

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER | 2024

Minneapolis

La Crosse



Working the waterways

COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM USERS TOUR MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Memphis

Vicksburg

New Orleans

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WHEAT LIFE

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**WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION OF
WHEAT GROWERS**

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President's Perspective



It takes teamwork

By Anthony Smith

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

I love wheat farming, but when I'm having a bad day, there's a lot not to love, too.

I don't think of myself as a successful wheat farmer, but I guess I am if I'm still running the farm operation. I know it takes a lot of hard work, discussions, planning, and determination. It also takes more than just me to be a so-called successful farmer, one who is able to weather the tough years (and we all have them). You need a good team backing you up: an accountant, a lawyer, hired men, a crop advisor, and many others. You need reliable equipment, and, finally, you need to be able to get your crop to the customer. That's where transportation is so important.

Like most farmers in the Horse Heaven Hills in Benton County, I haul my wheat by truck from the field to the elevator. From the elevator, the wheat is moved to Portland primarily by barge or train, but trucks are also used. No one method of transportation can handle the volume of grain that is moving across the countryside. The competition between rail, river, and roads also helps keep our costs lower, and at a time when we are struggling to make a profit due to low wheat prices, that's critical.

One of the most important members of my supporting team is the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). While I'm tending to my crops, they are out there fighting for me and all the wheat farmers in Washington state. WAWG is able to spend time on the phone with legislators or attend Zoom meetings with farm officials. They are able to travel to Olympia and Washington, D.C., to present our issues and concerns. If you've spent any time reading my monthly column, you'll know that protecting the lower Snake River dams is one of our biggest priorities right now. Once again, WAWG is right at the front of the fight, leading tours of the dams, participating in hearings, and speaking to whomever will listen about why the dams are so important to our region, to farmers, and to our local economy.

At the end of June, WAWG brought the fight to protect the dams to an unexpected place — the Mississippi River. See, we don't think advocates of dam breaching will stop at the lower Snake River. If that effort is successful, every river system in the country is in danger of attack. Recognizing that fact, Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director, worked with Mississippi River stakeholders to bring a group of Columbia-Snake River System users to the Midwest, to talk about what's happening in the Pacific Northwest, to learn more about the Mississippi River, and to explore ways for stakeholders on both river systems to collaborate and support each other. The trip was extremely successful, and I believe the relationships that were formed will benefit all of us for years to come. I never thought I'd count a barge company in Vicksburg, Miss., or a port association in New Orleans as a member of my support team, but I'm sure glad I can. Michelle writes about the trip on page 6, and a recap of the trip begins on page 26.

I know a lot of you in Eastern Washington are still cutting wheat. As you move your grain, take a minute to appreciate the system we have — and the people working to protect it. Happy harvesting. ■

Cover photo: A group of Columbia-Snake River System stakeholders spent a week in the Midwest, finding common ground with Mississippi River users. See page 26. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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Non-Voting Membership						
Student \$90	X	X	X			
Industry Associate \$250	X	X	X			

WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

More member benefits:

- Greensheet ALERTS • WAWG updates
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- National Wheat Grower updates
- State and national legislative updates



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[Fertilizer]

Issues, lots of travel keep WAWG leader hopping

In the past six months, our office has been busier than ever before. I've been to Olympia, four trips to D.C., Commodity Classic in Houston, and a Midwest tour of the Mississippi River, all worth the time and effort to advocate on your behalf for the farm bill and for our transportation system. With all this local and national travel, I can't express how important it is to have an efficient and effective staff and support team to fill in the gaps while I'm not in the office. I'm excited that we have brought two new staff members onto the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) team. Our conservation coordinator, Andrea Cox, works closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide wheat growers a contact for critical NRCS questions, along with a way to provide feedback on programs so that we can have a better functioning relationship with NRCS. Also added to the team is our new administrative assistant, Keri Gingrich. Keri is vital in keeping our office organized and functioning. It's so nice to have a friendly voice and face when farmers either stop by the office or call. A strong team at WAWG is important, and I can't thank my staff enough for all their hard work and willingness to go above and beyond when needed.

Harvest is in full swing across the state, and reports from farmers have been variable, from good to less than desirable to bad. Washington state has many different climates and rainfall zones, and each county has a different story to tell when it comes to the crop conditions and issues they face. I know that on our farm, seeding conditions were dry in the fall, and we had to reseed some of our hilltops and slopes in the spring. Our farm has yet to start harvesting as I write this article in mid-July, but the crop will be average — if we're lucky — to less than average. Along with frost damage, this stretch of hot weather is hitting much of the spring wheat hard, according to the farmers who have been calling in. This is where I am thankful that we have crop insurance as a top WAWG priority, so when Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, farmers have something to fall back on.

One of the biggest highlights of the last six months was the Midwest Mississippi River tour. I can't thank



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

the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) enough for their coordination and effort in putting this visit together. Our travels started in La Crosse, Wis., and went all the way down to the Gulf and was full of informational tours along with networking opportunities with Mississippi River stakeholders. The Pacific Northwest stakeholder river team that joined me did an excellent job relaying the issues and priorities of our river system while learning theirs.

One of my highlights of the trip was the UMWA board meeting we attended on the first day. Not only was it a great kickoff, but it was also a very vital piece in starting the conversation with Mississippi stakeholders. We gave a presentation on our system and discussed the fight

over breaching the lower Snake River dams. The UMWA group asked a lot of great questions and made statements on how this is the time to collaborate. Next steps were also discussed.

At that point, I knew the trip was already successful. Collaboration is key for river systems to have a unified voice across the U.S. and especially in D.C. when our critical infrastructure is being threatened. The rest of the week was spent learning about the Mississippi River system, including similarities and differences from the Columbia-Snake River System. Seeing how vast their system is was eye opening.

This inaugural trip is an essential stepping stone to bringing U.S. river systems together to coordinate messages and present a unified voice. It was very memorable, and I couldn't ask for a better team to travel six days with, communicating our message and representing our critical system. We had the pleasure of having our *Wheat Life* editor, Trista Crossley, attend the trip with us and document all of the stops and conversations had during this tour. You can read all about it beginning on page 26.

The farm bill delay has been frustrating. We need a farm bill now, but our food always seems to be a political playing chip when it comes to getting legislation passed. We all know SNAP makes up the majority of the farm bill. We support SNAP and recognize its importance in feeding

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those less fortunate. But something that sticks in my mind is that in order to provide food for SNAP, farmers have to have the support to grow that food first.

We have participated in multiple trips to D.C. to relay the importance of not only passing a farm bill for our farmers, but also to make sure the farm bill being debated protects our farmers when they need assistance. It's vital our decision-makers know we need to secure the safe, reliable food supply that our nation is known for. There are some major differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. Our message is to get the two to negotiate a bill and get it passed before the end of the year. I can't predict if this will happen or not, but we will keep pushing the importance of getting a useful bill passed on behalf of our food system sooner rather than later.

A state issue that has been on everyone's minds has been the fuel exemption through the Climate Commitment Act. We learned that ag fuel users who purchased fuel in 2023 will qualify for a rebate under a Department of Licensing program called the Agriculture Support Program. Applications can be made beginning the week of Aug. 26, and producers will receive payments in September. We will keep you updated on the process, but

it will be crucial that you submit your request quickly, as we fear that the amount of money that was budgeted will not cover all requests. We have participated in many stakeholder meetings to find a solution, and the result was money budgeted for the rebate. Although the amount isn't sufficient to cover all the costs farmers spent, it's a start. See more on page 10.

The wheat industry has also been participating in the riparian buffer taskforce meetings, working to come together with other stakeholders to negotiate and provide recommendations for a final report to the governor. Discussions were helpful, thorough, and vast, but the wheat industry doesn't agree with some of the recommendations that look likely to come out of the roundtable. We will keep you informed and will continue to push for voluntary measures without a regulatory backstop.

Lastly, you should have received a WAWG membership renewal form in the mail. Your support is vital in our efforts to advocate on your behalf. The number of issues we face are growing, and it's so very important we have you as a member and gain your feedback so that we can make sure your interests are heard. My door is always open and thank you for your support and membership. ■



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

Why Support the Washington Wheat PAC?

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

Please join our efforts by financially supporting the Washington Wheat PAC. Your contribution will strengthen the network of elected officials who understand the wheat industry's goals and objectives by fighting for what is critical to the livelihood of our members.

The Washington Wheat PAC is a nonpartisan political action committee that is dedicated to supporting ag-friendly candidates.

The Washington Wheat PAC pledges to promote and support elected officials from all parts of the state who positively influence agriculture.

DONATION PROMISE

Yes, I would like to join with the Washington Wheat PAC's vision and support their actions with my donation.

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

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Update on DOL's ag fuel refund program

Beginning the week of Aug. 26, the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) will start taking applications for refunds for ag producers who paid taxes related to the state's cap and trade program on fuel purchases. The DOL circulated a letter recently containing the following information:

What Is the Agriculture Support Program (ASP)?

The ASP is a funding opportunity for agricultural producers and transporters who purchased fuel between Jan. 1, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2023. The state's Climate Commitment Act exempts fuels used for agricultural purposes, such as diesel for tractors and trucks moving produce. Agriculture fuel users who qualify for this exemption can apply for payments between \$600 to \$4,500.

When Will This Take Place?

The Department of Licensing will begin issuing ASP

payments in September 2024. The application will be available in the week of Aug. 26, 2024. Don't delay. Due to limited resources, applications will be processed in the order they arrive.

What Can You Do Now?

The application will include several questions to determine if you will be eligible. You can begin now to collect information that helps you answer the following types of questions:

- Did you purchase and use fuels for agricultural purposes between Jan. 1, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2023?
- Can you estimate how many gallons you used for agricultural purposes during this time period?
- Are you able to prove that you are an agricultural producer or transporter?

DOL will provide additional information and details by



WHITMAN GROWER MEETING. Following the Washington State University Spillman Farm Crop Tour in late June, Whitman County growers and guests gathered for dinner at the South Fork Public House in Pullman.

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early August, including the types of documents you will need for your ASP application. ■

Wheat growers sign letter opposing cuts to food program

Last month, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers joined 90 other organizations, including U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers, in a letter to the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations opposing \$619 million in cuts to the Food for Peace Program. The cuts were included in a funding bill for fiscal year 2025.

“Under the current text (of the funding bill), our nation’s flagship international food aid program, Food for Peace, would be funded at only \$1 billion, an enormous \$619 million reduction from FY24 levels, already a large cut from FY23, and dramatically below the authorized level of \$2.5 billion,” the letter states. It goes on to add that Food for Peace not only benefits its recipients, but also U.S. economic and national security interests. Food aid, in all its forms, is made available through this program usually bearing the U.S. flag and/or marked “from the American people.”

By furthering stability in fragile nations and sparking hope in countless people who are struggling to survive, U.S. strategic interests are protected and expanded. ■

USDA to gather conservation data to improve programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is reaching out to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners to gather in-depth information about the conservation practices they use.

Nearly 12,000 operators nationwide will receive the 2024 Conservation Effects Assessment Project survey. Data obtained will support the third set of national and regional cropland assessments delivered by USDA’s Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), a multi-agency effort led by NRCS to quantify the effects of conservation practices across the nation’s working lands.

“The survey gives farmers the power to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the conservation practices on their lands and in their operations,” said Joe Parsons,



DAM LISTENING SESSION. Several Washington wheat growers, including Anthony Smith, president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, took a break from harvest last month to attend a Tri-Cities listening session led by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) on how the proposed removal of the lower Snake River dams would impact local communities. Newhouse is shown here (with microphone), along with several other local legislators and community leaders. Photo courtesy of Rep. Dan Newhouse’s office.

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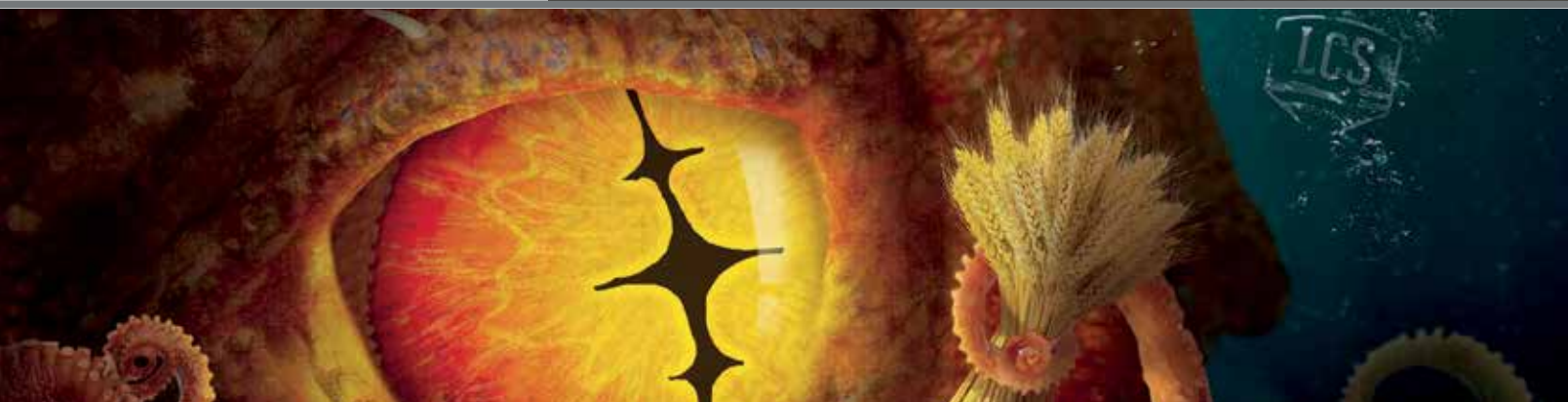
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NASS administrator. “I urge farmers to participate if contacted, because their responses can help leaders focus on the conservation practices that most benefit both the farmer and the natural resources on which we all rely.”

CEAP Cropland Assessments quantify the environmental outcomes associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on agricultural lands. Findings are used to guide conservation program development and support conservationists, agricultural producers, and partners in making informed management decisions backed by data and science.

Specifically, CEAP results may help:

- Evaluate the resources farmers may need in the future to further protect soil, water, and habitat.
- Shed light on techniques farmers use to conserve healthy environments.
- Improve and strengthen technical and financial programs that help landowners plan and install conservation practices on agricultural land.
- Support the conservation programs that can help producers’ profits while also protecting natural resources.

This survey is conducted through a cooperative agreement between NRCS and NASS. NRCS will couple survey results with modeling to report on trends in cropland

conservation — and associated outcomes — from 2024 through 2026.

“The U.S. has more than 300 million acres of cultivated cropland that are used by farmers and other land managers to grow diverse crops for food, fuel, and livestock feed for our nation and beyond,” said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby.

“CEAP delivers critically important data that we use to guide our strategic, equitable, and voluntary conservation on cropland acres nationwide. This leads to healthier ecosystems, improved conservation, and stronger management of agricultural landscapes.”

Local NASS representatives will visit farmers and agricultural landowners in August and September of 2024 to determine if their operations and properties meet the criteria to be considered eligible candidates for the survey. Eligible farmers and landowners may be contacted between November 2024 and March 2025 and asked to participate in the survey. Typical questions will discuss farm production practices; chemical, fertilizer, and

manure applications; tillage; irrigation use; and installed conservation practices.

“Responding to these questions will help farmers tell their story about conservation efforts and land stewardship,” said Dennis Koong, director, NASS Northwest Regional Field Office. NASS will provide survey data to NRCS, the agency tasked with publishing findings.

Information provided to NASS and analyzed by NRCS is kept confidential, as required by federal law. The agencies only publish data in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual respondent or operation can be identified. The data from this survey will be published as a report at nrcs.usda.gov/ceap/croplands. If you have questions about the survey, please contact us at (888) 424-7828 or visit nass.usda.gov/go/ceap. ■

Happy harvesting!

When harvest happens, everything else takes a back seat, including *Wheat Life*. This is a combined August/September issue. The next issue will be published at the beginning of October.

The next Washington Association of Wheat Growers state Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 17, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Washington Wheat Foundation building in Ritzville. ■

Producers reminded to update activity records for NRCS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is reminding producers with active Environmental Quality Incentives Program and/or Conservation Stewardship Program contracts to reach out to their local office if they need assistance with records for activity certification. The sooner NRCS gets producers’ records, the sooner they can certify and get payments processed. For more information about NRCS technical and financial assistance, please call or stop by your NRCS local office. ■

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. ■



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DR. BART FISCHER is a research assistant professor and co-director of the Ag and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M AgriLife. His applied research focuses on solving real-world policy problems for ag producers and on anticipating potential policy changes for Congress to consider.



JOHN O'LEARY in 1987 was a curious nine-year-old boy. Playing with fire and gasoline, John created a massive explosion in his home and was burned on 100% of his body. He was given less than a 1% chance to live. John is the host of the Live Inspired Podcast and a speaker.

DERRICK JOSI is a fourth generation Oregon dairy farmer. Whether Derrick is on hour 27 of a long harvest day or breaking down the intricacies of the agricultural industry to an urban audience, he is building on a strong foundation of honest farming using raw, unfiltered transparency.



ERIC SNODGRASS is a Science Fellow and the Principal Atmospheric Scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions. He develops predictive, analytical software to help ag producers manage weather risk. His frequent weather updates focus on how high-impact weather events influence global ag productivity.

Breakout sessions to include:

- Wheat Market Update
- Farm Bill Update
- NRCS Programs Update
- Financial Planning
- Legislative issues
- Barley Trends



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Auction and Dinner

The auction and dinner will be held Thursday, Nov. 21, at 6 p.m. Social hour starts at 5:30. Donation forms for auction items can be found at wawg.org.



Watch wawg.org/convention for updates



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***Note: FULL Convention Registration includes Wednesday & Thursday meetings and all meals.**

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Circle one:

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_____ State Banquet	_____ x \$95	\$ _____
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Please Indicate Which Meals you will be Attending (Important for head count purposes):

_____ Agribusiness Breakfast (Wednesday)	_____ Oregon Banquet (Wednesday)	_____ Opening Breakfast (Thursday)
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Please Indicate All that apply:

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_____ County President	_____ Past Idaho Wheat Commissioner	_____ WA Lifetime Member
_____ Board Member	_____ Past Idaho Barley Commissioner	
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POLICY MATTERS

Report doesn't rule out regulatory backstop

The final report from a riparian buffer taskforce funded by the Washington State Legislature recommends funding and implementation of voluntary restoration efforts and acquisition of riparian areas through voluntary methods. The report also says that if those voluntary efforts fall short, a discussion of regulatory options and requirements, including eminent domain, should be pursued.

Leaders and staff of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) participated in the taskforce, but do not support all of the recommendations published by Plauché & Carr, the Seattle law firm that led the taskforce, especially those that call for regulatory action.

"We support funding voluntary programs that incentivize growers to establish and maintain riparian buffers and completely reject the idea of mandatory buffers," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director. "Forcing farmers to pull ag land out of production under the threat of eminent domain or without adequate financial compensation is wrong and would put many farmers out of business."

The report points to two volumes published by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in 2020 as the guide in establishing and maintaining riparian buffers.

The recommendations set out in the report include:

- Protect currently functioning riparian habitat and ensure that local government land use regulations protect existing ripar-



ian ecosystem functions in accordance with the WDFW riparian guidance report.

- Restore and conserve riparian areas and establish and ensure sufficient funding for a watershed-based riparian implementation program focused on improving and protecting riparian habitat for salmon and steelhead recovery that builds on existing and ongoing watershed restoration and salmon recovery efforts and establishes firm, readily measurable outcomes.
- The riparian taskforce should continue discussing regulatory or compensation strategies that would come into effect if the concrete targets adopted in the watershed-based implementation strategies are unable to be met through voluntary actions.

The report can be found at ofm.wa.gov/about/publications-and-reports. ■

Canada, US announce tentative Columbia River Treaty agreement

In early July, the Biden administration announced it had reached a tentative agreement with Canada on a modernized Columbia River Treaty.

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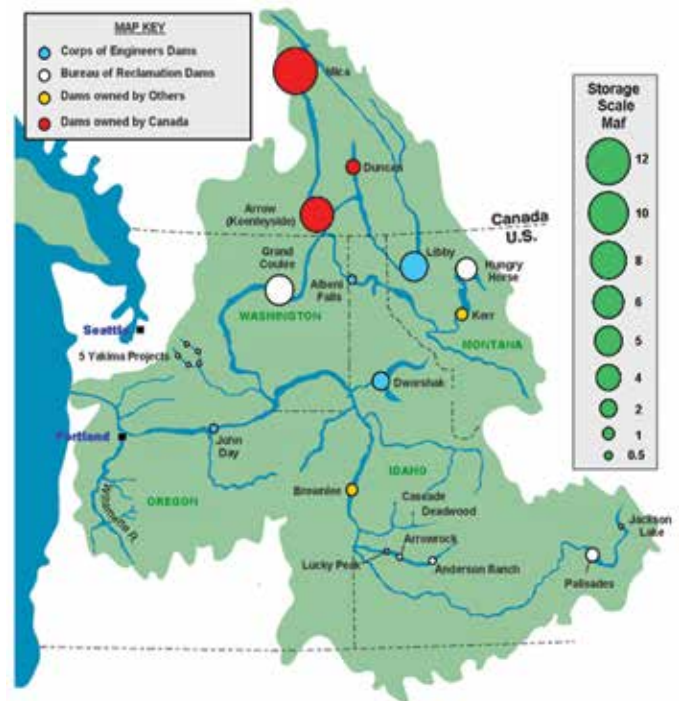
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through the Columbia River Treaty. Now, our two countries have found common ground on how we will work together to care for them for the next 20 years,” President Biden said in a statement. “In modernizing this treaty, we will elevate U.S. Tribes’ and Canadian Indigenous Nations’ voices. We’ll rebalance energy coordination between the U.S. and Canada, allowing the U.S. to keep more clean hydropower energy at home while giving Canada more opportunities to import from and export to the U.S. market — critical to both countries achieving our clean energy goals. And the U.S. will benefit from pre-planned water storage at Canadian Treaty dams, to help control flooding and protect vulnerable communities.”

No details had been released as of the end of July. The original Columbia River Treaty was signed in 1961 and governs flood risk management and hydroelectric energy production between the two countries. The U.S. and Canada began renegotiating the treaty in 2018. The U.S. government’s key objectives in a new treaty include continued, careful management of flood risk; ensuring a reliable and economical power supply; and improving the ecosystem in a modernized treaty regime.

“The Columbia River is critical for the agriculture industry, especially Washington wheat farmers who rely on the transportation and irrigation benefits of the river,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. “Thriving family-owned



farms are the lynchpin of rural economies, and while we appreciate this important first step, we encourage swift, thoughtful, and science-based negotiations moving forward to ensure an agreement that reflects a modernized system and serves stakeholders across the board, including farmers.” ■

Government report concludes dams harmed PNW Tribes

In mid-June, the U.S. Department of the Interior released a report concluding that the federal dams along the Columbia and Snake rivers have inflicted harm on the Tribes in the region. The Biden administration also announced the creation of the Columbia River Task Force. Both steps are part of the agreement between the U.S. government, four Tribes, and the states of Washington and Oregon that pauses litigation on the lower Snake River dams for up to 10 years in return for investments in Tribally-owned energy projects and funding for fish habitat restoration.

While the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) acknowledges the critical importance of Tribes in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), we also strongly believe that a thriving region can only be possible when the interests and well-being of all are considered. We do not believe that the health of the salmon population and the interests of other stakeholders need to be at odds.

“The PNW brings together some of our nation’s best attributes — vibrant culture, strong rural economies,

and cutting-edge technology. However, for our region to succeed, it is critically important that any decisions made, especially those regarding the Columbia-Snake River System, consider the impact on stakeholders from all communities including Washington’s wheat farmers,” said Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director. “We encourage the administration to engage with all stakeholders and focus on solutions that don’t prioritize one group over another.”

According to the report, “The Tribes and Indian individuals suffered from the damming of the Columbia and Snake rivers and their many tributaries. Consistently, Tribal advocates have warned of the numerous and significant consequences of the dams in the Columbia River Basin — consequences that the Tribes inequitably shoulder. Beyond the importance of salmon to Tribal identity and spirituality, these impacts include the destruction of housing and displacement of individuals living near the water; ruination and inundation of cultural and religious sites, Tribal lands, and other natural resources; diminish-

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ment of Tribal members' ability to exercise their treaty and executive order harvest rights; and economic deprivation. The lack of abundance or absence of salmon meant the loss of many people's primary source of sustenance. The transformation of the once free-flowing river and reshaping of the hydrograph affected species and resources, as well as transportation routes across and down the rivers. Together, these consequences and others the dams catalyzed by fostering industrial development threaten Tribes' and their members' well-being, ways of life, and sovereignty."

The report includes recommendations for actions by the U.S. government to protect the Tribes' rights, including:

- Fulfilling the U.S.'s treaty and trust responsibilities by protecting and enhancing the resources the Tribes depend on for survival.
- Acknowledge and integrate the report in NEPA analyses of proposed federal actions.
- Recognize that status quo conditions reflect a degraded baseline.
- Support actions that strengthen

Tribal sovereignty and achieve healthy and abundant populations of salmon, other aquatic species, and wildlife.

The Columbia River Task Force will coordinate efforts across federal agencies to fulfill the Biden administration's commitments. Members of the task force will include representatives from the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Office of Management and Budget, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Read the report at doi.gov/media/document/tribal-circumstances-analysis. ■

Ag groups oppose herbicide tariffs

On July 12, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) joined five other commodity groups in sending a letter to Department of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo asking her to consider the impacts on farmers as she reviews a petition by the agricultural chemical company, Corteva, that would place duties on imports of the herbicide 2,4-D.

"Restricting imports of 2,4-D will have wide-ranging consequences for farmers," the letter said. "American farmers cannot solely rely on Corteva, which is the only domestic supplier of 2,4-D, because there is not enough supply to meet demand. This will cause availability shortages due to the disrupted supply chain. Additionally, restricting the availability of 2,4-D will be very harmful at a time when farmers are grappling with rising input costs and low commodity prices."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) projects total farm production cash expenses for 2024 to be at a record high level, while total cash receipts in nominal value for crops in 2024 will be 11.7% lower than 2022.

The National Corn Growers Association, the American Soybean Association, the National Barley Growers Association, the National Sorghum Producers, and the U.S. Durum Growers Association joined NAWG in signing the letter. ■

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The journey of wheat: From field to flour mill

The journey of wheat, from waving in the golden fields to the finely ground flour found in our kitchens, is a process that is both centuries old and advancing as technology continues to develop. Wheat, one of the most important staple crops globally, undergoes several stages before transforming into the versatile flour we use daily in a variety of foods and healthy diets. The beginning step in the journey begins when the wheat is ready for harvest.

Once wheat dries down to the appropriate moisture content, typically between 8-14%, it is ready for harvesting. The harvesting process is initiated by combines, which perform multiple tasks simultaneously. These combines cut the wheat stalks and then separate the kernels from the chaff. The kernels are collected in a bulk tank within the combine, while the chaff, which is the husk and other residue, is blown out the back of the machine. This efficient separation process ensures that only the valuable wheat kernels are collected for further processing.

After the wheat kernels are collected, they are transferred from the combine to a transportation system, typically a grain cart pulled by a tractor, which then transfers the grain to a truck. The kernels can also be deposited directly into a truck. From there, the wheat is hauled to a local grain elevator where it is temporarily stored. The next stage involves transporting the wheat to processing facilities, which can be done by truck, rail, or barge.

Wheat varieties play a crucial role in determining the types of products that can be made from the flour. For instance, soft white wheat is known for its lower protein content and is ideal for making pastries, cakes, and other delicate baked goods. Club wheat, another variety, is often blended with other wheats to improve the texture and quality of baked products. Red wheat, which includes both hard red winter and hard red spring varieties, has a higher protein content and is primarily used for bread-making because of its strong gluten strength.

Once the wheat kernels arrive at the flour mills, they

undergo a meticulous grinding process. The mills use a series of rollers to gradually break down the kernels into finer particles, eventually producing the fine flour that is packaged and shipped to stores and bakeries. This flour is then used to create a wide range of food products, from bread and pasta to pastries and cereals. Each type of flour has unique properties that make it suitable for different culinary uses, contributing to the diversity of our diets.

The health benefits of wheat and its products are also worth noting. Whole wheat flour, which retains the bran and germ parts of the kernel, is rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. It is considered a healthy grain option that can help with digestion, provide sustained energy, and con-



tribute to overall well-being. As consumers become more health-conscious, there is a growing demand for whole grain products, which are perceived as more nutritious compared to refined grains.

It's indisputable that the journey of wheat from the field to the flour mill is a remarkable process that highlights the importance of agricultural practices and technological innovation. Understanding the different wheat varieties and their uses, as well as the health benefits of wheat products, can help consumers make informed choices about their diets and help develop a greater understanding of the nutritional powerhouse that is wheat. The next time you enjoy a slice of bread or a piece of cake, take a moment to appreciate the intricate journey that brought that wheat from the field to your plate! ■

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Working the waterways

COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM USERS TOUR MISSISSIPPI RIVER | BY TRISTA CROSSLEY

At the end of June, a group of Columbia-Snake River System stakeholders returned from a tour down the Mississippi River impressed with the need for collaboration among all U.S. river systems and a reminder of how much of the nation's commerce relies on these river highways.

"While there are many differences between our two river systems, we also have a lot in common, especially how important each waterway is in moving inputs upriver and products downriver for export," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG). "It was very educational to see how stakeholders on the Mississippi River navigate funding for infrastructure, balancing the different sectors that use the river, such as recreation and industry, and how they operate despite wildly fluctuating water levels."

Joining Hennings on the trip were Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for Shaver Transportation; Anthony Peña, government relations manager for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Kristin Meira, director of government affairs for American Cruise Lines; and Captain Jeremy Nielsen, president of Columbia River Pilots. Gary Williams, executive director of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA), and Jeremy Putnam, president of UMWA, helped coordinate the trip and traveled with the group. ►



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Following the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) meeting in La Crosse, Wis., the group boarded a JF Brennan barge for a trip on the Mississippi. Pictured from left are Gary Williams, executive director of UMWA; Linda Williams, UMWA treasurer; Kristin Meira, director of government affairs for American Cruise Lines; Anthony Peña, government relations manager for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Captain Jeremy Nielsen, president of Columbia River Pilots; Greg Genz, UMWA member; Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers; Mark Caspers, UMWA member; Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for Shaver Transportation; Jeremy Putnam, president of UMWA; and Trista Crossley, editor of *Wheat Life*.

The trip began in La Crosse, Wis., at an UMWA meeting. The Pacific Northwest group gave a presentation and talked about the challenges facing the Columbia-Snake River System, in particular, the controversy over the lower Snake River dams. The next stop was Memphis, Tenn., where the group toured an American Cruise Lines vessel and learned about the river cruising industry, which is growing exponentially. From Memphis, the group headed to Vicksburg, Miss. After a tugboat ride, they visited the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineer Research and Development Center to see how the agency uses simulations to design channel infrastructure and train pilots. The tour ended in New Orleans. The group had the opportunity to visit St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District, the Port of South Louisiana, and one of Cargill's terminal facilities.

An UMWA delegation is planning to visit the Pacific Northwest next summer to get a look at the Columbia-Snake River System.

"I look forward to more collaboration and exploring ways for the users of both systems to work together," Hennings said.

Common threads

Throughout the tour, a number of common threads be-

tween the two river systems emerged, including the need for public education and awareness of the value of working rivers. Putnam explained that people often underestimate the economic and environmental impact these vital waterways have on everyday life, and future collaboration between stakeholders using facts and data is key to protecting the inland river system as a whole. Williams added that it's not only the public that needs to be educated, but legislators and the media also need to understand the importance of the nation's waterways.

"Users on both rivers are realizing that we have to increase the content of facts, frequency, and reach of our message. While the rivers may operate differently and deliver goods to/from different parts of our country and abroad, we need to be telling our river's story and the other river's story to our own audiences," he said. "Other messages without all of the hard facts or regard for actual impacts are being told and adopted as being true by one part of our country about another part of our country. Ill-informed is worse than the uninformed in such instances."

Throughout the trip, the group talked with people who made their living operating on the Mississippi. While the

Continued on page 32



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June 24: La Crosse, Wis.

After arriving in Minneapolis the night before, the Columbia-Snake River System group traveled to La Crosse, Wis., to attend a meeting of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA). At the UMWA meeting, the Pacific Northwest group spoke about the issues on the Columbia and Snake rivers, specifically the efforts to breach the lower Snake River dams. After the meeting, the group loaded a JF Brennan Company barge for a short trip up to Lock #7. Following the barge trip, the group toured JF Brennan's facilities before driving back to Minneapolis.



(Above) Michelle Hennings (left) and Rob Rich (right) speak with Joe Serbus, treasurer of the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, prior to the UMWA meeting. (Left) Mark Twain opened the UMWA meeting.

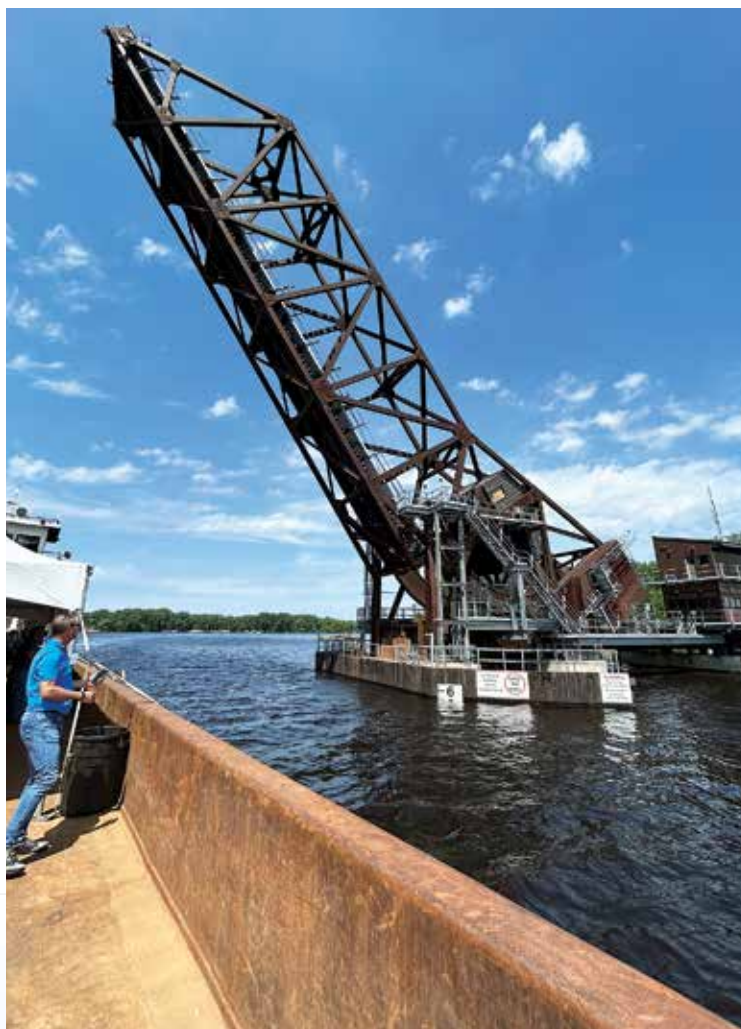


(Above) Jeremy Nielsen (left), Michelle Hennings, and Anthony Peña during the barge ride on the Mississippi River. (Right) The Pacific Northwest group gave a presentation during the UMWA meeting about the Columbia-Snake River System and some of the issues users of that system face, especially the threat of breaching the four lower Snake River dams.





Jeremy Putnam, president of UMWA, gives an interview during the barge ride on the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wis.



(Left) After the barge ride, the group got a tour of the JF Brennan facilities, including this drydock the company uses when making repairs to structures in the Mississippi River. (Above) The original plan for the barge tour included a trip through Lock #7 (below), but flooding made that unsafe. Fortunately, there were plenty of other structures to see, including this bridge that raised out of the way so the barge could pass.



two river systems are very different geographically, the dedication to safety, efficiency, and the environment by the people working on them is the same, something Meira noted. Another common denominator is federal oversight of navigation infrastructure and the continual need for funding to maintain that infrastructure, including dredging.

“It is important for stakeholders from both river systems to share and compare their experiences when it comes to port facilities, navigation channels, locks, and all the other largely unseen elements that keep our country on the move,” Meira said.

While the group was visiting La Crosse, the upper Mississippi was flooding due to storms. Because many of the dams along that part of the river aren’t used for flood control, facilities along the river have



Each member of the Pacific Northwest team introduced themselves and talked a little bit about the issues their industry faces on the Columbia-Snake River System during the UMWA meeting in La Crosse, Wis. From left are Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers; Anthony Peña, government relations manager for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for Shaver Transportation; Captain Jeremy Nielsen, president of Columbia River Pilots; and Kristin Meira, director of government affairs for American Cruise Lines.



A barge tow moving upriver on the Mississippi River at La Crosse, Wis.

to be built to accommodate both high and low water levels or, in the case of flooding, be able to move equipment to higher ground temporarily. Flooding also impacts river traffic by not leaving enough room for ships to pass under bridges or rendering the locks unusable because of the volume of water.

A “working river”

While the Columbia-Snake River System is big, the Mississippi River System dwarfs it, not only in reach but in the amount of commodities that are moved on it. In the upper Mississippi (generally regarded as above St. Louis), recreation used the river side by side with industry. On the lower Mississippi, however, the river was all business with very little recreation to be seen, except for the cruise ships.

On the lower Mississippi, an average tow is about 30 barges, a size that leaves little margin for error when navigating along the river. Some of the issues the lower Mississippi faces include maintaining the

Continued on page 36

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June 25: Memphis, Tenn.

The group, now joined by Upper Mississippi Waterway Association leaders, Gary Williams, executive director, and Jeremy Putnam, president, arrived in Memphis. While this was mostly a travel day, the group was able to fit in a last minute tour of one of American Cruise Line's (ACL) vessels that was docked in Memphis. Because of the Pacific Northwest dams, ACL is able to run cruises on the Columbia-Snake River System, bringing millions of tourist dollars to the communities along the rivers.



The stopover in Memphis coincided with the arrival of one of American Cruise Line's steamboat-style paddlewheelers. While the boat was changing over for the next set of passengers, the Pacific Northwest team was able to get a tour of the ship, including the pilothouse, and enjoy drinks in one of the lounges.



Beale Street in Memphis.

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channel, strong currents, and shifting sandbars. Security was a high priority at the ports in New Orleans as a considerable amount of the nation's fuel is refined there. It was no surprise that hurricane plans are a big priority for the ports in the New Orleans area; what was a surprise was learning that at the Port of South Louisiana, wind tends to do more damage than water. Getting equipment tied down and people moved to safety before a storm is part of the port's preparation, but finding people once the storm has passed is also important.

"While both systems have similarities in their function as inland waterway transportation corridors, they have dramatic differences in their effects on the local environment, the scale of commodities movement, and the investments and commitments made to these areas by industry and the government," Peña said.

At the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District in New Orleans, the group donned hard hats and life vests for an Associated Terminals' tugboat ride to see the equipment used for midstream cargo handling, something that isn't utilized in the Pacific Northwest. With barges lining both sides of the river and a continual stream of cargo ships and tugboats passing by, it was easy to understand why it was referred to as a "working river."

"My biggest take away from the trip was how highly dependent that system is on barging vs. rail at the big downriver terminals," Rich said. "Also, the sheer immensity of the volumes and facilities are just incredible. That system is not only functioning as a giant export/import hub, but as a distributor of economy-sustaining materials and liquid products to support a vast swath of the nation."

Reflections on the trip

"This trip was a proactive step towards networking and establishing relationships with stakeholders from other river systems for future collaborations. The reception we received along the tour was overwhelmingly positive, as we all recognized the need to work together to protect our working river systems," Hennings said. "I was fortunate to travel with capable, knowledgeable PNW leaders that have the skills and passion to represent the Columbia-Snake River System to the fullest."

"I was impacted on this trip by the enormous value our river transportations systems bring to our nation. The increased costs, not just in terms of money, but in congestion, pollution, road maintenance, safety and reduced efficiencies if we were to abandon our river transportation systems must be staggering," Nielsen said.

Continued on page 40



Tows on the Mississippi are big, much bigger than the four-barge tows common on the Columbia and Snake rivers. An average tow on the lower Mississippi River is 30 barges. The river makes a big bend at Vicksburg, Miss., right before passing underneath the Old Vicksburg Bridge. The currents and shifting sandbars mean navigation is tricky through this stretch, and it's not unusual for vessels to end up hitting the bridge.



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June 26: Vicksburg, Miss.

Driving south from Memphis, the group arrived at Ergon Marine & Industrial Supply in Vicksburg, Miss., located on a big bend of the river, where Port Captain Lee Hogue talked about some of the issues users on the lower Mississippi River face, such as channel maintenance and strong currents and shifting sandbars that make navigation tricky. The group boarded one of Ergon's tugs for a ride down to the Old Vicksburg Bridge, where evidence of navigation errors was obvious from the scarred concrete piles of the bridge (you can watch traffic on that part of the river by googling "earthcam Vicksburg"). After a tour of Ergon's boat store, the group headed over to the Engineer Research and Development Center's Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility where they use simulators to test channel design and train pilots. The day's travel ended in New Orleans.



The piles on the Old Vicksburg Bridge shows evidence of past vessel collisions. You can watch real-time traffic through this stretch of the Mississippi River by googling "earthcam Vicksburg."



(Above) Spying this guy on the bank of the Mississippi River at Vicksburg, Miss., erased any notions anybody had about taking a swim. (Right) Dr. Keith Martin (right), program manager for the ship/tow simulator at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineer Research and Development Center's Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory in Vicksburg, Miss., showed the group the 360-degree simulator that the laboratory uses to test channel design and train pilots.





The first stop in Vicksburg, Miss., was at Ergon Marine and Industrial Supply, where Port Captain Lee Hogue (upper left photo, in orange shirt) talked about some of the issues stakeholders on the lower Mississippi River face. The group then donned life vests for a tugboat ride past the Old Vicksburg Bridge.



“WAWG and UMWA provided the most in depth and comprehensive shared interaction with this region that I have ever experienced,” Rich said. “I learned more in our six days about the differences and commonalities in our systems than I could have imagined.”

“I was honored to get an inside look at some of the operators and port facilities on the mighty Mississippi,” Meira said. “It was wonderful to have the chance to share one of our vessels with this group as well. I look forward to more opportunities to partner with fellow river stakeholders.”

“Our journey to the Mississippi River System was an eye-opening experience that highlighted both the similarities and stark differences between our river systems,” Peña said. “While both serve as vital inland waterway transportation corridors, we observed dramatic contrasts in environmental impact, scale of operations, and levels of investment. This exchange underscored the importance of cross-regional collaboration and knowledge sharing. By understanding each other’s unique challenges and innovative solutions, we can work together more effectively to advance and protect our nation’s diverse river



A group photo at the Port of South Louisiana, which is home to seven grain elevators, more than 40 liquid and dry bulk terminals, and a regional airport. From left are Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for Shaver Transportation; Captain Jeremy Nielsen, president of Columbia River Pilots; Anthony Peña, government relations manager for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Gary Williams, executive director of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association; Ted Knight, Port of South Louisiana’s senior advisor for commercial operations; Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers; Trista Crossley, *Wheat Life* editor; Dawn Lopez, Associated Terminals/Turn Services vice president of marketing and public relations; Brian Cox, Port of South Louisiana’s CEO; and Bill Sullivan, vice president for Associated Terminals.

systems. This trip reinforced my belief that open communication and mutual learning between different river communities are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability and prosperity of America’s waterways.”

“This trip marks a new era of collaboration for UMWA and our waterways. We’ll share ideas, address challenges, and ensure our rivers thrive for generations to come,” Putnam said.

“The exchange trip represents the start of a much more determined effort by users to exchange ideas, issues, opportunities, on bettering the very important working waterways,” Williams said. “Whether it be on how to foster careers to be sought in the inland maritime industry, tailoring our information message to the public, ideas on how to utilize the advantages of our river systems for growth and reduced environmental impact, and ensuring our local, state, and national legislators understand the importance of addressing the needs of our waterways — we have much to lend, support, and learn from one another.” ■



Loading a ship with grain at the Cargill grain elevator at the Port of South Louisiana near New Orleans.

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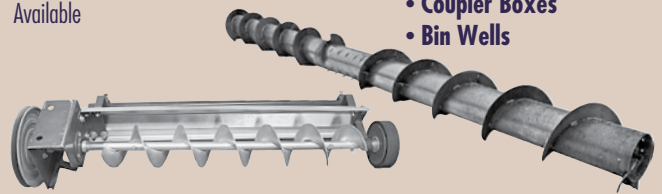


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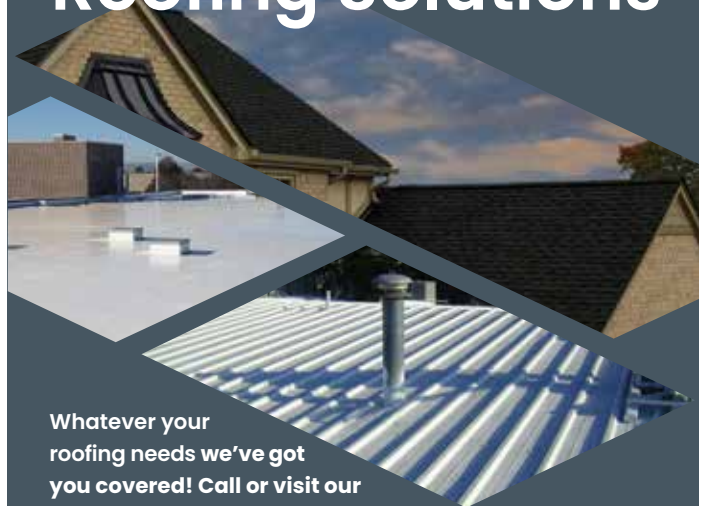
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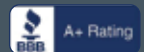
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June 27-28: New Orleans, La.

New Orleans might be the Big Easy, but there was nothing relaxed about this stretch of the Mississippi River. Where transportation and recreation shared the river in La Crosse, the lower river (below St. Louis, Mo.) was almost entirely dedicated to industry, with little to no recreation, especially around New Orleans. The group's first stop was at St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District, to learn about the port from Executive Director Drew Heaphy. After suiting up in hard hats and life vests, the group boarded an Associated Terminals' tug and rode out to view one of Associated Terminals' midstream cargo handling vessels.

The next stop in New Orleans was at the Port of South Louisiana, which is home to seven grain elevators, more than 40 liquid and dry bulk terminals, and a regional airport. It moved nearly 250 million tons of cargo in 2023, mostly bulk and petroleum products. The trip ended on a high note with a visit to a Cargill grain elevator at the Port of South Louisiana, before the group headed to the airport and flights home.



The amount of river traffic near New Orleans left little doubt that the lower Mississippi River is a "working river," not one where recreation is a major industry.



(Left, from left) Rob Rich, Michelle Hennings, and Gary Williams get ready to board the tugboat at Associated Terminals at the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District. (Above) The covered barge loading/unloading facilities at the Cargill grain elevator at the Port of South Louisiana.





(Above) Drew Heaphy (left), executive director at the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District, and Dawn Lopez (right), Associated Terminals/Turn Services vice president of marketing and public relations, gave a presentation to the Pacific Northwest group before everybody boarded a tugboat for a trip on the river to look at Associated Terminals' midstream cargo handling vessels (left).



(Above) The final day of the trip included a tour of the Cargill grain elevator at the Port of South Louisiana. (Left top and bottom) Admiring the view of the Mississippi River (and an incoming storm) from the docks at the Port of South Louisiana.

Taking off from the New Orleans airport, Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, was able to take this overhead view of the Mississippi River and surrounding area.



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Pesticide label language update

New information could restrict or limit use around endangered, threatened species habitat



HENRY WETZEL

Pesticide Recertification Safety
Educator, Washington State
University



SCOTT NIELSEN

Pesticide Compliance Program
Manager, Washington State
Department of Agriculture

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Growers and pesticide applicators should be aware of new language on pesticide labels that could restrict or limit pesticide use in certain areas where endangered or threatened species are found.

The language will normally be found in the directions for use section of the label, indicating endangered species concerns and containing verbiage similar to the following:

Endangered Species Protection Requirements: It is a federal offense to use any pesticide in a manner that results in an unauthorized "take" (e.g., kill or otherwise harm) of an endangered species and certain threatened species under the Endangered Species Act Section 9. When using this product, you must follow the measures contained in the Endangered Species Protection Bulletin for the area in which you are applying the product. You must obtain a bulletin no earlier than six months before using this product. To obtain bulletins, consult <http://www.epa.gov/espp/>, call 1-844-447-3813, or email ESPP@epa.gov. You must use the Bulletin valid for the month in which you apply the product.

Growers are directed to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website, epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins, where they can enter the pesticide EPA registration number (typically found on the front page of the label below the list of active ingredients) and the month and location of the planned application. If the planned application is in an area designated as a Pesticide Use Limitation Area, or PULA, the grower will need to download a bulletin that contains pesticide restrictions or use limitations for that area.

"Right now, the biggest concerns in Washington are different species of salmon and trout. Some areas of Eastern Washington don't have PULAs, because not all water bodies are habitat for migratory fish," explained Henry Wetzel, a pesticide recertification safety educator at Washington State University. "The bulletin is essentially an extension of the pesticide label. Once you learn where you are applying the pesticide, if you have a potential to cause problems with an endangered or threatened species, the bulletin is going to give you a script on what you should or should not do to minimize the impact."

Wetzel added that bulletins may ban application of the pesticide at that location at that time or list the requirements that need to be met to apply the product, such as no forecasted precipitation events, with greater than 50% chance of occurrence of 1 inch or more of rainfall, for 48 hours following an application. A big challenge for growers will be keeping up with the active ingredients that might have bulletins associated with them, as the list keeps growing. As of mid-June, there were nine active ingredients that have bulletins in Washington:

- Herbicides: Bromoxynil, Prometryn, and Metolachlor
- Insecticides: Cyantraniliprole, Chlorpyrifos, Diazinon, Dimethoate, and Malathion
- Soil Fumigant: 1,3-dichloropropene

Scott Nielsen, pesticide compliance program manager for the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), said the department has been working to get the word out on the bulletins since last fall. He confirmed that some pesticide containers

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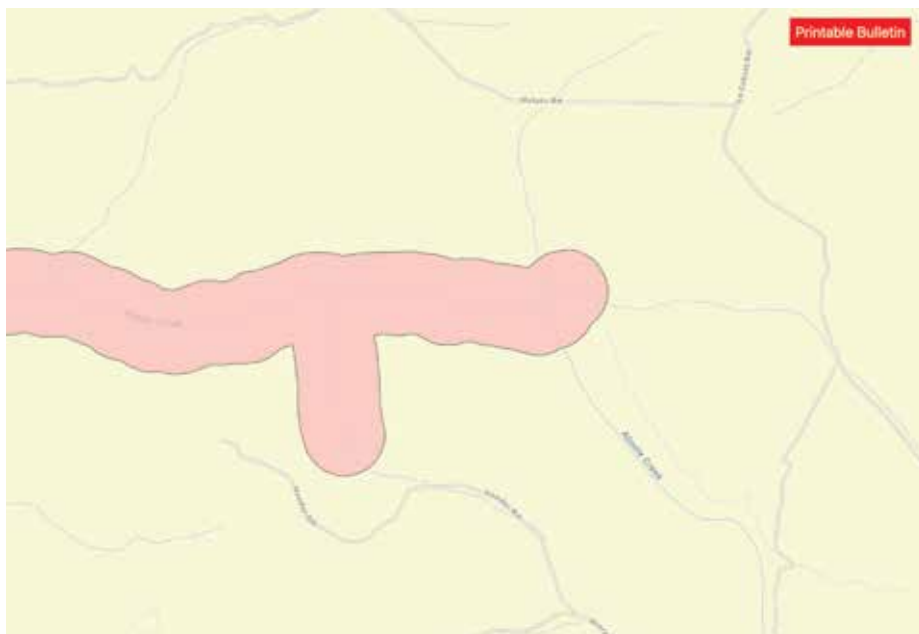
packaged in January 2024 and in the channels of trade have the new language included on labels.

“We are really trying to instruct growers, applicators how to use the labels. How to go into the Bulletins Live! Two website, how to look up the EPA registration number, and find your own farm,” he said. “It’s not really a problem if you aren’t in a PULA, but if you see the pink area in your fields, then you have to obtain the bulletin and follow the instructions. You’ve got six months in advance of the application to be able to pull off the bulletin, but you need to pull it off for month you intend to apply (the pesticide).”

When doing normal applicator inspections, WSDA will be checking to see if the applicator has checked for a bulletin and if they are in compliance with the bulletin’s requirements. Applicators aren’t required to keep copies of bulletins, but if an application is made in a PULA, Wetzel recommended keeping a copy just in case.

While Eastern Washington growers who don’t farm on salmon-bearing streams might be less impacted by the new regulations, that relief is likely to be short-lived. The EPA is working on strategies for herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and rodenticides that will include endangered species mitigation activities that applicators will need to take. Growers who want to spray a field adjacent to an area where an endangered plant is located may have to take additional precautions. While details haven’t been finalized for these additional mitigations, Nielsen said many dryland farmers have likely already implemented some of the practices the EPA will be requiring to reduce surface runoff.

“The best way for growers to know if they have an active ingredient of concern is to look at the



At the Bulletins Live! 2 website (epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins), enter the location of the planned application, the application date, and the EPA registration number of the chemical to be applied and click on the magnifying glass. If you see a salmon-colored area (above), that means the location is in a Pesticide Use Limitation Area. Click on the location, and if there is a bulletin, the “Printable Bulletin” in the upper right corner will turn green and become clickable. Clicking on the button will take you to the applicable bulletin.

pesticide labels on the containers. If they see that endangered species statement on there, and go through the bulletins process, do what is expected to minimize impacts on endangered and threatened species and their habitats, everything should be fine,” Wetzel said.

The WSU Small Grains website, smallgrains.wsu.edu, has published several timely topics on the new pesticide labels. More information is at WSDA’s website, agr.wa.gov/departments/pesticides-and-fertilizers/pesticides/compliance, and at EPA’s website, epa.gov/endangered-species/assessing-pesticides-under-endangered-species-act. ■



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Making introductions

WAWG'S NEW CONSERVATION COORDINATOR TO BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN GROWERS, NRCS

By Andrea Cox

Conservation Coordinator, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

As a Whitman County native, I grew up spending countless hours helping around our family's dryland wheat operation. From driving harvest truck, picking rye and rocks out of the field with my brother, and helping flag machinery when we moved from place to place, I was blessed to have had the opportunity to experience such an amazing childhood on the farm. I remember riding in the combine with my dad and grandpa and cherished times gathering with the harvest crew at lunchtime for the most amazing homemade meals that my mom and grandmother spent countless hours preparing. It was truly a wonderful way of life that I wouldn't change for anything.

Fast forward to life now. My husband, who also grew up on a dryland wheat farm outside of Pomeroy, and I have three kids of our own, live on some acreage in Kennewick, raise 4-H steers for our local fairs, and are working hard to instill the same work ethic and morals that we both grew up learning.

When I heard about the conservation coordinator position with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

(WAWG), I was immediately intrigued by the opportunity it offered to help serve the farmers that helped me get where I am today. Four months into the role, I can tell you that I've made strides meeting with our growers and reconnecting with those I've worked with throughout my career. Throughout the month of June, I managed to rack up 1,200 miles traveling throughout Eastern Washington for crop tours, including Lind, Fairfield, Walla Walla, Connell, and the Horse Heaven Hills. In addition to crop tours, I've made it a priority to introduce myself and start to build relationships with several of the East Area Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office staff and Conservation District staff.

Now that harvest is in full swing and crop tours are over, I've taken time to sit back and set some goals for this fall. I plan to attend grower meetings to not only meet our producers face-to-face, but to also gather feedback regarding NRCS programs in hopes of sharing it with those individuals in charge of updating existing guidelines. Having spoken with our state NRCS leadership team, I assure you there is a desire and interest for feedback from you, our growers.



My role is such a unique opportunity as a liaison be-



Andrea Cox, conservation coordinator for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, is asking growers to provide feedback about Natural Resources Conservation Service programs.

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tween our growers and NRCS. I'm excited to help increase awareness among our growers of the opportunities offered through NRCS. While the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funds are available, let's work together to share our thoughts and feedback with our NRCS counterparts on how things are working for our growers. I am asking that you keep this in the back of your mind while you're making passes around the field this summer and fall. Given all the logistics of harvest and fall work, I know this isn't going to be at the forefront of your mind, but if we want change, it needs to come from you, our growers at the grassroots level. If there is new equipment you are currently utilizing or would like to utilize, please let me know. If there are conservation-related practices that you're currently implementing, shoot me the details. Our growers are some of the most innovative in the nation, and the technology that is being utilized in the field is second to none.

Later this year please keep your eyes open for a survey arriving in your inbox that will focus on conservation practices, funding, etc. We all know time is precious, and no one really wants to see another survey pop up in their inbox. However, the results of this survey provide an opportunity for your voices to be heard in an effort for positive change.

Thank you again to Roylene Comes At Night, NRCS state conservationist, and Michelle Hennings, WAWG's executive director, for collaborating to make this position a reality. I'm excited for the opportunity I've been given to assist our growers and look forward to meeting more of you. I'm only a phone call or an email away to help answer your conservation-related questions, and I look forward to working hard to assist and support our wheat growers. You can reach me at (509) 659-0610 or andrea@wawg.org. ■




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SEASONS OF FARMING

SUMMER/FALL

Nine, maybe 10 months ago, Eastern Washington farmers planted their winter wheat crop. Now they'll find out if they'll be able to recoup their investment.

Winter wheat, which was planted the previous fall, ripens first, followed by spring wheat. Combines started hitting the fields in Benton and Franklin counties in July, moving north and east through August and September. Most wheat will be harvested by mid-September, although growers in higher elevations may still be harvesting spring wheat as late as October.

During harvest, combines cut the wheat heads off, leaving the stalks. As that residue or stubble decomposes, it will help replenish soil nutrients, protect the ground from wind and water erosion, and shelter next year's crop. Some growers will bale the residue and use it as animal bedding or in animal feed. In no-till and direct seeding operations, next year's winter wheat crop will be planted directly into the previous crop's residue.

From the field, wheat is trucked either to on-farm storage bins or directly to a local county elevator. Because of limited storage capacity, many county elevators often funnel grain to larger, more centralized elevators using trucks and train cars.

Depending on how big the harvest is, grain may be temporarily stored outside in huge grain piles. The final leg of grain's journey happens when it is sold, which can be months after harvest. Most of Eastern Washington's wheat is destined for overseas markets, such as Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. The grain is loaded onto barges from elevators along the Columbia or Snake rivers, or onto railroad cars, and sent to export terminals in Vancouver and Portland where it is loaded onto ocean-going vessels.

At each step along the journey, the grain is tested and inspected for quality, test weight, and protein. If any of those are found to be lacking, the farmer is docked and will receive a reduced price for their grain.

While farmers have little control over some things that could negatively impact grain quality, like drought, inputs applied months before harvest are key to growing a high quality, high yielding crop. In the spring, farmers apply a nitrogen fertilizer to help maximize their yield, but because nitrogen can also increase protein, they have to carefully balance how much nitrogen is applied. High protein is desirable in some classes of wheat, but not others. Additionally, fertilizer is very expensive, so farmers want to apply only what is needed when it is most beneficial. Growers will also apply pesticides to the growing crop to deal with weeds, disease, and pests, all of which can impact grain quality and yield. Like fertilizer, pesticides are extremely expensive, so they are applied sparingly and only when needed.

Even if a farmer's harvest is outstanding, they aren't out of the woods yet. They must sell their crop at a high enough price to pay back the money they've already spent on seed, inputs, fuel, and equipment, plus have enough left over to purchase seed and inputs for the next year's crop. The price of wheat is dictated by the global market; wheat farmers have very little negotiating power and as costs rise, can't pass those increases to the consumer.

By early fall, most Eastern Washington growers will have finished harvest and moved on to planting their winter wheat crop. Depending on the weather, they may "dust" the wheat in, which means planting in very dry conditions and hoping the rain will come, or they might wait to plant until some rain falls. ■



HARVEST TERMS

THE LANGUAGE OF FARMING: The agriculture industry has its own specialized and technical language, often learned by farmers from a young age. But to many others, including some landlords and extended family, this language is not as familiar. This infographic explains some common terms used during the harvest season in Washington.

COMBINE: A machine that combines the tasks of harvesting, threshing, and cleaning grain crops.



1 HEADER: A component of a combine that gathers the crop and feeds it into the threshing mechanism.

2 DRAPER: A type of header on a combine that uses a fabric or rubber belt to convey the cut crop to the threshing mechanism.

3 BULK TANK: A storage space on a combine harvester where the grain is temporarily held before being transferred to a truck or grain cart.

4 CHAFF: The husks and other dry, scaly plant material separated from the kernels (seeds) during threshing.

5 RESIDUE (aka stubble): The remains of the crop left in the field after harvesting, such as stalks and chaff, which can be used for soil conservation or as animal bedding.

6 AUGER: A screw conveyor used to move grain from one location to another, such as from the combine to the grain cart, or from a grain cart to a storage bin.

7 HOPPER: A large storage container designed for the efficient handling, storage, and discharge of grains or other bulk materials. Also a component of grain rail cars (aka hopper cars), elevators, and other storage facilities.

8 WATER TRUCK: A vehicle equipped with a large tank used to transport water to the field, for dust control or firefighting purposes during harvest.

9 ELEVATOR: A facility where grain is stored and handled, including equipment for weighing and loading onto transport vehicles. Larger facilities also include equipment for cleaning, blending, and quality screening.

10 SAFETY/FIRE CONTROL: Safety practices during harvest include parking vehicles on bare soil (without dry crop residue) to reduce the risk of fire. You might hear a farmer say: *"Park on the black ground."*

SCALE: A device used to accurately measure the weight of the grain, often found at grain elevators or within the harvesting equipment.

SAMPLING: The process of collecting a representative sample from each load of grain at the elevator to assess quality, moisture, and protein content.

IMPACT MILL: A device that crushes weed seeds collected during harvest, reducing the spread of weeds in subsequent crops.

BLENDING: The process of mixing grains from different sources to achieve a desired quality or to meet specific grading requirements.

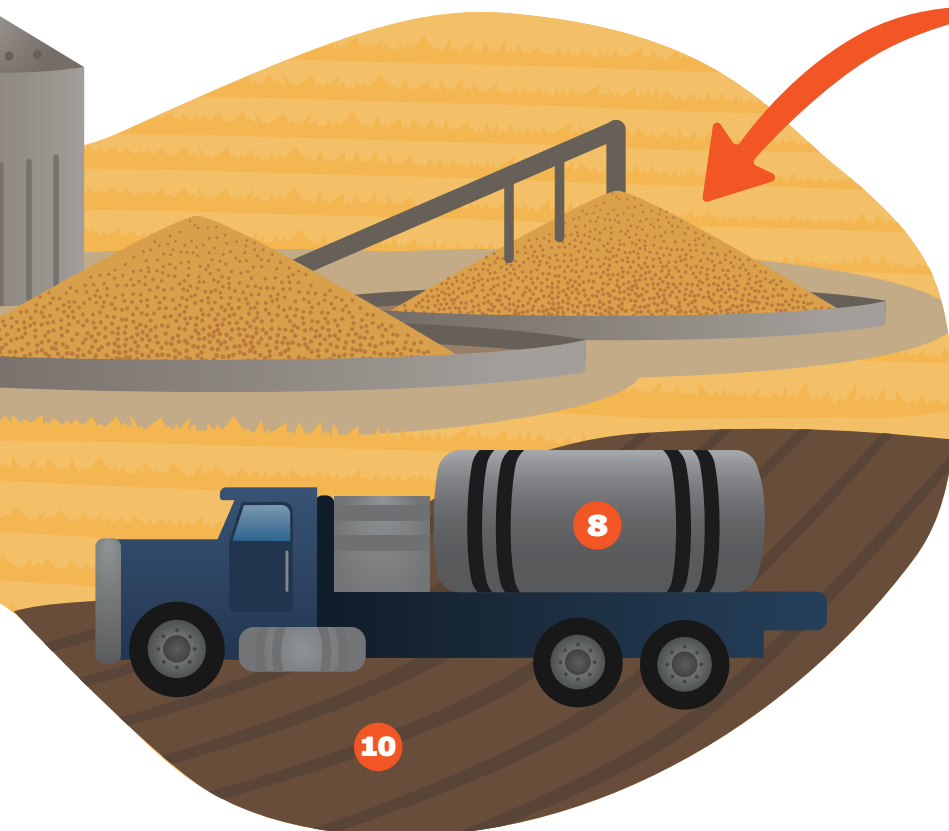


BUSHEL: A unit of volume measurement used for grains, equivalent to just over 9 gallons and weighs approximately 60 pounds (depending on kernel size) for wheat and approximately 48 pounds for barley.

TEST WEIGHT & PROTEIN: A measure of the grain's weight per bushel and its protein content, which are critical factors in determining grain quality.



BANK-OUT WAGON
(aka grain cart): A mobile storage unit used to transport grain from the combine to the truck or storage area.



WHY IS A GRAIN PILE SITTING THERE?

When wheat harvest starts in Eastern Washington, elevators are quickly inundated with more grain than they have storage for. The solution is to pile the grain outside in huge piles.

"It's temporary storage to handle the crop," explained Mark Weber, general manager of Tri-Cities Grain in Pasco, Wash. Tri-Cities Grain uses four grain piles that sit on pavement, not dirt. "Harvest for us starts the first part of July to the last part of August. As soon as those piles are finished up and full or harvest is complete, we put the tarp on."

The bustle of unloading the grain will usually keep birds and other animals away, and because summer in Eastern Washington is generally dry, the quality of the grain being stored outside is unaffected. The grain is treated for potential bugs, and the piles are covered with a tarp as quickly as possible. Multiple tarps are sewn together and then rolled down over the grain. Pipes crossing the base of the pile will use fans to act like a giant vacuum, sucking air out of the grain to cool it and keeping the tarp in place.

Grain stored in piles is usually picked up that fall or winter and either shipped to customers or moved into upright storage.

Nitrogen Stewardship

How yield consistency, crop rotations, weather, and new technologies influence fertilizer use

By Jennifer Ferrero

Nitrogen is all around us. It is a colorless and odorless gas converted into a fertilizer for food production. Are nitrogen fertilizers helpful or harmful? How and when can it be applied to make the most impact in an ever-changing farming landscape? I turned to the insights of two seasoned farmers, Jack DeWitt and Jim Kent, who have cultivated the land in Eastern Washington and Northeast Oregon for decades. Their experiences, combined with the expertise of a Washington State University (WSU) scientist, shed light on the cooperation of the weather, crop rotations, and benefits of nitrogen fertilizer in this region.



Jack DeWitt, a seasoned farmer with over 70 years of experience in the region, brings a wealth of knowledge to the table. His extensive career, which includes 40 years managing a 5,000-acre farm, ownership of Touchet Valley Seed, and involvement in leading farm organizations, has equipped him with a deep understanding of the industry. In semi-retirement, he manages 40 acres of wine grapes, eight acres of Christmas trees, and 140 acres of wheat, which testify to his expertise.

DeWitt's practical approach to farming, honed by his years of experience, is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of the agricultural industry. He shared that add-

ing nitrogen to what "nature will supply" is necessary for increased yields. However, the amount to add is contingent on moisture (rainfall).

"WSU research claims it takes 2.7 pounds of nitrogen to produce a bushel of soft white wheat. That's 270 pounds of nitrogen for a 100 bushel-per-acre crop," he said. "My soil is about 2.5% organic matter, and I assume nature will supply enough nitrogen from organic matter decomposition for 35 bushels per acre, or about 100 pounds. Soil testing prior to seeding usually shows about 50 pounds of residual nitrogen, so I apply 120 pounds at seeding time to bring the total nitrogen available to 270 pounds. If rainfall during the winter is excessive, I soil test in January or February to see if nitrogen has moved below the root zone of the young wheat. If so, I will add 30 to 50 pounds of additional nitrogen per acre by air."

Rich Koenig, a key figure in the WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, has been in various roles with the university and industry for 30 years. His extensive experience and academic background make him a trusted source of information for his customers, including farmers, crop consultants, fertilizer distributors, and the ag industry.

"Farmers use nitrogen fertilizers or fertilizers with nitrogen and phosphorus; nitrogen is the largest single nutrient they use," he said.

The problem farmers are working to solve is nutrient deficiency. Koenig noted that farmers test the soil in the spring and must adjust if the field doesn't look right. He shared that nitrogen prices have tripled over 20 years, so the input cost is high. Nitrogen is manufactured using natural gas to remove it from the atmosphere and turn it into fertilizer.

"Fertilizers are produced where there is a lot of natural gas like Russia, China, Canada, and the U.S.," he explained, adding that it is a domestic commodity marketed to a global community.

"Nitrogen management is crucial from a source, and timing of application, standpoint. The farmers and professionals we work with are highly motivated to be meticulous with their nitrogen use. Nitrogen efficiency is a key goal, aiming to grow as much wheat as possible with as little nitrogen as possible. Since nitrogen is an expensive input, the focus is on maximizing the yield and return. This underscores the urgency and significance of effective nitrogen management in modern agriculture," Koenig emphasized.

The big concerns about nitrogen overuse include groundwater contamination and making the soil acidic and less fertile. Therefore, soil testing is common and helps farmers understand how much to use. Koenig said that consistency is key for wheat farmers, who output their products into baked goods, such as cookies, cakes, and uniform loaves of bread. He said applying the correct amount of nitrogen will help the bread to rise and have high protein.



"If a farmer is growing red wheat and needs to meet the market requirements, they must carefully manage nitrogen for a high protein level. Soft white wheat has a low protein requirement for nonraising products. However, farmers need to manage nitrogen carefully for soft white wheat. It depends upon what bakers need; farmers are motivated by the input cost and the wheat market class they are growing. They can be penalized if the protein is off — too high or too low," he said.

Jim Kent is a wheat farmer in Walla Walla and has been at it for 35 years. He doesn't alternate crops and does use soil testing to make decisions about fertilizers annually. He cites the importance of using nitrogen fertilizer for crop growth and higher yields. One problem with regional farming can include fertilizer runoff and waste, but Kent said, "Many farmers have gone to a chem-fallow rotation with no-till or minimum-till usage. I think this practice has helped tremendously in runoff issues."

Kent believes farmers are good stewards of the land.

"Without fertilizer and Mother Nature cooperating, crops would probably not be as bountiful in certain regions. It has always been challenging to balance adding fertilizer. Soil tests are a must," he said.

He added that new technologies have created precision farming, making applying the right amount of fertilizers at the right time and place easier.

"Not all farmers are capable of partaking in this (precision farming) due to the financial

risks in switching over, but it is an option," He said regarding the technology. "Precision placement of any element can advance the early growth of the seed and give it a better chance of producing more. I believe more farmers will adopt this technology in the future."

Koenig noted the variable use of technology for nitrogen fertilizer placement, such as artificial intelligence (AI), satellite imagery, GPS, and drones. He said these tools allow farmers to identify locations in the field with a problem, allowing them to treat field sections as needed, which can cost less and provide better results.

Reviewing the mass media coverage, DeWitt suggested that there might be a biased portrayal of fertilizers. He supported Kent's claim that farmers are inherently responsible land stewards, and he questioned whether the shift towards organic farming would address concerns about chemical usage. DeWitt also emphasized that conventional farms are becoming more productive, highlighting the importance of synthetic nitrogen for feeding the world's population. He noted that without synthetic nitrogen, the world's farms could only feed half of its 8 billion people. ■



Export Q&A

More than 85% of Washington's wheat is destined for overseas markets, such as Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines, where it will be made into noodles, cakes, and cookies. But how does the grain get from farmers' fields to consumers' plates half a world away?

Companies, such as United Grain Corporation, operate export terminals in areas where ocean-going vessels can dock to load (and unload) commodities. Most of the time, export terminals are located near a coast, often along a river or bay that is deep enough to handle these huge vessels.

United Grain Corporation (UGC) operates an export terminal in Vancouver, Wash., where they ship nearly 6 million metric tons of grains and oilseeds around the globe. Once a customer orders a shipment of grain, UGC sources that grain either from their own storage or from inland elevators. The grain is sent to the export terminal by train and barge and is then loaded onto a ship. The process sounds straightforward, but the logistics of finding the product the customer has ordered and getting it to Vancouver in time to meet the ship is anything but simple. UGC's Stephanie McClintock explained the process in more detail.

How do overseas customers place an order for wheat?

Buyers will usually solicit offers and UGC's merchandising team will work with overseas customers to negotiate sales contracts and terms.

When a customer orders a load of wheat, what options do they have?

Class of wheat, protein, amount, timing are all options. We follow U.S. grain standards for quality factors generally, but there are many options available for the buyer to get exactly what they want.

What is the time between when an order is placed, and when it is delivered?

That depends on when they want it to arrive. We generally sell orders about two months before the ship arrives for loading, then it takes about three weeks to sail to the customer, so it's an average of two to three months after the order is placed.

What is the average size of a wheat shipment?

Sales quantities can vary greatly, but an average wheat sale may be around 50,000 tons or 1.8 million bushels.

Does UGC generally store enough wheat to fill a customer's order?

We have the largest storage capacity of any West Coast export terminal, 8 million bushels. We can store enough to

load three or four big ships, but due to logistics, we always have a little of everything on hand, so we must coordinate the arrival of some product with the arrival of the vessel.

How does UGC work with inland elevators?

Inland elevators are the initial step in our supply chain. We strive to partner with producers in providing a market for their product. From the inland elevators, product is moved to our export terminal by either rail or barge.

Does UGC have contact with farmers?

Yes. Our team works with producers to provide them with market intelligence and strategies. We have a fleet of services we offer to help producers maximize their opportunities.



When you get a load of wheat in, what do you test it for?

When the wheat is first brought to the local elevator, it is tested for moisture, protein, impurities, and test weight to make sure it meets our requirements and to help identify how the wheat should be segregated in storage. Samples are then sent out for more complete grades. The wheat is again tested when it is loaded out of the local elevator and at least once more when the Washington State Department of Agriculture grades the wheat, at the export terminal, before it is sent to the purchaser.

What is blending, and why do you do it?

An overseas customer will ask for a certain level of protein, or specific grades factors, in the wheat, and we will blend different factors to meet the customer's request.

How do you separate and store wheat?

Our export terminal has over 250 storage bins, and we will separate based on grade factors.

Besides wheat, what else does UGC handle at the Vancouver facility?

UGC also handles soybeans, corn, sorghum, and canola. ■

CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Ben Barstow



No matter where you are in your harvest season, I pray that everyone has a safe harvest. Ours is a dangerous profession, and people get hurt, so be careful with yourself and even more so with your employees and family members.

My top priority for accident avoidance, year-round and not just for harvest, is farm equipment accidents that occur on the highway. I am terrified that I will be in an accident that makes news and makes you, my neighbors, and every farmer in the country look bad by association. As a farmer, I feel like the public already has a skewed vision of me because I use fertilizer and pesticides, and the last thing I want is to add more negativity with my equipment on the highway or even county roads.

Always use flag vehicles, even if it is just 300 feet on the highway between field entrances. To the driver who comes flying around the corner and finds you in the road, it does not matter how short your road travel is or how quickly you make your move. To the surprised driver, whether you have been on the road for three hours or 30 seconds, it doesn't matter; to 98%+ of the drivers on the road, their closest encounter with production agriculture is when they suddenly find agriculture in the middle of the road, and that is always an unexpected surprise. Always use flaggers.

Those of us who have driven equipment down the roads know how hard it can be to find a safe place to pull over, and how much time it takes to do so and then get back to traveling again. We know how frustrating it is to be driving on the road shoulder as much as safely possible, giving following traffic a perfect opportunity to pull around, and yet they patiently keep following. While these things are ordinary and commonplace to us, they are wildly new experiences for everyone else on the road, and we cannot expect them to know what to do, nor can we expect them to be patient and understanding with us, no matter how much we need them to!

A lot of those drivers do seem to get that harvest is a critical time of year for us, "the culmination of a year's hard work," but I don't think they fully understand that harvest is when we learn how much we might get

paid. Most years, harvest coincides with the first income we've seen for months, maybe many months. In years where yields or price (or both!) are disappointing, it can be a real challenge to find reason for optimism, or joy, or tolerance for "idiot drivers on the road who don't know how (or when) to pass a combine."

Here's a coping mechanism. As you are crowding the shoulder driving down the only straight stretch of road for miles with no sign of oncoming traffic, and that car following you is stubbornly refusing to go around, remember that the person behind the wheel has probably consumed wheat products in one form or another on multiple occasions in the last 24 hours. They are a customer, a consumer of wheat that removes wheat from the market, and that is price positive!

Even if the car's occupants are gluten free, every one of them has had a birthday within the last 365 days, and the secret truth is, many of the gluten free still make an exception when tempted by birthday cake! When you have to move equipment on the public roads, think birthday cake. Just smile, wave, and remember they are birthday cake eaters, and if they are not, if they are among the celiac sufferers, pity them, because they can't have real birthday cake made from the real wheat that you grow.

It goes way beyond the car's occupants, too. Every vehicle in the country, even if they are not built by our customers overseas, contains parts and components that are built by our Asian and Latin-American customers. Every vehicle you have to dodge helped give someone the means to buy and consume wheat (more price-positive impact). Remember that happy thought with every vehicle you meet, then listen to a market report, and it will probably make you wish you had met more cars.

The absolute worst part about moving equipment on the roads, though, is the fear — the absolute dread — I have of meeting other farmers and their equipment. My worst nightmares have been about hopelessly tangled equipment half off both sides of the road, and traffic backed up for miles in both directions.

Be safe with harvest and moving all year long, everyone, and I wish everyone great success with marketing! ■

Market success built on decades of work

TRADITIONAL NORTH ASIAN US WHEAT MARKETS REMAIN STEADY, BUT STILL NEED SUPPORT

This is the third in a series of articles describing how U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is investing funds from the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) to maintain and grow demand for soft white (SW) and other classes of U.S. wheat in overseas markets. The partnership between USW and state wheat checkoff programs allows USW to apply for export market development funding from U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service programs.

That partnership has been working since the 1950s, yet ongoing export promotion remains vitally important to Pacific Northwest (PNW) wheat growers. For example, the U.S. exports an average of 55% of total annual SW production and carry-in stocks, and the percentage for Washington-grown SW is closer to 80%. From such products as sponge cakes, cookies, and pastries, to blending with other wheat classes, SW wheat flour has the versa-

tility to improve the quality of a wide variety of products in the top SW export markets like Southeast Asia (May issue) and South America (June issue).

This article focuses on North Asian markets, specifically Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. In marketing year 2023-24 that ended May 30, these countries purchased approximately 1.333 million metric tons (mmt), or 65.3 million bushels of SW that represented 29.5% of total U.S. SW sales.

USW's legacy organization, Western Wheat Associates, originally opened these markets that remain strong trading partners with PNW wheat farmers. Yet, there are significant changes that require careful attention in trade service and technical support.

Japan

The Japanese market is very quality-conscious and so-



A USW Japan trade team of JFMA member representatives have dinner with WGC staff and growers on Sept. 13, 2023, in Palouse, Wash., after a day of wheat quality tours. From left: Growers Sandy and Larry Cochran; Mari Ito, representing Taiyo Flour Milling; Nobukazu Mae, representing Nisshin Flour Milling; WGC CEO Casey Chumrau and Vice President Mary Palmer Sullivan; Akihiro Inoue, representing Nitto Fuji Flour Milling; Leslie Druffel, outreach director for The McGregor Company; Kenji Ito, representing Hoshino Bussan Company; Kazunori Nakano, country director for USW/Japan; and WGC Chairman Ben Barstow.

phisticated, making it a stable and consistent U.S. wheat buyer. For fine sponge cakes and biscuits (cookies), Japanese flour millers have imported Western White (WW) wheat (SW blended with minimum 20% white club wheat) through the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) for decades. In 2023-24, the U.S. exported 597,000 metric tons (mt), or 21.9 million bushels to Japan with an estimated total FOB value of \$164 million, which is lower than the average pre-pandemic sales. USW Japan Country Director Rick Nakano said the industry expects improving demand in 2024-25.

The market is mature with limited opportunities for growth due to an aging society and decreasing population. USW's primary strategy, implemented by its oldest overseas office in Tokyo as well as the WGC, is defending SW and other U.S. wheat class sales.

Constant quality improvement is a crucial element that USW and WGC coordinate through an annual technical exchange with the Japan Flour Millers Association (JFMA). It involves JFMA analyzing the aptitude of various club wheat varieties for biscuit and sponge cake production and providing feedback to the WGC. Exchange results help inform the annual PNW Preferred Variety list and help SW and club wheat breeders incorporate Japanese preferences into new lines. WGC CEO Casey Chumrau participated in this exchange in June, with U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) Research Geneticist and club wheat breeder Kimberly Garland-Campbell, and USDA-ARS Western Wheat Quality Laboratory Director Sean Finnie.

"Another strong market for Western White wheat here is for biscuit production," Nakano said.



Wheat farmers from Oregon and Oklahoma joined U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) staff, officials from the Korean flour milling industry, and U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service in celebrating USW's 50th anniversary of its office in Seoul in May 2023.

"When the Japan Biscuit Association created a consumption campaign, we saw an opportunity to be a partner in their effort to grow demand for products made with 90% Western White flour."

USW Tokyo elevated U.S. WW in this industry by using Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) funding to help the association create and place articles promoting biscuits in the largest newspaper in Japan.

USW Tokyo maintains a regular schedule of trade team visits to the PNW for Japanese flour millers and trade service to all Japanese industry participants. Chumrau presented on SW and club wheat at the USW Japan Crop Update Seminar June 8-12, and the WGC will host its first of two USW Japan trade teams in Eastern Washington this August. Working with MAFF to help officials adjust contract specifications based on conditions and customer needs is an important way USW and WGC fight to protect Japanese exports.

South Korea

In the Korean confectionery and baking industry, consumer preferences align with soft, mild textures and a preference for bright white flour. The industry produces increasingly sophisticated biscuits and cakes with 100% U.S. SW wheat. That is one of the reasons USW is expanding total demand by helping other markets like the Philippines adopt popular "K-Wave" wheat foods.

"For example, the demand for instant noodles produced in South Korea is growing rapidly, with exports to 132 countries setting a record in 2023," said USW South Korea Country Director Channy Bae. "Instant noodle flour uses over 60% U.S. wheat, which includes a blend of soft white, hard red winter, and hard red spring."

To grow demand, USW Seoul collaborates with customers to conduct an annual Noodle Flour Development Short Course at the Wheat Marketing Center

(WMC) in Portland. Using WMC's pilot-scale noodle line to test U.S. wheat flour blends, customers have a better understanding of instant-fried noodle formulation, processing, and instant noodle ingredient functionality. In the April 2024 short course, participants also visited an Oregon wheat farm.

In addition to conducting regular activities, USW Seoul plans to establish a baseline study of specific SW performance benefits compared to competitive suppliers.

Taiwan

Decades of work by farmers, USW, and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service export market development programs has established a preference for U.S. wheat in Taiwan's milling and baking industry. This success is reflected in an 81% market share and annual sales of about 1 mmt, or 36.74 million bushels, including an average of almost 130,000 mt, or 4.78 million bushels of SW wheat. The strategy of helping Taiwanese customers develop new foods using U.S. wheat flour, which established demand for wheat foods and increased per capita wheat consumption, remains relevant in a market nearing peak population.

Recent examples include a June 2023 Classic Cookie and Snack Baking Workshop for nearly 40 food technologists, chefs, bakers, teachers, food bloggers, and students. The workshop demonstrated that, in the words of the university instructor, "Taiwan-made soft white flour is not only high in performance, but also a wholesome and cost-effective ingredient for cookies and cakes."

"The popularity of traditional religion and culture, including food, is growing," said USW Taiwan Country Director Yi-I Huang. "To link U.S. wheat flour with this trend, we collaborated with a technical school and a large food company to conduct a traditional pastry baking workshop for a range of participants."

The workshop demonstrated pastries made with SW flour, such as "Patron Saint of Children" cookies. Other pastries depicted the Chinese "Mazu" goddess of the sea and linked to an annual Mazu pilgrimage parade in which more than 4 million people participated in 2024. In addition, the workshop emphasized the wholesomeness of the products. The manager of a day care center that participated told USW, "I'll use the U.S. wheat flour made in Taiwan to create more healthy products without food additives for our kids." ■



(Above) A June 2023 Classic Cookie and Snack Baking Workshop in Taiwan for nearly 40 food technologists, chefs, bakers, teachers, food bloggers, and students demonstrated the qualities of soft white flour by making "Patron Saint of Children" cookies (right, top). (Right, bottom) Pineapple Souvenir Cake is a popular pastry in Taiwan.



Washington State University Winter Wheat Breeder Arron Carter speaks to growers and industry stakeholders at this year's Lind Field Day.

Nature vs. nurture

MEASURING PHENOTYPE BY GENOTYPE BY ENVIRONMENT INTERACTIONS

By Arron Carter

Winter Wheat Breeding Program Professor and O.A. Vogel Endowed Chair of Wheat Breeding and Genetics, Washington State University

For almost all plant breeders, the interaction of the phenotype, genotype, and environment is crucial to developing new varieties. The phenotype is the trait that is being measured and is determined by the genotype (genetics) of the variety, along with the environment it is grown in. For example, if the phenotype we are looking at is plant height, it will be determined in part by the genetics, whether or not the variety contains zero, one, or two dwarfing genes. The final plant height is also determined by the environment it is grown in. If there is one dwarfing gene in the variety it will be of medium height, but if grown under irrigation, it may be 40 inches tall, whereas if it is grown in rain-fed conditions of only 12 inches of rain, the variety may only be 32 inches.

While we can measure a lot of the phenotypic traits of a variety, understanding the genetics is also very important. Past articles I have written have helped explain the advances we have been able to take advantage of in wheat with regards to the genotype. We have more DNA markers tracking genes of interest, and we have sequencing technologies that allow us to make predictions of future performance of lines. One thing that has been missing in the equation is a better understanding of the environment.

Plant breeders generally characterize the locations that their trials are grown in. You will often hear us saying that we have trials in “low rainfall locations” or “high rainfall locations.” Other times you will hear us say that it was a “cool wet spring” or a location was affected by “terminal drought.” We generally characterize these locations to help us better understand the traits we are measuring such as plant height, heading date, test



Figure 1: Setup of weather stations at Washington State University Winter Wheat Breeding Program trial locations.

weight, and grain yield. As we get a better understanding of both phenotype and genotype, it is becoming more important for us to better understand the environment. Understanding the environment will help better understand the trait we are measuring.

If we are looking at grain yield in a “high rainfall location,” it will be important to know when the rain actually came. Did most of the moisture come in the form of snow melt? How much did it rain in April and May? Were there any late June rains that helped the crop finish strong? All of these are important questions to have answered if we want to fully understand grain yield as a trait and the genetics that are controlling the performance of that line in that specific environment.

In addition to this, when our breeding lines are tested the first year in yield trials, they are unreplicated and usually only tested in two or three locations. When lines are selected to be high yielding, they are only high yielding based on the environment they were grown in. I have written previously how our drone sensor technology is helping us better understand how the plants are interacting with the given environment, and how the sensor data is helping select better cultivars in given

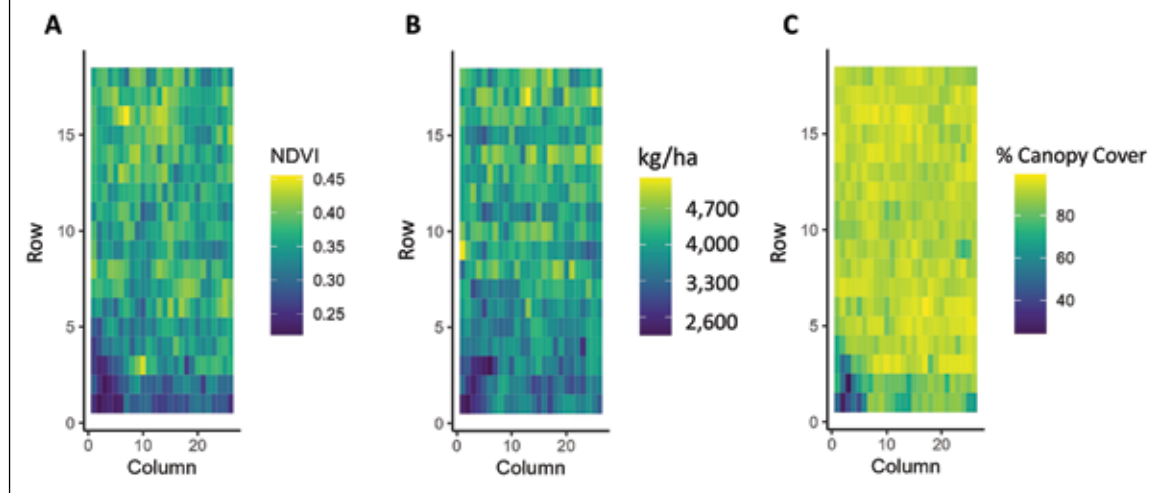
environments, but we are still missing the fine details of the environment.

To that end, we partnered with Meter Group Inc. to acquire six ATMOS weather stations to be placed at each breeding location (Figure 1). These are the same weather stations that are used by AgWeatherNet, so between the six units the breeding program has and other breeding locations that are adjacent to AgWeatherNet stations, all our breeding locations now have active weather monitoring. We installed these stations in 2022 and are now collecting our third year of data.

With this data, we are beginning to understand how the environment is interacting with each genotype we are testing. Using a combination of drone sensor and environmental data, we can adjust the performance of breeding lines tested in large trials. Previously, lines would be replicated across the field and adjusted based on their performance in each replicate. With large trials, replication is difficult, leading to unreplicated trials that are affected more by field variations (Figure 2). Adjusting performance of breeding lines in unreplicated trials with sensor and environmental data has improved trial data as if it had been adjusted based on replication. This

Example of Irregular Spatial Heterogeneity in a Field Trial

Figure 2: An example of the spatial differences that occur in a given field trial.



allows us to grow more lines in individual locations each year, but still get robust data that a replicated trial would have provided.

While this is just a first step in how to use the data, we are excited to continue to use environmental data to better understand breeding lines and their performance. Knowing the exact environmental parameters of each location, such as when it rained, how much it rained, how much evapotranspiration was happening (which is a measure that combines water evaporation from the soil and water transpiration from the plants), what the temperature was, and the myriad of other data we can collect, will help understand what made a breeding line so good (Figure 3). As we continue to collect data over varying environmental conditions, we can begin to build models to start asking questions about how breeding lines will perform in very specific weather conditions.

Understanding the environment

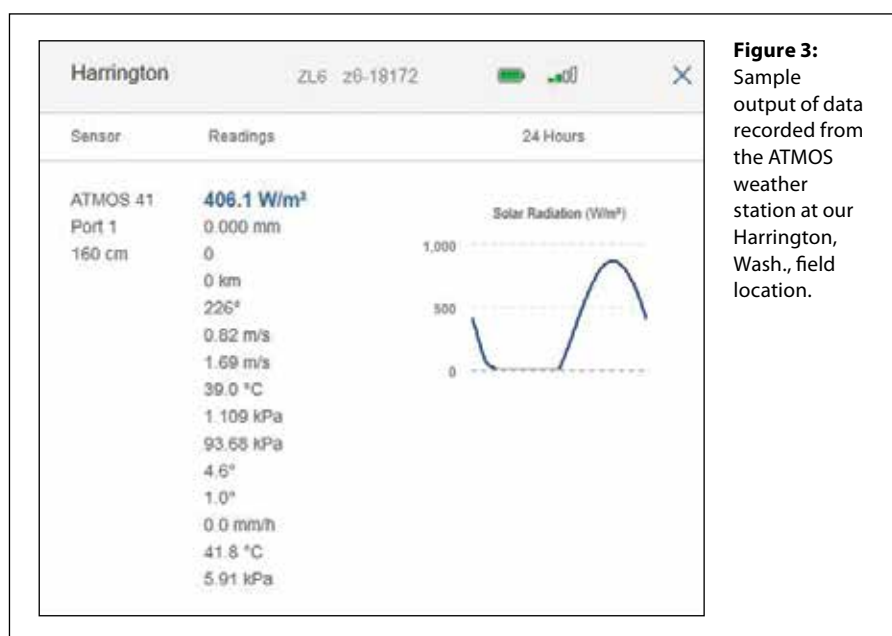


Figure 3: Sample output of data recorded from the ATMOS weather station at our Harrington, Wash., field location.

is going to be a key part of breeding in the future. As our climate continues to vary across Washington and from year to year, having cultivars that can be resilient to those changes will be important. Being able to incorporate environmental data into selection and decision making will hopefully allow us to develop better cultivars. I use the word hopeful because we are just starting to use this data within the breeding program. The coming years of selection and testing will be the true test as we watch how different breeding lines perform after selection. While I am cautiously optimistic, I am still very excited about using this technology to improve cultivars for the state of Washington! ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Outlook suggests increased production, stocks



By Allison Thompson
Owner, The Money Farm

Grain markets have been facing multiple challenges since the start of 2024, from weather issues sparking production concerns to economic uncertainty questioning demand. Unfortunately, these issues haven't been alleviated going into the second half of the year. Price action has certainly been volatile, and recent movement has likely dwindled any remaining market optimism. However, plenty of uncertainty still remains. How these moving pieces play out over the coming months will dictate how wheat markets finish the year.

Fundamentally, the outlook for the 2024-25 U.S. wheat crop suggests a significant increase to supplies, domestic usage, exports, and ending stocks. The latest round of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data attributed much of this rise to higher production levels, increased harvest acres, and improved yields. All wheat production is now estimated to exceed 2 billion bushels. The USDA now estimates U.S. winter wheat production at 1.341 billion bushels. This is up 4% from the June report due to a higher yield of 52 bushels per acre. The updated estimate is also 7% higher than 2023 production based on better yields and a lower rate of abandonment following improvements in weather, with harvested area holding at 25.808 million acres. In 2023, winter wheat totaled 1.248 billion bushels with an average yield of 50.6 bushels per acre on a harvested area of 24.683 million acres.

Hard red winter (HRW) wheat production was also raised by 5% compared to last month to 763.31 million bushels, while white winter wheat (WW) gained 4% on the month to 234.443 million bushels. Soft red winter wheat (SRW) was less impressive as it received a less than 1% decline from June with production estimates at 343.502 million bushels. Last year, HRW production was 601.017 million bushels, with SRW at 449.017 million bushels, and WW at a combined 197.714 million bushels. At this point, the winter wheat harvest is ongoing and could wrap up soon in some key states.

According to the USDA, U.S. spring wheat production is seen at 577.84 million bushels, 14% larger than last year. On top of that, the USDA is projecting a record average yield of 53.1 bushels per acre, which more than

cancels out expectations for smaller harvested area this year at 10.885 million acres. For 2023, production was 504.9 million bushels with an average yield of 46 bushels per acre on a harvested area of 10.985 million acres. Impressively, durum wheat production is expected to double compared to 2023 to 89.3 million bushels. Based on conditions as of July 1, yields are expected to average 42.7 bushels per harvested acre, which is up 5.7 bushels compared to last year. On top of that, harvest acres are expected at over 2 million which is up 30% from 2023.

Honestly, the updated production estimates are hard to argue with. The U.S. hard red winter wheat crop has been in great shape since coming out of dormancy, and yield reports are matching this data. Harvest is progressing north with a bit more variability, but overall, good yields and quality have been reported. Soft red winter wheat harvest is nearing completion with quality being reported similar to last year. Soft white wheat harvest has officially started, and so far, conditions are holding, and the crop is expected to have both excellent yields and quality. Spring wheat is also experiencing strong condition ratings this year. Despite a cool and damp start to the season, the crop looks phenomenal, and harvest may be approaching a bit earlier than first anticipated as conditions are turning warm and dry. The U.S. durum crop is the same story.

With U.S. wheat production expected to rise significantly, the USDA did increase domestic usage. The agency increased domestic feed and residual use by 10 million bushels while also raising exports by 25 million bushels. As a result, ending stocks are estimated to reach 856 million bushels, a 22% increase from last year and the highest U.S. ending stocks in five years. The situation could certainly keep wheat prices stagnant, if not on a continued downtrend, especially if the increased production is not matched by increased domestic demand or exports.

Globally, the current USDA outlook for 2024-25 expects increased supplies, consumption, trade, and stocks. World wheat supplies are rising and are mainly driven by higher beginning stocks and higher production mainly in the U.S., Pakistan, and Canada. Although global consumption is expected to grow, primarily due to higher food, seed, and industrial use, the consistent world trade levels suggests that increases in exports

from the U.S., Canada, and Pakistan may be balanced by reductions in the EU and Black Sea. In the end, global ending stocks are expected to rise roughly 5 million tons to 257.2 million metric tons.

The increase in both domestic and global wheat production and stocks will have implications on price movement going forward into the second half of 2024. While the current outlook is daunting, potential adverse weather conditions could greatly change this forecast, particularly during key growing stages over the next couple of months across the Black Sea, Australia, and the EU. While weather forecasts for these regions have gone to the wayside recently, any disruptions threatening the tightening of supplies will cause prices to rally, particularly if any of these regions experience prolonged periods of extreme weather. Some already have.

Without any production issues, demand moving forward will be the key to price movement. The recent weakening of the U.S. dollar is supportive to grain futures as it makes U.S. commodities more competitive on the global market. This, in turn, ties back to U.S. inflationary data. If interest rates stay higher for longer, a higher U.S. dollar will dampen exports and keep prices

pressured and vice versa. Right now, the narrative supports a lower U.S. dollar moving forward, but if we have learned anything over the past year, it's that the narrative can quickly change. Beware.

Still, global inflation and economic situations can also spur demand and prices, especially if trends similar to what is taking place in Norway become more widespread. The country recently announced it would start stockpiling grain, specifically wheat, for the remainder of 2024 and 2025. Food security could be a trend worth watching in a tense geopolitical environment.

The printed fundamental outlook for wheat seems bleak. However, the final outcome for the year will depend on many unpredictable factors including weather, the value of U.S. dollar and, ultimately, demand. The trade will have plenty of information to sift through in the coming months. Unfortunately, it can take the trade time for the market to digest this information, and it may not fit your timeline. ■

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



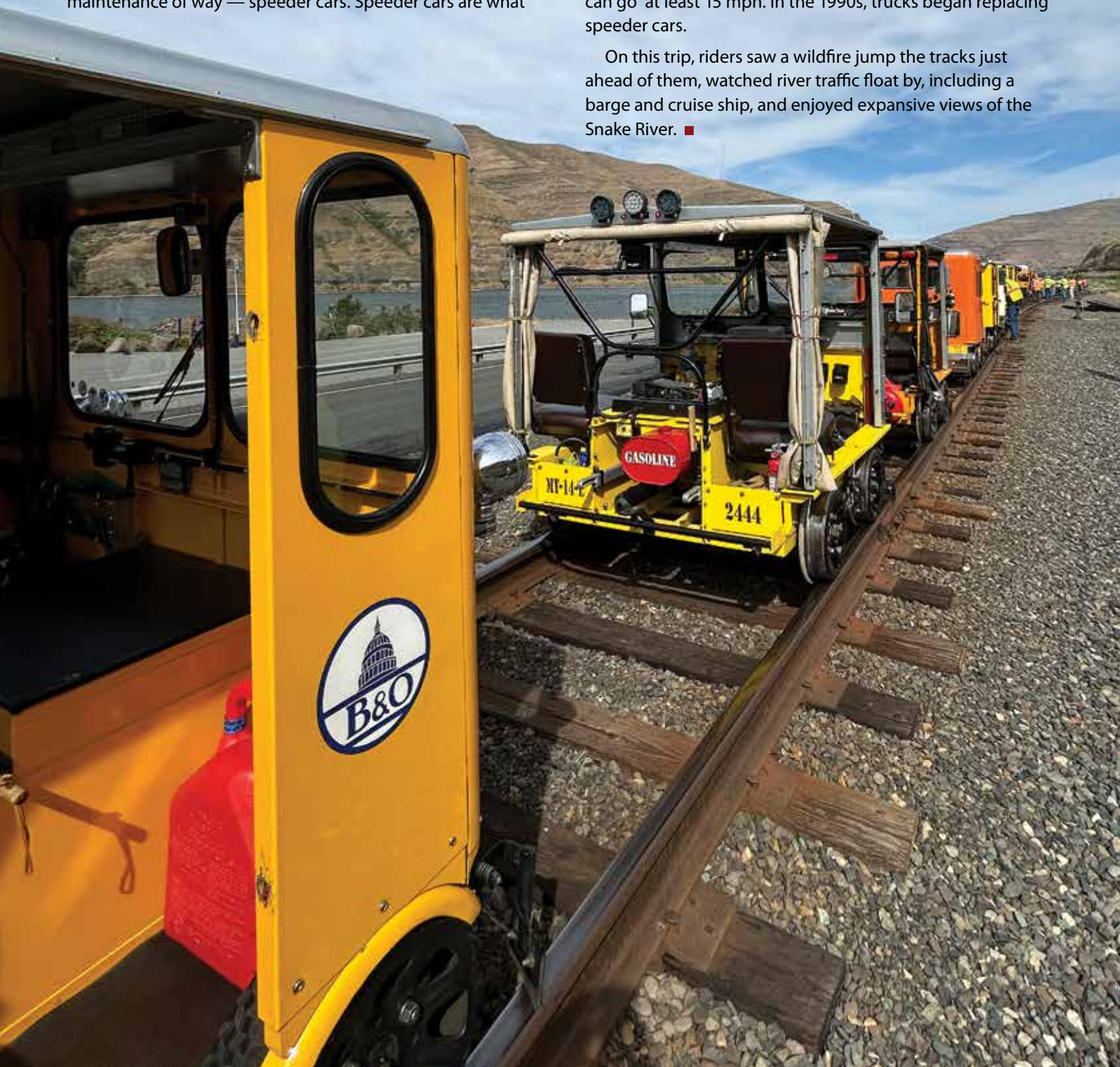
Speeding along the rails

RAILROAD MOTORCARS SHOW OFF THE SNAKE RIVER FROM A UNIQUE VIEWPOINT

In June, *Wheat Life* had the opportunity to take a 144-mile speeder car ride along the Snake River, from Lewiston, Idaho, to Riparia, Wash., with local members of NARCOA, the North American Railcar Operators Association. NARCOA is a nonprofit group dedicated to the preservation and the safe, legal operation of railroad equipment historically used for maintenance of way — speeder cars. Speeder cars are what

track inspectors and railroad workers used to ride to do repairs and maintenance on the rails. According to Wikipedia, speeder cars date back to the 1890s. They are called speeder cars because although they are slow compared to a train or car, they are faster than a human-powered vehicle such as a handcar. Most speeder cars have gas-powered engines and can go at least 15 mph. In the 1990s, trucks began replacing speeder cars.

On this trip, riders saw a wildfire jump the tracks just ahead of them, watched river traffic float by, including a barge and cruise ship, and enjoyed expansive views of the Snake River. ■



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— Jerry McReynolds,
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THE BOTTOM LINE

Perspectives on business transition planning

By Dr. David Kohl

President, AgriVisions, LLC

A major trend in American agriculture will be the acceleration of estate and transition planning. The transfer of wealth will also be a high priority item for the general population as \$68 trillion of assets and equity will transfer between 2025 to 2040. With many elderly in the demographics, the agriculture industry will be the first segment to experience this transfer of approximately \$4 trillion dollars of wealth.

One of the major challenges is that businesses and individuals will tend to procrastinate when confronted with the challenge of transition. Businesses that complete my Business IQ scorecard find that transition and estate planning is often a weak point. Surprisingly, it is the lowest score for successful businesses when ranked by return on assets.

Perspectives

Let's make it clear that there is a difference between estate planning and transition planning. Estate planning is the transfer of assets and equity of the business, whereas transition planning often entails the transfer of management and operations to the next generation or remaining stakeholders, which could be family or nonfamily members. Twenty one percent of American farmers and ranchers have no next generation to whom they can pass the business or legacy.

Process

Recently, I lost an older brother, who was a farmer, which brought the whole process of estate and transition planning front and center. In my brother's case, his wife passed some 20 years earlier, resulting in a proactive stance in addressing many of the challenges.

The process of transition and estate planning is a marathon, not a sprint. Usually, it will take a series of meetings over a period of time with key stakeholders of the business and help from professionals such as a lawyer. A facilitator or business coach can be very useful in moving the process for-

ward. This third-party facilitator needs to be someone outside the family. Time should be allotted to build trust with this facilitator so that complicated issues and challenges can be addressed. The role of the facilitator is to develop agendas, maintain minutes, and ask challenging questions that require individuals to critically think about the consequences. They are often very good listeners and observant of nonverbal communications to maintain the flow of the process. Be forewarned that if the individuals involved in the transition process do not threaten to fire that individual at least once, then they are probably not flushing out all of the issues and challenges. Get ready, because sometimes the situation will feel very uncomfortable!

Cost and control

A barrier in completing the transition or estate plan is the overall cost. Yes, it may require 1% of the asset or equity value to complete and update the plan. Consider the funds spent as an investment in the preservation of equity, assets, and transfer of management in a timely manner for a smooth business transition.

One obstacle for business owners and entrepreneurs that have built the business and wealth is giving up management control of the business. There is an old saying that to maintain control, one must give up control in a more objective, less emotional process. I will often bluntly tell people if you do not give up control and follow the process, the ultimate winner will be the tax man and some high-priced professionals including lawyers and accountants!

Jump-starting the process

Frustration often occurs when stakeholders indicate that some individuals hold the process up, particularly parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Success in this challenge has come from delegating the task of interviewing their elders to the grandchildren to develop a history of the business. This history can be in writing, audio recording, or video. Through this process, commitment is often created among generations to ensure the business' legacy continues on.

Another technique is to require each

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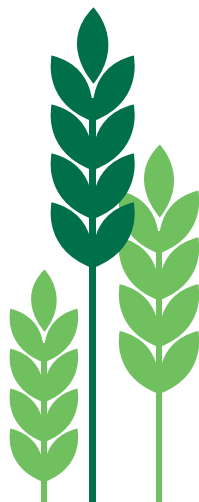
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stakeholder to write down the vision and goals of the business. Short-term goals are usually less than one year, and longer-term goals have a time frame of three to five years. In a recent instance, the parents thought their children did not have any interest in the business. After completing this exercise, they were surprised to find out that they really wanted to return.

Other tips and perspectives

A successful business transition requires a profitable business measured not by tax returns, but by accrual adjusted income statements and a thorough financial analysis. Tax returns often are not an accurate picture of profitability as a result of manipulating revenues, expenses, and capital purchases to reduce income taxes.


Start simple and move towards complexity. Make sure that you have the basic documents in place, such as wills and final directives, and have these documents in an accessible, known location. Once these basics are in place, then move on to more complex parts of the process.

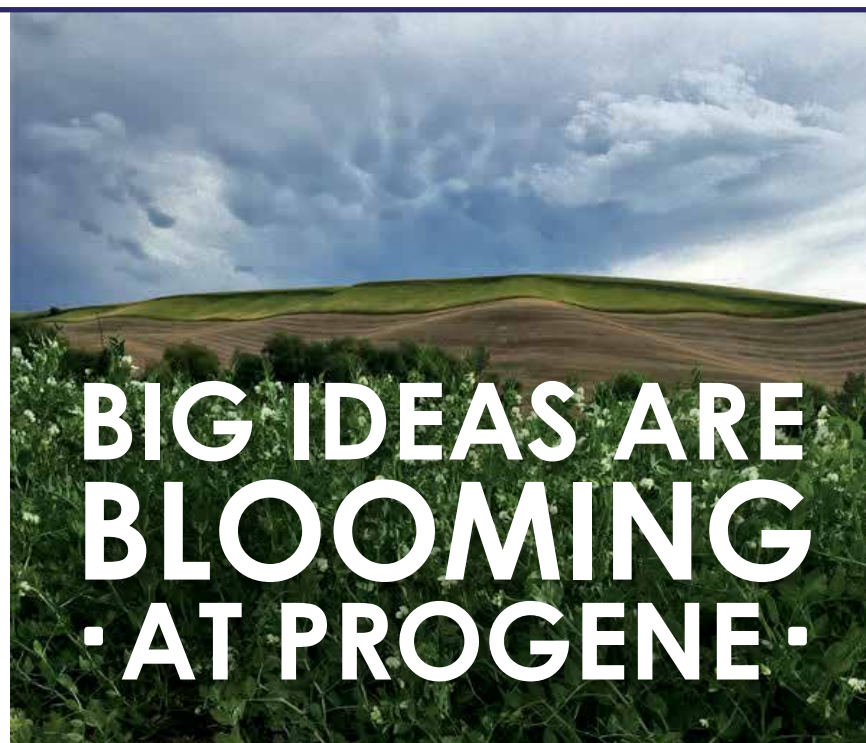
Finally, not all children or heirs of the estate need to be treated equally. They need to be treated fairly and equitably. The individuals involved in the business often take over a risky asset that was used to build wealth and earnings. In some cases, these heirs will become encumbered by debt or other financial obligations. Cash or liquid assets such as life insurance proceeds have very little risk and a high degree of flexibility.

Keep these final thoughts on structuring an inheritance in mind:

- If an individual is given \$100,000, on average, they will spend it in 17 months and have little to show for it.
- “Fast money” builds big egos and is quick to be spent. “Slow money” received over time builds character. ■

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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June in Douglas County. Photo by Sharon Davis.



Harvest 2023 at Jorgensen Farms, about 15 miles northwest of Coulee City in Douglas County. Banks Lake is the body of water in the background.
Photo by Conor Jorgensen.



Gideon (8) and Alaina (6) Foged running towards dad, Wade Foged, in the tractor in Mansfield.
Photo by Abby Foged.

Your wheat life...



Alisa and Nicholas Freter with daughter, Georgia (4), on the family homestead in Valleyford.
Photo by Sam Craft.



Kaelyn Gfeller (12) practicing for her basketball tournament (she just got done working her show steer, hence the bog-boots) with dad's combine behind the hoop. Typical busy farm kid! Photo by Shannon Gfeller.



Grady Howard (18 months) helping his dad, Marshall Howard, check out the new equipment at the Spokane Ag Show earlier this year. Photo by Paige Howard.

HAPPENINGS

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

AUGUST 2024

1-3 MOXEE HOP FESTIVAL. Parade, beer garden, entertainment, food and crafts, BBQ cookoff. Moxee, Wash. evcea.org

2-4 KING SALMON DERBY. Over \$10,000 in cash and prizes available. Registration required. Brewster, Wash. brewstersalmonderby.com

3 SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES.

Enjoy the traditional features of Scottish Highland Games, such as massed bands, pipe band exhibitions, individual piping, heavy athletics and highland dancing. 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Spokane County Fair and Expo Center in Spokane Valley, Wash. spokanehighlandgames.net

7-10 YAKIMA VALLEY FAIR AND RODEO. PRCA rodeo, car show, parade, beer garden. County Fair Park in Grandview, Wash. yvfair-rodeo.org

8-11 OMAK STAMPEDE. Parade, carnival, art show, rodeo dances and vendors. Omak, Wash. omakstampede.org

13-17 GRANT COUNTY FAIR. Ag exhibits, livestock competitions, carnival, arts and crafts, entertainment, food. Moses Lake, Wash. gcfairgrounds.com

16-25 NORTH IDAHO FAIR AND RODEO. Fireworks, draft horse pull, demolition derby, entertainment, carnival. Kootenai County Fairgrounds in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. northidahostatefair.com

17 NATIONAL LENTIL FESTIVAL. See the world's largest bowl of lentil chili. Fun run, parade, softball tournament, beer garden. Pullman, Wash. lentilfest.com

20-24 BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR AND RODEO. Demolition derby, parade, live entertainment. Kennewick, Wash. bentonfranklinfair.com

22-24 LINCOLN COUNTY FAIR. Rodeo, livestock, exhibits, food. Davenport, Wash. lincolncountywafair.com

22-25 NCW FAIR. Live entertainment, carnival, livestock sale, rodeo and horse. Waterville, Wash. ncwfair.org

22-25 NORTHEAST WASHINGTON FAIR. Exhibits, parade, entertainment, Colville, Wash. facebook.com/pigsfly53/

24 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 lawn chairs, sunscreen and blankets. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until racing is done. webbsslough.com or (509) 553-1014.

28-SEPT. 2 PIG OUT IN THE PARK.

Music and food. Riverfront Park in Spokane, Wash. spokanepigout.com

29-SEPT. 1 WHEAT LAND

COMMUNITIES' FAIR. Rodeo, exhibits, entertainment, vendors. Ritzville Rodeo Grounds. wheatlandfair.com

30-SEPT. 2 ELLENSBURG RODEO AND KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR. Carnival, midway, pancake breakfast, parade. Ellensburg, Wash. ellensburgrodeo.com

31-SEPT. 1 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

SEPTEMBER 2024

6-15 SPOKANE COUNTY INTERSTATE FAIR. Livestock exhibits, rides, food booths, rodeo and entertainment. Fair and Expo Center, Spokane Valley. spokanecounty.org/fair/sif/

11-14 OTHELLO FAIR. Adams County Fairgrounds in Othello, Wash. othellofair.org

14 CONNELL FALL FESTIVAL. Parade, car show. connellwa.com/fallfestival/

15 PIONEER FALL FESTIVAL. Tour the Bruce Mansion, see pioneer craft demonstrations, antique farm equipment and tools, and horse-drawn carriage rides. Food and vendors. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Bruce Mansion, Waitsburg, Wash. waitsburgmuseum.org/fall-festival

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

19-22 DEUTSCHESFEST. German music, food, crafts. Parade. Biergarten, fun run. Odessa, Wash. deutschesfest.com

20-22 SE SPOKANE COUNTY FAIR.

Cornhole tournament, soapbox derby, parade, fun run, truck pulls. Rockford, Wash. se Spokane County Fair.org

20-24 VALLEYFEST. Pancake breakfast, car show. Centerplace Regional Event

Center and Mirabeau Point Park in Spokane Valley, Wash. valleyfest.org

20-29 CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE FAIR. Entertainment, beer garden, monster trucks, demo derby, carnival. State Fair Park in Yakima, Wash. fairfun.com

27-29 GREAT PROSSER BALLOON

RALLY. Sunrise balloon launches from the Prosser airport. Weekend also includes a harvest festival and farmers market. Prosser, Wash. prosserballoonrally.org

OCTOBER 2024

4-5 OKTOBERFEST. Biergartens, food, music, vendors. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

5 FRESH HOP ALE FESTIVAL. Over 70 breweries, wineries and cideries, live music and food. SOZO Sports Complex in Yakima, Wash. freshhopalefestival.com

5 RIVERFEST. Celebrate our rivers and learn why they are so important to our region at this free, family-focused event. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Columbia Park in Kennewick, Wash. riverfestwa.com

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

11-12 OKTOBERFEST. Biergartens, food, music, vendors. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

18-19 OKTOBERFEST. Biergartens, food, music, vendors. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

18-19 HAUNTED PALOUSE. Haunted houses, food, fortune tellers, street entertainment. Must be 12 or older. Downtown Palouse, Wash. hauntedpalouse.com

25-26 HAUNTED PALOUSE. Haunted houses, food, fortune tellers, street entertainment. Must be 12 or older. Downtown Palouse, Wash. hauntedpalouse.com ■

Submissions

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

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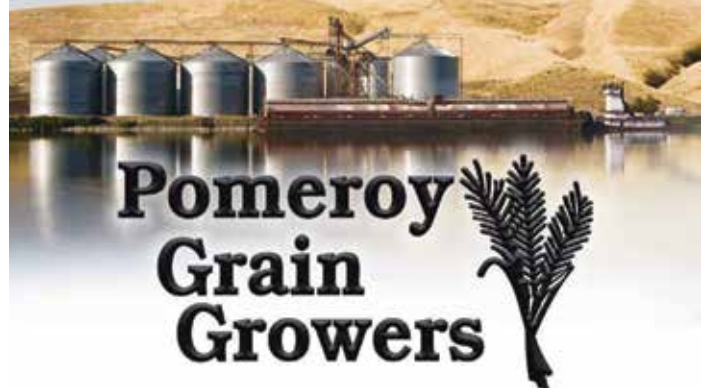
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