

WHEAT LIFE

The official publication of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers

OCTOBER | 2024



Harvest 2024

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

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

2024 Tri-State Grain Growers
Convention Preview

Congressional staffers tour dam

Election candidate Q&As

WSU royalties at work

What happened to barley acres?

Barley research updates

WHEAT LIFE

Volume 67 • Number 09
wheatlife.org

The official publication of



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

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

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President's Perspective



Farm bill push

By Anthony Smith

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Well, here we are in October, and we still don't have a new farm bill, but that's not for lack of effort from the U.S. agricultural industry.

Last month, myself and WAWG past presidents, Andy Juris and Nicole Berg, flew into Washington, D.C., to take part in a National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) farm bill fly-in. It just so happened that we are all Horse Heaven Hills farmers, but we were representing all Eastern Washington wheat growers. Additionally, Nicole is a NAWG past president and works closely with House Ag Committee Chair, GT Thompson, so we had some serious experience on our team.

The message we gave to Congress was that we don't want to extend the 2018 Farm Bill any longer. We need a new farm bill, one that reflects the cost of farming in today's economy. When the 2018 Farm Bill was passed, the environment farmers faced was much different than today's. We are advocating for strong crop insurance programs that remain affordable, strengthening safety net programs by increasing reference prices, and increasing funding for market promotion programs, such as the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program. As a trade-heavy state, Washington growers rely on access to foreign markets.

Other commodities were in D.C. to help wheat push the farm bill, including corn, soybeans, peanuts, sorghum, cotton, and Farm Credit. It was great to visit with our senators and representatives. I think our small team of Washington wheat leaders did a fabulous job, and I want to thank the NAWG team for working tirelessly to set up the multicommodity and industry meetings with Congress. In one week, I learned more about the peanut industry than I have in my whole life. I really got to see that all these growers from different crops face many of the same challenges wheat farmers do. See more on our farm bill fly-in on page 14.

Speaking of coming together, the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention is fast approaching, Nov. 19-21. Please join us in Coeur d'Alene and make this a successful convention. It's a chance to take a break from fieldwork, socialize with other growers, and learn more about the small grains industry. Every year, Washington holds an all-committee meeting where we review our resolutions and update them. The resolutions help direct WAWG's activities and guide the association's efforts. We need growers to attend the all-committee meeting and let leadership know what your concerns and issues are for the next year.

Learn more about what's on tap for the convention on page 28. If you need any assistance with getting registered, please call our office at (509) 659-0610. If you haven't been to convention before, plan on going. You'll enjoy it! ■

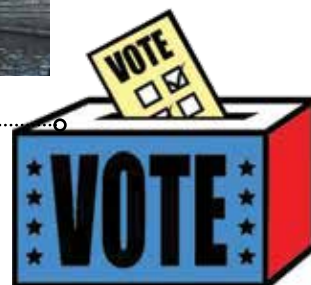
Cover photo: Blake Heaton may have turned over the day-to-day operations of his family's Whitman County farm to his son, Justin, but during harvest 2024, he deftly tackled the rolling hills near Hay, Wash., in a combine. See more harvest photos beginning on page 20. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

Inside This Issue

WAWG President's Perspective	2
Membership Form	4
WAWG at Work	6
Policy Matters	14
Washington Wheat Foundation	18
Harvest 2024	20
Growers bring in the grain	
Convention preview	28
What's on tap for 2024	
Planted in ag policy	32
Farm bill expert will speak at convention	
Social media sharing	34
Dairy farmer to give social media tips	
Seeing the system	38
D.C. staffers tour Lower Granite Dam	
Election Q&As	44
2024 candidates answer questions	
WGC Chairman's Column	73
WGC Review	74
Royalties at work	76
Funds help breeders' efforts	
What happened to barley?	78
Discounts, rise of corn and soy bite into acres	
Research update	79
Increasing the added value of barley classes	
Wheat Watch	82
The Bottom Line	84
Your Wheat Life	86
Happenings	88
Advertiser Index	90



**TRI-STATE GRAIN
GROWERS CONVENTION**
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Lifetime \$3,000 (1 individual)	X	X	X	X		X
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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WAWG board hears legislative, agency, advocacy updates

In the first Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) state board meeting since the summer break, board members heard updates from state and federal agencies, reviewed summer activities, and looked ahead to convention and the 2025 legislative season.

Over the summer, WAWG has been very active on behalf of the lower Snake River dams. Besides leading a river stakeholder tour to the Midwest in June (see the August issue of *Wheat Life* for more about that trip), WAWG also organized a tour of Lower Granite Dam for congressional staffers in August (see page 38), participated on an advisory committee that is monitoring the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Lower Snake River Dam Transportation Impact Study, and attended a CSG West River Governance meeting in Richland, Wash.

The WSDOT study is looking at how to replace the transportation infrastructure through other means if the lower Snake River dams are removed. Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director, told the board that one of her

main concerns is that the reliability in delivering grain to overseas customers that Washington wheat is known for could be threatened.

"If ships had to wait for trains or trucks to deliver grain to them, we could lose money and customers," she said.

Leslie Druffel, outreach director for The McGregor Company, is also working with the transportation study. She said the study's cost model is focused solely on wheat, timber, and fertilizer, leaving out many of the other commodities that use the river system, such as fuel. She said in meetings she's trying to drive home that agriculture is not a simple, linear system. The window when farmers need fertilizer is a short, moving target, and the capacity to meet that window is problematic, at best, if fertilizer companies have to rely only on railroads or trucks.

Leaders from several state and federal agencies attended the meeting and gave agency updates. Jon Wyss, state executive director of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), told growers that they will see several changes in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Beginning next year, before CRP contracts are approved, FSA will be asking for cultural resource information from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to be consistent with the handbook requirements of NRCS and FSA. In addition, FSA policy states growers will have 24 months to establish their CRP stand, not 36. Only the county committee can approve the additional 12 months in rare circumstances such as documented drought, fire, or other circumstances outside a grower's control.

In other CRP news, Douglas County has reached their 25% cap, and any pending appeals requesting to include acreage in a signup consistent with national requirements must be denied, which would be affirmed by the national office.

The state FSA office is almost done reviewing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts. Wyss said they've found several contracts that were "planted out of compliance." The impacted producers, who are in Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties, will be notified. FSA will do a 50% cost share to get them back into compliance, with the local conservation district kicking in the other 50%. If the contract ends in the next two years, Wyss said they can't offer cost share, but the conservation commission received funding to assist producers impacted by this audit with additional



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PNWA! In August, Washington Association of Wheat Growers Executive Director Michelle Hennings (middle) joined Danielle Nelson (left) and Ashley Smith from the Torrey Advisory Group in Lewiston, Idaho, to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association.

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funding. If producers want to re-apply, cancel the current contract, and start over with just the eligible portions, they will be eligible for a 50% cost share. Wyss said FSA is alerting producers about the compliance issue now so they can factor in the cost of becoming compliant into their future business plans.

Finally, FSA is opening up their staff program training to producers.

“Growers can come and learn with us rather than learning from afar,” he told the board. FSA is also looking for beta testers on new software that will allow them to submit various reports on their cell phone. Interested growers

should contact Wyss at jon.wyss2@usda.gov.

Over at NRCS, State Conservationist Roylene Comes At Night told the board that the state office has been successful in getting this year’s Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) money spent, and the office is gearing up for fiscal year 2025 IRA funding. The state NRCS is planning to increase staffing by more than 40, and they have been able to hire more local people by tweaking some of their hiring requirements. The office is also investing in more partnership agreements, similar to the one they have with the wheat growers that supports the WAWG conservation outreach coordinator position. ►



WHEAT WORLD TOUR: In August, National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) staff joined Washington wheat representatives to participate in wheat harvest on the Bailey Family farm in Whitman County (above) and tour the Western Wheat Quality Laboratory (WWQL) on the Pullman campus of Washington State University. During the tour of the lab (right), lab staff showcased the importance of testing wheat quality. From left are Daniel Zborowski, flour lab manager at the WWQL; Jack Long, NAWG’s government relations representative; Mary Palmer Sullivan, vice president of the Washington Grain Commission; and Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers.



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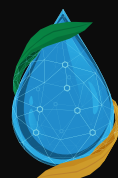
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Andy Pittenger, agriculture program manager for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, told growers that changes to the department will be coming due to the elections. One of the questions he has been getting lately from leadership is the difference in cost share vs. cash rent leases. Pittenger said on the surface, a cost share lease looks like it is more work because the grain has to be marketed, but it really isn't. In addition, the department can often get more money by selling the grain than they could get in cash rents.

Dennis Koong, regional director for the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), told the board that the agency is getting ready to send out a rather large conservation effects survey, which asks about conservation practices on farms. The feedback will help other agencies, including NRCS, design and update standards. Koong said only 127 Washington farms will be asked to participate, so it is important that farmers take part.

The other big NASS effort that starts in October is phase 2 of the ag resources management survey. This survey is looking for information on chemicals that are used on wheat. WAWG has given NASS an endorsement letter to help with grower participation. Koong explained that without farmer data, decisionmakers may end up relying on maximum label rates.

Counties reported mostly average to slightly above average yields for the 2024 winter wheat harvest. Frost damage was common in higher elevation spring wheat. Most counties have started fall seeding and reported dry conditions.

In state legislation, lobbyists Diana Carlen and Mark Streuli talked about the November general elections and the 2025 Washington Legislative Session. WAWG is watching several tight state legislative races and preparing for two new ag committee chairs. Issues on WAWG's radar include riparian buffers, farm labor, and vehicle miles traveled as a way to boost gas tax revenue.

WAWG's annual Olympia Days trip is scheduled for Jan. 19-21, 2025.

In national legislation, WAWG leaders just returned from a farm bill fly-in to Washington, D.C. (see page 14). One of the meetings was with Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack, where WAWG Past President Andy Juris was able to talk about classifying winter wheat as a cover crop.

"We told him we aren't asking for a payment as a cover crop, but programs are coming that need a cover crop, such as crop insurance premium support," Juris said. "We made the argument that dryland agriculture is locked out of cover crops, and where growers use a wheat rotation on irrigated land, they may stop growing wheat and go to a cover crop instead."

Casey Chumrau, CEO of the Washington Grain

Commission (WGC), introduced Jake Liening as the new market development specialist (see page 75 for more on Jake). The WGC has been busy with trade teams this summer. Chumrau said she is hearing that club seed sales are down and encouraged growers to consider planting it. This fall, the WGC will be participating in a trip to Peru to meet the largest South American buyer of U.S. wheat and then swinging over to Santiago, Chile, where U.S. Wheat Associates has opened a lab to help with technical training.

The next state board meeting is scheduled for Oct. 8. ■

Growers: Don't forget to apply for fuel tax repayments

The Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) is accepting applications for partial repayments to ag producers or transporters of ag products who paid carbon fees related to the state's cap and trade program on fuel purchases. Qualifying purchases are between Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023. Funds will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications should be submitted at DOL's website at dol.wa.gov/agriculture-support-program

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers encourages growers to apply as soon as possible, as the \$30 million set aside by the Legislature is expected to be far short of what is actually needed. ■

WAWG making (air)waves

The July/August National Association of Wheat Growers' (NAWG) podcast dives into the importance of Southeast Washington's lower Snake River dams. The podcast includes conversations with Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.), and Jack Long, NAWG's government relations representative. The podcast is at wheatworld.org/podcast/july-august-podcast/. ■

NRCS announces program application batching dates

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington (NRCS-WA) announced the following application batching dates for programs for Fiscal Year 2025 funding:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program Classic ap-

plications batching date is Oct. 22, 2024.

- Conservation Stewardship Program Classic applications batching date is Jan. 17, 2025.
- The Agricultural Conservation Easements Program – Agricultural Land Easements first round of applications batching is Oct. 4, 2024, and the second round of applications batching is Dec. 20, 2024.
- The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements first round of applications batching is Oct. 4, 2024, and the second round of applications batching is Dec. 20, 2024.

To learn how to get started with NRCS, visit nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. To find your local field office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator. ■

Counties designated as natural disaster areas for drought

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, seven Washington state counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of D2-Drought-Severe for eight or more consecutive weeks or D3-Drought-Extreme or D4-Drought-Exceptional.

The primary counties eligible are Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, and Yakima counties. The contiguous counties that are also eligible are Adams, Benton, Ferry, Franklin, Island, King, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Pierce, San Juan, Skamania, Snohomish, and Whatcom.

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of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through emergency loans. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation, or to refinance certain debts. FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability.

On farmers.gov, the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet, and Loan Assistance Tool can help you determine program or loan options. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. ■

2024 CRP enrollment nears 27 million acre cap

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for more than 2.2 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners through this year's

grassland, general, and continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-ups administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). With these accepted acres, enrollment is very near the 27 million CRP acreage cap.

"The popularity of our suite of Conservation Reserve Programs, including the significant success of Grassland Conservation Reserve Program and the fact that we are nearing the Conservation Reserve Program acreage cap, is a testament to the commitments made by the farmers, ranchers, and landowners we serve to mitigate the impacts of climate change by conserving, protecting, and enhancing our natural resources," said Zach Ducheneaux, FSA administrator. "It's through all FSA's conservation programs that we are able to work directly with agricultural producers to implement climate smart conservation practices that ultimately benefit everyone."

Grassland CRP

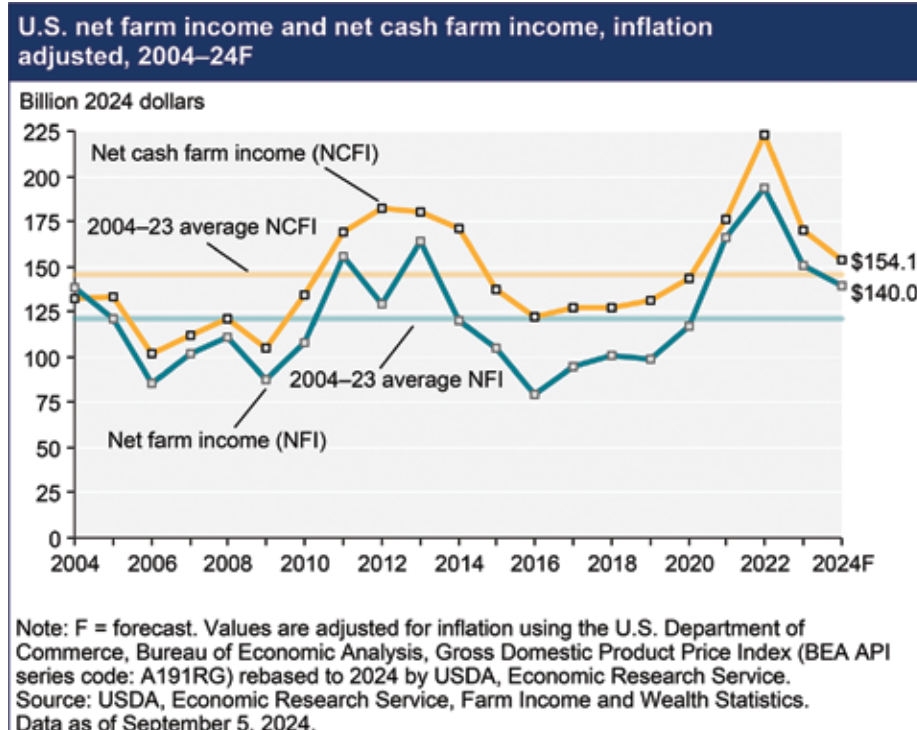
Including the nearly 1.44 million acres accepted in grassland CRP for offers received in 2024, producers will have enrolled more than 10 million acres in this popular working-lands program.

Grassland CRP allows producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while protect-

USDA forecasts 4% fall in net farm income in 2024

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, after reaching record highs in 2022, farm sector income is forecast to fall in 2024, but at a slower rate than it fell in 2023. Net farm income, a broad measure of profits, reached \$182 billion in 2022 in nominal dollars. After decreasing by \$35.6 billion (19.5%) from 2022 to \$146.5 billion in 2023, net farm income in 2024 is forecast to decrease \$6.5 billion (4.4%) to \$140 billion. Net cash farm income reached \$210.1 billion in 2022. After decreasing by \$44 billion (20.9%) from 2022 to \$166.1 billion in 2023, net cash farm income is forecast to decrease by \$12 billion (7.2%) to \$154.1 billion in 2024.

In inflation-adjusted 2024 dollars, net farm income is forecast to decrease by \$10.2 billion (6.8%) from 2023 to 2024, and net cash farm income is forecast to decrease by \$16.3



billion (9.6%) compared with 2023. If realized, both measures in 2024 would remain above their 2004–23 averages (in inflation-adjusted dollars). ■

ing grasslands and further CRP's impacts. Grassland CRP leverages working lands practices to improve biodiversity and conserve environmentally sensitive land.

Enrolled acres help sequester carbon in vegetation and soil, while enhancing resilience to drought and wildfire. Meanwhile, producers can still conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing, or harvesting seed from the enrolled land, which supports agricultural production.

Top states for this year's Grassland CRP sign-up include:

- Nebraska with 237,853 acres accepted.
- Colorado with 218,145 acres accepted.
- New Mexico with 185,619 acres accepted.

General and Continuous CRP

FSA also has accepted nearly 200,000 acres through the general sign-up, bringing total acres enrolled in general CRP to 7.9 million acres. As one of the largest private lands conservation programs in the U.S., CRP offers a range of conservation options to farmers, ranchers, and landowners. It has been an especially strong opportunity for farmers with less productive or marginal cropland, helping them re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and support wildlife habitat.

In January 2024, FSA opened enrollment for continuous CRP. Under this enrollment, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. To date, in 2024, more than 565,000 acres have been offered through continuous CRP bringing the total acres enrolled to 8.5 million. ■



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POLICY MATTERS

WAWG leaders take part in September farm bill fly-in

Last month, Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leaders took a break from fieldwork to travel to Washington, D.C., to take part in a farm bill fly-in.

WAWG President Anthony Smith was joined by WAWG past presidents, Andy Juris and Nicole Berg, on the trip, which was organized by the National Association of Wheat Growers. In addition to wheat, other commodity organizations took part in the fly-in, including the National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association, National Cotton Council, U.S. Peanut Federation, Southwest Council of Agribusiness, National Sorghum Producers, USA Rice, Farm Credit Council, and the American Bankers Association. The groups gathered at the NAWG office for a briefing before breaking into multicommodity groups and meeting with nearly 100 Hill offices and Congressional leaders, including Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

During the meetings, the growers emphasized the need for Congress to act before the end of the year to strengthen farm policy for America's farmers and highlighted the weakening market prices, increased cost of production, and overall financial situation in the farm economy.

"Our message to Congress was that we need a farm bill now, not another extension," said WAWG President Anthony Smith. "I think having multiple commodities visiting together drove home the message that the farm bill is critical to every part of agriculture." ■



(Above) Washington wheat growers were in Washington, D.C., in early September to take part in a farm bill fly-in organized by the National Association of Wheat Growers. Multiple commodities and stakeholders took part in congressional meetings. From left are Andy Juris, WAWG past president; Nicole Berg, WAWG past president; Sara Wyant, AgriPulse; Mary Kay Thatcher, Syngenta; and Anthony Smith, WAWG president. (Left) WAWG president Anthony Smith's (third from left) group included representatives from sorghum, Farm Credit, peanuts, corn, and soybeans.

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Stakeholders give perspective on buffer recommendations

Members of the state agricultural industry that participated in the Riparian Taskforce recently submitted a letter providing an agricultural perspective to some of the recommendations released earlier this summer by Plauche and Carr, the Seattle law firm that led the taskforce.

The final report recommends funding and implementation of voluntary restoration efforts and acquisition of riparian areas through voluntary methods, but says if those efforts fall short, a discussion of regulatory options and requirements, including eminent domain, should be pursued. In the letter, the ag stakeholders re-iterated their support for full and complete funding for the Voluntary Stewardship Program and pointed out that mandatory buffers are likely to jeopardize current federal funding for conservation practices.

“In multiple conversations with federal agency officials, we understand completely that federal funds that flow to farms in this state for voluntary riparian buffer efforts would be unlikely to continue if the state wants to make buffers mandatory. Put simply, the federal government offers funding to incentivize voluntary actions and not to meet regulatory mandates,” the letter says.

The letter also pushes back against using eminent domain as a “regulatory backstop,” expressing the concern that “last resort” authorities have too often become over-used or even first step actions in state government. “We, therefore, remain strongly opposed to endorsing the use of eminent domain as a regulatory backstop,” the letter says.

Besides representatives of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, other agricultural stakeholders signing onto the letter were the Washington Farm Bureau, the Washington State Dairy Federation, the Washington State Potato Commission, the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, and the Western Washington Agriculture Association.

A copy of the letter can be found at wawg.org/wp-content/uploads/Ag-Perspective-Riparian-Task-Force-Report.pdf. ■

Letter from ag groups urge Congress to pass farm bill

From the National Association of Wheat Growers

Citing worsening economic conditions impacting the nation’s farmers, over 300 national and state groups sent a letter to congressional leaders on Sept. 9, 2024, calling on

them to pass the farm bill before year’s end.

Signatories included groups representing farmers, livestock and specialty crop producers, lenders, and other essential stakeholders in agricultural communities across the U.S. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers also signed onto the letter. Commodity and lending groups will head to the Capitol en masse this week to advocate for passage of the legislation with a stronger agricultural safety net.

“It is critical that Congress pass a new farm bill that strengthens the safety net as many producers are facing multiple years of not being profitable, and this is causing their overall financial situation to deteriorate,” the letter said. “Some will have challenges as they seek operating credit for the 2025 crop year.”

The farm bill is typically passed every five years. The law was originally scheduled for reauthorization in 2023. Last November, Congress voted to extend the existing legislation to Sept. 30, 2024. As the farm bill has faced delays, producers across the country have experienced headwinds, ranging from extreme weather to high input costs to uncertain global demand to supply chain disruptions. Since the beginning of the year, the harvest price of major crops traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Intercontinental Exchange have fallen by an average of 21% while total production costs remain near record levels.

“Since the 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law, we have realized considerable gaps in the farm safety net due to sharply changing conditions, including the trade war with China, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, COVID-19 and related supply chain challenges, rising foreign subsidies, tariffs, nontariff trade barriers, and other harmful practices,” the letter said. “These conditions seriously tested the effectiveness of the 2018 Farm Bill, and it was only by the aggressive use of supplemental assistance that many farms survived.”

The letter noted that the outlook for farm country is even more daunting, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture-projected market prices for the 2024 crop are well below costs of production, and current projections paint another bleak picture for 2025.

“A durable farm safety net, along with risk management tools like a strong federal crop insurance program, voluntary and locally led incentive-based conservation programs, and enhanced international marketing and promotion programs, will be critical in shoring up America’s farm families and rural communities, which otherwise face an uncertain — and potentially calamitous — future,” the letter states.

Read the letter at wheatworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-Agriculture-Group-Farm-Bill-Letter-9.9.24-FINAL.pdf. ■



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The art of fall wheat seeding in dryland wheat farming

As the golden hues of summer begin to fade and the crisp air of fall sets in, farmers across Washington turn their attention to an essential task: fall wheat seeding. This practice is the culmination of months, a full year, in fact, of hard work, dedication, and meticulous preparation, all to yield the ideal seedbed for the wheat crop. From harrowing the fields the previous fall to managing weeds in the summer, every step is critical in crafting the perfect seedbed. The ultimate goal is to ensure a bountiful harvest, and the method chosen — whether conventional or no-till — plays a pivotal role in achieving this.

The journey towards a successful fall wheat seeding begins long before the first seeds are sown. In the previous fall, farmers harrow, which is essentially dragging a large rake across the stubble left behind from the previous crop. This process breaks up the stubble, allowing organic matter to decompose over the winter months and nourish the soil. Throughout the summer, weed and pest management becomes the primary focus. Farmers can employ a combination of mechanical and chemical methods to keep weeds at bay, ensuring that the soil remains healthy and free from unwanted competition.

No-till vs. conventional farming

When it comes to fall wheat seeding, farmers have three primary methods to choose from: no-till, minimum till, or conventional till. All methods have their advantages and are environmentally friendly, allowing farmers to select the approach that best suits them.

- **No-till farming.** In no-till farming, the stubble from previous crops is left undisturbed, breaking down naturally without mechanical intervention. No-till farmers do not harrow the stubble in the fall, nor will they work the ground the next spring. Pests and weeds are managed using pesticides and herbicides throughout the year. When fall arrives, a special drill is employed to pierce the soil and place the seeds, disturbing the ground only slightly. This method significantly reduces soil erosion, as the soil structure remains intact. However, it often requires increased chemical usage to manage weeds and pests effectively. The primary advantage of no-till farming is its ability

to maintain soil health and structure. By minimizing soil disturbance, farmers can preserve the organic matter and microorganisms essential for a healthy soil ecosystem. This method also reduces water runoff and improves water retention.

- **Conventional farming.** Conventional farming, on the other hand, involves more mechanical tillage to prepare the seedbed. Conventional farmers will harrow their stubble in the fall, then use a cultivator in the spring to lightly till the ground. Sometimes, two or three passes with a cultivator are required in order to make a smooth seedbed. In the fall, a drill is used to place the seed directly into the moisture-rich ground. While this method requires more mechanical intervention, it often results in slightly less chemical usage compared to no-till farming. The benefits of conventional farming include a well-prepared seedbed that can promote better seed-to-soil contact and root development. This method can also help manage weed pressure by disrupting weed growth cycles through tillage. For some farmers, the trade-off between mechanical tillage and chemical usage makes conventional farming the preferred choice.
- **Minimum till farming.** Minimum till, as the name suggests, deploys a mix of no-till and conventional practices. Most farmers utilize herbicides and pesticides to manage weeds during the summer months and may utilize some forms of tillage depending on their operation. When seeding in the fall, they use a drill that normally has a cultivator in front of where the seed is sown. This lightly works the soil, allowing good seed-to-soil contact.

Choosing the right method

The decision between no-till, minimum till, and conventional farming is a personal one, influenced by various factors such as soil type, climate, precipitation, and individual farming goals. All methods offer unique advantages and contribute to sustainable agriculture in different ways. By having multiple approaches to fall wheat seeding, farmers can tailor their practices to optimize their harvests and maintain the health of their land. ■

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A large combine harvester is shown from a low angle, moving through a vast field of golden wheat. The harvester is white with black and red accents. The field is filled with ripe wheat stalks, and the sky is a clear, bright blue.

Harvest 2024

By October, most of the year's wheat crop has been harvested, and growers have swapped out combines and bank-out wagons for planters and seed drills.

This year's wheat harvest was slightly ahead of average in timing, according to National Agricultural Statistics Service numbers. Most producers reported average to slightly better than average yields with average quality in winter wheat. Spring wheat wasn't so fortunate, as a cold snap in late spring followed by a very hot, very dry summer hurt yields.

For the 2024 harvest, *Wheat Life* spent time with three producers in Asotin, Douglas, and Whitman counties. All of the farm families featured on the following pages are immensely proud to be good stewards of their land and are working hard to protect the environment while raising the world's best wheat. They feel a deep connection to the family that came before them and are committed to leaving that legacy to the generations that come after them. ■



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Standing up for your Neighborhood & Business

Policies and laws on fentanyl, convicting criminals, illegal immigration into our communities, and heavy restrictions on housing have put us all at risk. Perry knows that every day you face issues because of the decisions in Olympia. With his leadership, more and more common sense Bills supporting law enforcement, safety and real solutions to affordable housing are reaching the Senate floor. Perry believes there should be more communication between state and federal agencies to address this.

Standing up for Safety

Four years as your Senator and life-long Washington resident, Perry has always stood with law enforcement by supporting laws that will protect you and your family. He believes in investing more to get criminals and drugs off the street. Perry has a long history of providing our community and state with common sense solutions including sponsoring 11 bills last year that protect us and our public servants.

Supporting Farmers and Agriculture

Perry will continue to be a strong advocate for the lower Snake River Dams. They provide carbon free electricity, water for farmers, and a climate friendly mode of transportation for ag commodities. These dams have provided a tremendous and positive impact economically not only in eastern Washington but also for the entire state. The state should not continue to spend taxpayer dollars looking for solutions for the removal of the lower Snake River Dams.

Improving the Cost of Living

Inflation is effectively a tax on Washingtonians—groceries are up, utilities are up, and our overall cost of living is up. Our state gas tax is also one of the highest in the nation, earning an unfortunate spot among top 5 highest gas tax rates. Perry has been a strong advocate for reducing the tax burden on citizens of Washington State. This past session, SB 5770, which would have increased your property taxes from 1% to 3% was stopped by the efforts of the Republican Senators and the bill was killed.

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The Forgeys, Asotin County



This harvest, Brad and Jody Forgey welcomed the newest member of the family, grandson Bryer, who is shown being held by their daughter, Shelby's, fiancé, Scott Slaybaugh.

Brad and Jody Forgey's farm sits high above Asotin on Anatone Flats, where one can see for miles. The farm was started by Brad's great-grandfather and passed through his grandfather and uncle to him. They grow wheat, barley, hay, alfalfa, and raise calves. This year, the Forgey's harvest included the newest members of the family, their daughter, Shelby's, fiancé, Scott Slaybaugh, and their son, Bryer.

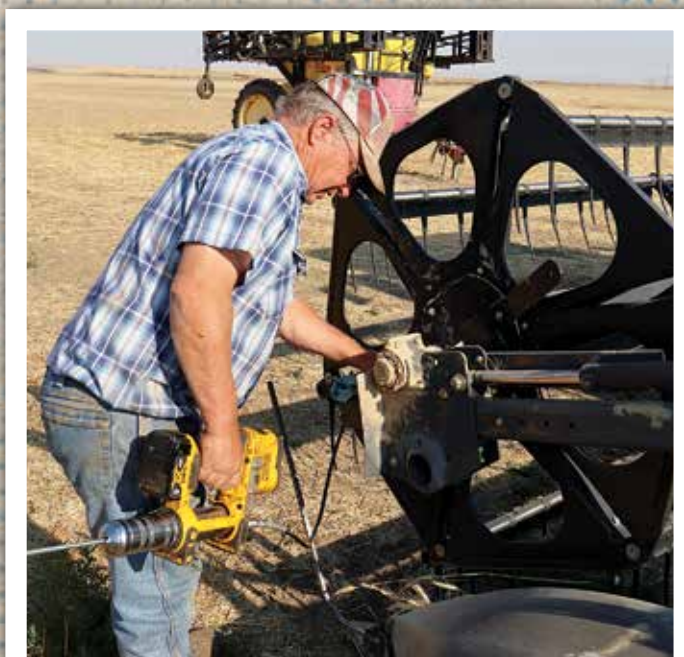
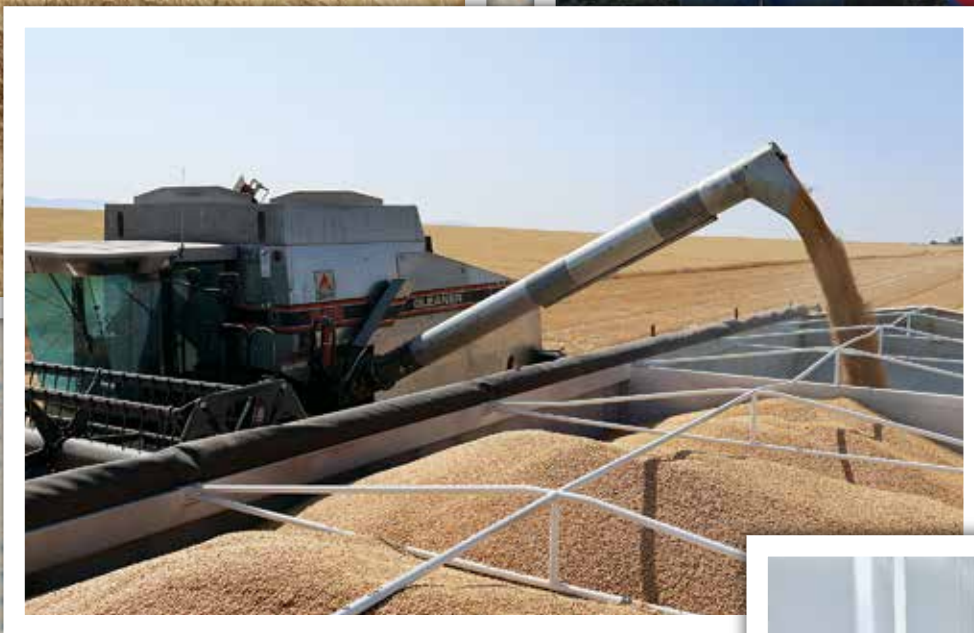
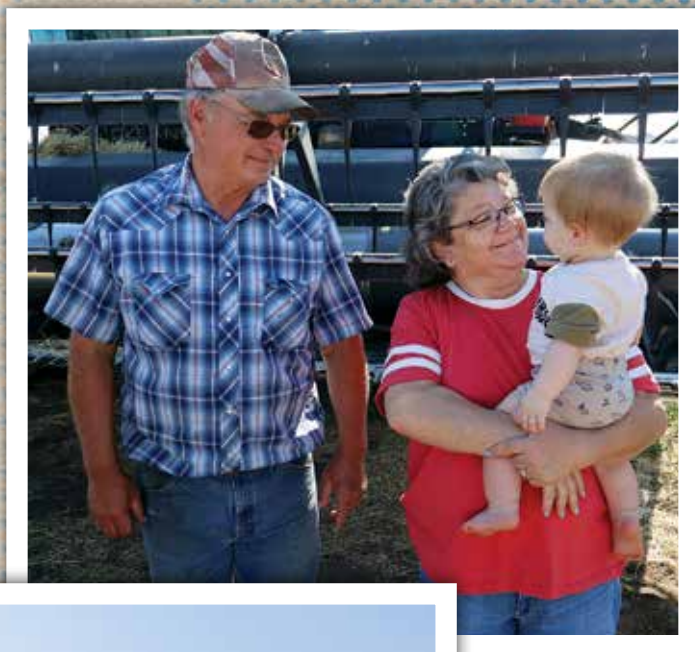
Unlike many farmers, harvest is not Brad's favorite part of farming. He calls himself a sower, not a reaper.

"I really enjoy seeding more than harvest," he said. "I never got gung-ho about harvest; I just want to get it done. I don't like the getting ready part because I'm going to find something that is broken. If it can go wrong, it will, and a lot of the time, I'm literally a one-man-band."

During the 2024 harvest, Brad's brother-in-law, Bruce Petty, was lending a hand by hauling wheat to the elevator. Once Brad's harvest was done, he planned to return the favor by hauling Petty's wheat. While Brad and Petty may be family, Brad explained that that closeness extends through the local community.

"The whole ridge around here, the main Flats, it's like family. We will squabble, and we will fight, but one year, I needed a pacemaker, and the neighbors pitched in and helped hay. Brit (Ausman, a neighbor) showed up and sprayed my chem fallow," he said. "It really is nice in a farming community. When the chips are down, we tend to help each other out." ■





The Tannebergs, Douglas County

Before Doug and Kelsey Tanneberg's family settled near Mansfield in Douglas County, they hopscotched across the country, from Denmark to Minnesota to Davenport, Wash., beginning in the late 1800s. The desire to raise cattle prompted another move west to St. Andrews, Wash.



At the Tanneberg farm in Douglas County, the harvest "family" includes (from left) Kelsey Tanneberg, Palmer Tanneberg, Kailee Tanneberg, Ryan Smith, Kimber Reynolds, DJ Reynolds, Jared Henton (kneeling), Michele Tanneberg, and Doug Tanneberg.

"I said to my granddad, Jens, 'Why did you come to St. Andrews?' His story was they were thinking about cattle and cattle grazing, and there was no water north of Davenport, so they settled in St. Andrews by the end of the 1800s. There's all these little lakes out there," Doug explained.

Jens' family eventually purchased land west of Mansfield in 1930 after years of leasing in the area. Doug's father, Jens Jr., and uncle would take over farming and eventually split the farm between themselves. Doug began farming in 1977 and took over from Jens Jr. in 1990. Doug's son, Kelsey, and Kelsey's wife, Kailee, began farming in 2017 and took over from Doug in 2022. Kelsey is the 4th generation on the farm where they raise dryland winter wheat and winter canola. Most of their acreage is direct seeded.

"It's important to take care of the ground," Kelsey said. "Where we farm is unique to other parts of Eastern Washington. What was done to make this land farmable was an undertaking. We are carrying on what the generations before have built."

Kelsey and Kailee have a daughter, Palmer. Kailee and Doug's wife, Michele, both play large roles in the farm, navigating the finances and government programs the farm is involved in. Their farm family also includes their hired man, Jared Henton.

"Things don't go without Jared," Kelsey said. "He keeps everything on this place running." During harvest, the Tannebergs also hire semi and combine drivers, Ryan Smith and DJ Reynolds, who are "outstanding."

Kelsey said that agriculture, like any other business, can be stressful, but that it's a great way to make a living and is a healthy way to raise a family.

"I'd like to eventually rotate more crops into what we are doing. We have a very limited growing season and limited moisture. We are pretty constricted on what diversity we can have while still being profitable, and I'd like to see that improve," Kelsey said. ■





The Heatons, Whitman County

Like many farm families in Eastern Washington, the Heaton family's roots go back more than 100 years, when Julia and Joe Stark settled near Hay, Wash., in 1908. The Starks, with their two daughters, Marie and Alice, grew wheat and raised cattle and hogs along the Snake River above

what is now Little Goose Dam. Their first home was near a river crossing, and Julia would often feed Native Americans as they traveled to Spokane.

After Joe Stark died in 1942, the farm passed first to Alice's family before Marie and her husband, Perry Heaton, took over the operation. Marie died in 1957, leaving seven children. Her mother, Julia, moved in with Perry to help raise the children, one of whom, Blake, would take over the farm by 1995, after helping build Little Goose and Lower Granite dams and working on the Alaska Pipeline and in New Guinea. Blake and his wife, Carmen, have three children: Christopher, Heather, and Justin. The farm is now run by Justin and his wife, Katy, but all three of the Heaton siblings — and their children — are very much a part of the operation.

"When our children and grandchildren were big enough, they rode in the tractor with Blake, and when they were able to reach the pedals and see through or over the steering wheel, they were helping on the farm," Carmen said.

Although Blake has officially retired from farming, he still goes to the ranch nearly every day to help (or just give advice), and while Justin might handle the day-to-day operations, during harvest, all of Carmen and Blake's children travel home to help out as much as they are able to. Heather, who Carmen said has not missed a harvest even though she lives in Mexico City and Florida, brings her sons with her. Her oldest son, Valente, moved to the area in 2020 to begin farming himself.

"Since he was young, Valente has been telling grandpa that he wanted to farm. This is the life he, too, has chosen. This makes the 5th generation of Stark/Heatons to farm at Hay," Carmen said. "Farming isn't for everyone. We have been blessed, with good yields and some not so good, good markets and down markets. We have made it work. We hope son or daughter will feel it in their soul to come back and have a 6th, 7th, or more generation on the land to continue Grandpa Joe and Grandma Julia's legacy." ■



The 2024 Heaton harvest crew included (front row, from left) Carmen Heaton, Tru Heaton (holding puppy, Fritz), and Range Heaton. Back row, from left are Jeronimo Reynoso-Heaton, Heather Reynoso-Heaton, Blake Heaton, Valente Reynoso-Heaton, Xico Reynoso-Heaton, Justin Heaton, and Katy Heaton.





Spotlight on the 2024 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention

Annual event rolls around again in November | By Trista Crossley

The 2024 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention is quickly approaching, but there's still time to take advantage of early bird registration and enjoy three days focused on the Pacific Northwest's small grains industry.

Staff from the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), the Oregon Wheat Growers League, and the Idaho Grain Producers Association are working hard to finalize details for this year's convention, which will be held Nov. 19-21, 2024, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The event offers growers from all three states the opportunity to hear state and national policy updates, listen to nationally known keynote speakers, participate in educational breakout sessions, socialize, and maybe do a little Christmas shopping. The convention will wrap up with dinner and the silent auction, which raises money to support the industry through various activities, including funding research equipment and scholarships.

"The annual convention is a time for growers to celebrate the past year and get a preview of what the upcoming year might hold from policy and market experts," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director. "With all the activity this past year around the lower Snake River dams, we've decided to do something a little different. Instead of an afternoon of multiple breakout sessions, we are going to have one, super-sized session focused solely

on the Columbia-Snake River System. Growers will hear from a panel of river stakeholders about advocacy efforts, the ongoing collaboration between U.S. inland river systems, and public outreach. All growers are encouraged to attend."

Participants on the All River Matters: Columbia-Snake River Special Breakout Session panel will discuss the status of the Columbia River Treaty; national advocacy strategies and collaboration efforts with other inland river systems; the Washington state studies that are looking at transportation and irrigation; challenges and opportunities on the river system; and map out the next four years with Congress and the new administration.

The annual convention is also an opportunity to take care of association business. Washington growers are invited to attend the all-committee meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 20, at 9:30 a.m. Members will hear from U.S. Department of Agriculture leaders and review and update WAWG's resolutions. The resolutions help direct WAWG's advocacy efforts for the coming year. Members that can't attend the meeting are welcome to call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610, and a staff member can submit comments on their behalf.

A copy of the current resolutions can be downloaded at wawg.org/about-us/.



TRI-STATE GRAIN
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“We are a grower-led organization, so we need our members to weigh in on the issues that they want us to focus on for the coming year,” explained Hennings.

The convention will be emceed by Greg Schwem. Schwem is more than just a business humor keynote speaker and sought-after corporate emcee. He is also an author, nationally syndicated humor columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, award-winning greeting card writer, and creator of funnydadinc, voted one of the top Dad humor sites on the web in 2020. Keynote speakers include:

- Bart Fisher 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. See more on page 32.
- John O’Leary, in 1987, was a curious 9-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 4th 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. See more on page 34. ►



Convention home sweet home

The Coeur d’Alene Resort is nestled on the north shore of Lake Coeur d’Alene and has a delightful array of resort amenities. Each of the 378 guest rooms feature spacious, well-defined living and work areas and oversized bathrooms. Make your hotel reservations by going to cdaresort.com or calling (800) 688-5253, press #2, then #1 for group reservations. Ask for the Tri-State Grain Growers group rate. Room rates are subject to fees and taxes. Parking is \$20 per night for self-parking and \$24 per night for valet parking. If possible, make reservations by Oct. 13 to ensure space and rate availability. ■

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- 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.

Registration and a complete convention schedule is available on WAWG's website at wawg.org/convention/. Early bird registration ends Oct. 25. Here's a closer look at the breakout sessions scheduled for the 2024 convention:

GLOBAL WHEAT TRADE AND MARKET. U.S. Wheat Associates staff will help the audience digest and better understand the news headlines of global wheat market outlooks and challenges.

D.C. TALK. Staff from the National Association of Wheat Growers will deliver an "inside the beltway" perspective about what farmers can expect from lawmakers moving into 2025. They will provide an update on the farm bill status as well as other federal issues.

ALL ABOUT BARLEY. Think critically about the future of barley with Ashley McFarland, vice president and technical director of the American Malting Barley Association, along with exploring how your checkoff dollars are developing markets around the globe with Sadie Marks, manager of global strategies and trade for the U.S. Grains Council.

WHEAT MARKET OUTLOOK. Dr. Randy Fortenbery's research program focuses on agricultural price performance in local and national markets, as well as the impact of future actions on the stability of cash prices. This session will focus on current market situations for wheat and issues/opportunities for the remainder of the crop year and into 2025.

BULLETINS LIVE! TWO/PULAS. Dani Lightle will be discussing Bulletins Live! Two, which is a web-based system developed by the Environmental Protection Agency to implement geographically specific pesticide use limitations for the protection of threatened and endangered species and their designated critical habitat.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE UPDATE. Learn about program updates from representatives from each of our three NRCS state offices, including how Inflation Reduction Act funding can benefit your farm.

SECURING YOUR RETIREMENT AND YOUR LEGACY. Not putting all of your proverbial eggs in one basket is something everyone is familiar with when it comes to planning your retirement, but what are the various "basket" options available to a self-employed farmer? Join Jordan Thayer of Morgan Stanley and Joe Cerrillo of CLA as they discuss financial planning while keeping tax implications in mind.

ENERGY GRANTS FROM THE USDA. David Funk, president of Zero Emissions Northwest, is officially contracted with the USDA to help farmers and rural small businesses access Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants. These grants cover renewable and energy efficiency projects. He has won nearly \$750,000 in grants for grain farmers in Washington and Idaho in 2023-24, ranging from drones, to heat pumps, to solar systems. He will explain who is eligible, the application process, which projects score well, and what your farm's next steps would be.

Calling all young producers

15x40 breakout: If you are a Washington producer under 40 who hasn't attended the convention before but would like to, you are in luck. There's still room in the 15x40 program, which offers a free 2024 convention registration and hotel room, as well as a one-year paid membership if the producer isn't a member of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. This is a first-come, first-serve program. To register, call the WAWG office at (509) 659-0610. ■

COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM UPDATE.

Marine Highway 84 is critical transportation for farmers to get their product to market. Did you know that over 55% of U.S. wheat, 14% of U.S. soybeans, and 13% of U.S. corn is exported on Marine Highway 84? This will be a special, two-hour breakout session of "All River Matters," talking about the status of the Columbia River Treaty; the Washington studies update on irrigation, transportation, recreation/tourism; providing a pilot's perspective of challenges and opportunities of our river system; national strategy and collaboration efforts with Midwest river systems; and mapping out the next four years with Congress and the new administration.

HOW TO LOBBY EFFECTIVELY. When farmers arrive at our states' capitols, they need to be effective in sharing our organizations' positions on various policy topics. Seasoned legislators will share advice and tips to make the most of time in front of elected officials and how to be successful in advocating your position.

BENCHMARK YOUR MERCHANDISING AND

FUTURE RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS. Mike Rohlfen and Jeff Kazin from AgrisAcademy will provide an opportunity for growers to assess their skill set and identify areas of focus for the future. AgrisAcademy is a unique business as its goal is education and not brokering or advising. The founders are global experts in merchandising and futures risk management. ■



Last year's winning photo, taken by Jake Ozburn from Soda Springs, Idaho.

Looking for your 2024 farm photos

All Washington shutterbugs are encouraged to enter Washington state's photo contest. Entries will be displayed throughout the 2024 convention area, and attendees are encouraged to vote for their favorite. The grand prize is a free registration to the 2025 Washington State Grain Growers Convention, which will be held back at the Coeur d'Alene Resort Nov. 17-19, 2025. The contest is open to convention registrants only, and photos must have been taken within the past 12 months. Submissions should be emailed to keri@wawg.org by Friday, Oct. 25, 2024. Please include photographer's name, contact information, and caption information. Winning photos may be used in 2025 marketing materials and may be published in *Wheat Life*.

Planted in ag policy

One of the authors of the 2014, 2018 farm bills will address convention goers

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

One of the authors of the 2014 and 2018 farm bills will be on hand at the 2024 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention to give his perspective on ag policy in the coming year.

Bart Fischer may still be heavily involved in the operation of his family's wheat farm in Oklahoma, but these days, he's also firmly planted in the world of ag policy. Fischer spent nearly nine years in Washington, D.C., as the chief economist on the House of Representative's Agriculture Committee. He was also the trade advisor to the Ag Committee chairman during North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiations and the trade war on China. He is currently co-director of Texas A&M's Agricultural and Food Policy Center and an associate professor in the agricultural economics department. Fischer plans to address the farm economic outlook and, of course, the farm bill in his convention keynote presentation.

"We will have just finished up a presidential election, and we are going to have a much better sense of where the conversation in D.C. is headed, particularly with respect to the farm bill," Fischer said. "I think we'll have a much clearer picture by the time we gather in Coeur d'Alene."

The 2024 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention will be held Nov. 19-21 at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Growers can register for the convention online at wawg.org/convention/registration/.

Fischer sees the farm bill as a vital risk management tool for farmers, who must deal not only with Mother Nature, but with markets that are dominated by factors outside of their control.

"For a grower to be able to navigate that and take all the enormous risks they face, they have to have tools at their disposal to be able to manage those risks. In essence, that is what a farm bill does. It is intended to provide risk management to growers," he explained. "The farm bill certainly doesn't remove all the risk. This year is a perfect example. There's an enormous amount of risk that growers are shouldering as prices have softened this year and input costs remain sky high. A farm bill doesn't remove the risk, but it does provide some tools for helping mitigate the risk."

Fischer laughed when asked if he thinks Congress will pass a farm bill before convention, saying, "Absolutely not. I would love to be surprised, but absolutely not." The 2018



Farm Bill expired in September 2023. Congress passed a one-year extension that expired Sept. 30, 2024.

The Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M works with both the House and Senate ag committees on food policy. The center has 96 representative virtual farms in 30 states, representing all the major growing regions in the U.S., including farms in Eastern Washington and a wheat farm in Oregon. When the ag committees want to know how a policy change would impact growers, such as a change in reference prices or in crop insurance premiums, the Center can apply the change to the representative farms and see the result.

Fischer said each of the farms is backed by real life growers. The Center works with a panel of four to six growers in each location to design a farm that is representative of their area. The information is updated every two years.

"We take all of that information, and we are able to simulate the impact of any policy change on the bottom line of those farms," Fischer explained. "It gives Congress a snapshot. We can't speak for every farmer, because how do you convey what's going on on over 2 million differ-

ent farms? But we've found, over time, it does a really good job of painting a picture of reality on the ground for policymakers. It's been a pretty effective tool going on for four decades."

One of the biggest ag policy problems Fischer is currently working on is the fact that the farm safety net hasn't kept up with the explosion in the cost of production, a problem made more acute by the collapse in commodity prices. The Center has done a lot of work on the need to update reference prices in the Price Loss Coverage program. Other ag policy issues the Center is working on include increasing funding for market access programs and dealing with the huge increase in conservation funding — \$20 billion — that came from the Inflation Reduction

Act and how that might impact conservation funding in the farm bill.

Fischer hopes that his convention presentation underscores the importance of grower engagement in Washington, D.C., especially during farm bill talks.

"Rural representation in D.C. is very small. The farm part of the farm bill is increasingly a smaller and smaller portion of the bill, so I think it is incredibly important for growers to engage to make sure that their voices are heard and not to just assume it is going to be taken care of," he said.

More information about Texas A&M's Agricultural and Food Policy Center is at afpc.tamu.edu. ■

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Social media sharing

Dairy farmer to encourage growers to show, not just tell, farm life at convention

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

Derrick Josi, a 4th generation dairy farmer from Oregon who posts about farm life to thousands of followers across multiple social media platforms, doesn't like being called an influencer.

"I hate it," he said. "I'm not trying to influence anything. I'm just showing the reality of dairy farming in my area, and what I go through. If that influences people, great, but my goal is not to convince anybody that what I'm doing is the right way or the only way. I'm just showing the reality, so that when people see the lies, they have something to compare that to."

Josi will be one of the keynote speakers at the upcoming 2024 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, Nov. 19-21, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Growers can register for the convention online at wawg.org/convention/registration/.

The Josi family has been farming near Tillamook, Ore., for more than 100 years. They have nearly 1,000 cows that produce 50,000 pounds, or nearly 6,000 gallons, of milk per day. They also grow about 500 acres of corn and grass silage.

At the convention, Josi will be encouraging growers to stop simply telling their story and to show their life instead, using himself as an example. He said the public doesn't want a story or to hear consumer-tested, cookie-cutter responses; they want to see what is real. Josi doesn't shy away from showing real life on the farm, things the public might be uncomfortable with because they don't understand it, such as using heavy machinery to lift cows out of manure. By showing and explaining why he does what he does, Josi said it gives people a reference point to realize that while some actions may not look good on the surface, they're being done for the animal's welfare.

"It's okay to show your life, the good, the bad, and the ugly, because there are times when farming is ugly. Crops die because of drought, and there's not very many pretty pictures that you can post of that," he said. "It's okay to show when you are having those kinds of days. In fact, people need to see that."

The comments on social media are known for being nas-



ty, and Josi's seen his share of trolls. He said "idiots" happen daily, and he knows that for some people, it doesn't matter what he shows or says, they are going to consider dairy farming a horrible practice. However, the flip side are those interactions where Josi can see the difference he's making. He had a mother reach out to him regarding her terminally ill daughter. The daughter was a huge fan of Josi's page, and the mother asked Josi if he'd name a cow after the daughter, which he did.

"It's nice to know that you do have that kind of influence and are able to ease things a little bit for somebody who's not in a good place," he said. "I always tell farmers that if you think you want to do social media, try it. If it ends up that you don't like doing it, just turn it off. Shut down your page. Social media isn't for everybody. There are days that it's all abuse, and you have to have a thick skin. It's not worth your peace if it bothers you."

More information and links to Josi's social media platforms are at tdfhonestfarming.com. ■

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TRI-STATE GRAIN GROWERS CONVENTION

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November 19-21, 2024

Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Early bird registration ends Oct. 25, 2024, at wawg.org/convention

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.

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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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_____ Tri-State Luncheon (Wednesday)	_____ Idaho Banquet (Wednesday)	_____ Luncheon (Thursday)
	_____ Washington Banquet (Wednesday)	_____ Dinner & Auction (Thursday)

Please Indicate All that apply:

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_____ State Officer	_____ Washington Grain Commissioner	_____ 15x40 Attendee
_____ County President	_____ Past Idaho Wheat Commissioner	_____ WA Lifetime Member
_____ Board Member	_____ Past Idaho Barley Commissioner	
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Seeing the system

D.C. STAFFERS TOUR LOWER GRANITE DAM, SEE INFRASTRUCTURE UP CLOSE

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

In August, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), in partnership with the Washington State Potato Commission, The McGregor Company, and Northwest RiverPartners, brought more than a dozen U.S. congressional staffers from Washington, D.C., to Lewiston, Idaho, to tour Lower Granite Dam and learn why the Columbia-Snake River System is so critical to the region.

“For most of these staffers, they’ve heard about the dams but have never actually seen one in person. By experiencing how the dams work, showing them the state-of-the-art fish passage facilities, and letting them interact with the people who depend on the river system to transport goods, we hope they’ll return to D.C. with a better understanding of how important the river system is,” said Michelle Hennings, WAWG’s executive director.

The tour began with a bus ride to Boyer Park and a boat

trip through the lock at Lower Granite Dam. On the bus to and from the dam, staffers learned about the role the dams play in power generation, irrigation, and transportation. Matt Harris, director of government affairs for the Washington State Potato Commission, explained that the dams on the lower Snake River irrigate about 62,000 acres of land that grows some of Washington’s most valuable crops, including potatoes, cherries, apples, grapes, and wheat. If the dams were to be removed, growers would need to re-engineer costly irrigation systems to account for lower water levels, and energy costs would go up.

Dennis Wright, general manager of AgriNorthwest, a large, irrigated farm in the Columbia Basin, said removal of the dams would cause the river channel to change, making it challenging to place irrigation infrastructure. Growers could lose a year’s worth of crops if water levels fall too low, and orchardists could see entire orchards die if they don’t have reliable access to water, especially during high temperatures. ►



Lower Snake River dams stakeholders brought a group of congressional staffers to Lewiston, Idaho, to tour Lower Granite Dam and learn why the Columbia-Snake River System is so critical to the region.



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Hennings and Casey Chumrau, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission, explained that barging competes with railroads to help keep transportation costs down. More than 60% of Washington-grown wheat moves through the lower Snake River dams. When Washington farmers use barging to move their wheat, they free up capacity on the railroads for other products to move. Eleven states funnel wheat through the Columbia-Snake River System. The system is the second largest export gateway in the U.S. for both corn and soy.

Chumrau pointed out that although farmers make up less than 2% of the U.S. population, everybody is connected to agriculture through food. One bushel of wheat weighs 60 pounds and yields about 60 pounds of whole wheat flour or 42 pounds of white flour. That's enough for:

- 53 boxes of cereal.
- 200 sponge cakes.
- 420 three-ounce cinnamon rolls.
- 72 pounds of tortillas.

"With the current low price of wheat, farmers can't afford to pay more for transportation," Hennings said.

Crops aren't the only thing that move through the lower Snake River dams. Leslie Druffel, outreach director for The McGregor Company, said during fall and spring planting seasons, her company relies on every mode of transportation to ship enough fertilizer upriver to meet demand.

"Fifty percent of yields is directly related to the appropriate and timely application of fertilizer," she explained. Any delay threatens farmers' yield potential. Barges also cost The McGregor Company less in labor, as it takes one man hour to unload liquid fertilizer from a barge vs. 50 man hours to unload the same amount from railcars.

Besides the people who traveled from D.C., the tour also included Gary Williams, executive director of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association. Williams said staffers might be wondering why a representative from the Midwest was on the tour. He explained that U.S. waterways need to amplify their voices by working together to protect and maintain infrastructure on working rivers.

"What's being faced here is likely to happen on other waterways," he said, adding that shippers need reliability to move their products.

A fishy business

Once through the Lower Granite Dam lock, staffers were taken to the dam's fish facilities where they saw biological information being taken from both juvenile and adult fish and learned about the steps that have been taken to improve fish survival rates, including state-of-the-art fish

Staffer statements

"I am amazed at the time and effort that is being dedicated to preserving the safe passage for the salmon population. Until you see it in person, you don't realize how much is being done."

— Randy Bogden, field representative
for Rep. Matthew Rosendale (R-Mont.)

"Sen. Daines believes Montana's wheat producers are the best in the country and appreciates the work of everyone involved in getting wheat from the farm to market."

— Brett Slaughter, natural resource liaison
for Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.)

"The various presentations and tours throughout the day truly highlighted the importance of the four lower Snake River dams. We learned that the massive structures play a vital role in the Pacific Northwest, providing clean hydropower, transportation, crop irrigation, recreation, flood risk management and so much more."

— Kaci Ralstin, regional director
for Sen. James E. Risch (R-Idaho)

"For the majority of the ride from Spokane to Lewiston, there were rolling fields of wheat as far as the eye can see. Hearing about the rich soils and fertile growing conditions, it's no surprise that this area is the envy of the country."

— Katie Donahue, transportation policy advisor
for Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

"I greatly enjoyed seeing first-hand the technologies used to allow the fish populations to safely pass through the dam. From the careful balancing of temperatures within the fish ladder to the implementation of new hydroelectric turbines to maintain optimal pressure levels, it is clear that the staff care greatly for the health and safety of the aquatic travelers passing through Lower Granite Dam."

— Sloane Perkins, digital director
for Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho)

"Born and raised in Lewiston, Idaho, I'm proud to see the positive results of the efforts to improve fish passage at Lower Granite Dam. This achievement is a testament to our community's commitment to responsible environmental stewardship and practical solutions that support both our economy and natural resources."

— Katie Kingsley, senior legislative assistant
for Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-Idaho)



bypass systems and increased spill. Juvenile fish have dam passage survival rates of close to 99%.

The tour also included a look at the turbines.

Ports and panel

Lunch took place at the Port of Lewiston, where staffers learned about Idaho's only seaport and the furthest inland port on the West Coast.

To bring all of the different industries that depend on the river together, a river users' panel highlighting the importance of Marine Highway 84, or M-84, capped the tour. The panel featured Anthony Peña, government relations manager for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; Scott Corbitt, CEO of the Port of Lewiston; Jennifer Riddle, communications and marketing manager for Tidewater Corporation; 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.

Peña reviewed the litigation history of the lower Snake River dams, including the December 2023 agreement between the Biden administration, the states of Washington and Oregon, and four Tribes that put a 5-year pause on litigation in return for federal investment in fish habitat and tribally owned energy generation. Peña explained that river stakeholders were excluded from negotiations, and

the agreement includes funding for studies on replacing the benefits the dams provide in energy generation and transportation.

One of the fastest growing segments on the lower Snake River is the cruising industry. American Cruise Lines is investing in infrastructure along the river, adding itineraries and vessels. Meira said they are trying to remind Americans that they have amazing vacation opportunities here at home and that there is a "huge fascination in other parts of the country with this river system."

Both Shaver Transportation and Tidewater Corporation rely heavily on the ability to barge products the entire length of the Columbia-Snake River System. Riddle said Tidewater is investing in new biodiesel blending and storage facilities to take advantage of the safety and energy efficiency that barging offers. Rich called the river system "finely tuned" with plenty of capacity left and questioned how large equipment, such as wind turbines or heavy mining equipment that is too large for the roads, will be moved if barging isn't an option.

Nielsen, who pilots ocean-going vessels from Astoria to Portland, said if the dams go, the system falls apart.

"We depend on predictability, and that's what the dams provide," he explained.

The tour wrapped up with dinner at a local winery. ■





The Washington Association of Wheat Growers would like to thank the sponsors of the tour: the Washington State Potato Commission, The McGregor Company, and Northwest RiverPartners.

2024 Election candidate Q&A

WHERE THE PEOPLE RUNNING TO REPRESENT EASTERN WASHINGTON STAND

This is a big election year, not only at the federal level, but at the state level as well. In an effort to get to know more about some of the candidates running to represent Eastern Washington, *Wheat Life* asked them to provide written answers to questions on issues important to wheat growers. Presented on the following pages with no editing (other than obvious grammatical errors) are what the following candidates had to say:

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Dave Reichert

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Dan Matthews

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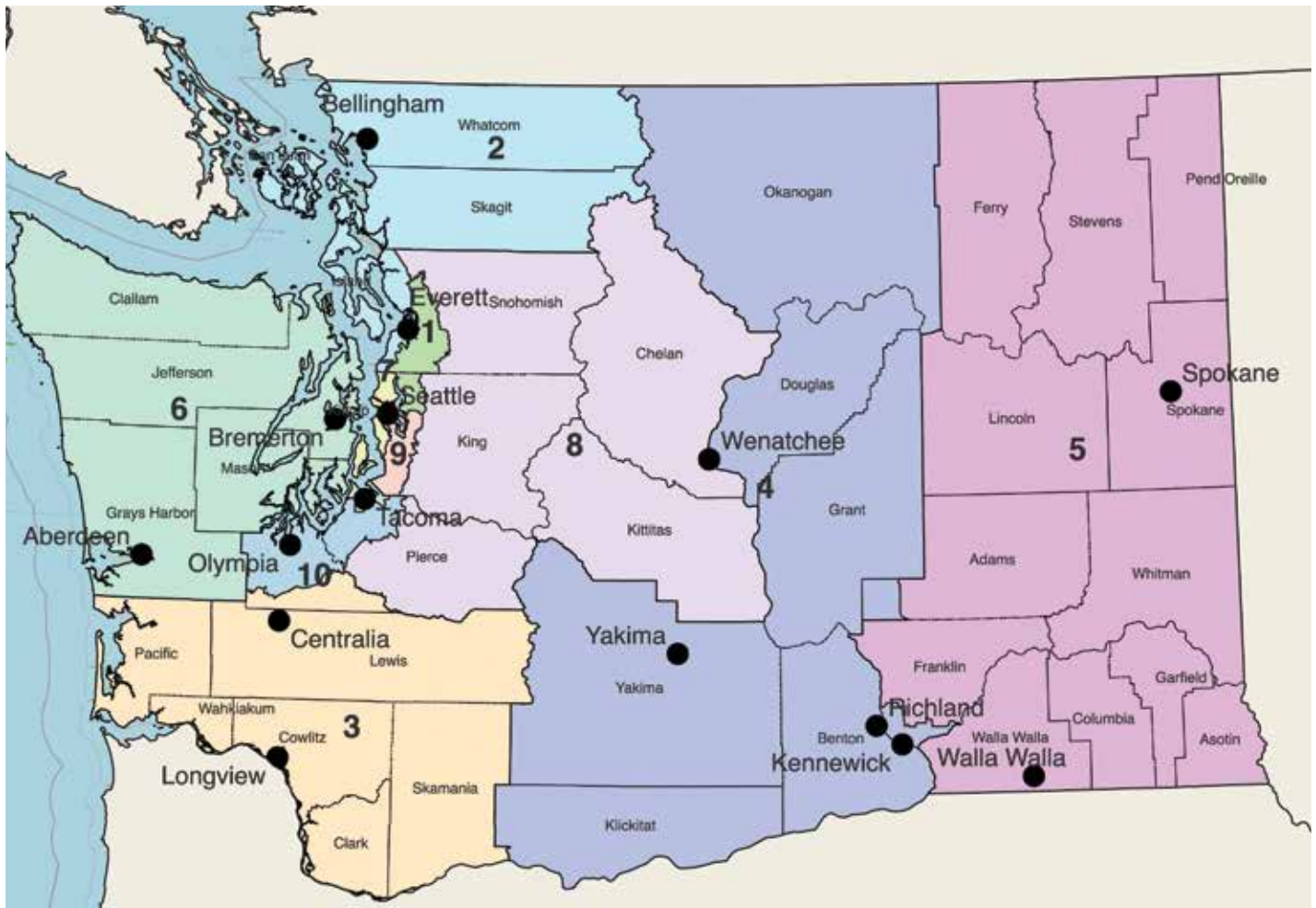
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GOVERNOR • BOB FERGUSON

For the past few years, agriculture's relationship with the Governor's Office has been strained. How will you repair that relationship?

I value the work of Washington farmers and their role in our economy. In my administration, I will have an open-door policy. As Governor, I promise to communicate with the agricultural industry to hear their concerns directly.

Please explain your position on mandatory riparian buffers?

I understand that a work group made up of industry professionals and stakeholders is currently meeting to address this issue. I will prioritize ensuring all voices are heard and that we center the concerns of Washingtonians when I am Governor — like our farmers.

While it is always hoped that voluntary measures will address this issue, we will need certainty to restore salmon. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for such a complex issue, and I look forward to hearing from your members directly.

Please explain your position on the Biden administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

We cannot "solve" the issue of salmon runs in the Snake River without additional study. As you know, a broad coalition of tribes, the federal government, and the states of Washington and Oregon recently negotiated and signed a memorandum on next steps for salmon recovery and mitigation on the Lower Snake. However, it is my understanding there may not have been as much input from the agricultural community as was truly needed.

The agreement does involve hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government in salmon recovery, and I see that as a positive step, but I want to ensure the voices of our farmers are heard. I see this agreement as a step toward a long-term, equitable set of actions that continue to restore salmon, honor treaties, and maintain the power needs and agricultural economy of the region.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Yes. Food grown by Washington farmers, protecting our salmon, and a clean energy economy are key to Washington's future.

With the state's push into solar and wind, how do we make sure that productive farmland isn't being lost to alternative energy facilities?

Agriculture is key to Washington's economy, history, and way of life. I fully support a just transition to a clean energy economy. Washington farms are essential to our economy and I am proud of food that is produced here. However, I do understand that a farmer's property rights are important. I think it's important that communities work together to find that balance.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

The issues facing the next Governor are numerous. The right leader for the job can orient state government to work effectively on many issues at once.

Examples of three key issues include:

- Improving public safety in communities across the state. Every Washingtonian deserves the freedom to be safe from harm.
- Setting Washington on a path towards 4+ years of growth by strengthening the middle class, adopting middle-out economic policies. That includes seizing the moment to lead the way on the green economy, investing in infrastructure, improving affordability, lowering costs, and providing economic opportunity for all of Washington's young people.
- Tackling our housing and homelessness crises. We must solve these challenges to move our state forward.

To effectively address these issues as Governor, I will reshape the culture of state government and leverage the full powers of state to serve the people to allow our state to achieve lasting change. I will center working families and build an economy that does not leave anybody behind. I will never forget who I'm fighting for, and I will not be afraid to hold powerful special interests accountable to ensure we make progress on these issues.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I want to say thank you. While I do not live on a farm,



I am thankful for all of your work and proud to live in a state that leads this nation in providing food for our communities and exporting food to all countries around the globe. I want to see this rich tradition continue.

Candidate information is at bobferguson.com. ■



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GOVERNOR • DAVE REICHERT

For the past few years, agriculture's relationship with the Governor's Office has been strained. How will you repair that relationship?

I recognize the significance of the strained relationship between agriculture and the Governor's Office in Washington state and the importance of repairing this vital partnership. I am dedicated to restoring trust and fostering a productive relationship.

We can do this through open communication, collaboration on policy, support of our rural communities, new opportunities for agricultural growth and innovation, policy stability and predictability.

I aim to cultivate a collaborative and supportive relationship between the Governor's Office and the agricultural community, enabling us to work together toward a more prosperous and sustainable future for Washington state's agricultural industry and rural communities.

Please explain your position on mandatory riparian buffers?

I am committed to individual property rights and a belief in fostering responsible land stewardship. While I recognize the importance of protecting water quality and natural habitats, I firmly believe that a one-size-fits-all approach, such as mandatory riparian buffers, may not be the most effective or equitable solution.

I am a strong proponent of engaging in open dialogue with all stakeholders, including farmers, environmental advocates, and local communities, to develop solutions that strike an appropriate balance between conservation goals and the rights of property owners. I believe that by working together, we can find innovative, site-specific approaches that preserve water quality and natural ecosystems while also respecting the diverse needs and perspectives of those directly impacted by these policies.

Please explain your position on the Biden administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams. Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

My position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams stems from a belief that the dams and salmon populations can co-exist while providing vital contributions to our region.

I support a comprehensive and balanced approach that includes investments in fish hatcheries, improved fish passage technology, and ecosystem restoration efforts as effective measures to mitigate the impact of the dams on salmon populations. I believe that these strategies, alongside responsible stewardship of the river ecosystem, can preserve both the vitality of our river systems and the benefits provided by the dams for energy, transportation, and agriculture.

I am committed to ensuring that our policies are based on sound science, meaningful collaboration with diverse stakeholders, and a holistic consideration of the economic, environmental, and social implications of dam management.

With the state's push into solar and wind, how do we make sure that productive farmland isn't being lost to alternative energy facilities?

We have seen the challenges with both solar and wind energy in Washington state. With dams under threat and our electric grid becoming more vulnerable to rolling blackouts, an all of the above energy portfolio is critical. However, alternate energy sources must not come on the backs of our hard-working farmers.

I will work with farmers and industry experts to ensure farmland isn't being taken in exchange for low efficiency and output energy. Looking at land use planning, agricultural zoning to protect our farmland, incentives for brownfield development and support, not resistance from the Governor's office.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

Record crime rates, the highest gas prices in the country, property taxes through the roof. These are just a few issue areas where our government has let us down. Whether it was my service in the Air Force, protecting our streets as King County Sheriff, or challenging the status quo as a member of Congress, I believe we need leaders who aren't afraid to be straight with people and tell it like it is. I have spent my entire life fighting fear — politicians have spent their entire careers trying to fuel it.

My top priorities will be: reducing the cost of living,



protecting our communities by arresting criminals, and addressing our homeless and drug addiction crises.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I am running for governor because for the past 40 years, politicians in Olympia have failed to listen to the people. And I support voluntary incentive-based approaches to implementing agricultural buffers rather than mandatory burdensome regulations.

We must focus on prevention and management, legislative support, identify at risk areas, support affected farmers, and collaborate. It is critical to work in collaboration with farmers and local and state governments to meet the needs of the farmers and environment.

And while it is important to protect existing water rights while supporting clear and fair water policies, farmers have a right to use their land.

Candidate information is at reichertforgovernor.com. ■

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LT. GOVERNOR • DENNY HECK

If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

Our top three priorities include promoting improved civic health. We need more respectful discourse in the public square, a strong commitment to try to reach principled compromises and when not possible, a greater capacity to disagree better. To this end we helped establish the Project for Civic Health with our partners, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the UW's Evans School for Public Policy and the Ruckelshaus Center. (Please visit projectforcivichealth.org for more information.)

Our office has also been aggressively involved in efforts to promote building more homes of all kinds for all our neighbors. We have a serious housing shortage in this state, and we simply must build more homes. We documented this shortage several years ago through our work with the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations (LCEDIR). Each session I have clearly and publicly advocated for multiple solutions to the housing shortage which economic development professionals have identified as the number one obstacle to quality economic growth. While the Legislature has made some progress to address barriers to building more homes, much remains to be done, and I will continue to advocate for bold action to build more homes of all kinds.

Also, as a result of our LCEDIR responsibilities, we regularly engage in trade promotion efforts. We have collaborated with the Association of Washington Business to travel to countries and promote the purchase of Washington products and especially agricultural products!

Please explain your position on the Biden administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

Our office has no jurisdiction whatsoever for this issue,

and I have no expertise regarding the agreement beyond what I have read in the news.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Yes.

Overseas trade is extremely important to Washington's agriculture industry. As lieutenant governor, how will you support and strengthen those relationships?

I have led several trade missions to foreign countries, including to Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan. Many of these missions were in partnership with the Association of Washington Business, the Washington State Departments of Agriculture, and Commerce, and included local growers and producers. I will continue to lead missions like these which are important avenues for addressing trade barriers and gaining market access for Grown in Washington products.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I grew up working on a farm. When I was in the State House of Representatives, I served on the Agriculture Committee. I represented rural communities then and while I served in the U.S. Congress. Look, agriculture is a significantly sized and critical part of our state's economy and wheat is a huge portion of that. We need to keep it so.

Candidate information is at dennyheck.com. ■





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LT. GOVERNOR • DAN MATTHEWS

If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

My top priorities:

- DEFENDING OUR FAMILIES — Parental & Children's Rights; Education.
- PROTECTING OUR FREEDOMS — Reminding Government that it works for us — We don't work for it! Cutting Taxes & Spending and Government excesses.
- SAFEGUARDING OUR FUTURE — especially Law Enforcement & Public Safety.

"I WILL BE THERE"

- For The Farmer — plowing through regulations and burdensome government at every turn.
- For The Fisherman and the small businessman — wondering if intrusive government must always be the cost of doing business.
- For The Entrepreneur — struggling to make his or her dream a reality.
- For The working Mom and Dad angry at Schools that regard them as threats, even terrorists, when they thought that they were entrusting their precious children to the schools to teach and not indoctrinate.
- Urging government to listen to the people and remember: it is there to serve them — the people do not serve the government!

Let us acknowledge that we are a divided people — State and Nation — often polarized; at odds with one another; frequently abandoning genuine human understanding. The Division, Discord, Partisanship and Rancor of Politics is never constructive. And neither is the Dishonesty!!

It is time to change course; to find common ground for the common good, with common sense! Let us now come together! Christ admonished, Abraham Lincoln repeated, "A House divided against itself cannot stand!" It is time for all of us to pursue mutual respect and understanding rather than political power.

This is my commitment to every citizen — from both parties: I Will Be There — For You! Committed to bringing people together, and finding solutions.

Please explain your position on the Biden administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

The economic, human and other impacts of dam re-

moval (breaching) is almost incalculable — and the environmental zealots seem to not care to address these. These impacts have not been adequately addressed, if at all. And only some powerful interests — committed to the dam removal position — were included in the negotiations. This decision was very one-sided, leaving too many questions and not enough answers!

Todd Myers (Director for Center for the Environment, in Crosscut), said there is no mention that "NOAA Fisheries has repeatedly found that dam removal would do little to improve salmon population, noting 'the relative size of the Snake River salmon stocks compared to others on the West Coast means that increases in their numbers, whether from breaching dams or otherwise, would result in only a marginal change in the total salmon available to killer whales.'" Peter Kareiva, (previous) head of research at NOAA Fisheries for Snake River salmon, wrote, "It is not certain that dams now cause higher mortality than would arise in a free-flowing river."

There are many questions that need to be answered in an honest and open debate: How will they replace the hydroelectricity currently generated? At what cost? Do they really think they can gas-light us into believing that alternative energy sources could replace even a small fraction of the reliable energy currently available?? The loss of energy will, by itself, cripple much of Idaho and the eastern part of Washington, if not the whole state! So, "Mr. Green," What will power the electrical Utopian society you envision if you remove most of the electric-generation capability now available?

This does not address the loss of irrigation and navigation that breaching the dams would cause. How many different crops, and industries, will be lost due to this action?? Who has assessed the human impact — or does that count??

How will barging capabilities — currently used — be replaced?

To date, the proponents of the dam-breaching scheme have been both dishonest and heavy-handed in their statements/discussions on this agenda/program.

The obvious fact that wheat growers, farmers, and almost all other stakeholders were left out of the decision-making process and truly kept in the dark about this



“Agreement” speaks to heavy-handed bureaucrats and politicians deciding the future without “the consent of the governed.”

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Yes, salmon and dams CAN coexist. For the dams on the upper Snake — in IDAHO — Very little effort has been made to examine the viability of new technology fish ladders, or other bypass mechanisms, that would help the salmon circumvent those dams, and probably obviate the need to remove any dams — at a significantly lower cost and impact. But the real agenda is to get rid of every man-made structure and return everything to as it was 100 years ago — and who cares about the “costs”!

Why has no one talked about a balancing of interests, or reasonable alternatives?!? Or, committing to a plan that allows salmon and dams to coexist. Throwing the “baby” out with the “dam” water has never been a good idea!

Obviously, a reasonable alternative is not on the agenda of environmental zealots and others who are committed to their agenda. It’s all or nothing, it seems. “Follow the money, folks!”

Overseas trade is extremely important to Washington’s agriculture industry. As lieutenant governor, how will you support and strengthen those relationships?

The Lieutenant Governor, by law, chairs the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations (LCEDIR). This 13-member panel is comprised of an evenly split membership of House and the Senate members, appointed by the Chair. Just the aspect of being the one who appoints the committee member means that, as Lt. Governor, I would be able to ap-

point agri-friendly legislators to the committee, assuring our perspectives were thoroughly represented. The current Lt. Governor has a bias toward members of his political party, and their agenda.

Committee meetings are typically held two or three times a year at the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor, who also determines which topics are presented. In addition to the committee work, the Lieutenant Governor continually meets with leaders in government, business, industry and education on economic development issues.

Throughout the year, the Lieutenant Governor represents the State of Washington to visiting foreign officials.

These aspects all present significant opportunities to explore and cultivate trade relationships with foreign countries for our grain and other products — both agricultural and manufactured — provided this is a priority for the Lt. Governor. I will make it a priority! ▶

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I hope to be able to expand and capitalize on the LCEDIR potential for improved trade relations with many different countries and our agricultural businesses/industry.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

My wife, Jan, and I are lifelong Washingtonians and have been married 51 years. We have 4 children; 13 grandchildren. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and a Master's in Public Administration. I have also served as a Legislative Intern to a Senator.

I am a Veteran — a retired USAF Pilot and Lt. Colonel, with 22 years of service, having flown in both Vietnam and Desert Storm.

After 31 years at Northwest Airlines, retiring as a 747 Captain, Instructor Pilot, and Examiner, I served 8 years at Boeing consulting in Pilot Instruction and Leadership. I have served on various Boards and Commissions, including as a STEM Educator, and Church Board leader. I have also served in elective office: 4 years on a local School Board, and as a Commissioner, always seeking to make a constructive difference in my community.

I have stepped forward to help fix a broken system. Misguided policies and laws originate from politicians who have forgotten people. Why is everything upside-down? People are suffering and many do not feel safe!

One political party has controlled our state for decades, representing powerful, big-money interests, growing more detached, imbalanced, at times radically extreme.

It is time to change course; to find common ground for

the common good, with common sense! Please help me, and Republican leaders, set a new course for government to better serve you. One party rule has proven to be the wrong path for our state. We must restore Balance and Sanity!

Professionally, my role has been to safely navigate to every destination, knowing people's lives depended on me; my skills, judgment, and professionalism, and the crew I led.

As Lt. Governor, I see my role, among others, as a Bridge-Builder and Unifier; a Communicator, Team-Builder, Peacemaker and a Statesman. My goal is to restore civility and accountability in our state government.

As our Lieutenant Governor, my focus will remain: People working together ... seeking balance in our public deliberations.

For our wheat farmers, my roots and loyalties run deep, and I will defend the rights and livelihood of all farmers in our state — knowing how essential every farmer is to the lives of the citizens and the economy of Washington and our nation.

I am a Republican: committed to limited, efficient government — opposed to government that intrudes into every aspect of our lives, and to unchecked power! This is the perspective of every Republican candidate I know.

So, this is my commitment to you and every citizen, whatever their views: I Will Be There — Working Cooperatively and Constructively — For You!

Tell everyone you know to VOTE — everything we hold dear is in jeopardy! PLEASE VOTE, Friends, We have a country to save!

Candidate information is at electdanmatthews.com. ■



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COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER

Alternative energy projects are being built on productive farmland, taking away income from Washington's farmers. How can DNR strike a balance between meeting its "higher, better use mandate" and allowing growers to continue to lease productive farmland from DNR?

We've seen too many developers and special interest groups pushing for pet projects without considering the impact on the local communities. I do not believe we should be taking productive agriculture land out of use. I will work closely with leaseholders to make sure their voices are heard.

How can the state proactively address its wildfire risk?

We must responsibly manage our state forests. Currently, almost half of the state's public forests are set aside from management; I will use sustainable forestry practices to manage the available trust land for the health of the forest and for the rural communities who depend on them. We should be using Washington-grown renewable timber processed in Washington mills. This provides good paying jobs and returns revenue to local schools and other community services. We should not import timber from countries that do not share our strong environmental standards.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

Reducing catastrophic wildfires before they start by cleaning up our forests. We should be attaining the sustainable harvest calculations. Active forest management will make our forests healthy; more fire resilient, abundant

with a diverse array of animals and habitat.

I'll lead our state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to withstand political pressures and overcome bureaucratic obstacles so that the foresters and environmental scientists who work there can do their jobs. My department will sustainably manage our state trust lands for all the values and benefit they provide for Washington's environment and economy. I'll also manage DNR tidelands and ag lands so growers can succeed. And we'll make the DNR self-sustaining, ensuring the state trusts support family wage jobs and provide critical funding for public schools and other community services.

I will make sure the owners of public land — the people of Washington — always have recreational access.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I know the importance the wheat industry plays, not only in the state but across the world. In Congress, I fought to keep the river system working and moving our products. As Commissioner of Public Lands, I will ensure we are working with all our growers and producers so they can succeed. I view this position as a stewardship role, empowering Washingtonians to use their land for the benefit of the state and local communities. I will stand up to political pressures and special interests that do not have our needs at heart.

Candidate information is at jaimeforlands.com. ■



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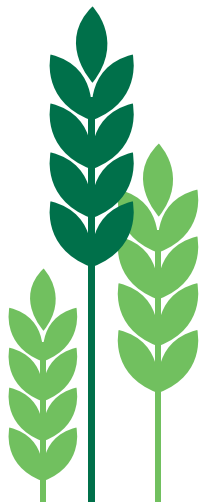
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Alternative energy projects are being built on productive farmland, taking away income from Washington's farmers. How can DNR strike a balance between meeting its "higher, better use mandate" and allowing growers to continue to lease productive farmland from DNR?

Balancing renewable energy projects with preserving productive farmland is essential. As the next Commissioner of Public Lands, the Department of Natural Resources will prioritize the needs of farmers while supporting the growth of alternative energy.

As a legislator, I chaired efforts to restore the Puget Sound and led the Blue-Green Alliance — "blue" for blue-collar and "green" for tree huggers — demonstrating we don't have to choose between jobs and the environment.

I'll carry this common-ground approach as head of the Department of Natural Resources. By focusing on common-sense solutions that protect farmland and encourage sustainable energy development, we can ensure both agriculture and clean energy contribute to a strong, thriving future for Washington's rural communities.

How can the state proactively address its wildfire risk?

Wildfire prevention and response are critical to public safety, and I will make sure we do more to keep communities safe. This includes increasing the use of prescribed burns and thinning to manage forest health, as well as working with local governments to improve land use planning and building codes in areas where urban and wildland areas meet. But we also need to take care of the people on the front lines. I will fight to ensure that firefighters, both local and within DNR, have the wrap-around services they need — fair pay, strong benefits, access to healthcare, and the resources necessary to do their jobs effectively.

Supporting the DNR fire chief and securing adequate funding will be a top priority for me because lives and land continue to be at risk in Washington.

If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how will you address them?

If elected, my top priorities will focus on protecting natural resources, improving wildfire prevention, and increasing recreational access to state lands, all with a focus on benefiting both rural and urban communities.

First, I am committed to protecting clean air, clean water, and our natural habitats. Our public lands belong to all of us, and they must be managed in a way that benefits current and future generations. I believe we can support rural economies and jobs while also safeguarding these resources, which, once lost, are gone forever.

Second, wildfire prevention and response are critical for public safety. We need to enhance efforts like prescribed burns and thinning to promote forest health while securing funding and support for local wildfire response teams. I'll also work with local governments to improve land use planning in high-risk areas to reduce fire hazards.

Finally, increasing recreational opportunities on state lands is key to supporting rural economies. By expanding access and investing in infrastructure for activities like hiking and camping, we can boost local tourism, create jobs, and preserve our state's natural beauty for everyone to enjoy.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I'm committed to supporting the hardworking people who drive our agricultural industries. I value the role farmers play in strengthening our state's economy and rural communities. I believe in finding common ground on practical solutions that protect livelihoods, public safety, and Washington's natural resources.

Candidate information is at upthegrove.org. ■



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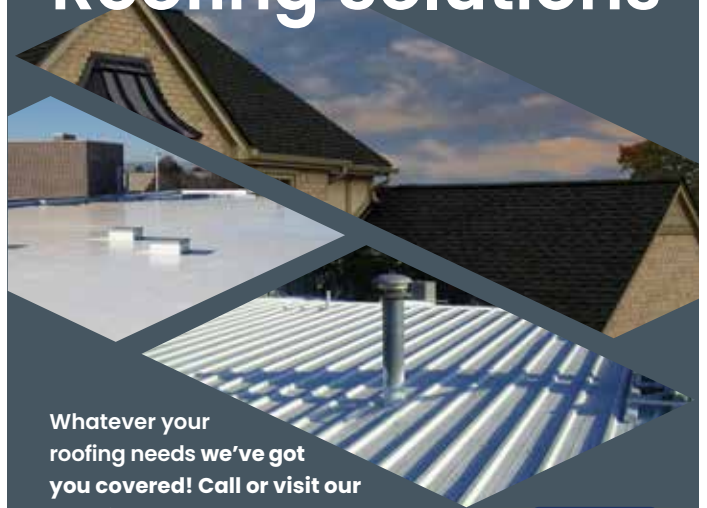
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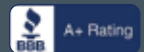
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SENATE • MARIA CANTWELL

Please explain your position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

Northwest electricity demand will jump 30% in the next decade. I continue to push for significant investments in energy diversification and habitat recovery. I helped secure \$2.85 billion for salmon restoration programs and pushed for transmission investments to keep Washington's electricity affordable and on track to meet net zero goals. A recent settlement agreed to by the state and Tribes requires a transparent, science-based, bottom-up dialogue that accommodates stakeholder priorities from across our region.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Yes.

What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

The farm bill is vital to our agricultural and rural communities in Washington state because of the support it provides to our farmers, food delivery system, and agricultural economy.

Increasing input costs means the Farm Bill's safety nets are more important than ever if America wants to ensure our farmers are going to continue to be able to grow the food that feeds the world. Getting a farm bill passed and signed into law that benefits Washington state's agricultural community is a top priority for me. I have and will continue to advocate directly to Congressional leadership to come together to get a bipartisan bill done. I brought the Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture to Washington to make sure leadership understands the needs of growers, farmers, and ranchers in Washington state, and to highlight our innovative approaches to increasing plant and animal health, developing resilient crop varieties, and remaining a leader in agricultural research. Any farm bill that is signed into law must continue to protect and promote Washington state farmers now and into the future.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Yes. Crop insurance is an important risk management tool and over 90% of Washington wheat acres are in-

sured, with the average coverage being about 80%. For wheat farmers to continue to grow and ship Washington wheat around the world, they need to be confident they will survive a bad year. Crop insurance is critical to providing this support and should not be cut.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

This year's cold snaps and drought conditions resulted in growers losing crop when many of these operations are still recovering from the 2021 drought conditions that led to the lowest statewide yield in 60 years. This is on top of the rising fertilizer, equipment, and other input costs. Combined with today's low wheat price, it is making it difficult for even established operations to break even.

To remain competitive in the international marketplace, we need to increase funding for USDA trade programs like the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program, which help growers access and advertise products in existing and new markets. I believe trade policies should focus on growing relationships and expanding markets and avoid policies like tariffs that reduce export opportunities.

To solve port congestion and shipping challenges which can increase the input costs and hurt exports, I introduced and got passed into law the Ocean Shipping Reform Act. This law helps level the playing field between big international shipping lines and agricultural exporters and helps ensure our agricultural products are not stranded on the docks.

I also believe we need to continue to bolster our transportation infrastructure to get our product to international markets. This means investing in rail, which is why I fought to secure a \$72.8 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvement grant for capital improvements on the Palouse River and Coulee City short line railroad that is a critical part of the Washington Grain Train program. I also authored a new \$3 billion highway-rail grade crossing elimination program that helps communities address at-grade crossing delays and billions of



additional funding in grant programs that support freight movement. I have also long supported investments in maintaining and improving navigation throughout the waterways and ports of the Columbia River Basin that are critical to getting agricultural products to market.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

1.) Get the farm bill passed and signed into law: I will be working with my colleagues to bring together a bipartisan farm bill that protects and benefits Washington farm communities.

2.) Grow International Markets and Increase Trade Opportunities: In the farm bill, I am pushing for increases to USDA's Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program to provide more resources for accessing and marketing in existing and growing international markets. I will also advocate for a trade agenda that opens markets and levels the playing field for Washington agricultural producers.

3.) Bolster Transportation Infrastructure: I want to continue to build on the historic investments Congress made over the past few years in our nation's transportation infrastructure and work to deliver more resources for projects

that help get agricultural goods to market. We need to increase investments in rail, our ports and the Columbia River system through working to secure federal funding for rail and port improvement and for maintaining the Columbia River.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I have worked hard to make Washington a leader in agriculture and wheat research and development. Along with my colleagues I fought hard to secure funding for Washington State University's new Plant Sciences Building where Washington State University students work alongside USDA agriculture research scientists on bolstering wheat health in the Palouse and beyond.

I will continue to fight to increase research funding, bolster our transportation infrastructure, open international markets and work to lower input costs so our wheat growers can get Washington grown wheat to customers around the world. We want to keep our farmers in business and help the next generation get established and grow.

Candidate information is at cantwell.com. ■



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SENATE • RAUL GARCIA

Please explain your position on the Biden administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

I do not agree with the Biden Administration's agreement because of the paramount importance of the Snake River dams as a primary source of renewable baseline energy. Additionally, with so many products transported on the river, the consequences of putting those products on trucks would be higher emissions, wear and tear on roads, significantly more congestion, and increased safety concerns.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

As a result of the enormous efforts to improve survival for fish passage up and downstream in the Columbia River, the answer is yes. We have much larger challenges with downstream predators and trends in ocean conditions.

What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

Any farm bill must protect and provide a safety net for producers, ensure food safety and security, and provide food nutrition to those who most need it.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Yes. I support the program and its important safety net for producers, landlords and valued agents. It also provides options for bad weather and dramatic price declines, as well as personalized revenue protection.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

Over the years, we've had some very good market assistance programs, food for peace programs and the like. Given that the U.S. Senate must approve trade deals, I will make sure any trade deals that affect agriculture are positive for our producers. And we always need to monitor actions that affect input prices for energy, fertilizer and crop protection products.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

From my travels across wheat country, I've learned that what is important to wheat growers is important to our state and our state's economy. It's been a real pleasure for me to spend the morning on a dryland wheat farm in the cab of a combine, and to get to know the people who contribute so much to the life of our state. Washington's wheat industry is vitally important to this state, and I am fully committed to being its champion in the U.S. Senate.

**If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?**

The Fentanyl crisis is my top priority. This is a statewide emergency that affects everyone, of every age, in every community. In my 26 years as an ER doctor, I've never seen a worse killer than fentanyl. Washington is one of the most hard-hit states by this deadly drug. Thousands of our people are dying every year. We can't afford to keep doing half-measures — with so many lives at risk we need drastic action. I am proposing the Americans Against Fentanyl Act, which would impose mandatory felony charges and significant prison time for serious dealers, and allow and reprioritize federal funding for involuntary treatment and rehabilitation programs for addicts. On a related issue, violent crime in Washington has spiraled out of control. We are ranked the eighth most dangerous state in the nation. I will make sure local law enforcement agencies across Washington get as much federal support as possible.

Additionally, I will work across party lines to help bolster our weak economy and to lower the cost of living. We must stop the reckless federal spending that has sent our national debt to dangerous levels. I support audits across the federal government so we can figure out how to make better use of taxpayer dollars. We need economic vitality for consumers and for producers. Our major industries, including agriculture, must be able to successfully compete in world markets, and our U.S. Senator needs to be vigilant about helping our industries to be successful.

Finally, we need to make sure our education system is preparing students who can work and succeed in our state's industries, including agriculture. I will be a champion for educational programs and institutions devoted to preparing and expanding opportunities for our agricultural workforce.

Candidate information is at garciaforwa.com. ■



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HOUSE DISTRICT 4 • DAN NEWHOUSE

Please explain your position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

This agreement, which would make our region's dams effectively defunct, confirms what we've all known for years. The Biden Administration is catering to the wishes of extreme environmental activists that do not understand both the importance of the dams to our region, and the consequences of their proposed actions. For the duration of this process, key stakeholders' positions have been widely ignored in favor of secret, closed-door meetings. The Biden Administration has consistently ignored the science and doubled down on the fraudulent claim that salmon and the dams cannot coexist — a fact that has been disproven multiple times, most recently in the 2020 Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement. This package is a slap in the face to the residents of Central Washington under the guise of protecting salmon and I will not stand for it. I have said it before, and I will say it again — Congress alone has the authority to breach the Lower Snake River Dams, and as long as I am in Congress, I will fight to ensure our dams remain in place.

To those that have concerns about the dams and salmon, I say work with us. I will never support breaching the dams, and these advocates for breaching will never support keeping them. So, let's work together and implement new and better ways to help our critical salmon populations.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Absolutely. Many dam breaching advocates try and paint the picture that if you are pro-dam then you must be anti-salmon. That's not the way it works.

We have seen tremendous progress made in salmon recovery with state-of-the-art fish passage. One thing I have seen recently is the implementation of these new fixed-blade turbines, like the one at Ice Harbor, that make it significantly easier for salmon to pass through the turbine systems without serious changes in water pressure that can harm the fish.

What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

As Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, I

work very closely with House Agriculture Committee Chairman GT Thompson on the top issues facing producers and the industry. In fact, I have a key priority included in this year's Farm Bill as it stands, and that is to expand the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program to help our producers stay on the front lines of the global marketplace. This is an initiative that expands market access and creates jobs in the industry without further burdening farmers.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Absolutely. Our region is especially prone to natural disasters that wreak havoc on local crops. Our producers need all the help they can get on that front. In fact, I have been working to move my bill that protects wine grapes from smoke exposure as another opportunity to help local farmers.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

It starts with a strong Farm Bill. Back to my market access program expansion, if Washington producers can have access to an increased variety of markets and can sell more easily in them, that is a win. We also have to keep our trade infrastructure secure. Over half of all U.S. wheat exports move through the Columbia River System and a significant portion of that rely on the four locks at the Lower Snake River dams.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

First we have to get our economy back on track. Families in Central Washington, and across the country, cannot afford basic household items and are spending an average of over \$1,000 per month more than they were three years ago. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee tasked with managing federal spending, I am working hard alongside my colleagues and House leadership to rein in the out-of-control spending that has driven inflation to record highs.



As a member of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, I believe protecting our homeland from our greatest foreign adversary is a top priority. I will continue to lead the House Select Committee Fentanyl Working Group tasked at developing legislative actions aimed at stopping the export of Chinese fentanyl precursors to cartels in Mexico.

I remain committed to getting our southern border under control. This is not just an immigration issue, it's a humanitarian one. There have been over 8 million encoun-

ters at the southern border, and the border patrol told me to my face that they don't have the resources to deal with it. This should be a bipartisan issue, we can't handle the influx of asylum claims, we can't keep up with who-is-who and where real criminals are getting through, and we can't contain the flow of illicit deadly drugs that continue to pour through our border.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I believe when farmers are successful, our economy is more successful, and as a third generation farmer myself, I know the issues the industry is facing. I remain committed to working with Chairman Thompson to get this Farm Bill through, and I want producers to know that through me, they have a seat at the table — a seat that I have worked very hard for a long time to secure.

Candidate information is at dannewhouse.com. ■



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HOUSE DISTRICT 4 • JERROD SESSLER

Please explain your position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

It's important to note that while both sides want to protect and restore natural salmon runs, there are differing perspectives on the best course of action. An entire apparatus has been assembled, chiefly for financial gain, in support of removing the Snake River dams. But the data simply does not support that action. The real data is ignored regarding salmon runs, diminishing the dams' present and future value in terms of energy, transportation, and habitat.

Overall, the Presidential Memorandum is not worth the paper it is written on and is offensive to the American people. They're using the sovereigns as pawns and the salmon as decoys to push their dam removal agenda, which has always been their goal.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Dams and salmon can absolutely coexist. Data shows ocean conditions, not river dams, primarily impact salmon runs. We've invested heavily in salmon-friendly dam infrastructure, like the \$70 million helix at Lake Cle Elum, but bureaucracy always slows progress.

If we really cared about solutions as much as bureaucracy, we'd find ways to cut the red tape, reduce costs, and shrink the time it takes to do these projects. We've invested in improving the infrastructure around the dams for decades in an effort to improve salmon viability. We need to continue to do these projects. Remember when America built great things? Let's return to that spirit and focus on practical solutions, not ideological agendas.

What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

The Farm Bill is respected by all but unfortunately, only around 3% of it actually goes to the farmers. The vast majority of the Farm Bill is for SNAP & EBT.

Interestingly, many people believe the incumbent, Dan Newhouse, is on the Agriculture Committee, but he is not. He serves on the Appropriations Committee, which allocates spending but has nothing to do with the Farm Bill.

To protect farmers and the U.S. food system, I will fight

to ensure that any potential Farm Bill legislation prioritizes the needs of our agricultural community while maintaining the safety and security of our nation's food supply. I will push for measures that protect farmland from being purchased by foreign nations and corporations. The Farm Bill should also protect farmers from burdensome regulations, enhance crop insurance affordability, and reduce red tape on local meat processing capabilities. Additionally, I will push for newer technologies to help reduce costs and improve soil and water capabilities.

I also believe we need a more dynamic and flexible approach to agricultural policy. I will advocate for a state-sponsored labor solution that complements federal programs, giving farmers more choice and reducing bureaucratic overlap. In order to maintain our ability to ship internationally and to be able to trade fairly, I suggest that we move to a dynamic tariff system that adjusts automatically based on select key indicators. We've never had a dynamic tariff system in America but it is time we started one.

Farmers can't simply raise their prices to compensate for additional costs of fuel, fertilizer, insurance, seed, labor, etc. We want a free market system that is not rigged by the government to force farmers out of business and off their land.

To protect family farms, I will support provisions that facilitate smooth ownership transitions without undue tax burdens, ensuring that our farms can be passed on to the next generation.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Thoroughly. The crop insurance program is synonymous with the great American financial system by design. When a farmer needs crop insurance there are really no other options. Because these operations are vital to food security and sustaining our food supply, we need to protect it. People seem to forget the incredible risk that farmers take each year not knowing what the circumstances will be. This is no different than when an American entrepreneur takes a risk in business and has the protection of



our system if things fall apart. Crop insurance is a fast-track system (although it could be improved) to provide the support and protection our farmers need.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

I jumped ahead with one of the other questions regarding this, so I won't belabor further here, but we need to ensure our entire economy is protected here in America. Farmers require special consideration to protect their viability and our food security. While we must implement various measures to support them, it's crucial to recognize that costs are unlikely to decrease significantly in the near future. The new economic reality is settling in at higher levels, and it would take a catastrophic event to bring costs back to previous norms.

Given this scenario, the key question becomes: How can we increase farm income in the face of persistently high costs? While efficiency improvements and technological investments are always beneficial, they alone cannot offset the current economic pressures. The clear solution is that farmers must receive more for their products, and this needs to happen swiftly to avert grim circumstances. I commit to educating farmers and stakeholders about this necessity, advocating for the implementation of a dynamic tariff system, and supporting additional protections to ensure the long-term viability of our agricultural sector.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

We've got to get our economy in line. If Congress keeps spending more than we have to spend, we will eventually and inevitably run out of track. You and I do not agree with spending \$40M on gender studies in Pakistan so why would our representatives vote to support that? Part of the solution is dividing the spending bills into much smaller chunks so that we can hold our elected accountable for the money they are spending. That should not be that difficult to do and it is vital to our future.

We must get our border secure and I'm not just talking about the southern border. We must secure the country and extract those who are here unlawfully along with those who present harm to us and our communities.

Specific to the Wheat farmers, the Farm Bill is up this

year so it will likely be passed before I get into office but either way it will come around again and it needs serious attention. We should call it the socialist bill instead of the Farm Bill because such a huge percentage of it goes to support people other than farmers. We also need to look at the way crop insurance is guaranteed and funded to ensure that insurance companies are not gouging the taxpayers or harming the farmers.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

During a speaking engagement last summer, I made a statement that I wasn't a politician and never would be. On the drive home, my 20-year-old daughter offered a perspective that humbled me. She pointed out that while she understood my intent, I was approaching the concept incorrectly. She reminded me that representing people is a great honor and that others have tarnished the meaning of "politician."

I got into politics because I love this country. My wife and I have raised our three kids, homeschooling them from day one. We live and work in the middle of farmland. All of our friends are involved in farming or supporting the farming community. To us, this is the ideal American life. There is nothing like driving my pickup between farms while listening to a good country song. We must preserve this lifestyle and our overall way of life here in America.

We need a system that supports that. We need to keep up with the efficiency options, but we also need our elected officials to actually work to protect our way of life, both personally and in our business operations. Farmers can trust me to do that because I've lived it, done it, and understood it.

I promise you that I will not be outworked. We will find a pathway that leads us to success because that is the American way and I don't know anyone that is ready to give that up. Your trust is a great honor.

Please pray for our nation and our communities. I say "Pray & Act" because that is the model that Jesus demonstrated for us. Elections are temporary fixes. We must return to biblical morality if we are to see the flourishing, once again, of the great America that we love.

Candidate information is at jerrodforcongress.com. ■

HOUSE DISTRICT 5 • MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER

Please explain your position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

Our Snake River dams are essential to agriculture in Eastern Washington and if elected to Congress, I will do everything in my power to support them.

I was deeply concerned by the Biden administration's "settlement agreement", secretly negotiated with the states of Washington and Oregon and four Northwest tribes in December. I disagree with the way it was "negotiated" — excluding key stakeholders — and I oppose its clear intent as a roadmap to removing the lower Snake River dams.

Although only Congress can authorize breaching the dams, the agreement included a commitment to supporting alternative energy generation and to studying ways to replace the dams' benefits relating to transportation, energy, irrigation and recreation.

The costs of breaching the dams would be tremendous and the proposal is a non-starter for me.

Approximately 10% of all U.S. wheat exports travel by barge down the lower Snake River. Commodities including fertilizer are moved upstream. Transporting those products by rail and road would result in huge cost increases for local agricultural producers who are already on narrow margins, while substantially increasing congestion and pollution. Meanwhile existing rail services have been cutting capacity and are not reliable.

Our dams provide low cost, zero-carbon energy that powers our homes and our economy — energy that can be flexed at times of high demand. Hydropower represents about 60% of Washington state's energy, creating thousands of jobs, mitigating floods, and keeping our energy costs at some of the lowest in the country.

Instead of spending literally tens of billions of dollars breaching the dams, we should be directing those funds to science-based salmon recovery programs, while investing in improved technology that will boost the dams' production of carbon-free energy.

I'm proud to be endorsed by prominent agricultural leaders like Sen. Mark Schoesler, Sen. Perry Dozier, Rep. Mary Dye and Alex McGregor who are similarly determined to protect our dams.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Yes. We know that dams and fish can — and do — co-exist.

I recognize the deep importance of salmon to the tribal nations as well as the special place salmon holds for the whole Pacific Northwest community. We all want healthy rivers and salmon populations. However, breaching the dams would likely make little difference to salmon recovery.

The lower Snake River dams have always allowed for fish passage. All of the dams meet or exceed the federal and state standards for safe fish passage, with the survival rate of juvenile salmon passing each dam estimated at more than 96%.

Much has been invested in supporting salmon recovery, and scientists continue to do tremendous work helping salmon pass through the dams and tracking populations, including developing safer turbines and improved technologies — the spillway weirs, fish cooling systems and juvenile bypass systems — to boost fish survival.

Salmon populations on the lower Snake River fluctuate based on ocean conditions but have been slowly increasing over recent years.

Fall-run Chinook are nearing recovery goals. The spring/summer Chinook are still struggling. The smolt-to-adult returns (the percentage of baby salmon that head downstream and return four years later) are lower than desired, but they are typical of West Coast rivers with or without dams.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has highlighted many critical factors impacting native fish populations: high water temperatures in streams, lack of quality habitat, blocked culverts, ocean conditions, and predation by birds, seals and sea lions.

More research is needed but breaching dams is not the answer. The billions of dollars that it would cost would be far better spent supporting science-based salmon recovery efforts.



What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

We urgently need a new farm bill to support our farmers who feed our nation. Farmers need certainty and confidence that assistance will be provided when it's needed. Meanwhile the extended 2018 Farm Bill, set to expire again in September 2024, uses outdated costs and reference prices. Food security is national security, and our agricultural sector is foundational to our economy.

Our new farm bill must safeguard the crop insurance safety net. Voluntary conservation programs should incorporate both flexibility and local control, so that farmers can adopt practices appropriate for their specific operation.

The bill must include robust funding for wheat research to keep our farmers competitive and at the cutting edge of best practice — with technical assistance, Extension programs, and research into new wheat varieties and cropping systems.

I'll work with advocacy groups including the Washington Association of Wheat Growers to help ensure that the new farm bill meets the needs of our farmers.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Yes, crop insurance is an essential safety net for farmers. We must ensure that farmers can operate — particularly at a time of high price volatility and inflationary pressures. Agriculture is Eastern Washington's number one industry, and wheat is our number one commodity. Farmers need to know that the farm safety net is intact and can be counted on when needed.

I am committed to protecting and expanding crop insurance, supporting trade and market access programs, and increasing our commitment to agriculture research, like the great work being done at Washington State University.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

Record inflation and supply chain constraints brought on by burdensome mandates from the Biden/Harris administration have greatly increased the cost of these inputs. Surging prices are a serious problem because when it costs more to fertilize the crops, and put fuel in the tractor,

farmers are given no choice but to raise their prices — or eat the cost.

Congress must do more to remove the unnecessary regulatory red tape that is crippling our farmers, and invest in effective trade promotions for U.S. agricultural products — expanding existing markets, and opening new markets. We must also protect our dams which are essential for transportation and keeping energy costs low.

I am appreciative of the work done by the National Association of Wheat Growers, and the local chapters here in Eastern Washington, and would look forward to working with them to promote solutions to the many challenges farmers face each year.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

- Secure the southern border
- Fight to extend the Trump-era tax cuts
- Protect our Snake River dams

In my first year in Congress, I hope to get onto committees key to agriculture and the federal budget. With my background in economics, serving on the Ways and Means and Commerce Committees in the State Senate, and as Spokane County Treasurer, I believe I will be able to make an important contribution as we work towards a balanced budget and fair, lower taxes.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

I grew up in Colton and Pullman, surrounded by the wheat fields of the Palouse. My father was an extension professor for WSU and my mother taught multiple generations of farm families as a kindergarten teacher.

My first "job" as a kid was selling Kool-Aid out of plastic Cougar cups to farmers going out to harvest. Some of my earliest memories include going pheasant hunting with my dad on the rim of the Snake River canyon, watching 8-man football on Friday nights and enjoying the Uniontown Sausage Feed each spring.

I want wheat growers to know that I have a deep appreciation of the farmers and the rural communities that feed our region and our nation. In Congress, my door will always be open to wheat growers and I will always fight for them.

Candidate information is at votebaumgartner.com. ■

HOUSE DISTRICT 5 • CARMELA CONROY

Please explain your position on the Biden Administration's agreement with the six sovereigns regarding the lower Snake River dams.

Settling the decade-long lawsuit was in the best interest of Eastern Washington. Adversarial lawsuits impeded progress and prevented all parties from fully investing in the long-term future of the Lower Snake River Dams. Now, we are finally able to focus on the future of the people and species that rely on our natural resources, the dams, and our environment.

Do you believe the dams and salmon can co-exist?

Absolutely, but only if we commit ourselves to the resources and investment that is needed. It is critical we deliver on protecting all that is great about our state: the lands, waters, and all the people they sustain. Federal investment in the LSR dams impacts flood control, irrigation, tourism, transportation, treaty obligations, energy costs, and the lives of everyday Eastern Washingtonians. As a member of Congress, I will ensure our taxpayers get the most value possible, and that spending bills are investments in sustaining our future.

What will you do to ensure that any potential farm bill legislation continues to support farmers and the safety of the U.S. food system?

This Congress' failure to pass a Farm Bill before taking an extra-long summer recess is a disgrace. Farmers in Eastern Washington deserve the predictability and stability promised by federal programs. Veterans who rely on food stamps also are left unsure whether such programs will continue in the future. Collectively, Eastern Washington families and farmers are continuing to struggle with higher costs, and we owe it to them to live up to the campaign rhetoric and get a deal done.

As a new Congressperson negotiating the continuation of supports for farmers adapting to the hotter summers, smoke-filled air, and increased threat of wildfires resulting from climate change is a top priority. I have heard from many family farmers across our region that these investments have enabled them to make critical infrastructure and staffing updates that are resulting in more secure harvests.

Unfortunately, some Congressmembers on the fringes would prefer to play politics with the Farm Bill and insist

on denying the reality of climate change, the impacts of which we are already seeing across the country. I will fight to keep funding for climate research and adaptation programs that are benefiting farmers and rural communities today.

Additionally, I strongly oppose ending nearly 60 years of precedent by excluding food stamps, SNAP, and other food benefit programs in this legislation. Simply put, this does nothing to address budget deficits, while pitting farmers, seniors, and veterans against one another for a perceived partisan gain.

Do you support protecting the crop insurance program from cuts in the next farm bill?

Absolutely. All of us have an interest in preventing family farmers from closing down because of adverse and unpredictable circumstances. Forcing farmers to be overly cautious or risk closure because of one bad harvest, would drastically reduce production. We must ensure that crop insurance is fully funded, and doing so is ultimately more efficient for taxpayers because all of us have a stake in the success of farming; it is the backbone of our economy and our region.

High input costs and low wheat prices are hurting Washington farmers. If elected, how will you ensure that Washington agriculture remains competitive with other countries?

One step would be fighting tooth and nail to protect USDA's export market access and development programs. Investing millions of dollars in the Foreign Agricultural Service's presence in the U.S. embassies in our top export markets has a return on investment worth billions of dollars every year. If extremists in Congress and current inept House leadership have their way, we would lose our best export markets, particularly in Asia, to farmers in Canada and Australia.

Among my best memories of working for Ambassador Tom Foley at U.S. Embassy Tokyo was participating in events promoting American agricultural products. From noodles made with Washington wheat, to the frozen potato products that had already become a staple of Japanese comfort food, through Washington wines, Ambassador



Foley made sure that his guests knew how proud he was to be serving the bounty of his home district.

If elected, what are your top three priorities for the first year, and how will you address them?

First and foremost, passing a complete and robust farm bill that serves our farmers, protects critical investments in climate adaptation, supports food security for our veterans and families, and preserves and develops our access to export markets across the globe. It makes my blood boil that some families at Fairchild AFB need food stamps and still have to access food banks to put enough food on the table.

Second, after nearly two decades serving overseas as a Foreign Service Officer, I am bringing focus and experience to secure America's reputation abroad and our security interests domestically. That starts at home by protecting our democracy, constitution, and fundamental freedoms but it also means living up to our commitments to our allies across the globe. As our fellow Eastern Washingtonian and former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said, if we don't fund diplomacy we'll need more warriors. Electing a diplomat to Congress will bring much needed experience and perspective to prevent the foreign conflicts that put our Military at risk and disrupt global markets.

Third, we must ensure that the federal government does not encroach on our individual freedoms. As a former deputy prosecuting attorney and Foreign Service Officer who swore to uphold and defend the Constitution, I was shocked at the implications of the 2022 Dobbs deci-

sion of the U.S. Supreme Court. Media attention rightly has focused on the life-or-death impact of anti-abortion laws forcing women and girls from states like Idaho into Eastern Washington to receive essential care. I will never stop fighting to ensure politicians stay out of the decisions patients make in consultation with their healthcare providers. My opponent would rubber stamp a federal abortion ban. We must elect congressional champions that will prevent extreme measures restricting women's freedoms and enshrine the right to reproductive healthcare nationwide.

What do you want wheat growers to know about you and your commitment to keeping the Washington wheat industry thriving?

When I was a kid, Mom used to take us out to Lind to visit her aunt Nora and uncle Leroy Watson, who had a wheat farm. Visiting our wheat farmer relatives, and in high school working harvest with them, reinforced my understanding of how much faith, hard work, and perseverance it takes to be a dryland farmer. I remember in 1980, after Mount St. Helen's blew, everybody holding their breath to see whether the wheat — and the farm — would survive. The equipment took a beating from the ash, but the harvest was a success. "Amber waves of grain" are emblems of this country we all love, and I commit to ensuring that Congress has our wheat growers' backs for generations to come.

Candidate information is at conroy4congress.com. ■

Are you a WAWG member?

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers fights every day to ensure that Washington's family farms continue to prosper and grow.

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Please consider joining today.
(509) 659-0610 or visit wawg.org



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Harvest on the farm of Jason and Denise Echelbarger, located north of Highway 2, in Spokane and Lincoln counties. Photo by Lori Maricle, Washington Grain Commission.

CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

By Ben Barstow



I certainly hope this finds everyone long done with harvest and, hopefully, mostly done with planting. As I write this, I have just finished harvest. The final field is done, and the combine is waiting to be cleaned off and readied for winter storage.

On my last day of harvest, as I was speeding toward the end, I saw something foreign hanging in the ripened crop ahead of me. As I got closer, I could see it was the remnants of what was once an airborne balloon, not one of the fancy mylar celebratory balloons, just plain white latex with a white ribbon tangled in the crop. But something was attached to it, a note of some sort. Do I just run it through the combine, I thought to myself, or do I stop, shut off the header, set the brake, climb down the ladder, wade through the crop, and pick it up?

Do I attempt to read the note or not waste my time? What might the note say? Maybe it's someone's prayer. Maybe it is a plea for help. Maybe a treasure map! Where could it have come from? How far away, I wonder. Maybe it is a contract from an Asian wheat buyer offering \$8 net per bushel to the farmer who sees it and takes the time to stop, shut off the header, set the brake, climb down the ladder, wade through the crop, and pick it up!

Well, as you can see from the photo (which, incidentally, was taken by the best truck driver anyone ever had), it wasn't a contract or a treasure map, but it

was a message, and a simple one at that. "Have a good day." It wasn't an over-exuberant, "Have a GREAT day!!!" with lots of capitals and exclamation points or hyped-up marketing — "Have a fabulous, wonderful, marvelous, day, and, by the way, stop by Al's Used Car Lot in Clackamas." It was just a simple, noncommercial, "have a good day," without punctuation or embellishment.

As I was climbing back up the ladder, re-adjusting my seat, releasing the brake, opening the throttle, and starting the header again, I was thinking, "Yeah, I can do that." It can be a "good" day. I can choose to look at the sunshine. The forecast for the next few days is clear, after all, and I haven't had to crawl inside the combine or buy parts for, what, two days now! I haven't had to dig the dirt out of the feeder house (I was thrashing garbanzos) even once this year! It IS a good day.

In that moment, I knew that I had been handed a little gift that was far better than an \$8 contract or a treasure map or even a great deal on a used car. In any case, I think I will treasure that simple message longer than any of those other things that might have been on the end of that balloon ribbon. I must admit, however, that the year of the \$4 club premium ranks up there with it.

Be safe with fall work, everyone, and I wish you just enough challenges/break-downs to alleviate any boredom. ■



REVIEW

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Event celebrates malt barley, raises funds for grain promotion

The Inland Northwest is a premier producer of grains specialized for use in craft beer, and the GRAINMAKER Festival is an event featuring world-class breweries from up and down the West Coast. Held on Aug. 9 at YaYa Brewing Company in Spokane Valley and celebrating the annual grain harvest of the Inland Northwest, the event raises money for the barley fund with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG).

“We’re most excited to bring brewers and beer lovers together to celebrate the brewing skills and abundant barley harvest here in the Pacific Northwest,” said Rachel Verhey-Goicoechea, director of relationships for Cold Stream Malt and Grain. “Our festival not only celebrates the art of brewing but also honors the hard work of our

farmers and the sustainable practices that define our approach to agriculture.”

Thirty breweries participated in making beer for the festival — they came from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Colorado, and Mexico. There were approximately 250 people in attendance, and WAWG raised \$2,600 to promote Washington-grown barley.

The activities included bringing brewers together in the Spokane region. After the Friday festival, brewers convened for field tours and networking at Horlacher Farms, near Tekoa, Wash., on Saturday, Aug. 10.

“GRAINMAKER is an awesome showcase of the wonderful grain being grown and malted in our region,” said



Rachel Verhey-Goicoechea (front), director of relationships for Cold Stream Malt and Grain, shares the views of the Horlacher family's fields near Tekoa, Wash., with participating brewers.



GRAINMAKER Festival attendees enjoyed live music as well as the 16 different beers featuring malt barley from our region.

Bret Gordon, owner and head brewer of Lumberbeard Brewing in Spokane, Wash.

Each of the 16 beers poured at the festival were brewed specially for the event, as collaborations between participating breweries. The event sponsors, LINC Malt and Cold Stream Malt and Grain, paired brewers to collaborate on unique beers made with local barley.

"Seeing the end product at these types of events is rewarding knowing all of the hard work and dedication some of our growers put into raising malt barley," said Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director. Washington Grain Commission Vice President Mary Palmer Sullivan also attended the event. ■



Traveling the dirt roads and through the fields, the brewers were able to see barley being harvested.

New market development specialist joins WGC team

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is pleased to announce **Jake Liening** joined the commission staff as a market development specialist on Sept. 16. Liening has a strong background in the grain industry, including experience in farming operations, strategic planning, and market analysis.



"We are thrilled to welcome Jake to our team. His agricultural roots and fresh perspective make him an excellent fit for the Washington Grain Commission. We are confident that his experience and skills will enhance our ability to provide valuable information and services to our overseas customers, ultimately benefiting Washington grain producers," said WGC CEO Casey Chumrau.

The new WGC market development specialist will support the commission's mission in expanding market opportunities for Washington grain, particularly in international markets. They will be responsible for data reporting and analysis and coordinating crop quality testing, as well as supporting trade team activities, content creation, and industry engagement.

Liening earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Whitworth University, where he concentrated in economics. Prior to coming to the WGC, Liening served as a Pacific Northwest land manager for Peoples Company, a firm that provides land brokerage, agricultural appraisal, land and energy management, crop insurance, and capital market services. Prior to that, Liening served as an analyst at Root Agricultural Advisory in Boise, Idaho.

Liening is from Walla Walla, Wash., where his family grows grass seed, alfalfa, dry peas, and seed corn. He is a licensed real estate broker in Oregon and Washington and also serves in the Washington Air National Guard as a crew chief within the 141st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

"I am confident that my prior work history within the farming world has equipped me with the insights and perspective needed to excel in this role. I am excited to continue working for the growers and producers in Washington state," Liening said. ■

WSU royalties to work for future of wheat

New wheat varieties emerging from Washington State University (WSU) are adding a growing stream of stable support for breeding advances that ultimately benefit the grower.

Established more than a decade ago, WSU's licensed wheat royalties are helping improve farm facilities, train the next generation of scientists and growers, and, for the first time this year, enhancing grower assessments to address wider research priorities.

"Royalties have become a critical source of support for public wheat breeding programs," said Professor Rich Koenig, chair of the recently established WSU Grain Royalty Advisory Committee. "The reality is that states aren't funding research the way they did decades ago. Royalties help modernize our facilities, bring down our request for checkoff dollars, and help WSU maintain its unique, locally responsive program."

The decision to begin charging wheat royalties, made by WSU in consultation with the Washington Grain Commission (WGC), was not taken lightly. The university held off for years but, as private and public peers across the nation implemented similar fees while state support dwindled, ultimately saw the move as necessary for the future.

"Our work is vitally important to Washington agriculture," Koenig said. "We breed wheat for a diversity of local climates, pests, diseases, end-use qualities, and with the final customer in mind, factors that might be overlooked by private company breeders. In research and education, we're thinking not just about today, but the next generation and the next 100 years."

An important decision

In May of 2012, the WGC supported a WSU-sponsored initiative to license its future wheat variety releases. Working with the commission, WSU established a royalty of 2 cents per pound of certified seed sold. That charge

is in the low-to-middle range compared to similar wheat-releasing institutions.

Starting with the Otto wheat variety, royalties from dozens of new releases allowed the university to fund its \$5 million portion of the \$15 million Plant Growth Facility expansion, opened in 2015 and paid off in 2023. That state-of-the-art facility, which cut several years off the time involved in selecting and releasing new varieties, helps retain world-class scientists and attract top students at WSU.

"These revenues illustrate the foresight that WSU had in implementing a royalty structure," said WGC CEO Casey Chumrau. "Thanks to its own

successful varieties, the breeding program now has another steady form of funding to reinvest in the future of our industry and allows us the flexibility to address new challenges as they arise."

Commercialization is vital to public plant breeding programs, said Jim Moyer, a Dayton wheat grower and committee member for research with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. As former director of WSU's Agricultural Research Center, Moyer joined the university at the time when royalties were being introduced.

"Breeding programs are among the most expensive programs, as well as one of the most tangible assets, for a land-grant university," he said. "Royalties are a measure of their varieties' relevance."

Moyer was fully supportive of the direction that WSU commercialization efforts were headed, based on his experience at similar institutions as well as what he knew from widespread grower use of patented varieties in the region, including on his farm.

"I was comfortable with the need for universities to follow this path and for farmers to access the best varieties," he said. "Royalties from WSU varieties are now significant. They ensure that the breeding programs con-



tinue to be nationally recognized well into the future and are a leading resource for the next generation of plant breeders.”

Freeing up grower assessments

The WSU Faculty Manual lays out how royalties are spent. The bulk of royalties, 70%, support wheat breeding research and variety development. Smaller portions, 10% each, go to the team that bred each variety, WSU’s Agricultural Research Center, and the WSU Office of Commercialization for intellectual property protection.

Current royalty income will soon help redirect grower-assessed funds to other high priority research projects, while allowing university scientists to develop new initiatives. Beginning in summer 2024, WSU’s wheat breeding team will reduce their annual request to the Washington Grain Commission by \$250,000. Royalties are slated to pay for certain staffing and facility costs as well as Hessian fly screening.

The college recently established the Grains Royalty Advisory Committee to ensure best use of royalty funds. Chaired by Koenig, the committee includes two producers — Brian Cochrane, Washington Grain Commissioner for District 5 and a farmer in the low-rainfall region, and Kurt Druffel, a Pullman grower — as well as the two winter and spring wheat breeders and the associate dean for research in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences.

“We want to be transparent about how royalties are used,” Koenig said. “Through the committee, we will maintain our great partnership with the wheat industry and ensure they weigh in on the work.”



Josh Demacon inspects wheat in the Plant Growth Facility on the Washington State University campus in Pullman, Wash.

The committee began meeting in early 2024 to consider the next best uses, among them research and education efforts, as well as equipment and deferred maintenance at the Lind, Davenport, Pullman, and Othello experimental farms. Launching last summer with royalty support, the new Washington Wheat Fellows program will financially support undergraduate students who want to learn by working in the science of grains.

“Students are more competitive when they’ve had experience in hands-on learning,” said Arron Carter, O.A. Vogel Endowed Chair in Winter Wheat Breeding and Genetics. “This benefits our programs by recruiting, training, and keeping excellent students.”

Fellows will join graduate student and faculty mentors in the winter and spring wheat breeding programs, taking part in hypothesis-driven research while growing their career potential.

“These students are more than just employees; they’re working on behalf of Washington growers,” Koenig said. “We want them to reflect on what it means to be a Washington Wheat Fellow.”

Through these endeavors, the team aims to maintain the university’s 100-year legacy of service to Washington state agriculture.

“We’re continuing the legacy of pioneers like Orville Vogel and William J. Spillman,” Koenig said. “Thanks to our partners, we will keep bringing top-quality, locally adapted wheat for Washington.” ■

What happened to barley?

DISCOUNTS, RISE OF CORN AND SOYBEAN ACRES PUT DENT IN CROP

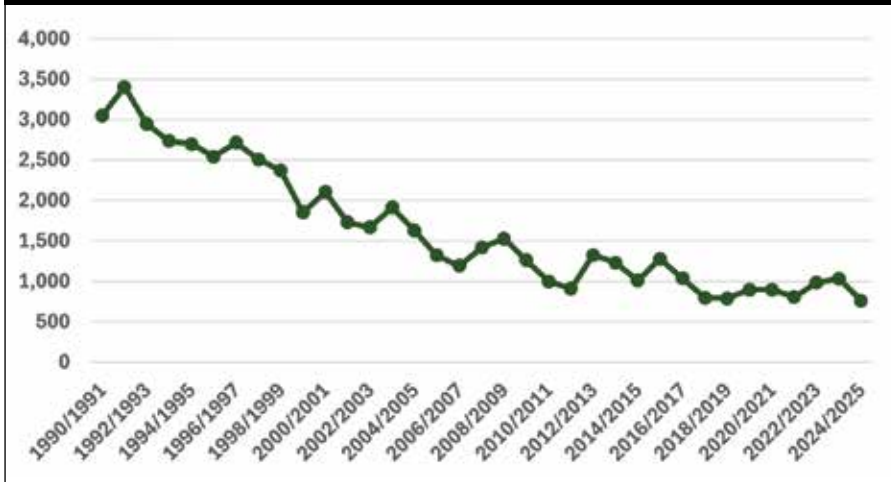
By Mike Krueger
 Founder, The Money Farm

Once upon a time in the northern Plains, barley was a very significant and important crop. That was back in the days before GMO crops had been thought of. It was back in the days when the primary crops for farmers in the Dakotas, Montana, and western Minnesota were wheat, oats, and barley. Sunflowers made their appearance in the late 1970s and early 80s. The chart shows harvested barley acres from 1990 to the current year. The decline in acres is quite amazing, from 3.5 million hectares (8.6 million acres) to just over 800,000 hectares (1.9 million acres) in 2024.

What caused the disappearance of barley as a major crop? There are numerous factors that came into play all about the same time, in the late 1980s and early 90s. There are also many and differing opinions about what caused the decline, but here are what I think are the biggest reasons:

The relationship between barley producers (farmers) and the malting barley industry was always contentious. Every farmer's intent was to produce malting barley. Malting barley specifications include good test weight; high plump; lower protein (less than 13%); good bright color; high germination (95%); and no DON (vomitoxin). The problem, of course, is that farmers have little control over these factors. They are dependent on weather and climate throughout the growing season. Discounts from malting barley to feed barley were usually very significant. Making planting decisions based on malting barley prices car-

U.S. barley area harvested (in million hectares)



ried a lot of risk. In years when barley yields and quality were good, maltsters would find reasons to downgrade barley from malting to feed. In years when barley yields and quality were not that good, barley that was feed in good years became malting barley. It was supply and demand based on what the malting industry needed at the time, and farmers had little control over the situation. Importantly, some of the grading factors could be very subjective.

Along came big advancements in corn and soybean genetics. Roundup-ready corn and soybeans represented major advancements in weed control and boosted yields. The improving genetics included much better short-season varieties of both corn and soybeans. These crops were suddenly adapted to the northern Plains. More importantly, corn and soybeans are not subject to discounts for all of the various factors that barley and wheat are. Corn is corn, and soybeans are soybeans. There are no worries about protein, color, plump, or falling numbers.

Farmers were looking for alternatives to barley and, in some cases, wheat. North Dakota corn acres went from 900,000 in 1991 to 3.8 million in 2024. North Dakota soybean acres went from 600,000 acres in 1991 to 6.9 million acres in 2024. Those are amazing numbers, and there were similar shifts in the surrounding northern Plains states.

The malting barley industry moved from "open" markets to offering malting barley contracts to farmers. These contracts contained several different pricing points and factors. Some were based on a relationship to the Chicago wheat futures contract. The intent was to maintain enough barley acres to ensure a supply of malting barley while offering the producer a more "guaranteed" new crop price structure.

The sharp increase in the corn and soybean planting trend across the Dakotas and western Minnesota pushed barley acres into Montana and Northern Idaho, where GMO corn and soybeans were not as readily adaptable.

There were multiple side effects of the steep drop in barley production. Domestic feed barley consumption has almost disappeared, replaced by corn and soybean meal. Livestock numbers across the northern Plains have also gotten much smaller over the years. U.S. exports of feed barley were almost 96 million bushels in 1992. They will be less than 500,000 bushels this marketing year.

The beer industry has also changed greatly over the last 10 to 15 years. The craft beer industry now represents almost 15% of total U.S. beer production. The majority of that growth has come since 2015. Total beer production in the U.S. was down 5% in 2023. Craft beer production was down 1%. Beer consumption has been declining. So has the demand for malting barley. The expansion in the craft beer industry has also brought expansion in small malting companies servicing the craft beer producers. The old-line, major malting companies are struggling, while the new and tiny malting companies are doing well.

Barley is now a specialty crop similar to dry beans, food grade soybeans, etc. Oats now fall into the same classification. The malting industry has consolidated. Some major facilities have closed (Spiritwood, N.D.). For Washington, a bright spot in this gloomy outlook is the potential for new malt barley varieties bred for the Pacific Northwest that give farmers a better bet at consistent quality to meet craft beer industry standards. Time will tell. That may give you one more reason to “drink local!” ■

Using genetics for added value of barley classes

By Robert Brueggeman

Associate Professor and Robert A. Nilan Endowed Chair in Barley Research and Education, Washington State University

Barley has four main end uses, and all four classes — feed, malt, forage, and food — are grown in Washington. However, with the traditional market for Washington barley, feed is still the major class grown on dryland production acreage. This is not the trend across the U.S., as the major barley class produced is for malting. When determining the direction of the Washington State University (WSU) breeding program, particularly regarding the targeted barley classes, it is essential to consider market demands, farmers’ choices, and the rationale behind the decisions to grow barley. Obviously, the choice is determined by farmer profitability, whether by securing malt barley contracts that bring premium prices or planting feed barley considering the positive effect on the soil that may translate into yield increases of subsequent crops in rotation. Thus, short-term or longer-term profitability directs the choice to plant barley in the winter wheat rotation, which also directs my decisions in our breeding program.

My initial priority as the WSU barley breeder was to focus on malt barley, aligning with the national trend and demand for a sustainable supply of domestically produced malting barley. We made excellent genetic gains in the WSU barley breeding program over the last few years to enhance malt quality. In 2023, two experimental WSU spring malt barley lines received a satisfactory rating from the American Malting Barley Association pilot malt barley evaluation program, a first for the WSU barley breeding program. In the WSU variety testing program, one of these lines, designated 20WAM783.1, outperformed barley check variety AAC Connect in all rainfall zones and in the high rainfall zones in the University of Idaho testing program. I’m excited to say that our breeding pipeline is stacked with even better experimental lines in terms of quality and yield, so I’m expecting to release new WSU malt barley varieties in the near future.

Developing high yielding malt barley varieties with excellent quality will result in WSU malt barley varieties on more acreage, but they are probably not going to result in a significant increase of barley acreage in the state.

Nationwide, the number one class of barley grown is for malt because the production regions of the upper Midwest and Intermountain States have



a large market for malt barley, and the infrastructure is in place. However, acreage devoted to malt barley in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) is determined by the capacity of the limited regional malting plants, and these are running at or near capacity. Even though there is a need for more high-quality malt barley in other regions of the U.S. and other countries such as Mexico, malt barley export is difficult due to the lack of storage and transportation infrastructure in the PNW.

This led me to ask what can be done genetically to develop barley varieties with added value for farmers and end users to increase marketability and encourage more barley production. For spring malt barley, the added value is meeting quality parameters needed by the craft brewing and distilling industries with consistent high yield and broad adaptability through heat and drought resilience. This requires generating malt data across environments to determine the stability of malt parameters, especially those with a high genotype by environment interaction, such as protein and beta glucan levels, that greatly impact malt quality and brewing performance. We are accomplishing this through enter-

ing our lines into the Western Regional Spring Barley Nursery (WRSBN), coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS). The WRSBN is grown at 10 or more sites in the northern Great Plains, Intermountain States, and the Pacific Northwest. These regional nurseries provide a robust set of agronomic and malt quality data generated at the USDA-ARS Cereal Crops Research Unit in Madison, Wis. The WRSBN provides breeders with nurseries where experimental lines can be measured for performance across diverse environments to determine performance in head-to-head comparison with other programs' lines and popular varieties.

High yield potential is required of all classes of barley, but there can be other added-value traits that would make their production more profitable or desired by industry. For example, winter malt barley has greater yield potential over spring malt barley under dryland production, where deficient late spring and early summer precipitation and high summer temperature can have negative effects on spring malt barley quality. Winter malt barley makes better use of stored soil moisture



WSU experimental bearded forage barley lines at the early generation row selection stage between malt and feed lines grown at Spillman Farm, Pullman.

and ripens early in mid-June. By avoiding the summer heat during grain fill, major yield and quality advantages are possible compared to spring-sown malting barley. However, winter malt barley contracting only extends so far north and east in Washington due to the lack of cold tolerance or winter survivability of the current winter malting varieties. The genetics are present in the barley germplasm pool for much greater cold hardiness; thus, it is a major objective to introduce these genetics into our program as an added-value trait in winter barley to provide greater options for contracting of winter malt barley acreage farther into Washington state's dryland growing regions.

The development of these winter hardy lines is of interest to Great Western Malting in Vancouver, Wash. To this end, we are bringing in winter hardiness genetics and, in collaboration with Dr. Kim Campbell's USDA-ARS wheat breeding program, can evaluate this material. Her group developed a method of screening winter wheat varieties in growth chambers, has modified the parameters for winter barley, and is evaluating winter hardiness in our winter barley breeding program. This research will help to identify lines with increased cold hardiness and, ultimately, winter survival under field conditions.

Although the breeding program resources will still proportionately favor the development of malt barley varieties, there is the need to continue effort to develop varieties in other barley classes, including feed, food, and forage. We are working on developing new beardless spring forage barley varieties, but as an anecdotal example, observation over years of growing winter malt barley showed that when we mow alleys in our winter



Korie Klein the barley program's field and malt lab manager just finished combining yield trial plots for the year at Spillman Farm, Pullman.

malt barley yield trials, they grew back in these alleys quite prolifically, giving rise to new ideas such as the development of beardless winter forage varieties that have excellent seedling vigor for early weed suppression, high biomass, and forage quality, with the potential for two cuttings in a growing season. Development of such a variety may bring many added-value traits, including higher profitability for medium to low rainfall growing regions, such as the Highway 2 corridor, where winter hardiness would be important, and spring forage barley is currently being grown.

An important added-value trait that we are continuing to bring into spring feed barley is imidazolinone (IMI) herbicide tolerance, allowing for high yielding feed barley varieties that can follow IMI-resistant winter wheat without harm by residual herbicide. We are also exploring low phytic acid barley by introducing the single *lpa1-1* gene into both our spring feed and food varieties. This trait provides more available micronutrients in the animal and human gut, which will result in more nutritional value in both the feed and food classes. It also results in less phosphorus in animal waste, which could provide our feed varieties with greater environmental sustainability.

As a geneticist and breeder, I have many ideas for how to increase added-value genetics into our barley varieties for greater profit and sustainability. However, is there a market for these varieties and can or will farmers incorporate these added-value barley varieties into their rotations? This is an open invitation for farmers, end users, and seed dealers to provide feedback on what your opinions are on the important attributes that may put more barley acreage on the map. ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Demand forecast increases; so does supply



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

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is currently forecasting the national average wheat price for the 2024-25 marketing year to be \$5.70 per bushel (based on the September 2024 World Agricultural Supply Demand Estimates (WASDE)). While this is still above the \$5.50 price that would trigger Price Loss Coverage payments, it is the lowest market year price since the 2020-21 marketing year (Figure 1). While total wheat demand this year is expected to exceed demand in 2023-24 by more than 4%, total supply is expected to exceed last year by over 10%, leading to a significant increase in wheat ending stocks in May 2025 compared to last May. This results in a stocks-to-use ratio of more than 42% for this year, well above stocks-to-use ratios the last several years.

Despite reduced U.S. wheat plantings for the 2024-25 harvest, better growing conditions resulted in a slight increase in harvested acres compared to last year and a 7.4% increase in average yields. Beginning stocks June 1 this year were also higher than last marketing year's beginning stocks. The result is an increase in the total U.S. wheat supply of 11% compared to 2023-24.

In Washington, wheat farmers planted 45,000 more acres for the 2024-25 harvest compared to 2023-24 and harvested 40,000 more acres. About 79% of the harvested wheat acres in Washington this year were winter wheat. In August, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated average Washington winter wheat yields were 70 bushels per acre this year compared to 68 bushels last year. As a result, USDA currently estimates that Washington producers accounted for 9.2% of the total U.S. winter wheat crop compared to 7.6% last year. Over the last decade, the Washington contribution to total U.S. winter wheat production has been as high as 11.4% (2020) and as low as 5.6% (2021), averaging 8.6% since 2014.

Internationally, wheat ending stocks are expected to decline this year compared to last. According to International Grains Council estimates, world wheat ending stocks will be down about 1.3% in 2024-25. Total world trade is also expected to be down. As a result, if

Figure 1: U.S. wheat balance sheet based on September 2024 USDA WASDE (in million bushels)

Marketing Year	USDA 20/21	USDA 21/22	USDA 22/23	USDA 23/24	USDA* 24/25
Beg Stocks	1,028	845	674	570	702
Production	1,828	1,646	1,650	1,812	1,982
Total Supply	2,957	2,588	2,446	2,527	2,789
Food	961	971	973	970	964
Feed and Residual	93	88	77	120	110
Seed	64	58	68	64	62
Exports	994	796	759	725	825
Total Demand	2,111	1,913	1,876	1,879	1,961
Ending Stocks	845	674	570	648	828
Stocks To Use	40.03%	35.23%	30.38%	34.49%	42.22%
Avg. Farm Price	\$5.05	\$7.63	\$8.83	\$6.96	\$5.70

*Forecast

USDA's U.S. wheat export forecast holds, the U.S. trade share will increase this year compared to last.

Russian wheat exports are projected to decline by 23% this year and Ukrainian exports by 19%. A small decrease in wheat exports is also projected for the European Union. Year-over-year increases in export volume are projected for Argentina, Australia, and Canada.

The major world wheat importers are expected to import 5% less wheat in 2024-25 compared to the 2023-24 marketing year. Import reductions are expected for the Philippines, China, Japan, much of the Middle East, and Southeast Asia (including Vietnam). Mexican wheat imports are currently expected to be about equal to last year. Despite the projected decline in global trade, U.S. shipments of white wheat through mid-September 2024 were up 77% on a year-over-year basis and includes increased trade volume with both Japan and the Philippines.

In past years, Washington producers generally enjoyed wheat prices that exceeded the national average price. However, this changed in the last couple of years. Figure 2 shows the monthly average wheat price for the U.S. compared to average monthly prices in Washington.

Notice that from 2019 through the rising price years of 2020 and 2021, Washington monthly wheat prices exceeded the national average price. However, as prices began falling in June 2022, the price relationship reversed, and since September 2022, Washington prices have consistently been below the national average price.

The national marketing year average price is calculated using the monthly prices and adjusted for the volume of wheat sold by farmers each month. Prior to the 2022-23 marketing year, the average marketing year price for Washington producers exceeded the national average price by about \$.90 per bushel (Figure 3). Thus, one could take USDA's forecast national average price, add \$.90 per bushel and then use that figure as a reference price for marketing wheat. When the market was offering something above that reference price, sales might be attractive, and when the price offerings were below the reference price, one might want to be patient in pricing. However, in the current market environment, holding out for a price \$.90 above the current USDA market year forecast of \$5.70 is quite aggressive. In the 2022-23 marketing year, the market year average wheat price in Washington ended up being \$.70 less than the national average price, and last year, it was \$1.03 per bushel lower. While we are only through the first quarter of the current year, the monthly prices reported for this year to date again show Washington prices lagging national prices, so we face a good possibility of the marketing year average price in Washington lagging the national average market year price this year as well. Given the price relationships since September 2022, one might expect the average market year price in Washington to be close to \$5 per bushel for 2024-25 if USDA's \$5.70 national price forecast holds.¹

On a positive note, the futures market is quoting substantially higher prices in later months compared to earlier months,

¹This is the expected price averaged across all classes of wheat in both the U.S. and Washington.

Figure 2: Monthly wheat prices

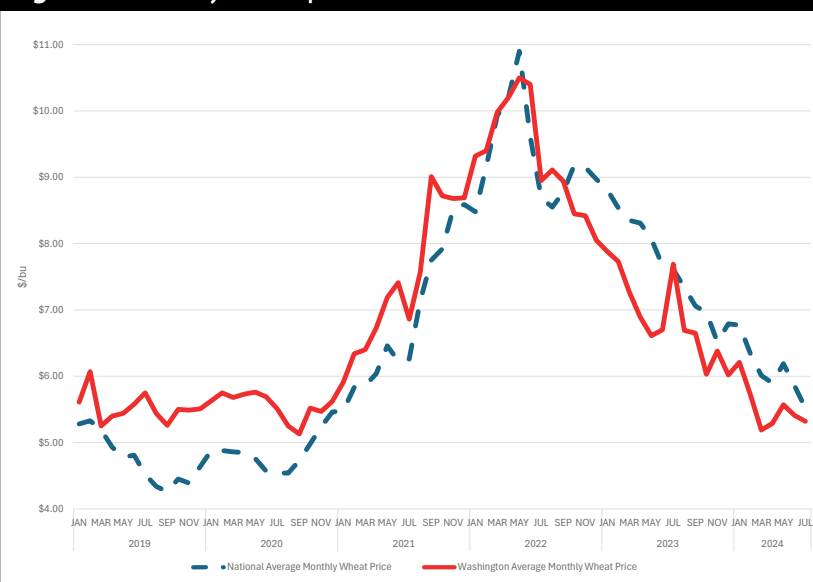
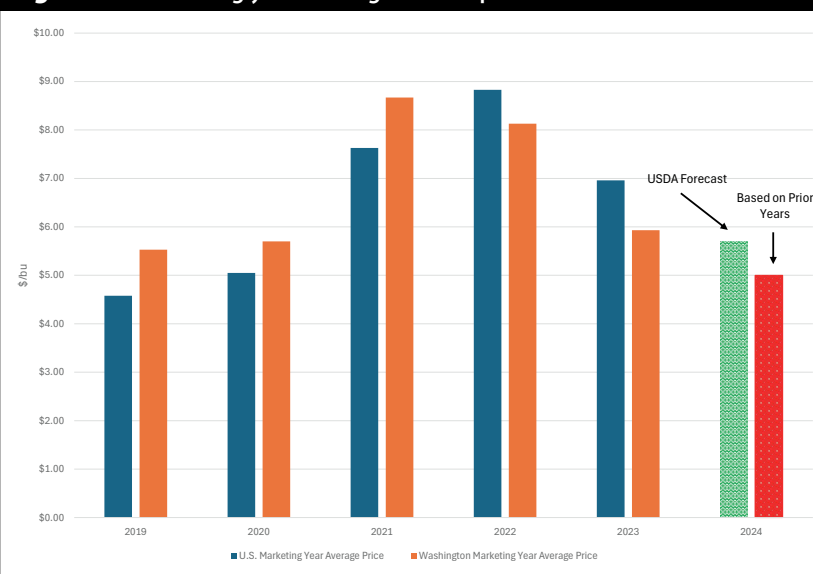


Figure 3: Marketing year average wheat prices



meaning there may be opportunities to lock in storage returns this year. As of this writing (mid-September), the March 2025 soft red winter wheat contract was trading at a \$.185 premium over the December 2024 contract, and May was trading at a \$.095 premium over March. Further, basis levels (the difference in the local price and the futures prices) are not as strong as they were at this same time the last couple of years, so basis risk is not as great on stored grain this year as it was last year. However, any unpriced grain still faces the risk of a decline in futures market prices even if basis levels do not weaken. ■

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

THE BOTTOM LINE

The many uses of LLCs in business operations

By Norman Brock

Attorney, Brock Law Firm

The author and his son, Corey, utilize hundreds of Limited Liability Companies, or LLCs, in their respective practices to help solve clients' various needs. I break down such uses between:

- Business
- Estate/transition planning

An LLC is often used as the business entity of choice vs. a corporation for its simplicity of forming.

The use of either an LLC or corporation for operating a business, be it the corner grocery store or farm/ranch operation, is paramount in the author's opinion. Utilizing an LLC or corporation is crucial if the business owner(s) desire personal protection from third party law suits and is absolutely crucial if the business owner has employees; operating your business as a self-employed owner or through a partnership of two or more persons, you remain individually liable for acts of negligence of an employee.

The possible business considerations in the operation of the business enterprise and the possible tax benefits of an LLC vs. a corporation in your particular business situation should be reviewed with knowledgeable counsel and a CPA. This is especially true for the farmer/rancher where possibly operating through a corporation structure still affords more tax savings benefits than an LLC, in the author's opinion.

An LLC formed by two or more business associates would generally include careful planning for succession of the business due to death, disability, or retirement of one of the owners. Crafting buy/sell protection is a critical component typically of the business entity. Holding real estate in an LLC as opposed to a corporation does NOT have the income tax drawbacks that holding real estate in a corporate ownership does. This needs to be carefully explained to the landowner by a knowledgeable advisor.

Let's look at the several benefits of an LLC in most farm/ranch estate/transition planning that the author and his son specialize in:

1. An LLC accomplishes the almost always goal of the farmland owner to "hold the land together." Succession planning to children/grandchildren that leaves them as tenants in common is usually a wreck! With an LLC, a manager is appointed who handles all the business of the LLC, i.e. receiving the landlord's share of crop, marketing, paying the bills, Farm Service Agency business, etc., and ultimately reporting business activity on a 1040 Partnership tax return. An LLC is a pass-through entity for tax reporting and does NOT pay tax on net earnings. Net income is reported on a K-1 form for each owner's proportional share of the net LLC income (or loss).

The LLC agreement we utilize will ALWAYS contain prohibitions on transfer of ownership of LLC units (shares) so that ownership remains in the line of family, always a goal of the farm/ranch landowners.

The LLC operating agreement we utilize would have provisions for buy-back protections in the event of a nonpermitted transfer, i.e. bankruptcy, divorce award, or an unauthorized transfer such as through a will or trust by an owner transferor.

2. Lifetime gifting to reduce the size of a large estate that could/would be subject to possible federal estate tax and/or Washington/Oregon estate tax is often a big planning issue (Idaho does not have a state estate tax). Since gifting is made in units of the LLC, typically nonvoting, which can be deeply discounted in value, much larger gifts of value can be made. We typically set up an LLC having voting/nonvoting units especially so the owner(s) can gift nonvoting units (value) to children/grandchildren without giving up control of the voting units until such is typically more clear to the landowners later in life.

Gifting of LLC units, whether voting and/or nonvoting, almost ALWAYS should be accompanied by utilization of trusts to hold the gifted (or bequeathed) units so the family always knows where the ownership of the LLC resides and is controlled.

3. We fairly often complete transition planning gifting out of the LLC owner-

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ship from parents to the children, setting the parent(s) (original owners) for possible Medicaid planning in later years. On that note, any type of assets can be contributed to an LLC, such as commercial property, rental, brokerage accounts, cash, life insurance, etc. Qualified accounts such as IRAs or 401Ks, would not, however. On that note, the author has yet to meet a client who is happy to have to sell off the family farm to provide possible long-term care in later years.

4. An LLC provides additional planning opportunities.

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CASE II
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A parent may want to provide for one child to be successor manager (in control), likely some form of protecting a family member such as a son or grandson. The right to always farm/ranch the land is often a critical component of planning.

5. Sometimes the family utilizing an LLC wants a plan in place for how the LLC lands might be divided between the children when the parents are gone. The author calls this "a road map" for distributing the property amongst the children one day. Often, there is the farmstead (home, shop, etc.) on the LLC lands. At some point, the parents often say, "our son and his family will move into our home when we are gone, and they should own the site, but we don't want to go to the cost of a short plat now." We can provide a mechanism in the LLC operating agreement for such future event to be an obligation of the LLC to do.

In summation, an LLC is a wonderful legal entity that can be tailored to your specific transition goals for your lands (and other assets). ■

Norm Brock has been representing farm families throughout Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Northwestern Oregon for more than 50 years. He works out of the firm's Davenport and Spokane offices and can be reached at (509) 721-0392 or brocklf.com.

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Your wheat life...



Ryan Clouse spring seeding wheat on the Hein Farm in Gravelle. Photo by Jon Reeves.



Spring work on hold down the Waukon Road near Edwall.
Photo by Marlena Falk.



Carson Frazier (1) at Frazier Bluff Farms in Walla Walls. Photo by Mitch Frazier.

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



(Left) In Pomeroy, Claire Heitstuman (2) can't wait for spring farming to begin. Photo by Stephanie Heitstuman. (Above) Throw back to a winter sunrise in Waitsburg. Photo by John McCaw.



(Above) Bode and Ryan Breau at Finch Farms in Creston. Photo by Beth Finch. (Right) Blake Appel (1) doing some soil sampling in Thera. Photo by Jaimie Appel.



HAPPENINGS

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

OCTOBER 2024

4-5 OKTOBERFEST. Bier gartens, music, vendors, kinderplatz. 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. Bier gartens, music, vendors, kinderplatz. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

18-19 OKTOBERFEST. Bier gartens, music, vendors, kinderplatz. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

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

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

NOVEMBER 2024

6-8 WASHINGTON STATE WEED ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE. Trade show, workshops, breakout sessions, credits requested. Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee, Wash. Register at weedconference.org

11-12 WASHINGTON STATE CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE. Yakima Convention

Center, Yakima, Wash. Register at washingtoncrop.com

12-13 FARM AND FOOD SYMPOSIUM.

This event, led by the Spokane Conservation District's BioFarming Program, focuses on regenerative agriculture in the PNW. Presenters include Graeme Sait and Dan Kittredge. CenterPlace Event Center, Spokane Valley, Wash. Register at spokanecd.org/products/farm-and-food-symposium

19-21 2024 TRI-STATE GRAIN GROWERS CONVENTION. Industry presentations, breakout sessions, exhibitors. Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Register online at wawg.org/convention/registration/ ■

Submissions

Email listings to editor@wawg.org. Include date, time and location of event, plus contact info and a short description.



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Advertiser Index

AGPRO	39	Edward Jones	11	Re-elect Mary Dye	17
AgraSyst	9, 63	Eljay Oil	65	Spectrum Crop Development ...	59
Albaugh	7, 89	Farm & Home Supply	33	Spokane Conservation District...	35
Bank of Eastern Washington	39	Fluid Roofing	59	State Bank NW	49
Barber Engineering	51	Great Plains Equipment	91	T & S Sales	88
Barr-Tech	57	Joe Schmick	35	Tankmax	47
BASF	5	Jones Truck & Implement	85	Tri-State Seed	33
Big Iron Repair	57	Kincaid Real Estate	55	Unverferth	21
Butch Booker	55	Let's Go Washington	45	Vantage-PNW	15
Byrnes Oil Company	71	Mark Schoesler	17	Walker Furniture	92
Central Machinery Sales	53	McKay Seed Company	55	Western Reclamation	61
Class 8 Trucks	47, 55	Mike's Auto	65	Wheatland Bank	13
CO Energy	45	North Pine Ag Equipment	55	Washington State Crop Improvement Association	51
Coldwell Banker Tomlinson	57	Northwest First Realtors	51	Washington State University Wheat Academy	39
Coleman Oil	51	Odessa Trading Company	15	Yunker Brothers	49
Connell Grange Supply	47	Perry Dozier for Senate	21		
Correll's Scale Service	49	PNW Farmers Cooperative	35		
Country Financial	57	Pomeroy Grain Growers	45		
Custom Seed Conditioning	59	R & H Machine	54		



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