenebrown.com. ■



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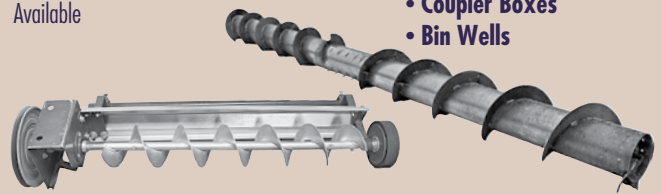


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AMMO 2024

Session focuses on landlords, leasing

By Trista Crossley
Editor, Wheat Life

Land is often a farm's most important asset, and many retired farmers and farm families are opting to become landlords rather than selling land. Recognizing that fact, the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization held a special workshop specifically for landlords in March.

Attendees heard a market update from Rob Froom, senior central hedge desk manager at United Grain Corporation; a snapshot of land values in Eastern Washington from Patrick Creagh, a senior appraiser from AgWest Farm Credit; and asked questions from a panel of landlords and tenants. Jolene Brown, a popular ag speaker, moderated the panel.

Market mayhem

Froom kicked off the landlord session by examining the current market (as of late February), which he called "the type of market you have to work at."

Several things are weighing wheat markets down, including inflation, a high U.S. dollar, the Russia-Ukraine war, and shipping problems through the Suez Canal. Froom explained that one-third of global shipping travels through the Suez Canal. Because of attacks by Houthi rebels, commercial ships are traveling around the Cape of Good Hope instead, which adds 20 days to the trip at a cost of \$1 million.

For many producers, the price of wheat is hovering close to the cost of production. Russia is still the price trendsetter, and Froom said they are forecast to have another year of record production, which if it happens, will further weigh on prices. Because of the low cost of wheat, customers are sourcing cheaper wheat outside the U.S., which is stagnating U.S. export demand. The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects the U.S. to export the lowest amount of wheat in nearly 50 years this marketing season, which ends May 31. The situation hasn't been helped by China's cancellation of soft red winter wheat sales in recent months.

"It's expensive to be a wheat farmer," Froom said. "Guys are choosing to plant other things."

Soft white wheat isn't doing much better. Sales are "scraping along." Japan, one of the main customers for soft white wheat, is at the slowest purchase pace in a decade. Froom pointed to dietary changes (more rice, less wheat)

and increased purchases of Canadian and Australian wheat. Corn prices are also weighing on the soft white wheat market.

What can growers do? Froom cautioned against being a reactive seller.

"Marketing grains off emotions is a recipe for disaster," he said.

Instead, growers should rely on predictable, seasonal patterns that influence price, including:

- Weather.
- Planting. When growers are out planting and seeding, they won't be marketing grain much, which means less hedge pressure.
- Harvest. If you are bringing grain to the elevator and so are neighbors, there's lots of grain available to sell.
- Global demand. Customers generally don't want to buy the tail end of old crop. Typically, new crop prices are cheaper, so customers will wait to buy new crop.

Other advice Froom gave includes using the weekly Commitments of Traders report and doing fundamental and technical analysis.

"Don't fight a bear market by putting your head in the sand and closing your eyes. Work with others to build a price. Too many people will wait and hope, and that is one of the worst strategies you can do," he said.

Froom is manager of United Grain Corporation's Profit Partner Program, which helps facilitate and educate producers in managing risk by providing access to global markets, market intelligence, and pricing tools. More information is at unitedgrain.com/products-and-services/ugc-profit-partner-program-purpose/. They are also on X (Twitter) at @UGCProfitPartner.

Land values continue to rise

The markets may be down, but the value of farmland in Eastern Washington is not. Creagh told attendees that dryland farm values are generally stable to increasing despite higher interest rates, high input costs, and lower commodity returns.

Comparing dryland prices over the last nine years in the Inland Empire, most categories showed an overall increase:

- In the low rainfall (12" or less) area, the average 2023 price per acre was \$827. Creagh explained that while

the average tends to bounce up and down, overall, it is generally increasing.

- In the medium rainfall (13"-17") area, the 2023 average price per acre was \$1,700. The trend line is fairly flat, but he explained that may be because the dataset is limited by size; there may be fewer acres available in that rainfall zone.
- In the high rainfall (18" and above) area, the average 2023 price was \$3,581 per acre, slightly below the 2022 average, although the overall trend is increasing. "I don't believe there's been a decrease in value from 2022," Creagh said. "I think it is a lack of available land."

Rainfall is the biggest impact to land values. Another major impact is the increasing interest in farmland that can be used for power production, like solar energy or a wind farm. Pastureland is generally valued less than cropland, but it follows the same overall upward trend with recreational land buyers influencing pasture values across the area.

Creagh also talked about lease structures. The two most common lease structures used on cropland are cropshare and cash rent. ►



Patrick Creagh, a senior appraiser from AgWest Farm Credit, told landlords that Eastern Washington farmland continues to rise in value.

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Under a cropshare lease, the landlord receives a percentage of the crop produced and shares some expenses with the tenant, usually set at one-third for the landlord and two-thirds to the tenant. It is common for the landlord to pay 100% of the property taxes and use the same split for crop insurance. A variation of a cropshare lease is a net share, where the landlord receives a lower ratio of the crop but shares no expenses with the tenant.

Under a cash rent lease, the landlord receives a cash payment with no sharing of the crop or input expenses. Creagh has also seen flex leases, where the lease is set up as a cash rent, but if grain prices go higher, so does the cash rent.

"The best lease is the one the landlord and tenant agree with," he said.

Finally, long-term leases can affect the marketability of cropland, especially if a farm property needs to be sold and has a long-term lease in place.

Panel

The landlord session finished up with a panel moderated by Brown, a noted ag speaker who specializes in family farm planning and conflict resolution. She had some advice on how to be a landlord of choice:

- A clear lease agreement should spell out who pays expenses and what type of expenses, the duration of the lease, how is land to be used, what are permitted activities, how and how frequently do you want to be communicated with. "If you as the landlord have specific things you want on the land, make sure it is clear in the lease," she said. "The more clarity you can give, the more they (tenants) appreciate it."
- Are you willing to share and does the tenant want to know things like historical informa-



Popular ag speaker Jolene Brown moderated a panel that included (sitting, from left) Eric Hille, a Ritzville farmer who leases from neighbors and family; Randy Suess, a retired Whitman County farmer who leases his family farm to nonfamily; Jim Whitman, a retired farmer from Benge who leases to nonfamily members; and Marie Denny, a farmer in Spokane County who leases land from family and nonfamily. Attendees asked the panel questions about being a landlord and a tenant.

tion of the land or the history of its soil health?

- What decisions do you want to be involved in?
- Who pays for property investments and improvements such as fencing, drainage measures, etc.?
- Have a fair rent structure based on the competition in the area. As you set rates, do you take into account the value the tenant brings to the land (and the value you as the landlord bring)?
- Recognize the work the tenants do and thank them. Does your lease represent their loyalty to you?

Brown also had advice on how to be a renter of choice:

- Be a member of grower associations.
- Be financially stable.
- Be willing to offer a plan on how you are going to use the land. What have you been planting? How will you control weeds? What will you use as fertilizer?
- Have recommendations and references from those you've worked for in the past.
- Be transparent in your communication. What are your plans for the property?

"A good renter will be thanking you, just as a good landlord will be thanking them," Brown said. "It's all about a relationship. You get to choose what kind of landlord you want to be. You get to choose what kind of renter you want to be."

Brown then introduced the panel of landlords and tenants and took questions from the audience. On the panel were Eric Hille, a Ritzville farmer who leases from neighbors and family; Randy Suess, a retired Whitman County farmer who leases his family farm to nonfamily; Jim Whitman, a retired farmer from Benge who leases to non-family members; and Marie Denny, a farmer in Spokane County who leases land from family and nonfamily. ■




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FSA examining CREP contracts

STATEWIDE AUDIT REVEALS ISSUES WITH MORE THAN 700 AGREEMENTS

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Following a months-long audit, the Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) office has announced that more than 500 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts in 21 counties may have been erroneously approved. Impacted producers were invited to join a call last month with FSA State Executive Director **Jon Wyss** to hear their options and ask questions. The call was followed up by a letter.

"I felt it important that you, as producers, didn't get a 'cold' letter in the mail that says, 'by the way, you have a contract with us, and it may be terminated,'" he said on the call. "I don't think you should be surprised by a cold letter without being able to talk, to ask questions, and know what's coming."



The statewide audit, which was initiated after a similar audit in Whatcom County last year, flagged 730 CREP contracts for review. While some contracts were found to be valid, 80 of them are being referred back to the county committee for outright termination because they are non-compliant with FSA and are ineligible for the CREP program, and 472 contracts are being reviewed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for compliance and will likely be revised. Producers whose contracts are found to have an issue will have three options:

- They can voluntarily terminate their CREP contract without penalty and go back to using their land as they see fit.
- They can terminate their contract without penalty and bid into another program, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or the Highly Erodible Land Initiative, without penalty.
- They can accept the contract modifications and remain in their current CREP contract.

In all cases, even in the 80 instances where the contracts are being terminated, producers will still receive their October 2024 payment.

Many of the problems date back to 2002 and include contracts approved on ineligible streams or ditches, ground located in other states, and buffer widths that exceed the maximum 180 feet allowed by FSA. In some cases, buffers can be wider than 180 feet, but those have to be justified and documented by NRCS as addressing a resource concern.

"CREP is a magnificent program. CREP is a program that FSA wants to keep and wants to keep people in," Wyss said. "It's a struggle when a line on a map is the driver for 80 contracts that have to be terminated."

Wyss explained that the program is functioning correctly; most of the errors seem to have occurred because of missing documents and the use of incorrect maps. Multiple agencies are involved with CREP contracts, but at the end of the day, FSA is responsible for verifying that the contract meets the criteria.

"We approve the contract and go forward. In that final audit, after it goes through its full process through the agencies, FSA is supposed to dot the 'i' and cross the 't,' and we missed dotting the 'i' and crossing the 't,'" he said. "The handshake was made, and I'm the one that's coming in and saying although we shook your hand, I have to notify you that you are under review. It's a hard pill to swallow. For me, I feel bad. I feel guilty because these producers relied upon us, and we made an error. I'm the one that has to look them all in the eye and announce this error, and it's painful, because it is such a magnificent program."

In order to ensure the same mistakes aren't made again, state FSA, NRCS, and Washington State Conservation Commission staff recently participated in a three-day training session on CREP. The state FSA is also rewriting the current state amendment so it is in compliance with national policy. During this process, Wyss said they've discovered some additional practices that could expand CREP opportunities and help fix other problems, such as the CRP cap in Douglas County. Wyss is confident that CREP will come out of this as a better program, although he acknowledges that producer skepticism is running high right now.

Of the 472 contracts that are being reviewed, 114 of them are in Whitman County, 85 in Walla Walla County, 64 in Columbia County, and 37 in Garfield County. Producers who received the notification letter should contact their county office for more information and further instructions. Those producers whose contracts are being revised

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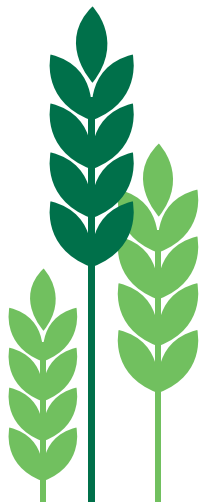
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will need to make a decision on what they are going to do by May 31.

When the errors were discovered, Wyss was adamant that producers wouldn't be required to pay any money back. He went all the way to the top, getting approval from senior U.S. Department of Agriculture officials.

"Our rules require that we are supposed to collect money back from erroneous contracts," he said. "No way I was going to look you in the eye and ask for money back. We enrolled you in a program, and, by the way, it was er-

roneous, and we need money back."

Wyss tried to find flexibility on which maps were used to determine eligibility or to allow the contracts on ineligible streams to go to completion, but those requests were denied. The official stream eligibility map is located at scc.wa.gov/programs/conservation-reserve-enhancement-program-crep.

"We will come out of this better and have more opportunities, but unfortunately, for opportunities to come, pain is going to be here for awhile," he told producers. ■



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Plot tours showcase research pipeline

Summer meetings are opportunity for growers to ask questions, see performance

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Variety performance may be the cornerstone of Washington State University's (WSU) summer plot tours, but there's a lot of other information also on offer for growers.

"While growers can get the information online, there's something tangible about being able to see the different varieties," said Clark Neely, WSU's cereal variety testing lead and an Extension agronomist. "It's also a good opportunity to ask questions. I'm at most of these field days, but often times, breeders will also be there, so if growers have real specific questions, they can ask (the breeders)."

For 2024, Neely and his team have 24 winter wheat testing sites and 18 spring wheat sites covering all of Eastern Washington's rainfall zones. There's no change in locations from last year, although the program does rotate through different grower cooperators. Neely said that while his program hasn't fundamentally changed, they have added some new trials. At both the irrigated site and the Dayton site, there are fall-planted spring wheat trials. They've added winter barley trials at all the high rainfall sites at the request of WSU barley breeder Bob Brueggeman. And some locations have trials that look beyond varietal testing.

"We have seeding rate trials for spring wheats at Horse Heaven, Farmington, St. John, and the Reardan sites. We've got, for the first time this year, seed size by seeding rate trials at three sites: Douglas, Creston, and Ritzville," Neely explained. "A lot of growers looked at our data last year and noticed that



June 2023 variety test plot tour at Mayview. Tim Murray (right) talks to growers about wheat diseases.

we embedded some treatments into trials where we had extra space. We had different seed size treatments of the variety Ryan. We saw some pretty consistent and noticeable differences and some visual differences they could tell on both height and heading date in addition to yield. There's plenty of other things to talk about besides just varieties at our plot tours."

WSU spring wheat breeder Mike Pumphrey is overseeing a spring wheat variety site at Edwall for the first time, but no plot tour for that site is planned for this year.

Attendance at the WSU testing plot tours has been going down, something Neely also saw at his previous variety testing job at Texas A&M (Neely joined the WSU team in 2019). He pointed to the shrinking number of farms as one culprit, and as farms get bigger, growers get busier, often turning to agronomists to get variety testing information.

"Another big culprit is private industry has stepped up their presence and are delivering information, so a lot of growers are getting information from private industry now. They are doing their own research and their own trials," he said.

The WSU Variety Testing Program relies on grower cooperators who donate land and resources to host the trials. Funding and support for the program also comes from the Washington Grain Commission. The most current information on the 2024 Variety Testing Plot Tour schedule can be found at smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety, including tour schedule and location maps. Neely can be emailed at clark.neely@wsu.edu. ■



2024

WSU Variety Testing Program PNW Crop Tour Schedule

The 2024 crop tour season will soon be starting and provides opportunities to view field trials and interact with Washington State University personnel. The list below provides an outline of when each small grain (other crops besides small grains will be clearly stated) variety tour will be offered in Washington. Please check with the contact listed prior to the tour to verify the time, location, and agenda or reach out to your local county wheat growers association or other co-sponsor. Location maps for the WSU Extension Cereal Variety Trials are available online at <http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety>.

We would like to thank the Washington Grain Commission for funding to support the trials and tours as well as the county wheat growers associations and co-sponsors for programs and meals associated with the field days. And lastly, a big thank you to all of the grower cooperators for their time and resources to host the variety trials. We look forward to seeing you in the field!

– Clark Neely, WSU Cereal Variety Testing

Date	Tour	Starting Location	Time	Contact
3-Jun	Horse Heaven	Horse Heaven Community Hall 37301 County Well Rd, Prosser, WA	8:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
3-Jun	Connell	46.601627, -118.586545	2:00 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
6-Jun	Adams County Crop Tour	47.2590062, -118.4508995	3:00 PM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
10-Jun	Harrington	47.401006, -118.400656	10:30 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
12-Jun	Moses Lake	47.114768, -119.010154	9:00 AM	Andy McGuire, 509-754-2011
12-Jun	WSU Weed Tour	Palouse Conservation Field Station, Pullman, WA	1:00 PM	Drew Lyon, 509-335-2961
11-Jun	Pendleton (OSU/ARS)	48037 Tubbs Ranch Rd, Adams OR 97810	8:00 AM	Debbie Sutor, 541-278-4405
12-Jun	Moro (OSU/ARS)	66365 Lone Rock Rd, Moro OR 97039	8:00 AM	Debbie Sutor, 541-278-4405
13-Jun	Lind Experiment Station Field Day	781 E. Experiment Station Road, Lind, WA	8:30 AM	Samantha Crow, 509-677-3671
14-Jun	Douglas County	47.610310, -119.984815	5:00 PM	Dale Whaley, 509-888-6352
17-Jun	Mayview	46.607572, -117.409327	10:00 AM	Mark Heitstuman, 509-243-2009
18-Jun	Wheat Academy Road Show	425 B St, Walla Walla, WA	9:45 AM	Rachel Wieme, 509-524-2685
19-Jun	Reardan	47.6945290, -117.9659950	9:00 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
TBD	Almira	McKay Seed, Almira, WA	TBD	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
20-Jun	Fairfield	Harvest Moon Restaurant, Rockford, WA	7:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
20-Jun	WSU Wilke Farm Field Day	47.656425, -118.131783	8:30 AM	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
21-Jun	Eureka (WSU/OSU)	46.2841394, -118.6537912	9:00 AM	Rachel Wieme, 509-524-2685
21-Jun	Walla Walla (WSU/OSU)	46.101129, -118.242495	1:00 PM	Rachel Wieme, 509-524-2685
21-Jun	W. Wheat Workers Field Tour	Blue Mountain Community College FARM building, Pendleton, OR	8:00 AM	
24-Jun	Spillman Farm Field Day	46.696113, -117.146961 (Sheaf Building)	3:00 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
25-Jun	St. John	47.081516, -117.518972	10:00 AM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
25-Jun	Farmington	47.034089, -117.056899	2:30 PM	Clark Neely, 814-571-5628
27-Jun	WSU Potato Field Day	Othello Research Station, 1471 W. Cox Rd	9:00 AM	Mark Pavcek, 509-335-6861
3-Jul	Bickleton	45.948259, -120.240402	1:00 PM	Hannah Brause, 509-773-5817

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact the coordination person listed under Contact above at the telephone number listed at least two weeks prior to the event. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.



Spring seeding in Lincoln County near Reardan. Photo by Lori Maricle, Washington Grain Commission.

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WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Ben Barstow



Across the state, the crops are in the ground, winter wheat is well on its way, spring crops are taking off or just emerging, and in a year like this one, I find myself wondering, “Will this crop pay the bills, or have I just spent a bunch of money I won’t ever get back?” I don’t recommend dwelling on those kind of thoughts very much; May is Mental Health Awareness Month, after all, and too much brooding over things you cannot know or cannot control is not good for your mental health.

If, like me, you find yourself wondering about paying the bills this year, I recommend taking some action instead of focusing on things beyond your control. Action doesn’t have to cost money like adding lighting and new tires and rims to your service truck, or adding video monitors and cameras to your combine, or worse yet, going to an auction. Instead, make plans to attend a variety testing field day or two or three or four. There are dozens to choose from. See page 37 for this year’s schedule. Make plans for next year’s crop or even for the 2027-28 crop. There are good things coming in future wheat varieties, and it doesn’t cost much to show up and see what will come up in the next few years.

If you are going to take in a variety testing field day, you might want to download the yield data from the Washington State University Wheat and Small Grains website (<https://bit.ly/WSU23VTP>) onto your phone so you can browse the yields as you browse the corresponding plots in the field. Comparing the two can be educational, and you might find some surprises. What did well in a dry year like last year may not be the best-looking thing in the field right now, and something that looks mediocre at this stage might be the one that has put the most bushels in the bin over the last three years.

The action you may take to distract yourself from today’s price situation will depend somewhat on whether you are an above- or below-average farmer.

All it took for me to become “above average” was time, and even with all the stupid mistakes along the way, I still managed to exceed the average principal farm operator age of 59.5. Once I accomplished that milestone and found myself still farming, a lot of things seemed to get better. I realize all those below-average-age farmers just think I’m old, and, technically, they are right, but technically, I am also ABOVE average.

Being an above-average-age farmer is a lot easier than you would think, and I highly recommend it. Being a below-average-age farmer is much harder because they do things like walk their fields with a backpack sprayer looking for Canadian thistle. They calibrate their yield monitors, shop for, buy, and actually use software. They even try new apps on their phones. Above-average-age farmers, like me, walk with a limp some days, calibrate our hearing aids, and shop for the best deal on ibuprofen and prescription drugs.

In the spirit of seizing any victory you can in times like these, I’m happy to be above average at something. Since becoming an above-average-age farmer, I found that I don’t worry nearly as much, and mistakes don’t bother me like they used to because being above average, I no longer hold the perception that I need to be perfect.

I’ve observed this perception with the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), too. I’ve lost track of how many have asked me what the commission is going to do to bring back wheat prices, and not always in jest. Believe me, we are open to suggestions. I wish raising the local wheat market price was as simple as a single press release.

This article will be going to press while I’m knocking on the doors of a couple of Vietnamese flour mills to tell them what a bargain our wheat is right now. The WGC works with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), which is the market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry, and I think of them as our overseas sales force. Our CEO, Casey Chumrau, and two other commissioners are attending the USW world staff conference in May. We’ve also launched a newsletter aimed at our worldwide customers to encourage them to buy, and we continue to bring in trade teams of buyers and end users. We are always on the lookout for ideas that will sell more wheat.

If you have any ideas, act! There are four commissioner positions up for re-election this year. Nomination petitions are mailed in mid-September from the Washington State Department of Agriculture to the growers in each district that has a seat up for election. This could be your opportunity to step in and help advance the small grains industry. Please, do so. I really miss selling above the cost of production! ■

Renewing the future of ag, energy

ACADEMY PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH HANDS-ON EXPLORATION OF STEM-RELATED CAREERS

By Kara Kaelber

Assistant Manager, Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts

In the heart of Washington state, where wheat fields stretch to the horizon and renewable energy powers communities, a unique partnership has blossomed to shape the future of agriculture and energy. The Benton and Franklin conservation districts, in collaboration with Benton PUD, the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), and a consortium of industry leaders and educational institutions, have pioneered the Tri-Cities Energy and Agriculture Career STEM Academy, a new initiative aimed at educating high school students about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-

related careers in agriculture and renewable energy.

Modeled after the successful Hydropower and STEM Academy hosted by Chelan PUD and the Foundation for Water and Energy Education in Wenatchee, the Tri-Cities Energy and Agriculture Career STEM Academy emerged from a pressing need to cultivate a skilled and diverse workforce capable of addressing the challenges of an aging agricultural community and ever-changing renewable energy technologies. Recognizing the critical intersection between agriculture and energy, the program aims to bridge the gap between young minds and rewarding STEM careers.

By partnering with industry professionals and academic advisors, the program's core mission is to provide high school students with a hands-on exploration of various STEM-related careers and a personalized approach to career development tailored to each student's interests, skills, and goals. From trade schools and apprenticeships to community colleges and four-year degrees, students learn about the multitude of pathways available to them for entering these dynamic fields.

Beyond providing students with practical skills and knowledge, the STEM Academy serves as a testament to the power of collaboration between industry, education, and conservation organizations. By fostering partnerships between these stakeholders, the program creates a holistic learning environment that equips students with the tools they need to succeed in these rapidly evolving career fields. Moreover, the STEM Academy plays a crucial role in nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders and innovators. In doing so, it ensures a brighter, more sustainable future for both the agricultural industry, renewable energy industry, and Eastern Washington.

Part of the WGC mission is long-term profitability and sustainability for the small grains industry, and education is one of the foundational strategic pillars that supports the mission. Partnering with the WGC to bring the new STEM Academy to the Tri-Cities fit with the commission's educational objective to cultivate the next generation through outcomes-based K-12 agricultural



Tri-Cities Energy and Agriculture Career STEM Academy student flying the drone he just built. Photo by Cristian Gonzalez.



Tri-Cities Energy and Agriculture Career STEM Academy students in the cooling tower at Energy Northwest. Photo by Cristian Gonzalez.

education curriculum and programming. The WGC also partners with the Franklin Conservation District to bring Washington fourth and fifth grade students the popular Wheat Week program. Providing additional learning opportunities for high school students is the next step in fostering an understanding of, and interest in, farming and agriculture in our state's youth.

In its inaugural year (June 2023), the STEM Academy welcomed 16 high school students from diverse backgrounds, representing multiple school districts across the region. Over the course of four days, these students embarked on a journey of discovery, engaging in hands-on activities such as building hydropower models, flying drones, and racing solar cars. Additionally, they embarked on educational field trips to prominent facilities including Ice Harbor Dam, CHS Sun Basin Growers grain terminal, and Energy Northwest's Columbia Generation Station.

Looking ahead, the STEM Academy aims to expand and enhance its curriculum to offer even more enriching opportunities for students. Plans for this year's STEM Academy include extending the program duration from four to five days and introducing exciting topics such as precision agriculture using drones and robotics for monitoring and harvesting produce, building model hydrogen cars, and touring Lamb Weston's Innovation Center. These additions will further immerse students in

the cutting-edge technologies and practices shaping the future of agriculture and renewable energy.

The Tri-Cities Energy and Agriculture Career STEM Academy for this year is scheduled to take place from June 24 to 28, hosted at the UA Local 598 Plumbers and Pipefitters Union in Pasco. Each student is required to pay a tuition fee of \$75, which will be reimbursed upon attendance for all days of the academy. On the final day of the program, students will engage in creating a comprehensive "high school and beyond" plan, focusing on a career path they have explored during the academy. The week will conclude with a luncheon, bringing together students, parents, and industry representatives to discuss career possibilities further, followed by a graduation ceremony and celebratory event.

The STEM Academy is aimed at educating and empowering an upcoming generation of leaders in agriculture and energy. By providing hands-on learning experiences, mentorship opportunities, and forging industry partnerships, this program exposes students to the essential skills, knowledge, and passion required to excel in the realms of agriculture, clean energy, and conservation management. As we cast our gaze towards the future, it becomes evident that initiatives such as the STEM Academy will remain pivotal in shaping a more sustainable and robust agricultural sector for future generations. ■

New varieties provide herbicide options

By Clark Neely

Extension Agronomist and Cereal Variety Testing Lead,
Washington State University

In 2023, the Washington State University (WSU) Extension Cereal Variety Testing Program (VTP) saw yet another expansion of testing — this time to accommodate a new pipeline of winter wheat varieties carrying the Axigen trait (denoted with an “AX” after the variety name) for the CoAXium system. Many Washington growers are no doubt familiar by now with this new program for applying Aggressor herbicide postemergence on winter wheat. The VTP began testing CoAXium winter wheat varieties in earnest in 2023, with only a handful of WSU experimental lines tested in 2022. These varieties were separated from the common soft white winter wheat trials and combined with Clearfield varieties

at each site to form their own trials. Below is a summary of their performance.

CoAXium winter wheat varieties

Limagrain has released a number of CoAXium varieties in just the past couple of years, some of which are already commercially available to growers. These include LCS Dagger AX, LCS Dragon AX, LCS Hydra AX, LCS Kraken AX, LCS Reaper AX, LCS Scorpion AX, LCS Eclipse AX (hard red winter), and LCS Helix AX (hard red winter). Based on 2023 data, LCS Scorpion AX had the best yield performance in the higher rainfall regions of all the soft white wheat Limagrain AX varieties. In the lower precipitation zones, LCS Kraken AX and LCS Scorpion AX tended to have better yield than other LCS CoAXium varieties.

In 2023, WSU released its first CoAXium soft white

Table 1. 2023 WSU Extension Clearfield/CoAXium Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=>20"									
	COLTON	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN	
Variety (HRW)	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu		%		
Sockeye CL+	130	95	119	143	122	127	61.4	10.3	
Piranha CL+	123	95	116	127	115	125	61.9	10.5	
LCS Shine (Check)	128	100	104	125	114	123	62.1	10.2	
Nova AX (WA8346 AX)	120	100	109	127	114	121	61.9	10.7	
VI Encore CL+ (UIL 17-7706 CL+)	128	92	113	122	114	118	62.2	10.9	
WA8345 AX	113	97	113	126	112	121	62.2	11.1	
Stingray CL+	122	90	109	121	110	121	61.0	11.4	
LCS Eclipse AX	108	93	107	125	108	--	60.8	10.4	
OR2190025CL+	125	79	113	115	108	110	61.4	11.2	
LCS Scorpion AX (LWWA19-0291)	110	84	105	122	105	--	61.6	11.0	
LCS Kraken AX	110	85	108	116	105	--	62.4	11.3	
WA8347 AX	113	88	105	112	105	110	63.7	11.3	
ORI2190027CL+	112	86	103	115	104	105	62.6	11.3	
LCS Dragon AX (LWWA19-0294)	113	87	105	107	103	--	63.4	11.2	
LCS Dagger AX	116	85	95	112	102	--	63.6	11.4	
Resilience CL+	109	84	104	111	102	115	62.3	11.4	
LCS Hydra AX	114	77	106	110	102	--	63.4	10.5	
VI Voodoo CL+	110	74	103	120	102	114	61.5	11.0	
UI Magic CL+	114	89	94	110	102	109	62.8	11.5	
LCS Reaper AX (LWWA19-0293)	119	80	103	102	101	--	63.2	11.6	
Battle AX	106	89	92	107	99	--	63.9	11.5	
WB4510CLP	103	85	93	96	94	--	65.2	11.2	
C.V.	6	7	6	5	4	5	0.4	1.9	
LSD (0.05)	10	9	9	8	3	3	0.2	0.1	
Average	115	88	106	117	106	117	62.5	11.0	

Precipitation Zone=16-20"									
	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN	
Variety (HRW)	Yield (Bu/A)				Lb/Bu		%		
Sockeye CL+	87	128	108	88	103	113	60.7	10.5	
OR2190025CL+	87	120	112	83	100	108	60.8	11.2	
Piranha CL+	82	122	110	83	99	108	61.3	10.8	
VI Encore CL+ (UIL 17-7706 CL+)	81	119	114	81	99	106	61.7	11.0	
VI Voodoo CL+	77	125	106	84	98	109	60.4	11.1	
LCS Scorpion AX (LWWA19-0291)	77	118	108	84	96	--	61.3	10.8	
Nova AX (WA8346 AX)	81	118	101	81	95	--	60.5	11.3	
LCS Shine (Check)	84	100	105	88	94	112	60.3	10.5	
Stingray CL+	77	113	107	79	94	107	60.3	11.7	
LCS Reaper AX (LWWA19-0293)	80	98	109	84	93	--	62.8	11.5	
LCS Eclipse AX	69	122	103	72	92	--	60.2	10.7	
LCS Dragon AX (LWWA19-0294)	76	105	104	82	92	--	62.7	11.3	
ORI2190027CL+	85	96	98	84	91	102	61.9	11.5	
LCS Kraken AX	79	112	92	77	90	--	61.4	11.6	
UI Magic CL+	73	111	98	74	89	99	62.1	11.8	
Resilience CL+	71	107	92	82	88	103	61.8	11.7	
LCS Hydra AX	71	111	87	78	87	--	62.9	10.8	
LCS Dagger AX	69	104	86	73	83	--	62.8	11.4	
WB4510CLP	69	99	97	64	82	--	64.4	11.0	
Battle AX	70	108	83	65	81	--	63.1	11.6	
C.V. %	4	6	7	5	6	6	0.8	2.7	
LSD (0.05)	4	9	9	5	4	3	0.3	0.2	
Average	78	111	100	80	92	107	61.7	11.2	

*Hard red winter wheat varieties italicized.

Table 1. 2023 WSU Extension Clearfield/CoAXium Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=12-16"									
	ANATONE	CRESTON	EUREKA	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety (HRW)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu		%	
Sockeye CL+	74	126	39	102	98	88	99	61.4	10.3
Piranha CL+	76	113	35	98	94	83	95	62.0	10.7
Nova AX (WA8346 AX)	77	106	36	90	97	81	92	61.4	10.9
WA8345 AX	74	105	38	95	92	81	91	61.8	11.0
Stingray CL+	75	100	33	102	93	81	89	61.1	11.4
LCS Shine (Check)	78	109	30	109	75	80	93	61.6	10.0
VI Encore CL+ (UIL 17-7706 CL+)	75	109	34	103	76	80	87	62.2	10.9
LCS Dragon AX (LWWA19-0294)	77	106	24	96	87	78	--	63.1	11.0
Kivari AX	71	111	32	91	83	78	--	63.0	10.4
LCS Scorpion AX (LWWA19-0291)	74	108	33	97	72	77	--	61.6	10.7
LCS Kraken AX	65	104	34	99	81	77	--	62.4	10.9
LCS Eclipse AX	77	87	37	95	80	75	--	60.2	10.4
VI Voodoo CL+	73	103	25	95	80	75	82	61.4	11.1
WB4510CLP	71	98	32	93	81	75	--	64.8	11.1
LCS Hydra AX	75	101	28	97	72	75	--	63.3	10.8
VI Presto CL+	73	91	34	96	77	74	82	62.7	11.5
LCS Helix AX	72	108	28	100	61	74	--	64.0	11.0
UI Magic CL+	79	102	23	95	70	74	80	62.6	11.6
LCS Reaper AX (LWWA19-0293)	76	102	26	100	63	73	--	63.0	11.3
WA8348 AX	72	100	31	86	77	73	86	63.1	11.5
Battle AX	75	90	28	96	75	73	--	63.5	11.1
LCS Dagger AX	75	97	21	100	68	72	--	63.2	11.2
WA8347 AX	75	98	32	78	73	71	83	63.3	11.2
Appleby CL+	74	97	30	96	60	71	78	62.2	11.5
ORI2190027CL+	75	95	27	94	66	71	82	62.2	11.2
Curiosity CL+	54	100	33	88	76	70	83	62.4	11.0
C.V.	6	7	8	4	11	8	7	0.8	3.3
LSD	6	10	4	6	12	4	3	0.3	0.2
Average	74	103	31	96	80	77	87	62.3	11.0

*Hard red winter varieties italicized.

See page 37 for a schedule of this year's Cereal Variety Testing Program plot tours. For the most up-to-date information, visit smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety.

Precipitation Zone=<12"									
	HARRINGTON	HORSE HEAVEN	LIND	RITZVILLE	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN	
Variety (HRW)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu		%	
Sockeye CL+	72	38	45	61	54	--	60.0	11.1	
LCS Shine (Check)	67	31	45	69	53	46	59.7	11.1	
Kivari AX	72	34	42	59	52	--	62.6	10.8	
LCS Eclipse AX	69	37	42	55	51	--	59.7	11.3	
Piranha CL+	58	36	42	58	49	43	60.5	11.6	
VI Encore CL+ (UIL 17-7706 CL+)	59	38	48	48	49	45	59.9	12.1	
LCS Kraken AX	61	34	44	52	48	--	59.8	11.9	
09PN118-02 CL2	63	35	36	53	47	41	59.3	12.3	
Stingray CL+	61	35	40	52	46	43	59.6	12.9	
LCS Hydra AX	58	35	35	60	46	--	61.4	11.6	
Nova AX (WA8346 AX)	62	31	36	54	46	--	59.0	12.1	
LCS Scorpion AX (LWWA19-0291)	60	35	28	55	45	--	61.1	11.8	
VI Presto CL+	58	33	36	56	45	41	61.7	12.3	
OR2190025CL+	59	32	35	55	45	39	59.3	12.4	
Curiosity CL+	57	36	34	49	44	37	61.6	11.7	
WB4510CLP	56	34	38	46	44	--	63.1	11.8	
LCS Dragon AX (LWWA19-0294)	54	28	34	57	43	--	61.7	12.0	
Appleby CL+	55	34	33	47	43	38	59.8	12.5	
LCS Reaper AX (LWWA19-0293)	52	27	30	61	43	--	61.5	12.4	
LCS Helix AX	46	26	37	64	42	--	63.1	12.2	
Mela CL+	56	35	34	46	42	37	61.0	12.2	
Battle AX	43	31	36	55	41	--	63.1	12.3	
LCS Dagger AX	38	27	21	56	36	--	61.4	13.0	
C.V.	9	7	9	8	9	8	1.1	3.6	
LSD	11	3	5	6	3	1	0.5	0.3	
Average	58	33	37	55	46	41	60.7	12.0	

IRRIGATED						
	MOSES LAKE	OTHELLO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety (HRW)	----Yield (Bu/A)----			Lb/Bu		%
LCS Eclipse AX	157	124	141	--	63.0	11.6
VI Encore CL+ (UIL 17-7706 CL+)	164	108	136	--	63.5	12.3
LCS Shine (Check)	155	109	132	141	63.3	11.1
WB4510CLP	158	104	131	--	66.2	12.2
Sockeye CL+	144	116	130	135	62.4	12.1
VI Voodoo CL+	153	98	125	--	62.4	12.2
Piranha CL+	138	113	125	131	62.5	12.3
Stingray CL+	147	102	125	128	62.0	12.3
LCS Hydra AX	151	96	123	--	63.7	12.8
LCS Dagger AX	150	91	120	--	64.0	12.5
LCS Reaper AX (LWWA19-0293)	139	93	116	--	63.2	12.6
C.V. %	4	5	5	5	0.8	2.1
LSD (0.05)	8	8	6	5	0.5	0.3
Average	148	104	126	134	63.0	12.2

Table 2. 2023 WSU Extension Soft White Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary (Table 2 con

IRRIGATED						
	MOSES LAKE	OTHELLO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD ¹	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety	---Yield (Bu/A)---		Lb/Bu	%		
LCS Blackjack	172	128	150	155	60.6	11.4
GS Bounty	174	124	149	149	61.2	12.4
AP Olympia (PN17MM604207)	170	122	146	--	62.8	12.1
TMC M-Press	155	135	145	139	61.9	11.6
LCS Hulk	159	126	143	146	62.1	11.9
LCS Shine	166	118	142	--	62.4	10.9
LCS Kamiak	166	117	141	139	61.4	11.8
AP Exceed	169	110	139	143	62.6	11.2
WB1922	162	115	139	--	62.2	12.9
TMC M-Pire	161	116	138	137	61.7	11.5
YSC-215	161	114	137	136	62.6	12.2
LWW19-6219	160	114	137	142	61.7	12.1
Inspire	150	123	137	136	60.4	12.6
AP Iliad	157	114	135	138	62.2	12.2
YSC-217	154	114	134	124	62.4	12.5
OR2160264	154	111	133	137	61.2	12.2
WB1621	157	107	132	--	64.0	12.0
OR2160243	156	107	131	135	61.4	11.9
LCS Jefe	153	109	131	138	61.2	10.9
Norwest Tandem	147	110	128	132	60.8	11.8
WB1720	150	104	127	--	61.0	12.7
YSC-93	148	103	125	122	62.0	12.3
SY Dayton	139	103	121	127	60.4	11.8
LCS Artdeco	138	99	119	135	59.7	11.4
C.V. %	4	6	3	6	0.6	1.6
LSD (0.05)	9	9	4	6	0.4	0.2
Average	156	113	135	137	61.4	11.9

¹Includes 2022 Mattawa site year.

*Club wheat varieties italicized.

Precipitation Zone=>20"									
	COLTON	FAIRFIELD	FARMINGTON	PULLMAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN	
Variety (Club)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu	%			
LCS Shine	136	103	109	123	118	125	61.9	10.3	
<i>Castella</i>	128	99	121	120	117	116	61.8	10.5	
Norwest Duet	117	97	124	127	116	125	61.2	10.8	
GS Bounty	119	94	118	130	115	124	61.6	10.6	
<i>Cameo</i>	124	98	118	120	115	121	61.0	11.4	
LCS Jefe	113	98	121	127	115	121	62.1	9.3	
Inspire	129	91	123	115	115	126	60.8	10.8	
LCS Blackjack	121	93	113	126	113	124	59.8	10.6	
TMC M-Press	117	95	116	124	113	117	62.0	10.6	
LCS Hulk	121	97	118	115	113	121	61.9	11.1	
AP Olympia (PN17MM604207)	119	89	115	125	112	--	62.6	11.0	
Purl	122	93	114	118	112	118	62.2	10.8	
AP Exceed	118	97	113	119	112	122	62.7	10.2	
YSC-93	114	95	115	119	111	121	61.7	10.7	
AP Iliad	122	89	113	119	111	117	61.7	10.8	
Norwest Tandem	121	95	113	113	110	118	61.3	10.8	
TMC M-Pire	122	87	115	118	110	114	62.2	10.4	
LWW19-6219	118	92	117	113	110	120	61.8	11.5	
SY Dayton	115	91	111	120	109	118	61.9	10.3	
WB1621	116	93	116	112	109	118	63.7	10.6	
<i>ARS09X500CBW</i>	117	85	111	120	108	117	63.3	10.5	
LCS Kamiak	122	81	118	112	108	120	61.9	11.2	
SY Assure	122	87	108	114	108	117	62.8	10.9	
VI Frost	116	90	109	115	107	--	61.8	11.4	
Nimbus	116	83	112	115	106	117	61.9	11.5	
Rydrych MZ	106	91	108	114	105	115	62.2	11.3	
LCS Artdeco	107	78	108	120	103	--	60.5	10.3	
YSC-215	107	86	105	115	103	118	62.8	10.5	
WB1922	101	83	113	115	103	--	62.4	11.9	
WB1720	104	91	110	104	102	112	61.7	11.8	
<i>ARS-Crescent</i>	104	87	103	105	100	111	61.1	10.6	
C.V.	7	6	4	4	4	6	0.7	1.9	
LSD (0.05)	11	7	7	6	3	3	0.3	0.1	
Average	118	91	114	117	110	119	61.7	10.8	

winter wheat variety, Nova AX (previously WA8346 AX). This variety is broadly adapted and is the number one "AX" line for yield in two out of four precipitation zones. LCS Kraken AX and Nova AX both have solid agro-nomic packages based on the current ratings available, which make them broadly adapted and even well suited for the Highway 2 corridor including Douglas County. LCS Kraken AX has a slight advantage over Nova AX for stripe rust, while Nova AX has a slight advantage over LCS Kraken AX for snow mold. While LCS Kraken AX is already widely available for growers, certified seed availability for Nova AX is still another year or two out.

For growers looking to grow a hard red winter CoAXium variety, LCS Eclipse AX showed about a 10-bushel-per-acre yield advantage over the other hard red winter AX variety, Battle AX, in the high rainfall areas. It also outperformed Battle AX and LCS Helix AX below 16 inches of precipitation, though Kivari AX, a Colorado State University variety marketed by PlainsGold, came out on top numerically and had one of the best test weights in the trial overall.

Clearfield winter wheat varieties

Sockeye CL+ had a banner year in 2023, taking the

Continued on next page)

Precipitation Zone=16-20"									
	DAYTON	MAYVIEW	ST. JOHN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD ²	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN	
Variety (Club)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
LCS Kamiak	87	128	139	86	111	114	61.4	10.9	
LCS Blackjack	78	128	130	78	103	112	59.4	11.1	
GS Bounty	83	128	120	83	103	111	60.2	11.4	
TMC M-Press	85	127	119	80	102	110	61.1	10.9	
TMC M-Pire	78	127	123	80	102	109	62.0	10.9	
WB1922	78	133	109	83	101	--	62.7	11.4	
LCS Hulk	79	122	120	81	101	108	61.8	11.2	
AP Olympia (PN17MM604207)	75	129	119	75	100	--	61.7	11.1	
Norwest Duet	75	117	120	86	100	107	61.1	10.9	
LWW19-6219	78	120	114	83	99	107	61.4	11.5	
Purl	79	121	118	78	99	107	61.7	10.8	
LCS Jefe	72	130	109	85	99	108	61.6	10.1	
Inspire	72	130	110	81	98	102	60.0	11.1	
WB1621	76	126	119	72	98	105	62.7	10.8	
<i>Cameo</i>	67	127	119	78	98	104	59.7	11.9	
Norwest Tandem	76	128	109	77	98	106	61.3	10.7	
YSC-93	75	118	114	82	97	106	61.0	10.9	
AP Iliad	73	135	112	69	97	102	61.2	11.1	
VI Frost	76	125	110	74	97	--	61.5	11.7	
AP Exceed	75	125	119	71	97	107	61.7	10.7	
SY Assure	77	119	111	80	96	105	62.3	11.4	
LCS Shine	81	118	106	81	96	109	60.5	10.4	
WB1720	70	131	103	75	94	103	61.9	11.4	
SY Dayton	69	129	103	76	94	104	61.4	11.0	
Nimbus	74	111	112	75	93	101	61.2	11.3	
<i>ARS09X500CBW</i>	69	130	101	74	93	103	62.0	11.5	
LCS Artdeco	73	114	104	79	92	--	59.9	10.5	
Rydrych MZ	67	120	96	76	90	101	61.9	11.3	
<i>Castella</i>	71	94	107	74	87	87	61.1	11.0	
YSC-215	63	119	95	63	85	94	62.0	11.0	
<i>ARS-Crescent</i>	64	106	93	71	84	92	60.3	11.4	
C.V. %	5	6	8	4	5	7	0.8	2.1	
LSD (0.05)	5	11	12	5	3	3	0.3	0.2	
Average	74	123	112	77	97	105	61.2	11.0	

²2-year yield average excludes Walla Walla 2022.

*Club wheat varieties italicized.

number one spot in every single dryland precipitation zone for yield, which was also true on the two-year average. Piranha CL+ was generally right there with it, coming in second in most cases. These sister lines from the WSU breeding program have very solid agronomic packages, allowing them to be grown in most production areas of Washington, though Sockeye CL+ has better stripe rust resistance compared to Piranha CL+. VI Encore CL+ is a new release from the joint Varsity Idaho breeding program between University of Idaho and Limagrain. It generally came in above average for yield at most sites, but behind Sockeye CL+ and Piranha CL+.

Precipitation Zone=12-16"									
	ANATONE	CRESTON	EUREKA	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety (Club)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%		
LCS Blackjack	73	107	24	118	101	85	90	60.5	11.0
WB1621	73	109	25	101	114	85	--	63.8	10.6
Norwest Tandem	72	105	27	115	95	83	92	61.8	10.9
LCS Shine	80	102	22	110	98	82	92	61.8	10.1
LWW19-6219	82	96	29	114	87	81	91	62.0	11.3
Norwest Duet	74	99	30	106	96	81	94	61.7	11.0
TMC M-Pire	75	97	27	103	103	81	89	62.3	10.7
<i>Castella</i>	78	98	23	101	104	81	92	62.1	10.6
TMC M-Press	74	98	29	99	103	80	92	61.6	10.6
GS Bounty	79	99	29	101	93	80	90	61.7	11.1
AP Exceed	82	105	26	101	87	80	91	62.3	10.7
LCS Hulk	79	105	27	101	87	80	87	62.5	11.3
LCS Jefe	83	98	26	108	84	80	92	61.9	10.3
VI Frost	75	102	5	105	112	80	84	61.8	12.1
YSC-93	74	95	30	98	101	80	88	62.0	10.9
WA8364	72	93	26	106	101	79	85	63.4	11.2
AP Olympia (PN17MM604207)	78	101	23	109	86	79	--	62.8	10.9
Jameson	67	101	28	98	92	77	--	61.9	11.0
LCS Kamiak	77	101	24	111	70	77	87	61.8	11.5
WB1922	70	93	25	104	91	76	--	63.1	11.9
Rollie	63	104	28	100	84	76	89	63.1	10.5
Nimbus	71	92	22	96	94	75	84	61.9	11.5
WB1720	75	92	22	94	91	75	--	62.1	11.7
<i>ARS12X097-12C</i>	67	93	24	90	95	74	86	61.5	11.1
OR5180071	69	82	26	89	93	72	80	62.5	11.0
<i>ARS-Crescent</i>	70	84	22	88	91	71	83	61.7	11.1
YSC-215	73	87	18	92	82	71	79	62.9	11.0
<i>Pritchett</i>	75	85	19	94	79	71	88	62.1	11.6
AP Iliad	78	91	27	93	51	68	79	61.2	11.2
Devote	62	89	24	92	70	67	83	63.4	11.2
Otto	55	77	23	87	77	64	77	61.9	11.7
C.V.	6	6	10	5	14	8	8	0.8	4.3
LSD	6	8	3	7	17	4	3	0.3	0.3
Average	73	96	24	101	89	77	87	62.1	11.1

While VI Encore CL+ has weaker ratings for emergence and aluminum tolerance, its good stripe rust resistance and stiff straw make it a possible option to blend with Sockeye CL+ or Piranha CL+ under high production situations due to their weaker straw. VI Voodoo CL+ performed the best in the 16-20-inch precipitation zone in 2023; however, growers are cautioned not to push this variety too far north as significant winter injury occurred in producer fields and variety trials in 2024.

Metribuzin-tolerant winter wheat varieties

For growers dealing with herbicide-resistant weedy

Table 2. 2023 WSU Extension Soft White Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Precipitation Zone=<12"								
	HARRINGTON	HORSE HEAVEN	LIND	RITZVILLE	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD ³	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety (Club)	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----				Lb/Bu		%	
Norwest Tandem	77	35	31	57	50	44	59.9	11.6
LCS Shine	76	30	29	63	50	45	59.1	10.7
WB1922	71	36	35	55	49	--	61.5	12.1
Norwest Duet	71	38	33	55	49	42	59.9	11.7
Rollie	72	39	35	50	49	43	61.0	10.9
LCS Jefe	83	33	27	53	49	42	59.7	10.8
WB1621	77	31	35	52	49	--	60.7	11.0
Jameson	65	36	38	53	48	39	60.4	11.4
WB1720	74	36	28	53	48	--	61.1	11.8
WA8332	65	37	33	54	47	42	58.8	11.9
Nimbus	70	36	32	52	47	41	60.1	11.9
<i>Castella</i>	77	31	30	52	47	41	59.0	11.3
GS Bounty	74	37	30	48	47	--	59.1	12.1
LCS Hulk	66	38	30	53	47	41	60.2	11.8
TMC M-Pire	68	36	29	55	47	--	61.0	11.2
AP Exceed	72	35	30	49	46	--	59.7	10.9
AP Dynamic	63	35	33	54	46	41	58.7	11.4
TMC M-Press	70	37	33	41	45	41	60.0	11.5
<i>Pritchett</i>	69	31	31	51	45	41	60.7	11.5
Devote	57	32	34	54	44	41	61.6	11.6
YSC-93	64	36	31	45	44	38	59.7	11.9
LCS Kamiak	61	34	25	55	44	41	59.2	12.1
Windust (WA8362)	68	33	34	36	43	--	59.2	12.1
YSC-215	66	35	28	41	42	37	60.5	11.7
VI Frost	74	31	23	40	42	38	61.0	13.5
Otto	51	32	29	50	40	38	60.4	12.1
<i>ARS-Crescent</i>	62	29	22	43	39	37	59.2	11.8
C.V.	7	5	8	7	9	9	1.3	3.5
LSD	6	3	3	5	3	2	0.5	0.3
Average	69	34	31	50	46	41	60.0	11.7

³Excludes 2022 data due to late plants from dry fall.

*Club wheat varieties italicized.

grasses, a new variety released by WSU may provide another option for control. Rydrych MZ, previously named ARS Selbu 2.0 in the WSU variety trials, was identified as a superior variety in trials screening for metribuzin tolerance. Winter wheat varieties can vary on their tolerance to Metribuzin, and so growers applying this

product on their wheat often use a lower rate to reduce the risk of injury to the crop. This variety allows growers to apply the highest labelled rate of Metribuzin without fear of crop injury. While yield potential is not as high for this variety as other soft white wheat varieties, it was released primarily to give growers another tool to clean up weedy fields.

Other new common winter wheat varieties

Two new soft white wheat varieties named in 2024 include AP Olympia (PN17MM604207) from AgriPro and Windust (WA8362) from WSU. AP Olympia generally landed two-to-three-bushels per acre above the trial average for yield. Available ratings are limited so far for this new variety, but early indications are that it has very good cold tolerance and stripe rust resistance. Windust was released specifically targeting low rainfall, deep furrow planting as it has superior emergence. It also possesses strong cold tolerance, stripe rust resistance, and snow mold tolerance. Growers should note that this nonsemidwarf variety will give up some grain yield potential compared to other varieties to gain the excellent emergence.

In nearly every instance, LCS Missile came out on top compared to LCS Blackbird in the 2023 hard red winter variety trials. It also had a one-to-two-pound-per-bushel better test weight. Gemini (WA8310) was released by WSU in 2023 and appears best adapted to the 12-16-inch precipitation zone. Yield dipped slightly in 2023 after landing near the top of the trial for this zone in 2021 and 2022. Compared to Scorpio, Gemini tends to have better test weight and lower protein.

To view additional ratings and the full results from these trials, please visit smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/2023-variety-data/. When possible, always use multiple years and locations within a region to better gauge the adaptation and yield stability of a particular variety. And lastly, all WSU field days are listed on the WSU Small Grains Extension website, which is at smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/. ■

Acknowledgements: Funding for the WSU Extension Uniform Cereal Variety Testing Program is provided by the Washington Grain Commission. Variety trials are made possible by the contribution of land and time from farmer cooperators where the trials are located.

Table 3. 2023 WSU Extension Hard Red Winter Wheat Variety Trial Summary

IRRIGATED						
	MOSES LAKE	OTHELLO	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety	---Yield (Bu/A)---		Lb/Bu		%	
LWH19-5663	161	119	139	147	62.9	12.8
LCS Jet	153	124	139	149	63.0	12.3
LCS Blackbird (LWH18-0122)	154	116	137	148	62.6	12.7
LCS Rocket	153	119	137	147	62.3	12.0
Keldin	154	120	136	137	64.6	12.7
WA8340	149	114	132	126	61.6	13.0
Milestone	159	102	132	--	63.7	12.7
LCS Missile (LWH19-0192)	155	108	130	138	63.4	12.8
WA8368	152	109	130	134	62.5	13.0
WB4303	150	107	129	139	63.6	12.8
Scorpio	149	107	129	--	62.2	12.9
WA8369	145	111	127	133	63.7	12.5
Kairos	146	108	127	139	62.5	12.8
LCS Evina	144	105	124	--	62.1	14.1
Canvas	140	106	124	132	65.6	12.7
WB4394	144	91	118	132	65.0	13.1
WB4311	132	94	113	--	64.6	13.8
C.V. %	3	7	2	7	0.6	1.7
LSD (0.05)	7	11	3	7	0.4	0.2
Average	149	111	130	138	63.5	12.7

Precipitation Zone=>16"							
	DAYTON	PULLMAN	WALLA WALLA	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----			Lb/Bu		%	
LWH19-5663	85	132	81	100	106	61.6	11.8
LCS Missile (LWH19-0192)	86	129	82	99	110	61.9	11.8
LCS Rocket	85	138	77	99	112	60.7	11.5
Keldin	84	128	81	97	107	63.3	11.7
LCS Blackbird (LWH18-0122)	82	126	79	96	109	60.5	12.3
Scorpio	83	121	84	96	112	61.5	12.4
LCS Jet	81	127	74	93	108	61.3	12.0
WA8340	78	124	77	93	100	60.1	11.5
WB4303	81	117	79	92	106	61.6	12.3
LCS Evina	80	119	80	92	--	61.0	13.3
WB4394	83	113	77	92	105	63.4	12.1
Milestone	81	117	76	91	--	61.5	12.0
Kairos	80	119	73	91	106	61.3	12.1
WA8369	77	117	78	91	103	62.2	11.9
WA8368	79	107	82	89	106	61.5	12.3
WB4311	81	108	72	87	97	63.4	12.6
Canvas	75	112	70	87	96	64.0	11.6
C.V. %	4	4	4	7	6	0.9	3.1
LSD (0.05)	5	7	4	5	3	0.4	0.3
Average	81	120	79	93	106	61.9	11.9

Precipitation Zone=12-16"								
	ANATONE	EUREKA	LAMONT	REARDAN	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----					Lb/Bu		%
Keldin	80	43	110	96	82	92	63.6	11.4
LWH19-5663	71	35	113	97	79	92	61.7	11.7
WB4311	83	32	106	95	79	87	63.7	12.3
Scorpio	72	36	99	109	79	96	62.2	11.9
WB4394	70	32	111	98	78	91	63.9	12.2
LCS Missile (LWH19-0192)	75	32	102	97	77	92	62.9	11.7
LCS Jet	80	25	103	95	76	92	61.9	12.3
Whistler	69	36	101	93	75	88	63.2	11.1
WB4303	74	27	113	84	74	88	61.8	12.3
Gemini (WA8310)	69	39	91	95	73	89	62.8	11.5
LCS Rocket	76	33	100	82	73	90	60.4	11.6
LCS Blackbird (LWH18-0122)	73	28	100	86	72	85	60.7	12.4
LCS Evina	71	41	91	84	72	--	61.6	13.4
Guardian	61	33	98	91	71	80	64.1	11.8
Canvas	68	29	105	79	70	84	64.5	11.4
Milestone	71	32	97	81	70	--	62.1	11.8
WA8367	74	33	86	75	67	85	64.1	12.3
C.V.	5	8	4	9	7	7	1.1	2.9
LSD	5	4	6	11	4	3	0.5	0.2
Average	72	33	101	90	74	89	62.6	11.9

Precipitation Zone=<12"							
	HORSE HEAVEN	LIND	RITZVILLE	AVERAGE YIELD	2-YR AVG YIELD	AVERAGE TEST WEIGHT	AVERAGE GRAIN PROTEIN
Variety	-----Yield (Bu/A)-----			Lb/Bu		%	
Whistler	36	45	67	51	40	62.2	11.6
WB4303	32	40	66	48	--	60.5	12.6
Guardian	31	49	59	46	39	61.9	12.5
Keldin	39	39	60	46	38	61.3	12.3
Canvas	29	41	66	45	38	62.3	11.9
Scorpio	37	42	51	44	38	60.5	12.6
LCS Jet	34	45	53	44	37	59.8	13.2
WB4311	33	32	62	43	37	61.4	12.9
LCS Missile (LWH19-0192)	36	43	50	43	38	59.8	12.9
WB4394	33	36	61	43	35	61.1	12.7
Gemini (WA8310)	36	37	47	41	36	60.5	13.0
Sequoia	36	36	51	40	--	61.0	12.1
LCS Blackbird (LWH18-0122)	34	31	53	39	35	58.6	13.2
C.V. %	5	7	8	10	10	1.1	3.4
LSD (0.05)	2	4	6	3	2	0.5	0.3
Average	35	39	56	43	37	60.8	12.6

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

IGC forecasts lower trade activity in 2024-25



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Based on International Grains
Council (IGC) data, world wheat pro-
duction for the 2024-25 marketing year

will be the second highest on record and just 0.6% below the 2022-23 production record. The current forecast is about 1% larger than 2023-24 marketing year production (Figure 1). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will not release their updated 2024-25 market year estimates until the June 2024 World Agricultural Supply Demand Estimates (WASDE).

Both Russia and Ukraine are expected to harvest less wheat in 2024-25 compared to this year, but combined, they will still represent over 14% of global wheat production. The largest wheat producer in 2024-25 is projected to be India (with a year-over-year increase in wheat production of almost 2%), followed by China, and then Russia.

The EU as a block is expected to experience a decrease in total wheat production of 3.3% in 2024-25, and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) combined are projected to have a 2% year-over-year decline. Africa and the Near East are expected to match last year's wheat production, with all other regions projected to exceed wheat production from the 2023-24 marketing year.

Among the major wheat exporters, Australia is expected to experience the largest year-over-year increase in wheat production with a forecast increase of 15%. Argentine production is expected to increase 13%. The U.S. and Canada are forecast to increase production 7% and 6%, respectively, in 2024-25.

Combining the 2024-25 production forecast with the 2023-24 world wheat ending stocks, total world supply is expected to decline by 0.8% next year. World wheat consumption is also expected to decline, but at a reduced rate compared to the production decline. This leads to world ending stocks for the 2024-25 marketing year declining about 1.9% compared to the 2023-24 marketing year (IGC uses a July through June marketing year, so their forecast of world wheat ending stocks are those stocks on hand on June 30. USDA calculates marketing

Figure 1: World Wheat Production (in million bushels)

EU	5,357.14
CIS	5,246.91
North & Central America	3,303.20
South America	1,157.41
Near East Asia	1,620.37
Far East Asia	10,537.92
Africa	962.67
Oceania	1,120.66
WORLD TOTAL	29,313.64

year ending stocks as of May 31 each year).

IGC is currently forecasting a decline in world wheat trade for 2024-25 and the lowest trade activity in the last four years (Figure 2). Among the major exporting countries, wheat exports for the 2024-25 year are expected to exceed levels of the previous year for Argentina (up 15%), Australia (up 7.5%), Canada (up 7%), and the U.S. (up almost 13%). All other exporters are projected to either decrease export activity in 2024-25 or maintain the previous year's export levels. Among prominent U.S. customers, total wheat imports for 2024-25 are expected to be up for Mexico, flat for Japan and Vietnam compared to this year's levels, and down slightly for South Korea and the Philippines.

Even with an expected decline of over 7.5% in Russian wheat exports next market year, Russia will still be the largest global wheat exporter. Russian wheat exports are projected to account for 24.4% of all global exports in 2024-25. The next largest export volume is expected to come from the EU, accounting for almost 16% of world trade. The U.S. is forecast to account for about 11% of world wheat exports.

Despite a more bullish international wheat balance sheet for 2024-25 compared to the 2023-24 marketing year, U.S. prices are projected to be significantly lower in the coming year. Back in February 2024, USDA forecast a 2024-25 marketing year price for U.S. wheat of \$6 per bushel. This compares to the current forecast for the 2023-24 marketing year of \$7.10 per bushel. However, the current market year price of \$7.10 is down from earlier

forecasts. In February, USDA estimated a 2023-24 price of \$7.20, and in March, forecast a marketing year price of \$7.15. Given the marketing year is about over, it is unlikely we will see any additional price reductions for this year in the May WASDE.

Market activity this spring seems consistent with the forecast of lower U.S. prices in the coming marketing year. Figure 3 shows the December futures prices for soft red winter wheat for December 2024 (half way through next marketing year) compared to last year's prices for the 2023 December contract. While prices improved a bit in April, for most of the year, they have consistently trailed last year's December futures by about \$1 per bushel.

As of mid-April, wheat prices from most exporters were down between 18 and 28% compared to year-ago levels. The largest year-over-year price decline was reported for Argentinian wheat. Global price volatility is generally lower than year-ago levels as well, with the exceptions of Australian wheat prices and U.S. prices for hard red winter wheat. Australian wheat price volatility was up about 25% compared to last year towards the end of April, and U.S. wheat price volatility was up about 7% compared to last year.

Last fall, Washington producers experienced a relatively strong basis compared to the five-year average for soft white winter wheat. If the Washington wheat crop does well this year, basis could be weaker fall 2024 compared to 2023, so Washington producers may face not only lower national prices, but lower relative prices compared to national prices as well. Crop progress reports though late April 2024 put Washington crop conditions just slightly above 2023 levels for the same time period.

Even with a tighter world wheat balance sheet for the 2024-25 marketing year, current market activity suggests that Pacific Northwest wheat producers may need to be a bit more conservative in pricing their 2024 production compared

Figure 2: World Wheat Exports

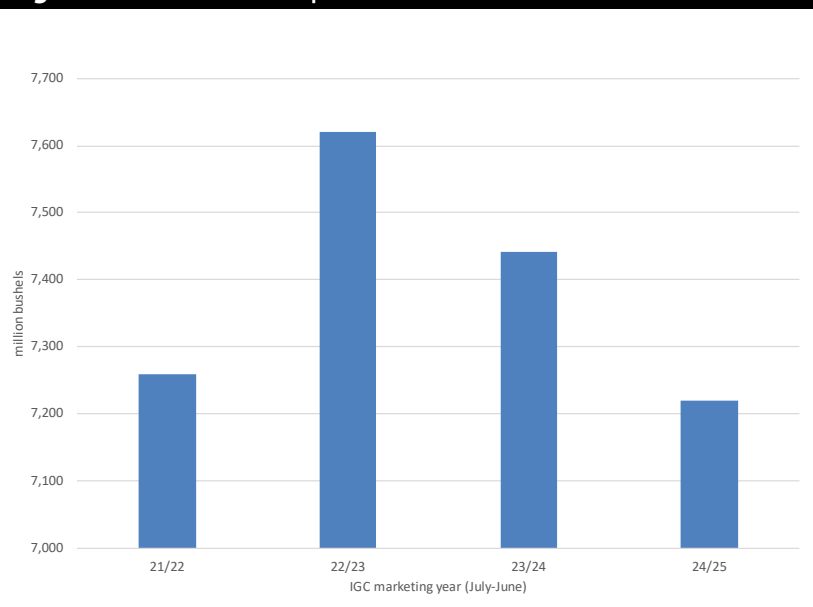
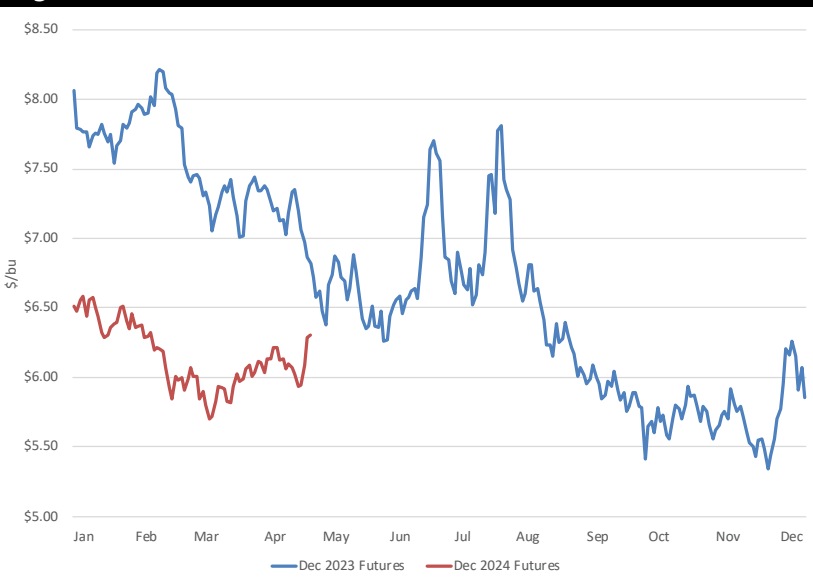


Figure 3: December Soft Red Wheat Futures Prices



to last year. However, it is early enough in the season that even with the possibility of lower average prices next market year, one may not want to be too aggressive in forward pricing until more is known about the current crop.

The market appears to be discounting any disruptions in wheat trade resulting from either conflict in the Black Sea or the Middle East. If the geopolitical environment becomes less stable, it could lead to higher commodity prices, including prices for wheat. ■

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

Trip shines light on legislative process

By Samantha Holling

2024 Washington Wheat Ambassador

In January, I was given the opportunity to accompany the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) to Olympia where we lobbied for our wheat farmers at the state level. Throughout this trip, I was able to meet and converse with legislators, have an in-person experience on how our government operates, and meet so many people. These interactions allowed me to make new, beneficial connections with the people in the agriculture industry.



I have done a lot of traveling the past four years for various things like sports and FFA. Through these experiences, I always knew what was going to happen. All the events were laid out, and I knew exactly what to be prepared for. However, this trip to Olympia was different. I had no idea what to expect. I had talked to past ambassadors, Shaley Tiegs and Angelina Widman, in an attempt to get a sense of what I was going to encounter on this trip. These conversations certainly helped to get me more pre-

pared than I was before, but still no certainty. They gave me the main layout of what the trip was all about, passing out cookies, meeting with legislators, and informing and educating others about what WAWG is all about.

Attending Olympia days with WAWG was certainly eye opening. I had never been to Olympia before, so seeing that, in itself, was an exciting experience. The first morning we passed out beautiful frosted sugar cookies in the shape of a wheat bundle while we explained what WAWG was all about. People were drawn to these stunning pieces of art laid out on the table, which gave us the perfect opportunity to inform them all about the wheat industry. Topics that were commonly covered were how wheat is grown, what WAWG is, and how their food gets on the table. While some individuals were just there for a free cookie, some were actually invested in learning more about wheat. I loved this opportunity to interact with people and inform them about the wheat that is grown across the state and on my family farm.

The 2024 Legislative Session was a shorter one, but of much importance for agriculture. Bills were discussed with legislators that could have an immense impact on the agriculture industry beyond Washington's borders. The lack of fuel exemptions for farmers, preserving the lower



Snake River dams, and a seasonal exemption for overtime pay were a couple of the main issues that were discussed. All of these topics have had a huge impact on our agriculture industry in Washington.

On the way to my first meeting with Sen. Perry Dozier, I was still unsure of what to expect and was nervous. I felt much better when he started talking, and I realized he wants to hear what we have to say. I got the opportunity to talk about where I was from, my family farm, and what I do as a wheat ambassador. Sen. Dozier also gave me some advice about how I can contribute when talking to other legislators in terms of talking about experiences on my family farm, and how these bills can affect it, in both positive and negative ways.

Throughout the rest of the meetings, I learned so much. I became more comfortable and confident discussing these topics with legislators. I learned how to connect my personal experiences on the family farm to these bills, and how I have seen their effect directly. It was truly insightful to see that, in some cases, we were educating the senators and representatives about the bills and how they affect wheat production across the state. It was also encouraging to see their interest in the topics, and how they wanted to help us in our mission. Overall, the meetings were successful. Those we spoke with were not only eager to hear from us, but receptive to what WAWG had to say.

Our trip to Olympia was insightful to say the least. Before, I was unaware of how the legislative system operated. Now, I know not only the workings of the system, but how to make an attempt to create a positive impact on the system that has the ability to assist our farmers in everyday operations. Advocating for agriculture is something I am extremely passionate about, but this was an opportunity to influence state representatives and senators that I had no idea I could ever be influencing. Seeing the way that members of the association presented agriculture to the legislators was very beneficial to me.

This was an experience I will value for the rest of my

life. I expanded my knowledge on agriculture, and got the opportunity to develop my communication skills through advocating and educating others. WAWG also showed me the importance of advocating for agriculture by educating those who are not as aware of the way these bills can affect farmers. I also gained more insight on how WAWG serves our farmers by taking assertive action on making a positive difference. I will take the knowledge acquired through this experience and apply it in an attempt to make a positive impact on those in my life. ■

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Opportunities for growth come from planning

By Dr. David Kohl
President, AgriVisions, LLC

It is amazing how time flies and seems to accelerate as one grows older. When looking out the windshield, the quarter-century mark is approaching quickly. It seems like only yesterday we were discussing preparation for Y2K when the clock was going to strike midnight and computer systems would shut down.

As we approach 2025, the opportunity for business and personal prosperity will not be dependent on size, type of enterprise, or the next “big thing.” Hemp, llamas, emus, and now green energy all have had the “next big thing” exposure and are sometimes oversold. Success for business and personal prosperity in the future will be about being a five percenter, or going the extra mile. When compared to their peers, these producers are just a little bit better in many areas of their business, such as production, marketing, risk management, finance, human resources, and



operational efficiency, while still being effective. This must be mastered while maintaining focus on core values, goals, and vision. In summary, there are no traffic jams in the extra mile!

What do the producers who go the extra mile often do that others fail to achieve? In short, they exert extra effort by being a little bit better in many areas. The extra mile will make you a “lone wolf,” or in statistical terms, a standard deviant. In some cases, you may need to benchmark your business using key performance indicator (KPI) trends of your own business to achieve incremental success.

The “extra milers” have written goals for their business, family, and personal life. In terms of personal life, they have goals to support their physical, mental, and spiritual health. A survey of the producers at this year’s Executive Program for Agricultural Producers (TEPAP) found that only 28% had written goals. This is compared to only 4% of Americans who have written goals. Producers with written goals that are monitored generally earn more in their lifetime and have stronger mental health as a result of managing the controllable variables and managing around the uncontrollable ones.

Next on the list, the high performers take time to develop and monitor cash flow projections. Within the cash flow, they have a set of spreadsheets with tabs to test financial, production, and other key assumptions to keep the business within the financial guardrails. The elite performers realize that the cash flow is not only for the lenders, but is a valuable tool for their business’ financial success.

Fifteen minutes each day or certain periods of time annually should be

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devoted to planning. The “extra milers” not only plan and strategize, but they execute and monitor the results. They realize that plans are often disrupted by macro events related to geopolitics, weather, supply chain issues, and competitors. On the micro level, things happen in the business that are disruptors, and the key is not to repeat the same mistake twice and learn from your mistakes.

Producers with a high level of business management acumen know their cost of production and break-even points. They have a budget for the overall farm and for each enterprise and use this financial information to compare themselves to peers, particularly the peers in the top quartile. This is where a farm record system can be a valuable tool for peer assessment.

A trend being observed is that the “extra milers” have formal advisory teams, which may include crop and livestock consultants, lenders, and financial planners. Some producers are even reaching out to the nonfinancial public and other businesses to enrich the process. Networking and surrounding yourself with good people can energize your business strategy and personal life.


High performers realize that risk management and marketing plans are not an option, but a requirement. The magnitude of numbers due to inflation and increased interest rates requires one to conduct risk assessments that fit your operation and your management style.

The Achilles’ heel of the most successful businesses is transition management. Unfortunately, transition management is often placed on the back burner of management priorities unless a sporadic, traumatic event takes place. The high performers know that management and employee transition combined with the estate plan is often a journey

that needs to have a coach or a facilitator. The time, attention, and prioritization required by everyday demands still puts transition management as a high priority business task for long-term business success.

While this list is not comprehensive, these are a few of the characteristics of successful producers that I have observed over the years interacting and engaging with the champions of the agriculture industry. Now, take a step back, pull your ownership and management team together, and assess your performance to the elements outlined. ■

Dr. David Kohl is an academic hall-of-famer in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. Dr. Kohl is a sought-after educator of lenders, producers and stakeholders with his keen insight into the agriculture industry gained through extensive travel, research and involvement in ag businesses.

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Seeding soft white winter wheat in Franklin County. Can't beat that office view. Photo by Brian Cochrane.



Macy Schoesler (11) last day of harvest 2023. Photo by Mark Schoesler.



Harvest photo from R & K Farms in Edwall. Photo by Kevin Klein.

Your wheat life...



Harvest near Lamont. Photo by Amy Swannack.



Jesse and Rick Brunner repairing a combine tire during canola harvest on Fifth Gen Farms outside of Almira.
Photo by Carol McFarland.



Grady James Howard (1) helping his papa, Paul Sievers, with wheat harvest near Spangle.
Photo by Paige Howard.

HAPPENINGS

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

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. bloomssdayrun.org

10-12 WINTHROP '49ER DAYS. Parade, cowboy songs and poetry, dancing, Saturday dinner, Sunday 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

31-JUNE 1 ROSALIA BATTLE DAYS. Community festival, parade, car show, vendors market, pin-up contest, fun run, kids activities, family games and more.

Rosalia, Wash. rosaliabattledays.info

JUNE 2024

1 REARDAN MULE DAYS. Three on three basketball tournament, craft fair, poker ride, car show, parade. Reardan, Wash. reardanmuledays.com

3 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Horse Heaven, Wash., at 8 a.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

3 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Connell, Wash., at 2 p.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

4 WHEAT COLLEGE. 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in Davenport, Wash. Lunch is provided. No charge. Register by calling (509) 659-0610 or print out and mail registration form at wawg.org/ammo-workshops/

6 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Adams County., at 3 p.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

7-8 DEMOLITION DERBY EXTRAVAGANZA. Combine demolition derby, parade, barbecue. Lind, Wash. lindcombinederby.com

7-9 PROSPECTORS' DAYS. Three on three basketball tournament, soap box derby, classic car show, music. Republic, Wash. facebook.com/prospectorsdays

8 SNAKE RIVER FAMILY FESTIVAL. Celebrate the lifeblood of the Palouse and enjoy a free lunch and ice cream, live music, favorite exhibitors, and kids' activities. Boyer Park & Marina, Colfax, Wash., 11 am to 3 pm portwhitman.com/snake-river-family-festival

10 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Harrington, Wash., at 10:30 a.m. For information call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

11 PENDLETON STATION FIELD DAY. Event begins at 8 a.m. at Pendleton Station on Tubbs Ranch Road outside Pendleton, Ore. For information call Debbie Sutor at (541) 278-4405.

12 MORO FIELD DAY. Event begins at 8 a.m. at Sherman Station on Lone Rock

Road outside Moro, Ore. For information call Debbie Sutor at (541) 278-4405.

12 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Moses Lake, Wash., at 9 a.m. For information call Andy McGuire at (509) 754-2011 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

12 WSU WEED TOUR. Pullman, Wash., at 1 p.m. For info call Drew Lyon at (509) 335-2961 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

13 LIND FIELD DAY. Event begins at 8:30 a.m. at the WSU Dryland Research Center in Lind, Wash. For information call Samantha Crow at (509) 677-3671 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

14 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Douglas County at 5 p.m. For information call Dale Whaley at (509) 888-6352 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

14-16 ALL WHEELS WEEKEND. Car show, music, food. Dayton, Wash. historicdayton.com/all-wheels-weekend

14-16 WENATCHEE RIVER BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL. Adults/children workshops, food, vendors, live music. Chelan County Expo Center in Cashmere, Wash. cashmerecoffeehouse.com/wrbfest.htm

15 SLIPPERY GULCH DAYS. Chamber breakfast, fun run, tractor show, parade, music, vendors, fireworks. Tekoa, Wash. slipperygulch.com

15 SPRINT BOAT RACING. Enjoy 5 grass terraces, two beer gardens and a great atmosphere to watch fantastic racing in St. John, Wash. Fun for the entire family! Bring the lawn chairs, sunscreen and blankets. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until racing is finished. webbsslough.com or (509) 553-1014.

15-16 UNION GAP OLD TOWN DAYS. Washington state's biggest civil war reenactment. Trading post, blacksmith shop, train rides, games and wagon tours. Fullbright Park in Union Gap, Wash. centralwaagmuseum.org/old-town-days-union-gap.asp

17 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP TOUR. Mayview, Wash., at 10 a.m. For information call Mark Heitstuman at (509) 243-2009 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

18 WHEAT ACADEMY ROAD SHOW. Walla Walla/Columbia County Bus Tour,

at 9:45 a.m. Rachel Wieme at (509) 524-2685 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/ for more information.

19 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. Reardan, Wash., at 9 a.m. For info call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

20 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. Fairfield, Wash., at 7 a.m. For info call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

20 WILKE FARM FIELD DAY.

Davenport, Wash., at 8:30 a.m. For info call Aaron Esser at (509) 659-3210 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

21 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. Eureka, Wash., at 9 a.m. For info call Rachel Wieme at (509) 524-2685 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

21 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. Walla Walla, Wash., at 1 p.m. For info call Rachel Wieme at (509) 524-2685 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

24 SPILLMAN FARM FIELD DAY.

Pullman, Wash., at 3 p.m. For information call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

25 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. St. John, Wash., at 10 a.m. For info call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

25 WSU VARIETY TESTING CROP

TOUR. Farmington, Wash., at 2:30 p.m. For info call Clark Neely at (814) 571-5628 or smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/

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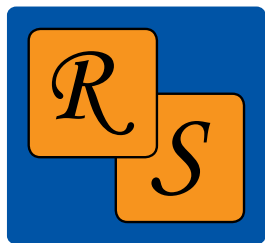
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