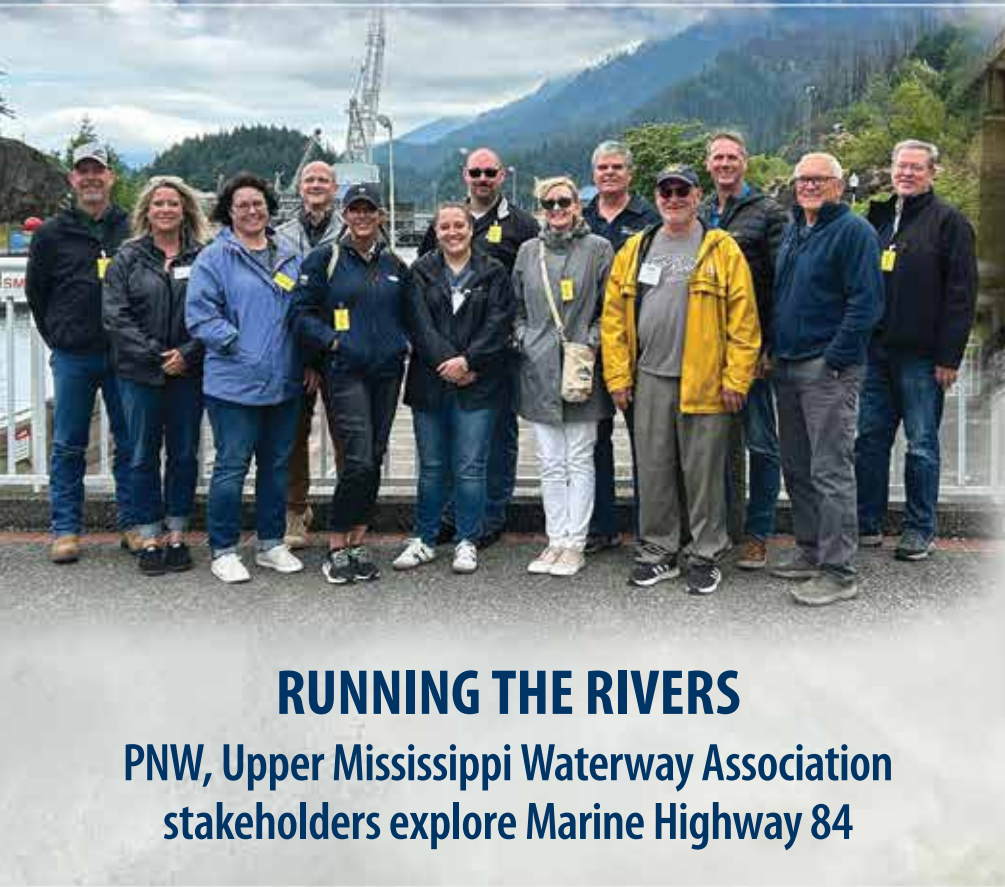


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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER | 2025



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Drew Lyon looks back on Extension career

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President's Perspective



Farm bill or bust

By Jeff Malone

President, Washington Association of Wheat Growers

On Sept. 30, the most recent farm bill, passed in 2018, will expire. This means we are, once again, facing a critical deadline. If you've been paying attention to how Congress handles the farm bill, you know we've been limping along on a series of extensions. A new bill should have been in place years ago. Instead, we're still operating under a law drafted when smartphones still had home buttons and

before anyone had heard of COVID-19.

Does your farm or your family operate today as it did in 2018? I know mine doesn't. Commodity prices have shifted, inflation is squeezing every dollar, markets have changed, and weather patterns continue to present new challenges. We are facing new risks, rising input costs, and increased scrutiny like never before. So why are we still expected to plan our operations based on a policy written seven years ago, expired two years ago, and sustained only by multiple extensions?

As a wheat grower with significant acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), I rely on the farm bill not just in theory, but in practice. Programs like CRP do more than provide conservation benefits; they offer essential income stability and long-term planning tools for growers like me who are committed to keeping our land productive and sustainable.

But here's the problem: more and more, key parts of the farm bill are being stripped out and shoved into standalone legislation, most notably in the "Big, Beautiful Bill." While that legislation accomplished a few things, it failed to include funding for the farm bill's conservation title. Extracting programs such as CRP from the comprehensive farm bill framework may appear efficient in the short term, but it jeopardizes the delicate bipartisan coalition that has historically been vital to the bill's successful passage.

Traditionally, the farm bill has succeeded because it brings together both urban and rural interests. Food stamps (SNAP) and nutrition assistance are in the same conversations as commodity programs and conservation incentives. That's not an accident. That structure is what ensures that lawmakers from New York or Chicago will sit down at the table with those from Montana or Washington state. It's that structure linking nutrition, conservation, and farm policy that gives the bill the political strength to succeed.

Why should consumers care about the farm bill? It's about food security. It's about protecting our land and water for future generations. It's about ensuring that family farms have the support to survive and adapt in an increasingly complex world. If you care about what's on your grocery store shelves, school lunches, or how much it costs to feed your family, then you should care about the farm bill.

The farm bill is the backbone of American agriculture, shaping everything from crop insurance and commodity safety nets to rural development, trade programs, and research. It funds risk management programs that protect farmers from extreme weather and volatile markets. Above all, it provides stability in a profession where uncertainty is constant.

If you're a farmer, raise your voice. Our future depends on it. If you're a consumer, stay informed and demand change. And if you're a legislator, it's time to step up and do what's right. Our farms, our families, and our future is counting on it. Farm bill or bust. It's really that simple. ■

Cover photo: Members of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association spent a week in the PNW. See page 24. All photos are Shutterstock images or taken by *Wheat Life* staff unless otherwise noted.

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WAWG's current top priorities are:

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

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

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Future of ‘traditional’ farm bill is uncertain

Happy Harvesting. This time of year reminds us that anything is possible with dedication and perseverance, and we appreciate the beauty of nature, the joy of hard work, and the power of gratitude!

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) has consistently advocated for a modernized farm bill. The current situation is a departure from previous expectations, particularly since WAWG has traditionally not supported dividing up the farm bill into separate pieces of legislation, something that happened with the recent reconciliation bill, H.R.1 (Pres. Trump’s “Big, Beautiful Bill”). The reconciliation bill incorporated certain farm bill provisions, while the remaining measures are included in an unpassed bill. Historically, there has been concern that splitting the farm bill could jeopardize its passage altogether. We are now entering a new era of modernization, and after discussions with agricultural committees in Washington, D.C., there is an expectation that a mini-farm bill will be enacted. Some agricultural stakeholders remain skeptical about this outcome, suggesting that an extension or alternative means may be necessary to implement the rest of the farm bill’s programs. I am uncertain regarding the future of a comprehensive farm bill.

However, H.R.1 addressed and improved the top three priorities on WAWG’s national legislative list:

- **Enhanced commodity safety nets.** H.R.1 revises the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs by adjusting reference prices 10-20% to reflect contemporary market conditions and increasing flexibility in program enrollment. Coverage is expanded to better support smaller producers and diversified farms. The wheat reference price will be \$6.35 per bushel, up from \$5.50 in the 2018 Farm Bill. Starting in the 2031 crop year, the reference price for all covered commodities shall equal the reference price in the previous crop year multiplied by 1.005 and cannot exceed 113% of the reference price. Effective reference price will be calculated based on 88% of the Olympic average of the previous five years versus 85%. H.R.1 allows farmers to receive the higher of the ARC or PLC payment for 2025. It



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

also allows farmers to purchase the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) crop insurance product even if they are enrolled in ARC. There is also an increase in the payment limitation for Title 1 payments from \$125,000 to \$155,000; that limitation will be adjusted annually to account for inflation.

- **Modernized crop insurance.**

H.R.1 increases subsidies for premium payments. It increased the maximum coverage level to 90% and the premium discount to 80% for SCO. It also allows whole farm policy coverage to increase to 90%.

- **Market development and export expansion.** H.R.1 reinvigorates trade programs, allocates additional resources for market promotion, and provides targeted support for

opening new export markets. There weren’t specific line items for the programs the wheat industry typically relies, the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program, but these funds are included in the trade promotion section of the package.

H.R.1 promises more direct support, deregulation, export incentives, and infrastructure investment. Some Title 2 conservation programs were included in the bill, but the Conservation Reserve Program wasn’t. It’s important we keep advocating for a mini-farm bill and/or solutions to make sure all the programs growers rely on get renewed and are available.

Last December, Congress passed the American Relief Act of 2025 that included \$30 billion in disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers — the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP). It’s likely that most of you have already received payments. The Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) sign-up started July 10, and you should have received a pre-filled form from your county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. To be eligible for stage one of the SDRP, growers must have experienced losses in 2023 and/or 2024 and have received an eligible federal crop insurance or NAP payment. Covered disaster events include frost/freeze, winter storms, excessive heat, and drought (your county must be listed as a qualifying drought county). In stage one of SDRP, growers will receive 35% of the payment that is



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estimated on their form. I personally went into my county's FSA office to apply for our farm on the first day of sign-ups so I could see the process and be able to inform farmers. It was very streamlined. I had my pre-printed forms, and they were very helpful in answering my questions on the few boxes I needed to fill out. If you have questions on how to fill out portions of your form, I urge you to call your local county office for assistance. There will be a stage two for producers with uncovered losses, including nonindemnified shallow losses and quality losses. Projected sign-up for stage two will begin mid-September. You can read more about the SDRP on page 10.

These disaster programs were intended to respond to the challenges facing agriculture, such as disrupted supply chains, market fluctuations, and rising costs. While the American Relief Act includes several provisions specifically designed to aid and empower growers, we all know this barely skims the high input costs and low commodity prices we have endured over the last few years. This is really only a band-aid. WAWG, along with other commodities, is continually advocating and educating at the national and state level about the current situation in farm country. I know from my own experience and from talking with farmers, it's very bleak, and this situation is not sustainable in the long term. We already know Washington state is losing farms at a very fast pace.

I want to spotlight a recent collaborative effort between the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) and stakeholders from the Columbia-Snake River System. WAWG, along with participants from across our region, organized a week-long tour of the Columbia-Snake River System, beginning in Astoria and ending at the Port of

Lewiston. The idea for this event stemmed from a similar Mississippi River tour I joined last June, which aimed to encourage cooperation between these two major river systems and amplify our collective voice to Congress and the public on the many issues facing working rivers. In previous columns, I've shared how successful that trip was. This time around, we hosted UMWA, giving them a closer look at the unique challenges and successes in our area.

Although there are significant differences between the two river systems, we also found common ground that can help us support and advocate for each other. My time on the Mississippi highlighted some important contrasts with how things operate here in the Pacific Northwest, such as how vast and big their waterway is (they run 40-barge tows vs. our four-barge tows); how many congressional districts they have along their river system; the resiliency on issues such as drought; the utilization of the river to maximize their capacity; and investing in high school students for a career on the water. On the Columbia-Snake River System, the UMWA group was impressed with our stakeholder engagement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and how the various entities work together to maintain the river system and communicate well on issues that arise. They mentioned how gratifying it was to see the ports include spaces for the public to enjoy, like the public market at the Port of Kalama, and they were also impressed with how many modes of transportation interact with the river system: barge, truck, rail, and pipeline. Overall, both trips were uniquely important stepping stones for a positive working relationship in the future. I look forward to collaborating with them on the issues we share. To read more about the trip, go to page 24.

Late summer is when we send out membership notices. To make payment easier, you'll be able to pay your dues on our website (wawg.org) or by scanning a QR code. Check payments are still accepted. WAWG continues to work on important issues at both state and national levels to protect members' interests. That work is made possible through your membership dues, and they remain vital to our advocacy efforts. We know the current farming environment is creating hardships for many, and we feel fortunate that our members value our work enough to support it. If you know growers who aren't WAWG members, please invite them to join. If you have questions or need information, call us at (509) 659-0610 or email michelle@wawg.org. ■



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WAWG leaders appear on local media

July was a busy week in the media department for Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) leaders.

Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director, appeared on OPB to talk about the recent Columbia-Snake River System tour with members of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA). Last year, stakeholders from up and down the Columbia-Snake River System spent a week traveling the length of the Mississippi River to talk to stakeholders on that river system about their challenges. Hennings was joined in the OPB interview by UMWA executive director Gary Williams.

“The trip was a proactive step towards networking and establishing relationships with stakeholders from other river systems for future collaborations,” Hennings said during the interview. “Gary and I met probably two years ago, a year-and-a-half ago. We were just talking about some of the challenges we have along our river systems, and how we could actually come together, have conversations, learn each other’s river systems to be able to collaborate together on some messaging at the national level.”

Hennings also talked to reporters from the *Capital Press* and *The Columbian*. For more on the UMWA trip to the Pacific Northwest, see page 24.

Over on the Western Ag Network, Andy Juris, a Klickitat County grower and WAWG past president, talked about the Trump administration’s recent decision to withdraw from the previous administration’s agreement regarding the lower Snake River dams.



Andy Juris, a Klickitat County grower and WAWG past president, spoke with the Western Ag Network about the Trump administration’s recent decision to withdraw from the previous administration’s agreement regarding the lower Snake River dams.

“It was a really big deal. It was a signal to us from the administration that there was going to be a change in its approach to the infrastructure, to its support of farmers, to its support of rural communities. It did a lot to give us some assurance going forward that we are going to have a viable transportation industry, have steady power, and rural communities will be able to continue to survive,” Juris said.

Hennings and Juris’ interviews are linked at wawg.org/wheat-leaders-appear-on-opb-western-ag-media/ ■

Federal disaster program now open for applications

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced on July 9 that agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can now apply for \$16 billion in assistance through the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP).

To expedite the implementation of SDRP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is delivering assistance in two stages. This first stage

is open to producers with eligible crop losses that received assistance under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program during 2023 and 2024. Stage one sign-up started in person at FSA county offices on July 10, and prefilled applications were mailed to producers immediately. SDRP stage two sign-ups for eligible shallow or uncovered losses will begin in early fall.

This announcement follows Secretary Rollins’ comprehensive plan to deliver the total amount of congressionally appropriated \$30 billion in disaster assistance to farmers and ranchers this year. These programs will complement the forthcoming state block grants that USDA is working with 14 different states to develop. To date, USDA has

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issued more than \$7.8 billion in Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) payments to more than half a million eligible producers. Additionally, USDA has provided over \$1 billion in emergency relief through the Emergency Livestock Relief Program to producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought or wildfires in calendar years 2023 and 2024.

USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet, Loan Assistance Tool, and the FarmRaise online FSA education hub. Payment details will be updated here weekly. For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center.

SDRP Stage One

FSA is launching a streamlined, prefilled application process for eligible crop, tree, and vine losses by leveraging existing Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) indemnified loss data. The prefilled applications were mailed on July 9, 2025.

Eligibility

Eligible losses must be the result of natural disasters

occurring in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024. These disasters include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions.

To qualify for drought related losses, the loss must have occurred in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks, D3 (extreme drought), or greater intensity level during the applicable calendar year. For more information, visit the SDRP website.

How to Apply

To apply for SDRP, producers must submit the FSA-526, Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage One Application, in addition to having other forms on file with FSA.

SDRP Stage One Payment Calculation

Stage one payments are based on the SDRP adjusted NAP or federal crop insurance coverage level the producer purchased for the crop. The net NAP or net federal crop insurance payments (NAP or crop insurance indemnities minus administrative fees and premiums) will be sub-



THAT'S A WRAP. The Washington State University Variety Testing Program finished up their 2025 crop tours in Klickitat County on July 1. Andrea Cox, conservation coordinator for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, attended the crop tour and then joined county growers for lunch to talk about the Natural Resources Conservation Service and provide feedback to the agency.

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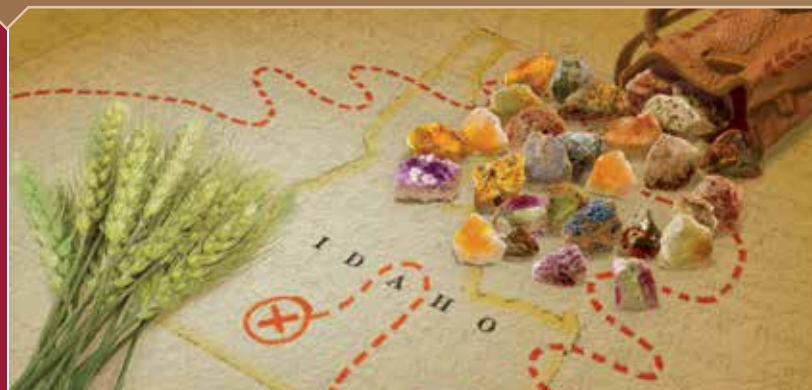
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tracted from the SDRP calculated payment amount.

For stage one, the total SDRP payment to indemnified producers will not exceed 90% of the loss, and an SDRP payment factor of 35% will be applied to all stage one payments. If additional SDRP funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive SDRP payments are required to purchase federal crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two available crop years will be required to refund the SDRP payment, plus interest, to USDA.

SDRP Stage Two

FSA will announce additional SDRP assistance for uncovered losses, including nonindemnified shallow losses and quality losses and how to apply later this fall. ■

Deadline to enroll in Grassland CRP nears

In mid-July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can now enroll in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (Grassland CRP). The sign-up runs through Aug. 8. Grassland CRP, offered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary working lands conservation program that enables participants to conserve grasslands while also continuing most grazing and haying practices.

CRP, USDA's flagship conservation program, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. For four decades, CRP has provided financial and technical support to agricultural producers and landowners whose accepted acres are placed under contract for 10-15 years and who agree to voluntarily convert the land to beneficial vegetative cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and support wildlife habitat. The American Relief Act, 2025, extended provisions for CRP through Sept. 30, 2025.

Currently, more than 25.8 million acres are enrolled in CRP, with nearly 9.7 million acres in Grassland CRP. On May 12, FSA opened General

and Continuous CRP enrollment for 2025. FSA is currently reviewing submitted offers and will announce accepted offers at a later date. Due to the 27-million-acre statutory cap, only 1.8 million acres are available for all CRP enrollment this fiscal year.

Landowners and producers interested in Grassland CRP should contact their local USDA Service Center to learn more or apply for the program before Aug. 8. ■

Winter wheat production down 3% from June forecast

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service's July 2025 production report, winter wheat production is forecast at 1.35 billion bushels, down 3% from the June 1 forecast and down less than 1% from 2024. As of July 1, the U.S. yield is forecast at 54.2 bushels per acre, up .5 bushels from last month and up 2.5 bushels from last year's average yield of 51.7 bushels per acre. If realized, the U.S. yield would be the second highest behind 2016.

Hard red winter production, at 755 million bushels, is down 4% from last month. Soft red winter, at 337 million bushels, is down 2% from the June forecast. White winter, at 254 million bushels, is down slightly from last month. Of the white winter production, 20.1 million bushels are hard white and 234 million bushels are soft white.

Durum wheat production is forecast at 79.7 million bushels, down less than 1% from 2024. Based on July 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 38.7 bushels per harvested acre, down .6 bushels from 2024. Area harvested for grain or seed is expected to total 2.06 million acres, unchanged from the acreage report released on June 30, 2025, but up 1% from 2024.

Other spring wheat production for grain is forecast at 504 million bushels, down 7% from last year. Based on July 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 51.7 bushels per harvested acre, down .8 bushels from 2024. If realized, the U.S. yield would be the second highest behind last year. Area harvested for grain or seed is expected to total 9.75 million acres, unchanged from the acreage report released on June 30, 2025, but 6% below 2024. Of the total production, 469 million bushels are hard red spring wheat, down 7% from 2024. ■

See you in October

This is a combined August/September issue of *Wheat Life*. Our next issue will be in October. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the staff at *Wheat Life* wishes farmers a safe, successful harvest. ■



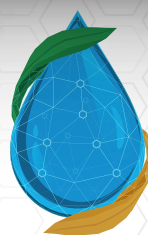
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RAY STARLING has been the Chief of Staff to a U.S. Senator and Cabinet Secretary, worked at the White House, and been involved in crafting public policy for more than 15 years. Ray returned to North Carolina in 2019 to serve as General Counsel to the NC Chamber of Commerce.



JOLENE BROWN is a walking/talking champion for the people of agriculture. She shares her credibility, authenticity, humor, and wisdom with audiences worldwide through her writing, appearances, and workshops. Jolene helps farm families navigate business transitions.

ARLAN SUDERMAN is the Chief Commodities Economist for StoneX Group Inc. Arlan oversees the company's commodity market intelligence efforts. He provides unique market insight on global macro-economic trends and their implications for the commodity markets.



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

Breakout sessions to include:

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



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Auction and Dinner

The auction and dinner this year will be held Tuesday, Nov. 18, 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

Farm or Business Name _____

Name _____ Additional Registrant _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone Number _____

Email _____ If current member, WAWG number: _____

FULL REGISTRATION (includes all meals and meetings)

	#ATTENDING	AMOUNT	
Active Member Full Registration	_____ x \$ 250 =	\$ _____	requires WAWG Member #: _____
Additional/Spouse Full Registration	_____ x \$ 250 =	\$ _____	
After 10/24/2025	_____ x \$ 300 =	\$ _____	
Non-Member Full Registration	_____ x \$ 350 =	\$ _____	
Convention onsite Full Registration	_____ x \$ 400 =	\$ _____	

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

SINGLE DAY REGISTRATION

Circle one:

Active Member Single Day	_____ x \$ 175 =	\$ _____ Tuesday/Wednesday (circle one)
Non-Member Single Day	_____ x \$ 275 =	\$ _____ Tuesday/Wednesday (circle one)

DINNER & AUCTION - Heads & Tails **Auction Fundraiser**

_____ x \$ 10 per person = \$ _____

ADDITIONAL Meal Tickets *Available to purchase ONLY with a Full Registration

_____ Individual Breakfast	_____ x \$ 35 =	\$ _____ Tuesday/Wednesday (circle one)
_____ Individual Lunch	_____ x \$ 45 =	\$ _____ Tuesday/Wednesday (circle one)
_____ Dinner & Auction (Tues)	_____ x \$ 85 =	\$ _____
_____ Award Banquet (Wed)	_____ x \$ 85 =	\$ _____

Please indicate which meals you will be attending (Important for head count purposes):

_____ Breakfast -- Ray Starling (Tuesday)	_____ Breakfast -- Arlan Suderman speaking (Wednesday)
_____ Luncheon -- Jolene Brown speaking (Tuesday)	_____ Luncheon -- Eric Snoddgrass speaking (Wednesday)
_____ Dinner & Auction (Tuesday)	_____ Washington Banquet (Wednesday)

Please indicate all that apply for a flag on your name badge:

_____ Speaker	_____ Committee Chairperson
_____ Exhibitor	_____ Past Washington Barley Commissioner
_____ Sponsor	_____ Wheat Foundation Board Member
_____ Past President	_____ First Time Attendee
_____ State Officer	_____ Washington Grain Commissioner
_____ County President	_____ Past Washington Grain Commissioner
_____ Board Member	_____ 15x40 Attendee
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POLICY MATTERS

House ag committee hearing focuses on risk management

On July 16, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit held a hearing on the importance of credit and risk management. This hearing focused on the severe downturn in the agricultural economy, with witnesses drawing direct parallels to the 1980s farm crisis. The central message was that high input costs and depressed commodity prices — resulting in paper losses of “\$180 per acre” for crops like cotton, as noted by Subcommittee Chairman Austin Scott (R-Ga.) — have rendered the 2018 Farm Bill’s safety net inadequate. Witnesses and members agreed that ad hoc disaster aid is an unsustainable model and that a predictable, modernized farm bill is urgently needed.

The most emphasized issue during the hearing was the critical need to reform Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan programs. Witnesses and members identified the programs as essential but also “slow and burdensome.” Unanimous calls were made to increase FSA loan limits, which Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) stated farmers hit “very quickly,” and to streamline the application process. A key question driving the discussion was what specific, actionable changes — beyond just funding increases — could make federal credit and risk management tools more effective and accessible, particularly for beginning farmers who face daunting entry costs. ■

USDA reduces red tape around NRCS and NEPA

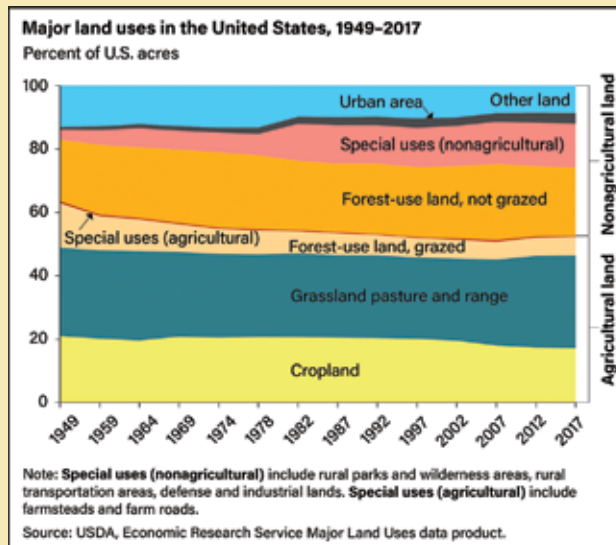
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is reducing red tape around the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-related reviews, which will improve conservation delivery to America’s farmers and ranchers.

The July announcement builds on the administration’s efforts to revise NEPA, in response to President Trump’s executive order on unleashing American energy that led to the Council on Environmental Quality’s rescinding its NEPA implementing regulations, which created a pathway for USDA and its agencies — like NRCS — to reform their NEPA regulations.

“NRCS is putting farmers first, and these commonsense changes will ensure the NEPA process does not cause

unnecessary delays or stand in the way of delivering the critical support America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners rely on,” NRCS Chief Aubrey Bettencourt said.


NEPA requires all federal agencies to consider the environmental impact of their proposed actions before deciding whether and how to proceed. NEPA’s aims are to ensure that agencies consider the potential environmental



How U.S. ag land is used

In 2017, land used for agricultural purposes totaled 1.19 billion acres or 52.5% of total U.S. land area. Agricultural land falls into three categories:

- **Grazing land.** This category accounted for 805 million acres in 2017, or 35.6% of total U.S. land. It includes grassland pasture and range; cropland used for pasture; and grazed forest-use land.
- **Cropland used for crops and idle cropland.** This category accounted for 377 million acres in 2017, or 16.7% of total U.S. land. When cropland pasture is included, total cropland accounted for 390 million acres, or 17.3% of total U.S. land.
- **Agricultural special uses.** This category accounted for 6 million acres in 2017, or .3% of total U.S. land. It includes land in farmsteads and farm roads. ■



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effects of their proposed actions in their decision-making processes and encourage public engagement in that process.

To comply with NEPA, agencies determine the appropriate level of review for a proposed action. Where required, these levels of review may be documented in an environmental impact statement, an environmental assessment, or categorical exclusion. A federal agency may establish categorical exclusions — categories of actions that the agency has determined normally do not significantly affect the quality of the human environment — in its agency NEPA procedures. ■

Wheat industry secures release of research funds

From the National Association of Wheat Growers

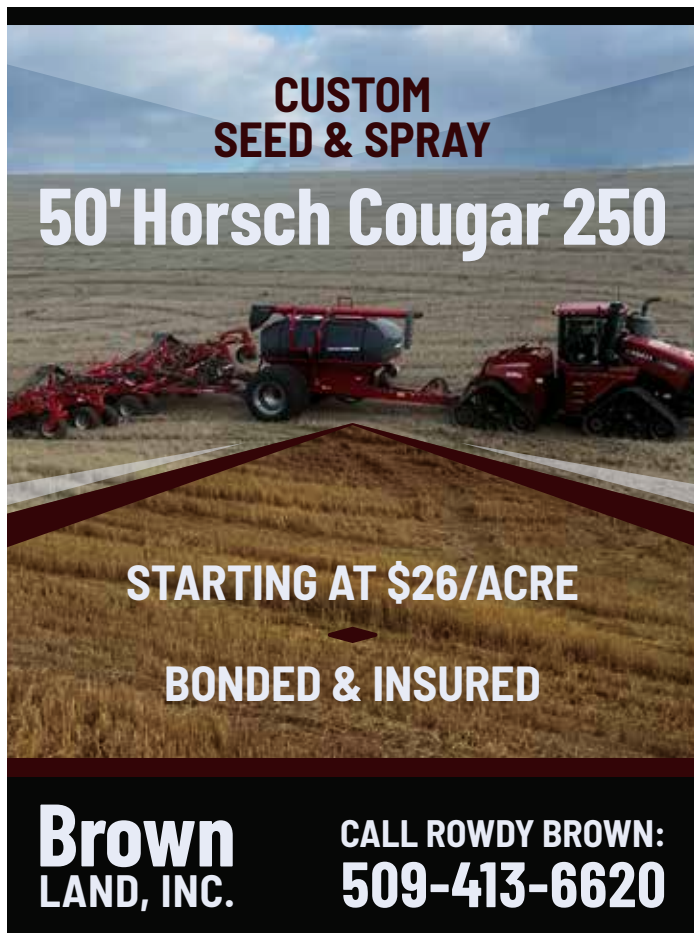
In July, stakeholders across the wheat value chain successfully united to encourage the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release funding for the U.S. Wheat

and Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI). These funds will now be distributed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through existing university cooperative agreements.

“We are deeply grateful to the Congressional Appropriations Committees, the director of OMB, and the secretary of agriculture for recognizing the vital importance of sustaining this essential research. Continued support for USWBSI is critical to protecting wheat and barley crops, strengthening food security, and advancing agricultural innovation,” said Pat Clements, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers. ■

Are you receiving your ALERT?

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



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From field to table: How the grain chain works

Across wheat country, combines are rolling, trucks are moving, and local grain cooperatives are storing up the 2025 crop in their elevators. Grain farmers have several options for marketing their crop, but most commonly, they sell it on the open market. They're paid by the bushel, with deductions — known as dockage — for lower-quality grain. Grain cooperatives provide daily pricing, allowing farmers to decide when to sell throughout the year. Once sold to the co-op, the grain is then marketed to overseas buyers, local mills, or other end users.

In Washington, nearly all of our wheat is exported to countries that can't produce enough grain to meet the needs of their people. Because we are on the Pacific Coast, Washington is well positioned to serve Asian nations across the Pacific Ocean. The transportation of wheat from the harvest fields to customers in Asia is a complex, well-coordinated process that involves several modes of transportation and significant infrastructure investments.

Trucks play an indispensable role in the wheat supply chain. After the wheat is harvested, it is often transported by truck from the fields to rail or barge terminals. Trucks



serve as the link between the farms and the major transportation routes, ensuring that wheat reaches the right location for further shipping.

The majority of Washington's wheat is barged from local co-ops in Eastern Washington and Idaho to ports and harbors in the Portland area using Marine Highway 84. This water high-

way uses the Columbia, Willamette, and Snake rivers to transport grain. This method is the most environmentally friendly, safe, and cost-effective way to transport grain.

Approximately 40% of Washington's wheat is transported by rail. Railroads are another key part of the transportation system, as they move wheat from farms to domestic mills or deep-sea export terminals on the Columbia River.

Once the wheat reaches export terminals, it's tested to meet each country's specific standards before being loaded onto ships for a two- to three-week journey across the ocean. Washington farmers have spent decades building trust with global buyers by consistently growing high-quality wheat. The decisions they make in the field directly impact the grain's quality to meet customer expectations. ■

HOW A COMBINE WORKS. A combine is a modern machine used by farmers to harvest grain. They call it a combine because it combines three processes that were once done separately by a team of horses and a crew of workers as shown in this photo from the Whitman County Historical Society. The modern combine cuts the grain (reaping), separates the grain from the plant (threshing), and removes the chaff (winnowing). The combine uses a header and reel to cut the crop, a threshing cylinder to separate the grain, and a fan and sieve to remove the chaff. The separated kernels are moved into the bulk tank at the top of the combine, and the chaff is pushed out the back and spread back onto the ground. When the bulk tank is full, the kernels are emptied into a grain cart or truck using an auger system.



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AUCTION DONATIONS

For years, the Washington Wheat Foundation Auction has been a highlight of our convention. Proceeds from the auction benefit our Washington ag industry. From research equipment to scholarships, the Washington Wheat Foundation supports various activities making a positive influence on farming including:

- Public Information (through WAWG)
- Research Equipment Grants
- Washington Association of Wheat Growers
- Wheat Ambassador Program
- Scholarships (Two \$1,500 scholarships are awarded each fall to WSU)
- Educational Grants that Support Consumer and Youth Education

This year our auction will be held on the second night of convention Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025, at The Coeur d'Alene Resort. We moved it earlier in the schedule so our exhibitor friends will also be able to attend.

If you and/or your company would like to make a charitable contribution to the 2025 Washington Wheat Foundation Auction, please fill out the form below and fax it to the WAWG office at 509-659-4302, or mail it to 109 E. First Ave., Ritzville, WA 99169. If you have questions, feel free to contact Randy Sueess at 509-595-3907 or rlsueess23@gmail.com.

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Running the rivers

Upper Mississippi River stakeholders find common ground, differences in PNW river system

By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

In late June, Columbia-Snake River System stakeholders hosted a tour of the Pacific Northwest's premier waterway for members of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA). The tour began in Astoria, Ore., and concluded in Lewiston, Idaho, and comes a year after a similar trip down the Mississippi River by many of those same Pacific Northwest (PNW) stakeholders.

The week-long itinerary included stops at the ports of Longview, Kalama, Vancouver, and Lewiston; tugboat rides from Shaver Transportation and Foss Maritime Company; a dock tour at Tidewater Barge Lines; a presentation from the Columbia River Bar Pilots and the Columbia River Pilots; a tour of the Coast Guard station at Cape Disappointment; tours of Bonneville and Lower Granite dams; lunch on an American Cruise Lines vessel;

and visits to Tri-Cities Grain and TEMCO.

The trip gave participants an opportunity to contrast and compare the Mississippi to the Columbia and Snake rivers. While the river systems share many of the same issues, they are vastly different in size. The navigable portion of the Columbia-Snake River is approximately 465 miles; the navigable portion of the Mississippi stretches about 1,800 miles and drains the largest basin in the United States. UMWA represents waterway interests on the upper part of the Mississippi, from St. Paul, Minn., to St. Louis, a distance of about 858 miles.

The tours and exchange of information was initiated by a 2023 conversation between **MICHELLE HENNINGS**, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), and **GARY WILLIAMS**, UMWA executive director, about the need for coordinated messaging and support between U.S. river systems. Hennings said



Upon arrival from points east of Washington, members of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association joined Pacific Northwest stakeholders on a private Willamette River dinner cruise past the Portland waterfront.

building partnerships with stakeholders of other river systems is an opportunity to leverage the support of a diverse group when advocating for U.S. waterways.

“These relationships allow us to bring a coordinated message to Congress and to federal agencies about the importance of the nation’s navigable waterways and makes a much larger impact than when each waterway tries to do it alone,” she said. “This trip was an opportunity to highlight how important the Columbia and Snake rivers are to the Pacific Northwest, discuss the issues stakeholders from both river systems are facing, and learn from each other.”

For Williams, seeing the exchanges happening between the UMWA group and the PNW group was one of his highlights, as was visiting the Coast Guard station at Cape Disappointment and learning about the surfman’s school.

“I think both sets of stakeholders can see the value in strengthening the relationship and partnership between these two rivers, reaching a wider audience, and being able to amplify one another’s voice on what the issues and the needs are,” he said. “This trip exceeded expectations. In talking to the (UMWA) members in the car between different stops, I think we’ve found a lot of content and a lot of direction that we can take from what we’re seeing out here and apply it to the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association.”

Thoughts from the UMWA participants

GREG GENZ, UMWA past president and board member, has spent his entire life working on the Mississippi River. He said he was impressed with the collaboration between the ports, communities, businesses, and the public along the Columbia-Snake River System.



Visitors to the Columbia-Snake River System were, from left, Jeff Steiber, government relations officer/small business liaison officer at J.F. Brennan Company; Gary Williams, Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) executive director; Greg Genz, UMWA past president and board member; Brandon Phillips, compliance and personnel manager at Riverview Tug Service in Iowa; and Cassandra Caldwell, government affairs manager for the Mississippi River and tributaries for American Cruise Lines.

“I think one of the most important things we’ve done is meeting with the ports and seeing how they interact with this whole system,” he said. “I’ve noticed that there’s a lot closer relationship between the commercial river and the public.”

JEFF STEIBER, government relations officer/small business liaison officer at J.F. Brennan Company, said one of the ideas he’ll take back to the Midwest is how the U.S. Corps of Engineers (Corps), which is the government entity that oversees infrastructure on the nation’s waterways, schedules and performs maintenance on the Columbia-Snake River System. Both he and Genz said they felt the Corps divisions that oversee the PNW river system are able to be more proactive. On the Columbia and Snake rivers, the Corps shuts down the system for two weeks every year to do annual maintenance, which includes inspection of the system’s locks.

“Back home, there’s 29 locks on the Mississippi. They don’t do that kind of regular maintenance,” Steiber explained, adding that on the Mississippi, the infrastructure tends to be older and there’s more debris and silt that moves down the river. The upper Mississippi also routinely freezes over in the winter; the freeze/thaw cycle tends to create more wear and tear on infrastructure.

“We also have more commercial traffic with heavier tows. You land a 15-barge tow in a lock, and it’s a lot more weight than your four-barge tows,” Genz added. “Out here, you truly are a system, even though it’s two different Corps districts that oversee these two rivers. Back home, the Corps seems to move more towards where the tonnage is, on the Ohio River or the lower Mississippi. That’s where much of the funding goes.”

CASSANDRA CALDWELL represented American Cruise Lines, which runs vessels on both river systems. She is the government affairs manager for

the Mississippi River and tributaries for the cruise line. Caldwell said getting to experience the Columbia and Snake rivers from both on the water and landside was valuable in helping her understand the big picture.

“The overall tour was very well organized and full of valuable content and activities,” she said. “I thought it was an exceptional experience to have an opportunity to see and hear about the similarities and the differences of our liquid highways along with the various strengths and challenges.”

BRANDON PHILLIPS, compliance and personnel manager at Riverview Tug Service based in Bellevue, Iowa, said his biggest takeaway from the trip is the how effectively PNW stakeholders communicate.

“You guys are really great at getting buy-in and investment into the issues that are important, for example, the dams,” he said. “Your ability to work with governmental agencies is impressive. That is something that we struggle with in the upper Mississippi River region, and I hope to take a lot of these lessons back home and make that work for us.”

The tour included a boat ride through the lock at Lower Granite Dam, followed by a tour of the hydroelectric facilities and the fish research facilities. The UMW group said they were impressed by the size of the locks and dams, the fish passage systems, and how clean and modern the river system is.

“I really enjoyed going to the locks and dams. They are very different from the upper Mississippi River because we don’t have very many hydroelectric plants,” Phillips said. “You guys are utilizing every means that you have to reduce your impact to the environment, increase efficiency and sustainability and reliability,



An ocean-going vessel carrying cars passes through the mouth of the Columbia River, headed inland to one of the deep-water ports along the river.

and that’s awesome.”

One other attribute of the Columbia-Snake River System that stood out was how many modes of transportation it touched: barge, rail, truck, and pipeline.

“We don’t necessarily have that same thing in our area; the railroads really don’t work with the river,” Genz explained. “One of the problems we see in the St. Paul District is you have some major cities, and it’s so congested. The public doesn’t seem to get the message that they need to utilize the river more for the congestion we’re seeing in these big cities.”

Reflections from the PNW contingent

Besides Hennings, the PNW group included stakeholders from the entire length of the Columbia-Snake River System, including trade associations, fertilizer suppliers, barge companies, and ports.

“Seeing the entire length of Marine Highway 84, from Astoria to Lewiston, really brought home to those of us who live here how important and interconnected it is to our lives and livelihoods,” said **HENNINGS**. “From barging grain downriver, fertilizer upriver, and fuel to points throughout the region, to the deep-water ports on the lower Columbia River that connect the Pacific Northwest to the entire world, to the dams that provide power to the region and allow cruise lines to visit Lewiston, Marine Highway 84 is the backbone of this region’s economy.”

“The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) was excited to be involved in hosting our friends from the Mississippi River. From the Columbia River Bar, 465 miles to the Port of Lewiston, Idaho, we showcased this incredible system that allows over \$31.4 billion in commodities to move annually,” said **NEIL MAUNU**, PNWA executive director. “Sharing information, best practices, opportunities, and challenges was one of the biggest takeaways. We

learned a lot from each other and are better equipped to advocate for shared interests going forward. Even though our systems differ, we came to recognize the huge benefit of sharing knowledge and networking. We now have even more advocates and partners to fight alongside us."

"This tour really helped me understand the unique nature of how our river system operates. What we lack in size and capacity to that of the upper Mississippi River, we more than make up for in how cooperatively our stakeholders work to obtain system-wide success," said **LESLIE DRUFFEL**, outreach director for The McGregor Company. "This was definitely a case of not knowing how good we have it until seeing it from an outsider's perspective. I'm thankful for this opportunity to be on the tour and am very proud to help promote our M-84 inland waterway!"

"Our time with the Mississippi stakeholders was impactful for all of us. We had great discussions about what makes our respective river systems unique. It is crystal clear that we need to support each other as advocates for these two incredible engines of river-borne commerce," said **SCOTT CORBITT**, general manager of the Port of Lewiston.

"The UMWA trip afforded one an excellent overview of Columbia-Snake river operations from the standpoint of multiple stakeholders. This overview came from tug operators, grain elevators, Corps of Engineers dam and lock operations, and on to American Cruise Lines operations," said **MARK FREEMAN**, American Cruise Lines' government affairs manager for the Pacific Northwest. "Of particular note was the sharing of viewpoints, ideas, and comparisons between the Columbia-Snake River System and upper Mississippi River stakeholders along the tour. This

was an education for all parties that afforded a better understanding of other regions as well as those in their own backyard."

"As a newcomer to the staff of PNWA, I enjoyed every minute of this tour with the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association," said **MEGAN MCKIBBEN**, PNWA government relations manager. "Traveling alongside our partners from the upper Mississippi River, I gained a deeper appreciation for the unique strengths of our inland waterway network and the critical role the lower Snake River dams play in supporting regional transportation, agriculture, and energy."

"We had an incredible week of deep dive experiences with ports, dams, tugs, river terminals, growers, exporters, and both bar and river pilots. It really showcased how we all operate as an integrated system to the benefit of all," said **ROB RICH**, former vice president at Shaver Transportation. ■

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- ✓ USCG briefing at Cape Disappointment



Shaver Transportation tugboat ride.



Columbia River Bar Pilots/Columbia River Pilots briefing.



U.S. Coast Guard station at Cape Disappointment.



Group photo at the Port of Longview.



Shaver Transportation ride on the tugboat, Capt. Steve.



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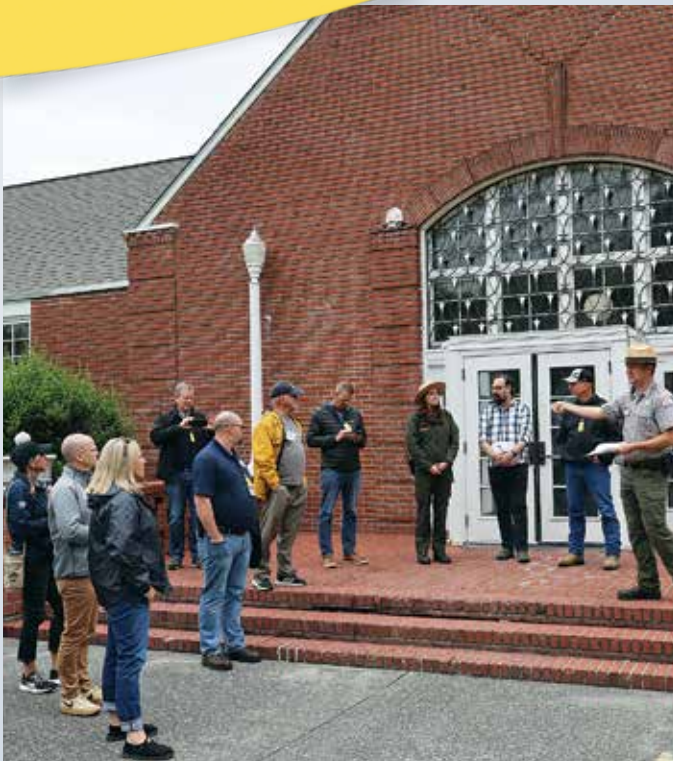


(Above) Lamprey, salmon, and shad in the viewing window at Bonneville Dam.
(Left) An American Cruise Lines ship docked in Hood River.

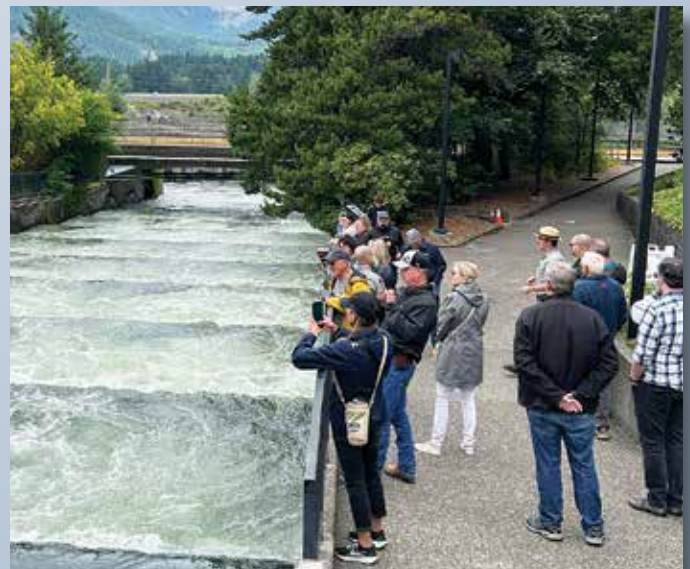
Day 3
✓ Bonneville Dam tour








Bonneville Dam.



Bonneville Dam briefing.



Fish ladders at Bonneville Dam.

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Group photo on American Cruise Lines' vessel, American Harmony.

Day 4

- ✓ Tri-Cities Grain visit
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- ✓ Lunch on American Cruise Lines vessel



Tri-Cities Grain visit.



Fuel station at Tidewater Terminal Services.



Tour of Tidewater Terminal Services.



Lunch onboard American Cruise Lines' vessel, American Harmony (right) docked in Richland.





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Day 5

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- ✓ Tour of Lower Granite Dam
- ✓ Port of Lewiston tour
- ✓ Farewell dinner with Washington wheat growers



The spillway at Lower Granite Dam.



Boat ride through the locks at Lower Granite Dam.



Tour at the Port of Lewiston.



Group photo at Lower Granite Dam.




Fish research facility at Lower Granite Dam.

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Keeping the river highway open

HOW PNWA PROTECTS WASHINGTON GROWERS AND THE COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SUPPLY CHAIN

By Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Washington's thriving wheat industry relies heavily on a critical, often unseen, transportation artery: the Columbia-Snake River System. This "river highway" is the backbone of the state's agricultural export system, efficiently moving millions of bushels of wheat from inland grain elevators to ocean ports at Vancouver, Portland, and beyond. The efficiency of barging is unparalleled; a single, four-barge tow on the river can transport the equivalent of 538 trucks, significantly reducing fuel consumption and emissions. This method is so vital that approximately 60% of Washington's wheat crop is shipped via this waterway. In 2023 alone, the Columbia-Snake River System transported an estimated 10.2 million tons of wheat, accounting for over 56% of all U.S. wheat exports, solidifying its status as America's largest wheat export corridor. This river superhighway is instrumental in maintaining low transportation costs, alleviating highway congestion, and ensuring the timely delivery of Northwest grain to global markets.

Infrastructure Washington relies on

The seamless operation of this grain superhighway is contingent upon a sophisticated and meticulously maintained system of river infrastructure. From Lewiston/Clarkston to Portland, eight dams equipped with naviga-

tion locks facilitate the movement of vessels, collectively lifting them a remarkable 730 feet in elevation. The channel from the mouth of the Columbia to Portland is dredged to a depth of 43 feet to accommodate large, ocean-going ships, while upriver from Bonneville Dam, it is maintained at a minimum depth of 14 feet to support barge traffic. A network of turning basins, jetties, and locks further ensures safe and efficient navigation.

Maintaining this complex system demands continuous effort. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers annually undertakes crucial tasks such as dredging sandbars, maintaining levees and dikes, and repairing or replacing lock gates. These efforts are vital to ensuring the river remains a dependable conduit for grain, goods, and general commerce.

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), an organization comprising farmers, ports, tow companies, and agricultural cooperatives, plays a pivotal role in securing federal support for these essential projects. Their advocacy efforts are credited with securing significant funding; for instance, Congress allocated approximately \$120 million in 2023 for Columbia River maintenance, dredging, and dike repairs. PNWA emphasizes that even minor shoaling or a lock gate outage could necessitate draft restrictions, potentially stranding grain barges and



Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River.



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resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in lost revenue for farmers. Therefore, sustained investment in locks, dredging, and port terminals is paramount to keeping the farm-to-ship supply chain flowing. A testament to this is the rapid influx of private and public investments — hundreds of millions of dollars — into new and upgraded grain terminals at Longview, Kalama, Vancouver, and Portland following the 2010 Columbia River deepening project, underscoring the confidence placed in the river's future.

Sustaining salmon, supporting communities

The future of the Columbia-Snake River System is a subject of ongoing public discourse, with environmental and tribal groups advocating for robust salmon protections, including proposals for dam removal or breaching. In contrast, PNWA and many farmers champion a balanced, science-driven approach. They advocate for maintaining the existing dams and barge infrastructure while continuing to invest in effective fish recovery efforts. They emphasize that the river system is crucial for the region's agriculture, navigation, and hydropower, and that any decisions regarding its future must carefully balance both ecological objectives and the economic well-being of rural communities.

Federal agencies and regional partners have already achieved substantial progress in enhancing conditions for salmon. Modern fish ladders, juvenile bypass systems, and extensive habitat restoration initiatives have contributed to historically high survival rates for young salmon migrating downstream. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports indicate that over 90–95% of juvenile Chinook and steelhead now successfully survive passage at each dam. Furthermore, investments in flow management, riparian restoration, and the reconnection of tributary habitat have significantly improved water quality and overall ecosystem health throughout the basin. These advancements demonstrate that salmon recovery and a functional river highway for commerce are not mutually exclusive but can, indeed, coexist.

PNWA remains a steadfast advocate for the navigation and agricultural communities in both policy discussions and legal proceedings. Their involvement ensures that the profound economic significance of the Columbia-Snake River System is thoroughly considered in all decisions about salmon recovery. In ongoing court cases and regional policy debates, PNWA brings the collective voice of farmers, ports, and waterway users to the forefront, underscoring that any proposal — including dam breach-

ing — must fully account for the far-reaching impacts on rural economies, transportation infrastructure, and the livelihoods that depend on this vital river system.

Economic benefits for communities

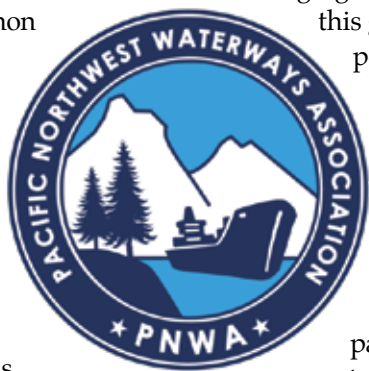
Beyond its role in navigation, the four lower Snake River dams are a fundamental component of the region's agricultural viability. Collectively, these dams generate nearly 1,000 megawatts of carbon-free power, sufficient to power a city the size of Seattle, and they are crucial for irrigating approximately 400,000 acres in the Columbia Basin. This reliable source of water and power is a cornerstone for regional prosperity. Furthermore, these dams facilitate the barging of about 10% of all U.S. wheat exports. Should this grain be forced to shift to trucks or rail, transportation costs could escalate by an additional \$.40 to \$.60 per bushel. Such an increase could severely impact profit margins, particularly in years when agricultural returns are already narrow.

Washington's wheat industry contributes nearly \$1 billion annually in production value and supports close to 19,000 jobs, encompassing every stage from the field to the port. In central Washington, irrigation within the Columbia Basin alone generates over \$3 billion in annual crop value and sustains more than 13,000 farm-related jobs. The Columbia-Snake River System is the engine that makes this economic activity more reliable and affordable, preserving global competitiveness and ensuring the stability of small towns across Eastern Washington. Disrupting this waterway would not only cripple the freight system, but also undermine the entire economic framework that supports the region's farms and way of life.

Ensuring the river stays open

For over 90 years, PNWA has been a consistent champion for this "river highway" and its diverse users. PNWA effectively unites farmers, barge operators, ports, and even utilities (which depend on hydropower) to foster common ground and advocate for sound policies. Their dedicated work in Congress and with federal agencies helps secure crucial funding for dredging, lock maintenance, and other vital upgrades. In the face of evolving weather patterns and dynamic global markets, the association also actively promotes long-term resilience, from modernizing existing dams to updating the Columbia River Treaty with Canada. Thanks to these sustained efforts, Washington agriculture's essential waterway remains open, efficient, and competitive.

Washington's wheat farmers can confidently rely on a consistent and efficient route to global markets for their



harvests. The Columbia-Snake River System stands as an indispensable corridor, significantly reducing transportation costs, bolstering rural employment, and seamlessly connecting the state's agricultural heartland to international buyers. As long as the barges continue their vital movement and advocates like PNWA persistently champion the system's immense value, keeping this river highway open will remain fundamental to preserving Washington's prominent role as a leading supplier in the global grain trade. ■

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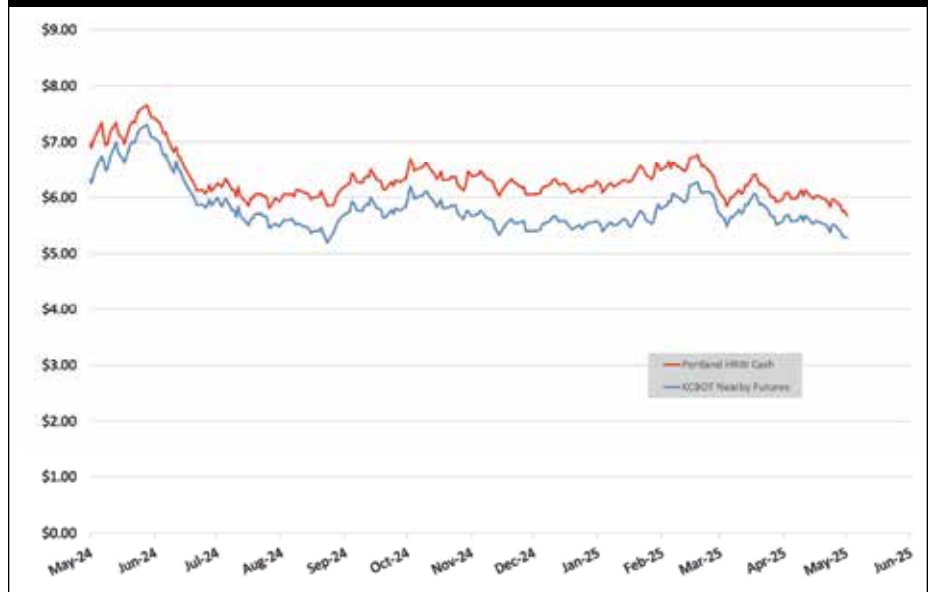
UNDERSTANDING SOFT WHITE WHEAT VERSUS CBOT BASIS

By Howard Nelson
Special to Wheat Life

I was asked if I would write an article explaining the basis relationship between soft white wheat (SWH) and CBOT wheat futures, so here we go! I felt that this relationship could be best explained if I compared/contrasted the hard red winter wheat (HRW) KCBOT basis relationship with the SWH CBOT relationship.

The market class of HRW has a true basis market. This means that the grain buyer indicates his market price by stating the amount (basis) that they are willing to pay over a stated futures contract month. It would go like this, "40 over the May KCBOT contract." To get the cash price, you need to add \$.40 per bushel to the currently trading May KCBOT contract price of \$5.61 per bushel to get the current HRW wheat cash price delivered to Portland of \$6.01 per bushel. This market price fluctuates during the day along with the movement of the futures contract, and buyers will typically only buy while the futures market is open and trading. The basis amount frequently doesn't change for days or even weeks. Let's put this into a formula that

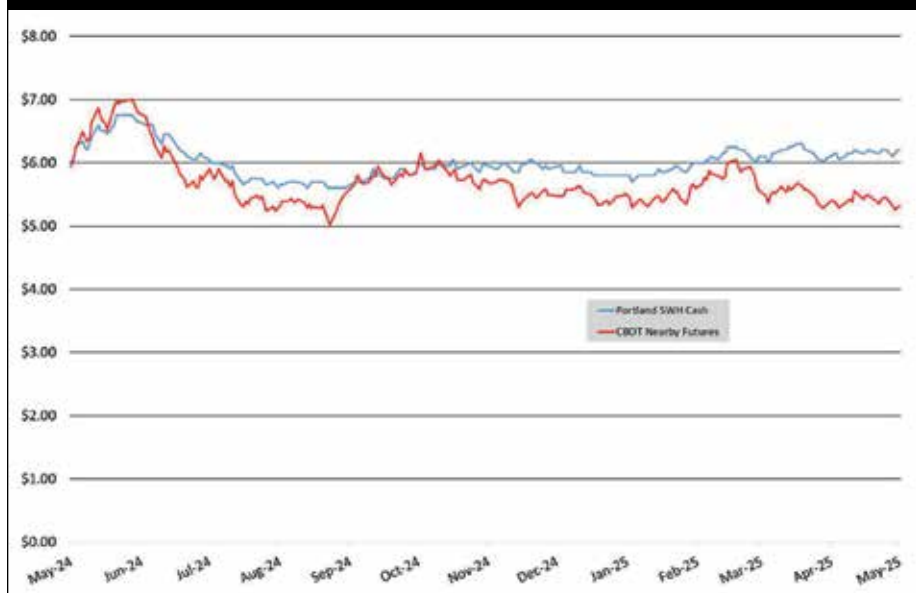
Chart 1: Portland hard red winter wheat 2024-25



may be easier to see: $\text{Basis} + \text{KCBOT Futures Price} = \text{HRW Portland Market Price}$

Chart 1 shows the Portland HRW wheat price for the 2024/25 marketing year and the nearby KCBOT futures price. The difference between the two lines is the HRW wheat basis. This marketing year to date, we've had a high HRW basis of plus \$.81, a low basis of plus \$.04, a basis range of \$.77 per bushel, and an average basis of \$.48 per bushel.

Chart 2: Portland soft white wheat 2024-25



The market class of SWH has a flat price market and doesn't have a futures exchange of its own. The closest exchange to SWH is the CBOT exchange that is based on the soft red winter wheat market class. It is the same commodity (wheat) but a different market class. This causes things to get complicated. The grain buyer will indicate his market price like this: soft white wheat for May delivery to Portland is \$6.15 per bushel. The SWH cash price is indicated each half day and doesn't usually change during the half day but can. The SWH basis will change while the CBOT futures is trading, and when that basis is referenced, it is usually the basis amount that was present at the close of futures

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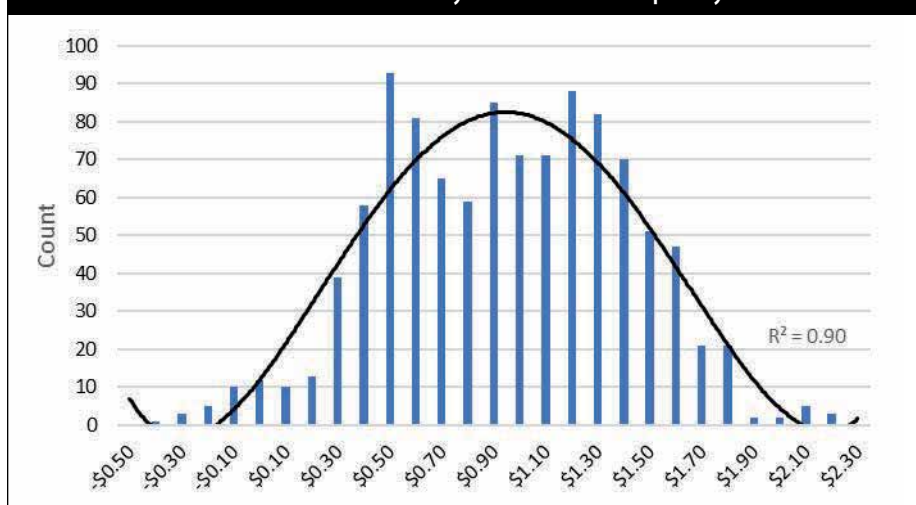
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Chart 3: Hard red winter wheat weekly KCBOT basis frequency since 2006


trading. The formula for the soft white basis is this: SWH Portland Market Price - CBOT Futures Price = SWH Basis

Chart 2 shows the Portland SWH wheat price for the 2024-25 marketing year and the nearby CBOT futures price. The difference between the two lines is the SWH wheat basis. You can see that the basis started the marketing year with an under basis (less than 0), moved to an over basis (greater than 0), went to an even basis (equal to 0) and then went back to an over basis. This marketing year to date, we've had a high SWH basis of plus \$.90, a low basis of minus \$.29, a basis range of \$1.18 per bushel and an average basis of \$.32 per bushel.

Chart 2 illustrates the variable relationship between Portland SWH and the CBOT futures market. If a futures market is to be a reliable marketing tool, there needs to be a good correlation between the futures market and the cash market. In addition, price risk should be reduced when using that futures market. Let's see how the HRW wheat and SWH markets meet these criteria.

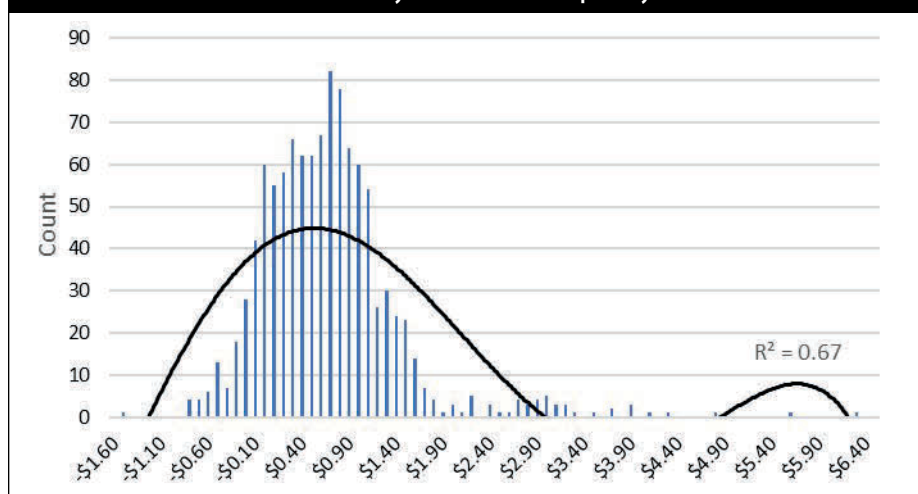
As you would expect, Portland HRW wheat prices have a very strong relationship with KCBOT futures prices. Over the past 19 years, every year has had a very strong correlation, with an average correlation of 95%. Since 2006, the weekly average basis averaged plus \$.89 per bushel and had a median price of plus \$.90 per bushel. There was an over basis (greater than \$.03) 96.6% of the time, an even basis (plus or minus \$.03) .8% of the time, and an under basis (less than \$.03) 2.6% of the time. There were 19 outliers at 1.9% of the total. A frequency chart of

the HRW basis is shown in Chart 3.

SWH wheat prices have not had such a strong relationship with CBOT wheat futures but still has a good correlation, averaging 68%. There was only one year since 2006, 2007-08, that had a weak correlation, and 14 of those years, 74%, had a strong to very strong correlation. Since 2006, the weekly average basis averaged plus \$.63 per bushel and a median price of plus \$.57 per bushel. A frequency chart of the SWH basis is shown in Chart 4, and it is right skewed. There was an over basis (greater than \$.03) 79.7% of the time, an even basis (plus or minus \$.03) 4.5% of the time, and an under basis (less than \$.03) 15.9% of the

time. There were a higher number of outliers totaling 67, 6.8% of the total.

One reason to use wheat futures markets is to manage price risk. The definition of price risk can be made several ways, and one definition is how much the price ranges between the high and the low during the marketing year. The use of futures markets fixes the futures portion of the price but leaves the basis open. This basis remains open until the futures portion of the price is lifted, and the wheat is priced in the cash market. Lowering risk means that you want to lower these price ranges as much as you can. Let's compare the marketing year price range of the cash market to the range of the basis. Let's put this into a ratio for comparison by dividing the basis range by the range of the cash market. A ratio number less than one means that the basis risk was lower than the cash market risk, and a ratio number greater than one means that the

Chart 4: Soft white wheat weekly CBOT basis frequency since 2006




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basis risk was higher than the cash market risk. The HRW risk ratio shows that the use of futures markets lowered risk, and the ratio was below one for all years. The ratio was never higher than .60 and had an average of .33 (Chart 5).

Chart 6 for SWH shows that risk is not always reduced by the use of CBOT futures. The average of the risk ratio was .76 but there were four years that the ratio was greater than one, showing that basis risk was greater than the cash market risk in those years.

What does all of this mean for the average farmer? If the marketing tools that you use are limited to the cash market, you don't need to worry about basis and basis risk. If you use hedge-to-arrive contracts, minimum price contracts, or the futures markets in any way, then basis and basis risk are important. The hard red winter wheat grower has a better situation than the soft white wheat farmer with a good correlation between cash and futures prices and the ability to use futures to control risk if desired. The soft white wheat grower can use CBOT futures tools for marketing, but needs to understand the limitations and potential pitfalls of using the CBOT futures market. ■

Howard Nelson is a retired agronomist and commodity broker. He worked for 31 years in the PNW grain indus-

Chart 5: Risk ratio of hard red winter basis and cash since 2006

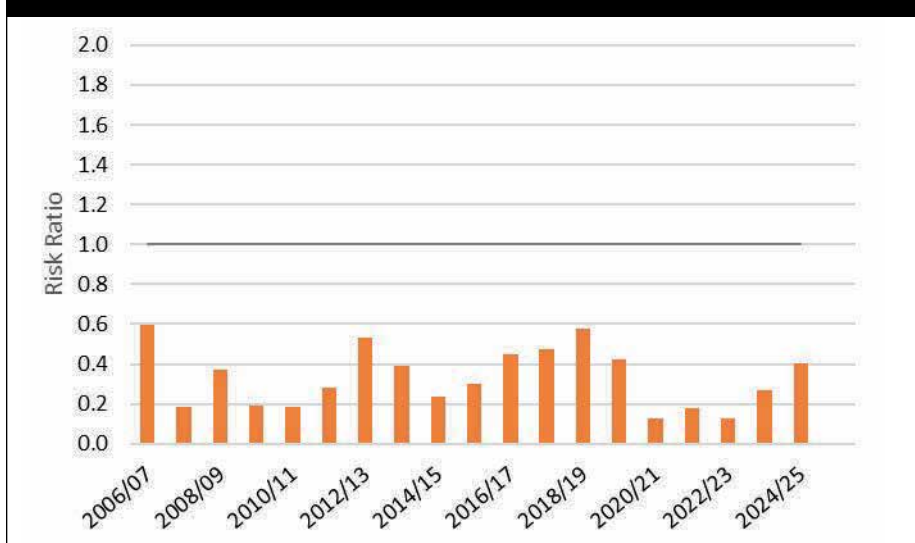
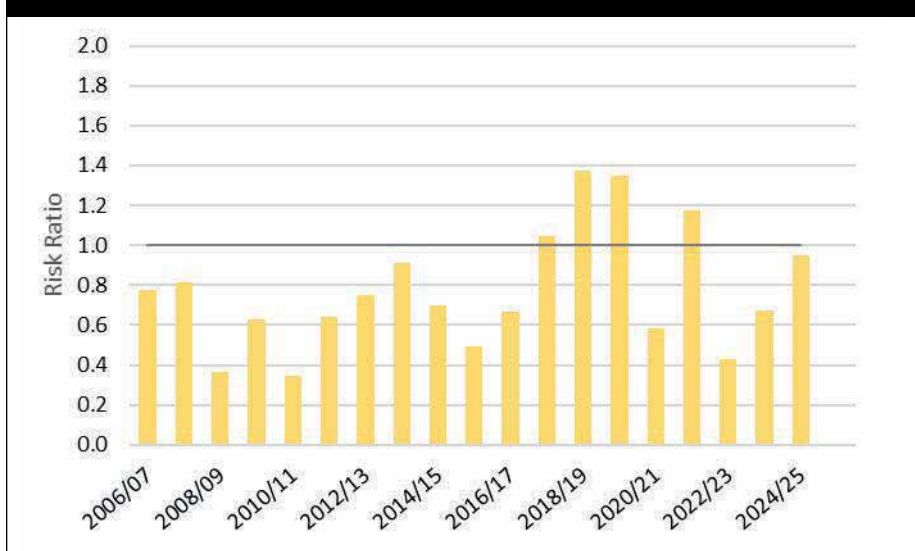


Chart 6: Risk ratio of soft white wheat basis and cash since 2006



try and retired in 2020 from HighLine Grain Growers. He has a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Washington State University and currently lives in Kennewick, Wash., with his wife, Cheryl. Nelson can be contacted at howardnelson73@gmail.com.

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Closing the deal

Crop insurance date for canola moved to align more with winter wheat, other fall-planted crops

By Trista Crossley
Editor, Wheat Life

An offhand comment about a crop insurance sales closing date during the January board meeting of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) sent Ben Thiel on a quest to see if he could streamline a crop insurance deadline to help growers for the 2026 crop year. Thanks to a lucky turn of events, he did.

In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced the sales closing date for canola and rapeseed will move from Aug. 31 to Sept. 30 in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington to better align with the sales closing date for fall-planted crops, including wheat. The change affects the 2026 and succeeding crop years.

"This change will align the canola sales period with other fall-planted crops in the area, giving canola producers more time to make insurance decisions. This also reduces the administrative burden on agents," said Thiel, director of the RMA regional office in Spokane. "It was rather fortuitous in that we were able to achieve the change. That comment happened in January, and changes had to be done in several months and be published no later than June 30. It was a short turn around. It wasn't planned, but everything lined up in a way to make it happen."

Because the sales closing date for fall type canola was initially a month earlier than wheat, it was easier to miss for growers and landlords. In addition, dealing with two separate dates required extra effort for growers, landlords,

and crop insurance agents. While getting these sorts of crop insurance changes aren't necessarily difficult, the process takes time. Thiel wanted to get the change implemented quickly, ideally before the Aug. 31 deadline hit.

Within six weeks after the WAWG board meeting, Thiel took the proposal to meetings of crop insurance companies and the PNW Canola Association; all groups were very supportive of the idea with the canola association actually putting it on their priority list.

"Then it became a process where you run things 'through the traps' to see if they are feasible. Is management on board? Informing the various parties within RMA. It takes effort, lobbying, negotiation with various layers of RMA," Thiel said. "Ultimately, those efforts and emphasizing that this is supported by WAWG, the canola associations, the insurance companies ... all that helped. At every step, it just made sense to do it. All those things pushed it over the finish line."

Besides moving the fall canola sales closing date, which is the last day to cancel, get a new policy, or modify an existing policy, RMA also shifted the fall canola premium billing date and the production reporting date to match wheat's dates.

Thiel said this is a good example of crop insurance changes that start at the grassroots level but overlap between crops and grower interests.

"There was commonality and interest for this happening," he explained. "It didn't start with the canola association, but they embraced it and wanted to champion it." ■





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Flying high on drone technology

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By Trista Crossley
Editor, *Wheat Life*

For Doug Bruce, drones seem like the perfect complement to his existing businesses; besides growing wheat, bluegrass, lentils, barley, oats, and a bit of alfalfa on his family's farm near Farmington, Wash., he also sells ag chemicals through a local branch of the Hefty Seed Company.

Drones flew onto Bruce's radar last year when a Hefty Seed Company representative mentioned them to him. After seeing a demo, he purchased a drone and became a licensed dealer for Terraplex, which is based in Iowa. To help manage the workload, Bruce brought in Tyson Lowley and Russell Erickson as partners in the drone business — they also work with him on his family's farm.

"The drones are part of your toolbox in the shop," Bruce explained. "You have multiple tools, and each one does a specific job. We have a self-propelled, 120-foot sprayer, and it does certain things. We also have the two drones, and they do certain things. We don't really look at the drones as taking the place of any other types of equipment that apply herbicides and insecticides and fungicides. It's just another tool in your toolbox."

While drones may not replace 120-foot sprayers, they do have some advantages over traditional farm equipment. Drones don't leave tire tracks through a crop, and they are able to spray in places that are hard for land-based vehicles to get to. Erickson said they've recently done some spraying for noxious weeds in the canyons along the Snake River.

Bruce's team also said coverage is typically better with a drone. The drones use atomizing nozzles that spin to create the droplet size, meaning droplet sizes can be changed on the go without having to change nozzles.

"The propellers on the drone create the (spray) pattern, and they push the pattern down into the crop," Bruce



(Above) The team at Terraplex Pacific Northwest includes Doug Bruce (right), Russell Erickson (middle), and Tyson Lowley. (Below) One of Terraplex's drones at the 2025 Wheat College in June.



said. "You have a different penetration than you would with a typical sprayer. In order to get the same type of coverage (with a typical sprayer), you would have to have tremendous amounts of pressure, which then increases drift."

Besides spraying chemicals, the drones can also seed, do mapping, take multispectral imaging, and do thermal imaging, which is useful in search and rescue operations. Multispectral imaging can measure a number of different crop attributes, such as plant height, plant count, and weed density, giving growers an opportunity to spot a problem before it is visible to the naked eye.

All drones have to be registered and licensed through the Federal Aviation Administration, in addition to any state agency requirements.

Each member of the Terraplex Pacific Northwest team had to get a Remote Pilot Certificate to fly the drones (also called a Part 107 drone license). They also spent a considerable amount of time spraying water on Bruce's farm to practice and better understand what the drones can or can't do.

Bruce said that in the past, drones had problems negotiating the hilly terrain of Eastern Washington.

"The first few drones that came out into this area didn't have two radar systems," he said. "They just had a single radar system. Consequently, they weren't able to manipulate the hills and negotiate the draws like the newer ones do. These that we're flying now have two different radar systems as well as an avoidance system to keep from colliding with anything like power lines, power poles, trees. The newer drones are much, much better."

While drones are much more mobile than traditional farm equipment, that mobility comes at a cost. A short battery life means the team needs to be as close to the target area as possible, otherwise, the drone uses up too much battery flying back and forth to the loading zone. Regulatory issues mean drones can't go beyond 400 feet of

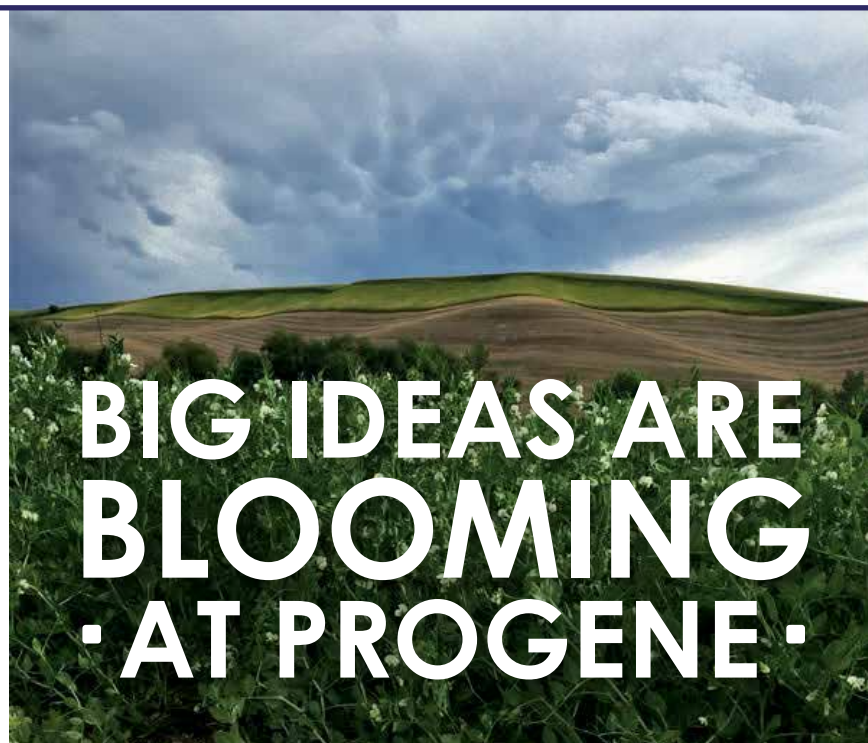
elevation from their takeoff point, limiting their upward range. Drones are also restricted in how much volume they can carry. Lowley pointed out that certain chemical labels call for 10 to 15 gallons of water to be added. The drones that Terraplex Pacific Northwest fly can hold approximately 110 pounds

“Depending on the chemicals, we’ll have to turn away business because we can’t get enough water per gallon with the chemical,” he explained.

Bruce doesn’t see drones ever completely replacing sprayers, but he’s certain there is a place for them, especially when you compare prices. He said a farmer can expect to spend approximately \$50,000 to buy a drone and everything needed to use it — a self-propelled sprayer can set a farmer back \$800,000 or \$900,000.

“There’s definitely a comfort level when you first start, and the drone goes out of sight,” Bruce said. “You are somewhat apprehensive of what’s going to take place, but after doing it a while, you learn very quickly that it’s totally autonomous. It takes off itself, and it can land itself and, obviously, it sprays itself. The piloting skills are not in flying. The piloting skills are in learning the software and how to operate all the different functions on the controller and reading the environment. If you’re out spraying, you have to know if the wind changes or what you’re really looking at when it’s spraying. What we found is, by far, the best drone pilot is a good farmer.”

For more information, contact Terraplex Pacific Northwest at terraplexpnw@gmail.com or visit their website at terraplexpnw.com. ■



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The Denny Farm and Ranch of Spokane County started their 2025 harvest on one of their fields in Whitman County that overlooks the Snake River.
Photo by Marie Denny.



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Wheat harvest of a different sort is coming to the state fair

By Kevin Klein
Chairman, Washington Grain Commission

Just before Independence Day weekend, President Trump signed his Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R.1) into law, which included some wins for Eastern Washington wheat growers. It is good to see additional funding allocated to the trade promotion programs that help develop and support our overseas markets. Investing in our customers helps market reliability, which translates into stability on the farm. We will find out how beneficial this extra funding will be with time, though for now, back to the present moment, which is to say, the bustle of harvest!

The month before harvest is the busiest time of year for me, each year facing the challenge of how to prioritize the most important projects to get done before harvest begins. Top of the list: don't forget your wedding anniversary or kid's birthday! Next comes ensuring all equipment is both operational and safe; rounding up all the parts necessary to fix the combine for a month of cutting and assessing whether or not the tires are safe and strong enough for another season. This year, we decided to put new tires on one of our grain trailers, a big expense, though better than taking a preventable safety risk or trying to find and change tires during harvest, which is always more time consuming and expensive when the truck needs to be on the road hauling grain.

Safety on the roads with our farm equipment is more concerning every year. According to the Washington State Department of Transportation and as reported by the *Capital Press*, in 2024, there were three serious-injury crashes and 57 collisions with farm equipment on our state's roadways. Too often, there are unaware and reckless drivers who don't know what farm equipment lights or oversized load signs mean. If you're like me, you're more appreciative for those who slow down, move over, and even wave as you pass by! To help you stay safe this harvest season, slow down, stay awake, and take time to look things over. Be aware of what's going on around you and look ahead to help anticipate what might be coming to minimize and prevent accidents.

While safety lessons may seem repetitive, being a farmer means always "being in school." Along with meetings, conferences, and constant paperwork, I will sit

on the combine watching my yields and crops and compare them to the Variety Testing Program research plots and data. Though it's a lot to keep up with, it's worth compiling the right information so we know what variety of winter wheat we will be planting into our summer fallow ground just two weeks after we finish harvesting.

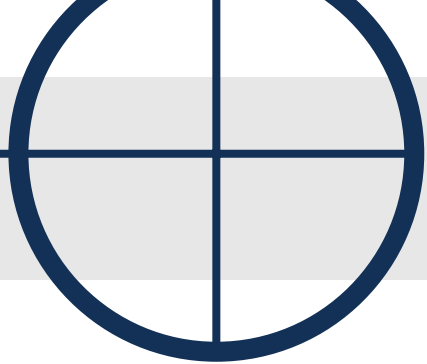
Thank you to all the researchers who spend countless hours in the field and compiling all the data in a timely manner so farmers can make planting decisions that help us improve both our quality and our yield.

In the end, harvest is always an enjoyable time on the farm. Yes, the days are often long and hot, but it is always fun to have extra family and crew around and rewarding to complete harvest and start again for the next year. I try to enjoy the process as much as possible, because we are all getting older. It is always a joy watching the younger generation learn and get excited to be a part of the harvest, generating the stories we will remember and continue to tell for the rest of our lives.

This year at the Washington Grain Commission, we're looking forward to joining the Washington Wheat Foundation and the Washington Association of Wheat Growers to help adults and children of all ages learn and get excited about Washington wheat farming at the 125th anniversary of the Washington State Fair, which will take place in Puyallup from Aug. 29 to Sept. 19. Wheat will have the largest footprint in a robust agricultural exhibit, enabling participants to see wheat in various stages of growth, submit their questions to Washington wheat farmers as part of an educational social media giveaway, and increase their knowledge and appreciation for the wheat industry.

Though Washington wheat farming plays a vital role in the state's heritage, economy, and future, the public — particularly on the west side of the state — isn't always aware of the industry's local and global impact. The state fair and its anniversary celebration are a prime opportunity to showcase the wheat industry's evolution from tradition to technology, bridging the gap between the general public and the grain producers who grow some of the world's best grain right here in Washington.

I hope your harvest season is rewarding and safe. For the latest updates from the Washington Grain Commission, including the new educational initiative we're launching during the Washington State Fair in Puyallup, follow us on Instagram (@wagrain). ■



REPORTS

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Liedl named USW VP of overseas operations

Washington Grain Commission industry rep to replace Mike Spier

By Sarah Márquez

Communications Manager, Washington Grain Commission

Brian Liedl, a wheat industry representative on the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) since 2021, has been selected by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) to serve as their new vice president of overseas operations, effective July 1. Liedl, who has over two decades' experience in wheat trading and logistics, will replace Mike Spier — who has held the role since 2019 — as Spier begins his tenure as the new USW president.

During his service as a wheat industry representative for the WGC, Liedl provided important context for the commission's work, particularly market development efforts.

"Brian brought a uniquely valuable perspective to the boardroom through his deep understanding of our customers' diverse needs and decision-making approaches," said WGC CEO Casey Chumrau. "In a market where over 90% of Washington wheat is exported, having the customer's voice represented is vital. His remarkable ability to ask thought-provoking questions and consider every angle enriched our discussions and strengthened our decisions."

Liedl received a bachelor's degree from St. John's University in Minnesota before starting his career as a licensed broker and wheat market analyst in the open outcry pit for CHS Hedging, a national co-op based in the Twin Cities. In 2011, he joined United Grain Corporation (UGC), a bulk grain export company located in Vancouver, Wash., as a spring wheat merchant, where he worked directly with buyers from around the world, supported building UGC's export and origination programs, and managed UGC's hard red winter, durum, and soft white wheat product lines. Moving from UGC senior merchant to director of merchandising in March 2020, Liedl has also served in multiple industry organizations such as the National Grain and Feed Association,



Washington Grain Commission staff and commissioners had the opportunity to connect with Brian Liedl (center) in his new role as vice president of overseas operations, alongside new U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) President Mike Spier (right) during the USW Summer Board Meeting.

North American Export Association, and the Pacific Grain Exporters Association.

"The WGC sincerely appreciates the time and effort Brian invested in the commission throughout his tenure," said Chumrau. "We wish him success in this new role and are confident he will excel. The wheat industry is fortunate to have Brian as a passionate advocate and ambassador, and we look forward to working with him in his new capacity."

Liedl will remain in the Pacific Northwest, based out of USW's Portland, Ore., office, where he will partner with state commissions, the grain trade, and USW overseas staff, trade, and technical teams. ■

From Eastern Washington to the world stage

MIKE CARSTENSEN ELECTED AS SECRETARY-TREASURER FOR U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES

By Jake Liening

*Market Development Specialist,
Washington Grain Commission*

The Washington Grain Commission (WGC) is proud to celebrate that Commissioner Mike Carstensen has been elected secretary-treasurer of the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) board of directors for the 2025-26 term. This significant milestone recognizes Carstensen's long-standing commitment to Washington wheat growers and the broader U.S. wheat industry.

Carstensen currently represents District 1 on the WGC board, which includes five counties in the northeast corner of the state: Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens. While he currently serves as a commissioner, Carstensen also previously held several WGC officer positions, including treasurer, vice chair, and chairman. Throughout his tenure, he has played a central role in sharpening the commission's focus on trade policy and international market development, an area especially critical to Washington wheat, approximately 90% of which is exported annually.

Carstensen's background in agricultural finance and business management has equipped him to excel and make a significant impact on the wheat industry in leadership roles on and off the farm. Before returning to the farm full time in 1985, Mike worked for the organization now known as AgWest Farm Credit. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management and accounting from Whitworth University and a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in economics from the University of Phoenix.

In addition to his work with the WGC, Carstensen serves on several regional and national boards, including HighLine Grain Growers, Tri-Cities Grain, the Lincoln County Conservation District, and the National Wheat Improvement Committee. His broad engagement across sectors reflects his belief that farmers must not only



A third-generation wheat farmer, Mike Carstensen manages a dryland farm near Almira with his wife, Lorie, and their son, Justin. Their operation receives about 12 inches of annual rainfall and utilizes a sustainable three-year rotation of soft white wheat, club wheat, and feed grains. Their adoption of high-level mulch tillage and direct seeding practices reflects their commitment to stewardship and long-term soil health.

tend to their own operations, but also help shape the systems and structures that support the industry as a whole.

This belief is at the heart of Carstensen's approach to leadership. In his letter to USW board members announcing his candidacy, he wrote, "As farmers, our instinct is to put our heads down, work hard, and mind our own business. However, I believe it is imperative that we also look up from our corner of the world and engage in activities that propel our industry forward."

That philosophy, grounded in humility, service, and generational responsibility, has guided Carstensen's work at the state and national levels. His decision to seek an officer role with USW stems from a desire to protect the legacy of those who came before him and ensure future generations of wheat growers have access to markets, tools, and opportunities to succeed.

"It's not ours, it's our turn," Mike said, underscoring his belief in generational responsibility. He credits USW's overseas staff for their dedication and effectiveness and looks forward to supporting their work at a strategic level as a member of the officer team.

Carstensen's election is a milestone not only for him and his family, but also for the entire Washington wheat industry. It highlights the leadership, vision, and values that Washington growers contribute to the national conversation. The WGC looks forward to supporting Mike as he helps guide USW into the future and thanks him for the years he has contributed to guiding the strategy, stewardship, and success of WGC's mission. ■

A win for wheat

US WHEAT INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS RESOLVE INDONESIAN TRADE BARRIER

Jake Liening

Market Development Specialist, Washington Grain Commission

In June 2025, a trade barrier with the potential to close the wheat market in Indonesia was successfully diffused, thanks to a united effort from U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), and the Washington Grain Commission (WGC). A testament to the power of industry-wide collaboration, what began as a technical policy shift in Southeast Asia became a concerted, years-long effort in advocacy and diplomacy, ultimately resulting in a positive return on investment in farmer-funded market development.

A key market, a sudden shift

Indonesia is consistently in the top five importers of soft white (SW) wheat. For decades, U.S. wheat has been prized by Indonesian millers for its consistent performance in cakes, cookies, and instant noodles.

But in October 2023, the Indonesian Quarantine Agency (IQA) implemented a sweeping regulation requiring all wheat imports to be fumigated with significantly higher doses of phosphine — a fumigant used to control pests in stored grain — than is recommended by U.S. authorities.

While the higher dosage was technically allowed under U.S. labels, it exceeded guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), and the fumigant's manufacturers. Worse, scientific evidence indicated this high dosage could reduce fumigation efficacy due to a phenomenon called "phosphine narcosis," a condition in which insects go dormant before they can absorb enough gas to be killed.

The U.S. wheat industry faced a difficult position. Some exporters were unwilling to comply due to safety and precedent concerns. Others feared that Indonesia's requirements would create lasting market uncertainty with potentially higher costs. For both U.S. producers and exporters, the stakes were high.

Industry mobilization

In response to the IQA's new regulation, USW launched a coordinated engagement strategy. The organization leveraged its Southeast Asia regional team and

its D.C.-based headquarters to align U.S. technical agencies, trade staff, and exporters around a unified position. The first step was clear: demonstrate, through science, that the new fumigation protocol was not only unnecessary but possibly harmful to Indonesia's own goals.

APHIS led with a series of technical documents and diplomatic communications. One report detailed global phosphine usage, recommending effective dosage ranges that fell in line with manufacturing standards that were far below those outlined in Indonesia's new rule. Another refuted a list of pests flagged by the IQA, concluding that none of the species posed credible phytosanitary (plant health) risks due to U.S. production, postharvest cleaning, and storage practices.

This evidence-based effort successfully delayed enforcement of the new fumigation standard through most of 2024, but a more permanent solution required direct, face-to-face diplomacy.

Washington hosts, farmers lead

In December 2024, the WGC hosted a high-level delegation from the IQA for a technical visit across Eastern Washington. The trip was organized in partnership with USW, APHIS, and FAS. Over the course of three days, IQA officials witnessed the U.S. wheat supply chain in motion, from farm fields to federal labs.

The delegation visited a Ritzville farm and elevator to observe how wheat is cleaned, stored, and managed for pest control. They met with Washington State University (WSU) wheat breeder Dr. Arron Carter and plant pathologist Dr. Tim Murray to understand how resistance traits are bred into new varieties. At the USDA Western Wheat Quality Lab, the delegation saw firsthand the extensive testing for end-use quality and contaminants, including mycotoxins.

Just as importantly, the WGC and APHIS provided a transparent briefing on traceability. While U.S. wheat cannot be traced back to individual farms in bulk shipments, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requires that every link in the chain, from farm to export terminal, can be traced one step forward and one step back. This ensures accountability and traceability at scale, reflecting not only a U.S. but an internationally recognized best practice.

"We appreciate the work of the Washington Grain Commission to support this effort to demonstrate the



During one of the site visits by a team from Indonesia, Mike Miller (right), a dryland farmer west of Ritzville, Wash., demonstrated the viability of seed treatments that persist through winter. These treatments effectively prevent disease, reducing the need for excessive fumigation during shipping.

wheat industry's production and export handling system. This collaboration highlights the power of the partnership between USW and state commission members in enabling trade," said Mike Spier, USW president and CEO.

From dialogue to policy change

The impact of the IQA's visit to Washington was almost immediate. Bolstered by continued discussions with U.S. officials, the IQA formally recommended a change to its import policy. On June 15, 2025, Indonesia officially dropped its requirement for high-rate phosphine fumigation of U.S. wheat. The revised rule restored flexibility and removed a major trade friction point.

The timing was fortuitous. As U.S. wheat prices became more competitive in the second half of the 2024 marketing year, Indonesian millers began increasing purchases. U.S. wheat sales to Indonesia surged in marketing year 2024-25, reaching over 28 million bushels (774,000 metric tons (MT)), up from just over 16 million bushels (437,000 MT) the year before. More significantly for Washington producers, SW sales to Indonesia rose by 44%, highlighting growing demand with over 20 million bushels (554,000 MT) sold.

Farmers behind the scenes

At the heart of this success is a quiet but powerful force: America's wheat farmers. USW is funded through a national network of state wheat commissions. Wheat producers contribute a portion of their wheat sales — on average around one-third of a penny per bushel — to their state commission, known as a checkoff or assessment. These funds are pooled to support USW's market development mission "to develop, maintain, and expand international markets to enhance the profitability of U.S. wheat producers and its value for their customers."

In return, USW works closely with state wheat commissions like the WGC to bring wheat buyers to the field, support informed dialogue with importing countries, and navigate complex trade issues when they emerge. WGC's leadership in hosting the IQA was more than logistical, it was an act of strategic storytelling. WGC helped foreign officials connect the dots between U.S. farming practices, science-based regulation, and global market needs.

Why this matters

This is not just a story about fumigation, it's a story about the role trade servicing plays in keeping doors

open for U.S. wheat. Nontariff barriers, such as phytosanitary requirements, traceability demands, or changing maximum pesticide residue limits, are increasingly common. Addressing these issues requires more than a good product, it requires trust, responsiveness, and constant engagement.

By investing in USW through their assessment dollars, wheat farmers are investing in a long game, one where relationships and readiness make the difference between market disruption and market growth.

A win for wheat

The resolution of the Indonesian phosphine fumigation requirement marks a clear win for the U.S. wheat industry and a direct return on farmer investment. This outcome shows that when producers, commissions, and national partners work together, even the most complex regulatory hurdles can be overcome.

Through this effort, U.S. wheat didn't just preserve access, it earned renewed trust, and that trust will pay dividends long after this season's crop is in the bin.

As of July 7, 2025, we're proud to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with APTINDO, marking a major milestone for the Indonesian milling industry and U.S. wheat producers. Under this agreement, APTINDO is committed to doubling its annual purchases of U.S. wheat over the next five years to 1 million metric tons each year. ■

Not noodling about

U.S. WHEAT CLIMBS TO MEET NEEDS OF KOREAN INDUSTRY

Ralph Loos

Director of Communications, U.S. Wheat Associates

As they typically do, the South Korean wheat buyers who explored Washington, Oregon, and Montana in late July carried in the back of their minds a lengthy list — a long and growing lineup, actually — of food products back home that depend on high-quality wheat grown in the U.S.

Noodles remain a prime player in that lineup.

Important to U.S. wheat farmers is the fact that the noodle game in South Korea is increasingly reliant on U.S. wheat, specifically soft white (SW), hard red spring (HRS), and hard red winter (HRW) wheat, blended to stand more equally matched with competing wheat suppliers.

Before we get into the role U.S. wheat plays in the aforementioned “noodle game,” here are a handful of interesting facts about the noodle situation in South Korea:

- South Korea is second only to Vietnam in per capita consumption of instant noodles (ramen) in the world. Currently, the driving force behind the demand for wheat flour in Korea is the export of ramen.
- Among flour usage segments, the largest is the noodle market, which makes up 40% of the total. Bread flour (20%), all-purpose flour (16%), and cake flour (11%) follow behind.
- The noodle flour market in South Korea is broken down into three categories: instant noodles (55%), fresh noodles (30%), and dried noodles (15%).
- Instant noodles use a blend of U.S. wheat (60%) and Australian wheat (40%), while fresh and dried noodles mainly use Australian wheat due to its high viscosity and chewy texture.

In recent years, wheat farmers in Washington have heard U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) staff explain the importance of noodles in Korea, an extremely competitive and vital market for U.S. wheat exports. South Korea imports approximately 4.6 million tons of wheat annually. Since 2015, South Korea's average annual imports of U.S. wheat have been

1.35 million tons. Last year, U.S. wheat imports surged to over 1.7 million tons, a 44% increase compared to 2023.





In 2024, U.S. Wheat Associates' noodle course for Korean manufacturers featured lessons on U.S. wheat classes and noodle flour quality analysis using the rapid visco analysis method. Participants also evaluated various blending tests that confirmed the advantages of U.S. wheat usage in instant noodle applications.

"In 2024, U.S. wheat held the largest share in the South Korean milling wheat market at 47.8%, followed by Australian wheat at 43.6%, and Canadian wheat at 8.6%," said USW South Korea Country Director Dongchan "Channy" Bae. "Much of the credit for that goes to wheat farmers in the U.S. who continue to produce a crop that millers, bakers, and food manufacturers desire, because it helps increase the quality of end-products. We bring wheat buyers to areas like the Pacific Northwest to see the current crop in the field, to meet the farmers responsible for the crops, and to confirm the entire U.S. supply chain."

Proving the ability of U.S. wheat classes to meet the standards of Korean noodle makers has been the job of USW. As mentioned above, for many years, Korean noodle makers preferred Australian wheat to produce noodle flour. But USW provided technical service that showed flour mills and instant noodle manufacturers that blends of flour from SW, HRS, and HRW wheat help improve texture in noodles and other end-products.

USW also positioned the reliability of U.S. wheat supplies to stand as an alternative to supply issues with Australian wheat. In recent years, USW has encouraged

Korean flour mills to increase the blending ratio of SW and HRW wheat for noodle and multipurpose flour to reduce manufacturing costs.

USW's work to grow demand includes USW's Seoul office hosting an annual noodle flour blending seminar to demonstrate the advantages of blending with U.S. wheat. For the past decade, USW has also brought Korean teams to the U.S. for a Korean noodle flour development short course at the Wheat Market Center in Portland, Ore.

In 2024, USW's noodle course for Korean manufacturers featured lessons on U.S. wheat classes and noodle flour quality analysis using the rapid visco analysis method. Participants also evaluated various blending tests that confirmed the advantages of U.S. wheat usage in instant noodle applications.

"The research and the information provided in the noodle courses prove that increased quantities of U.S. wheat classes in the blend maintain current product quality," said Bae. "Our work also is designed to show participants that U.S. wheat farmers accept the responsibility to provide high quality U.S. wheat to overseas customers. We do that by taking teams to visit farmers and meet them on the farm." ■

At the nexus of science, farming

The WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems team is making a difference

By Drew Lyon

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

This is the last *Wheat Life* article I will write. After 13 years as the Endowed Chair in Small Grains Extension and Research, Weed Science at Washington State University (WSU), I will retire by year's end. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at WSU. It has been my privilege to work and learn from many exceptional wheat and barley growers, industry representatives, and WSU colleagues. I have been particularly lucky to be a member of the WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems team. I hope I have been able to make a positive difference for at least a few of you.

I arrived at WSU in the fall of 2012 after serving 22 years as the Extension dryland cropping systems specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff. The endowment of my position at WSU by the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) incentivized and inspired me to come to the Palouse. When I arrived, Dr. Rich Koenig had just become associate dean of Extension in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. WSU Extension had been substantially impacted by the budget cuts following the Great Recession of 2007 and 2008. With fewer people in Extension, Rich suggested that I consider forming a team of specialists and county educators to develop and coordinate educational programming focused on dryland wheat and barley production.

With funding support from the WGC, both from my endowment and annual funding requests, the WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems team was born in 2013. One of our first goals was to build a website to serve as a central resource for all the information WSU has related to wheat and barley production.

The WSU Wheat and Small Grains website (smallgrains.wsu.edu) was launched in 2014. It is a continuous work in progress, constantly providing new and

timely information and resources. The number of unique users and sessions continues to grow each year. If you have not visited the website lately, I encourage you to take a few minutes to see all that it offers.

In 2017, I became a podcaster. My proximity to many WSU and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service scientists gave me a unique opportunity to speak with them about their research and its relevance for Washington wheat and barley growers. I hit



Drew Lyon (right) records an episode of the Washington State University (WSU) Wheat Beat Podcast with Dr. Tim Paulitz, a plant pathologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. Lyon, who has produced the podcast since 2017, holds the WSU Endowed Chair Small Grains Extension and Research, Weed Scientist. He will be retiring by the end of 2025.

play on the WSU Wheat Beat Podcast (smallgrains.wsu.edu/category/podcast/) with the first podcast episode, "Wireworms with Aaron Esser and David Crowder," which aired on Oct. 24, 2017. The last episode, number 214, will be published on Aug. 4, 2025. I enjoyed hosting the podcast, and I learned a great deal from my guests. With the convenience of listening wherever you are, podcasts are a great way to learn. If you have not listened to the WSU Wheat Beat Podcast, I encourage you to check it out before it is archived in October 2026.

In 2021, I managed to convince several of my weed science colleagues in the Pacific Northwest to join me in contributing to a weed science blog. The first Weeders of the West blog (smallgrains.wsu.edu/weeders-of-the-west) post was "Herbicide Resistance: Can We Blame

Glyphosate?" There have been 102 posts since then. Some articles discuss current research; other articles are musings on current issues in weed science.

One goal of the blog was to stimulate grower comments so that we could continue dialogue on the topics and learn from one another. Unfortunately, that goal has not had much success. Even when I intentionally wrote a provocative article entitled, "Is No-Till Sustainable?," to try and stimulate conversation, only Tracy Eriksen, an innovative no-till grower near St. John, engaged in the conversation. Thank you, Tracy! I believe the best learning occurs when growers and scientists engage in conversation around issues of interest. If you have never read a Weeder of the West blog post, please check it out and consider providing a comment that will enhance the conversation.

In addition to the WSU Wheat and Small Grains website, the WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems team also plans and hosts the WSU Wheat Academy. The WSU Wheat Academy, which began in 2015, is a highly rated, two-day educational event held in Pullman in December. Growers and crop consultants take a deep dive into the science behind the recommendations that WSU provides. Attendance is limited to 75 people to keep class sizes small and allow for hands-on learning opportunities and good dialogue between attendees and presenters.

Agricultural Extension faces several challenges going forward. These include reduced state and federal funding that will likely result in a continued decline in personnel and greater limitations on operating budgets for those that remain. I think that agricultural Extension in the future will



Dr. Arron Carter (left), the Washington State University (WSU) winter wheat breeder, demonstrating how to emasculate winter wheat flowers prior to making crosses to attendees at the annual WSU Wheat Academy.

rely heavily on the co-production of knowledge and collaborative on-farm research. As farm machinery gets larger and technology more advanced and expensive, these collaborations with growers will be critical for a university Extension system increasingly constrained by a lack of resources.

Another challenge I see coming is artificial intelligence (AI). My teaching colleagues are already wrestling with the risks and benefits of AI in the classroom. Similar challenges face Extension. There are already several chatbots that use AI to scour the internet and summarize the vast amount of information found there. While this can be very useful, it can also result in misinformation. Generative AI is known to create fictional answers, and the more powerful it gets, the more outlandish some of its creations become. I think Extension will continue to have a role to play in verifying and contextualizing AI-generated information for agriculture as it has for more traditionally developed information.

Much of the information WSU Extension has available online does not meet new federal and state web accessibility standards that require all content be usable by everyone, including those with sight and hearing impairments. Some nonaccessible content is already being removed from WSU websites, including the WSU Wheat and Small Grains website. While it is possible to make many of these resources compliant with the standards, it will take time, effort, and money to do so. I think some valuable resources will disappear from the WSU Wheat and Small Grains website and many other useful websites and may never return. I ask for your patience and understanding as we work to accomplish these improvements in support of our mission of disseminating useful information and tools for your use.

I have seen a lot of changes in agriculture in my 40-plus years working in Extension. Extension has adapted to meet these new changes and challenges, and I'm confident it will continue to do so well into the future. I have enjoyed working at the nexus of science and farming and being a member of the WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems team, and I know the wheat and barley growers of Eastern Washington will continue to be well served by this team for many years to come. ■

WHEAT WATCH

WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

US exports steady amid China negotiations



Eric Jessup
Research Professor and Director of the Freight Policy
Transportation Institute, Washington State University

U.S. wheat exports depend on many factors, including advantageous weather, efficient (and available) transportation, and beneficial trade policy. In the wake of recent tariffs, U.S. wheat exports to China, historically our second largest wheat trading partner, have fallen precipitously, from 1.6 million tons year-to-date in 2024 to zero so far this year. Total U.S. wheat exports, however, are only slightly down from 2024 year-to-date as of June 19, 2025 (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grain inspections). At this time last year, total U.S. wheat exports totaled 10.3 million metric tons, compared to 10.1 million metric tons year-to-date for 2025 (down 2%). Wheat exports historically destined for China have been redistributed across established trading partners and an expanded set of countries importing wheat from the U.S. That redistribution has mostly compensated for the decline in U.S. wheat exports to China. Those expanded export markets include Kenya, Yemen, Guatemala, and Costa Rica (400,000 metric ton increase collectively. See Figure 1) and increases in wheat exports to established markets such as Korea, Nigeria, Thailand, Columbia, Vietnam, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Japan significantly ahead of 2024 export volumes (1.6 million metric ton increase over 2024).

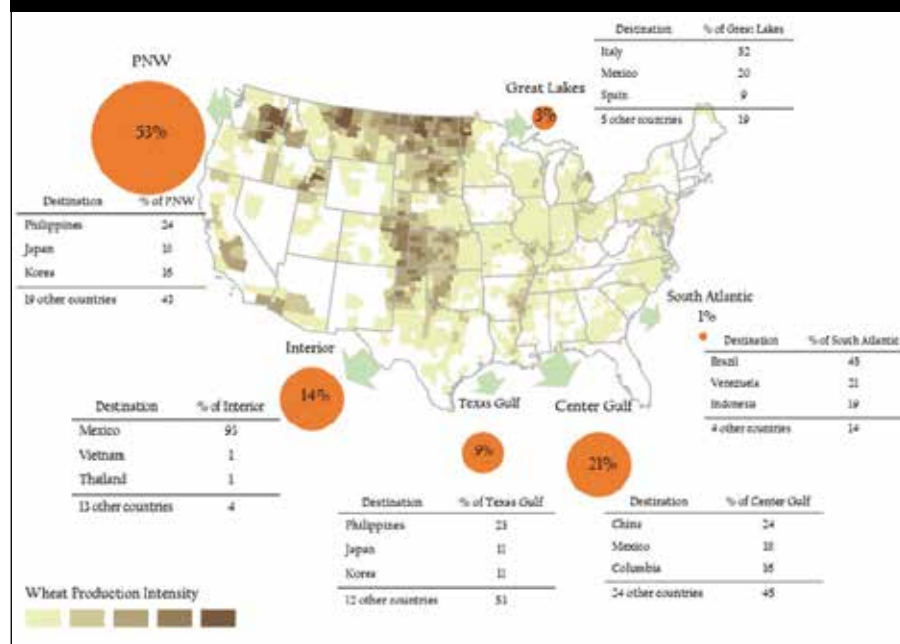
Historically, the Pacific Northwest (PNW) export terminals have dominated U.S. wheat exports, representing 53% of total U.S. wheat exports in 2024 followed by the center Gulf at 21% and interior at 14% (see Figure 2). The

significance of the PNW as a wheat export gateway is partially related to ideal production and proximity attributes, particularly soft white wheat from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and wheat grown in Montana and the Dakotas shipped on rail to PNW ports. However, the primary destination markets for 2024 wheat exports out of the PNW were the Philippines, Japan, and Korea, not China. China, year-to-date in 2024, accounted for close to 500 metric tons of wheat exports out of the PNW. The predominant share of wheat exports to China were sourced from the center Gulf in 2024, with over 1 million metric tons exported by this point last year.

U.S. wheat exports out of the Great Lakes and South Atlantic ports account for less than 4% of total wheat exports, primarily serving European and South American export markets. U.S. wheat exports to Mexico are predominately served via rail originating out of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and Nebraska.

Given the decline in 2025 wheat exports to China, one may expect that rail/barge service and rates satisfying that 2024 volume may result in some slack transportation capacity and improved 2025 rail/barge service and rates. But wheat exports compete for rail and barge space across multiple grain exports, including the dominant grains of corn and soybeans. And across all U.S. grains, total exports year-to-date are ahead of the 2024 pace by 6.7% out of the center Gulf and 5.5% out of the PNW. The growth in grain export demand heading out of PNW is largely being driven

FIGURE 1: Total U.S. wheat exports, year-to-date, by destination country (June 19, 2025)



by corn exports, currently 30% ahead of 2024 levels, whereas wheat exports out of the PNW are almost identical to 2024 levels, year-to-date. As a result, Class I railroad tariff rates for wheat shipments from the upper Midwest, Montana, and Washington, Idaho, and Oregon to the PNW are significantly above levels over the prior three years (Figure 3). The northern-tier wheat producing states are experiencing rail tariff rates anywhere from 4 to 8% higher, as compared to the average tariff between 2022-24. Conversely, wheat rail tariffs for grain originating out of Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma are experiencing lower or comparable rates to the 2022-24 average. It is unlikely that grain rail tariffs will decline over the remaining 2025 export season, particularly given the strong rail freight demand for 2025 to date, particularly from other grain commodities and coal shipments.

Bulk grain ocean vessel freight rates and vessel loadings in export ports have remained relatively consistent to date in 2025, reflecting the strong U.S. grain export demand, particularly for corn and wheat exports. Disruptions to ocean freight service and rates have primarily been concentrated on container vessel imports, which have experienced wide fluctuations since January 2025. Between April and May 2025, the number of container vessels arriving to U.S. West Coast ports each week decreased from above 20 to 10. This has little impact upon wheat exports, given the low utilization of containerized wheat exports, but the downstream impact on other agricultural export markets is significant, particularly for many products produced in the PNW that depend on container availability and ocean container service to access export markets.

Ongoing U.S. trade negotiations

FIGURE 2: U.S. wheat export ports and destination markets, 2024

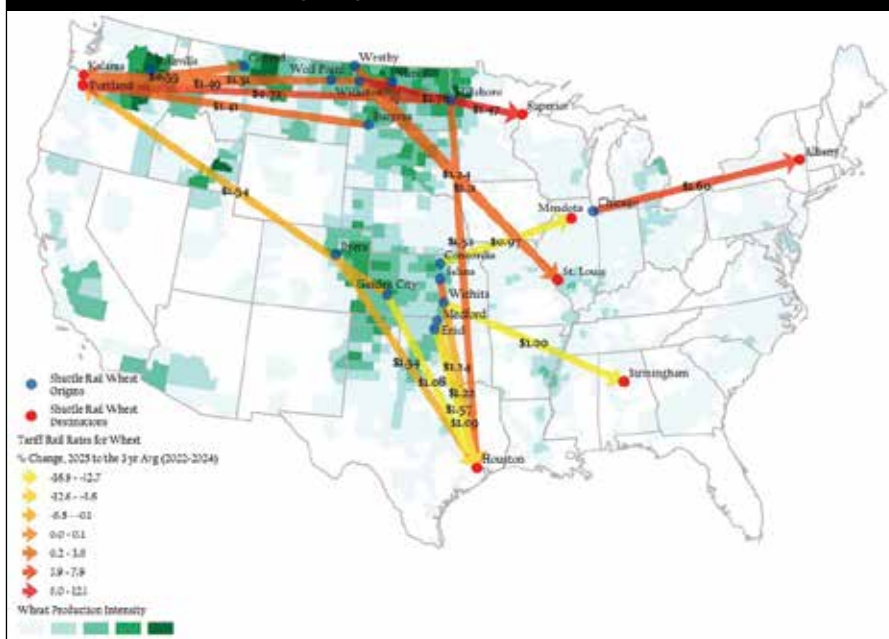
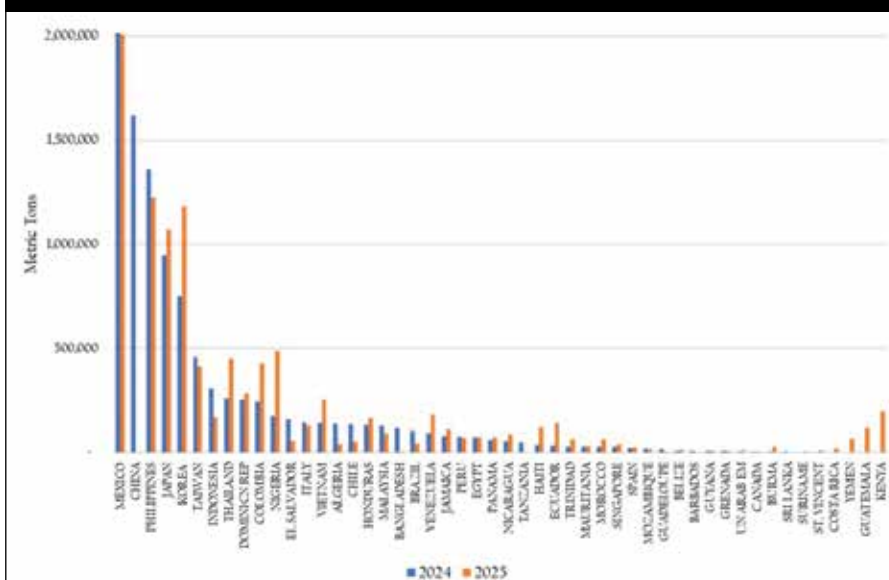


FIGURE 3: Class I rail rates and % change for U.S. wheat originations and destinations, June 12, 2025



may lead to increased exports to China or other export markets throughout the remaining 2025 calendar year, perhaps expanding total U.S. wheat exports to end the year ahead of 2024 volumes (21.4 million metric tons). September is typically the month with the largest wheat exports, but total 2025 wheat exports are unlikely to counter the 40-plus year declining trend. Total annual U.S. wheat exports in the 1980s averaged 35 million metric tons (including the peak year of 42.5 million metric tons in 1984), 32 million metric tons in the 1990s, 27.6 million metric tons between 2000-10, 26.4 million metric tons between 2011-20, and 20.4 million metric tons between 2021-24. ■

Dr. Eric Jessup leads the Transportation Research Group at the WSU School of Economic Sciences and is the new director of the IMPACT Center. He has conducted freight transportation and economic research for more than 25 years.

Planting the seeds of ag literacy

An update from Washington Ag in the Classroom



By Alisha Klein
*Public Relations and Promotions
Administrator, Washington Ag in the
Classroom*

Understanding where our food comes from is something every person should know — and something every child should be taught. That's the heart of the mission behind Washington Ag in the Classroom (WAIC), a program I'm honored to be a part of.

My name is Alisha Klein, and I serve as the public relations and promotions administrator for WAIC. I was born and raised on a wheat and cattle ranch just 15 miles south of Ritzville. After college, my husband and I returned to the family farm to raise our three children who are now fifth generation. Being involved in agriculture, education, and communication has always been a passion of mine, so

joining WAIC felt like a natural and meaningful step.

As we look ahead to the 2025-26 school year, I'd like to share an update on our program's growth and impact! WAIC is part of a national program dedicated to "increasing agricultural literacy through K-12 education." Our main project, Ag@School, is celebrating a major milestone this year — we've been publishing Ag@School three times a year for 25 years! This achievement wouldn't be possible without the generous support of sponsors like the Washington Wheat Foundation and the enthusiastic participation of teachers and students across the state.

Though Ag@School is primarily designed for 4th-grade classrooms, its engaging content and curriculum-aligned lessons are used by teachers all the way through high school. We publish three issues annually, all of which are mailed free of charge to subscribing classrooms. The issues focus on the diversity of Washington agriculture, innovations in ag technology, and the importance of



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environmental stewardship. Specifically to wheat, students have learned how wheat farmers are incorporating technology, such as GPS and drones; the importance of the dams in moving wheat to market; and how wheat is milled into flour, among other concepts. Teacher guides ensure that the content meets state educational standards. If you know of a teacher, school, or classroom that would benefit from Ag@School, it's not too late to sign up. Visit waic.net and click on "Subscribe," or email us directly at waaginclassroom@gmail.com.

We've also been thrilled with the success of our "Workshop in a Box" project, a 3rd through 5th grade ag literacy kit packed with ag literacy books, materials, and hands-on activities. These kits were distributed to classrooms throughout Washington and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Building on that momentum, we're introducing a new early elementary resource this year: *The Day the Farmers Quit*, a heartwarming K-2 book that helps students understand the critical role farmers play in their everyday lives.

In addition to printed materials, we offer digital resources through the Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, an online database filled with lesson plans and companion tools for teaching ag-related topics. Whether you're planning a one-day activity or an in-depth unit, this resource is a one-stop shop for high-quality, standards-based ag education materials. You can explore it on our website as well.



Looking ahead, we're excited to announce a new collaboration with the Dairy Farmers of Washington to launch "Dairy in a Box," a creative new resource currently in development with the potential for farm tours. Stay tuned for more details.

WAIC is supported by a volunteer board representing the breadth of Washington's agricultural community. Our work is made possible entirely through donations, grants, and sponsorships from individuals, organizations, and commodity commissions. To all of our supporters, especially the Washington Wheat Foundation, THANK YOU! Your contributions help us plant the seeds of agricultural understanding and appreciation in classrooms across the state. ■

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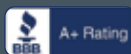
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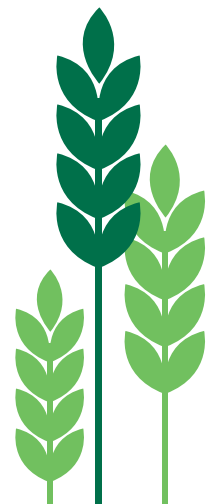


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THE BOTTOM LINE

Building a behavioral mindset for uncertain times

By Dr. David M. Kohl
Professor Emeritus, Virginia Tech

The inspiration for this article occurred on the convention floor of the recent Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting. This was a historical event as the CEO, Warren Buffett, announced his retirement. In his four hours of questions, answers, and profound thoughts, he mentioned managing a business in an unsettling type of environment many times. He stated that successful businesses will have owners and management teams that have a behavioral management mindset that can respond, execute, and monitor results.

Let's examine the elements of this behavioral management mindset to help you to determine how you stack up.

First and foremost, you will need a good set of financial spreadsheets or written budgets. Do you know your cost of production and breakeven level? Many operations have multiple enterprises, thus budgets and breakeven calculations for each are critical. They allow for the proper distribution of energy and resources in the appropriate way to ensure profitability and sustainability. Knowing your cost of production and breakeven level also helps you position for new opportunities.

Many factors create uncertainty in planning:

- Tariffs and sanctions.
- Export market concerns.
- Global competition.
- Dollar value fluctuations.
- Interest rate changes.

An important aspect of the behavioral mindset is to continually conduct "what if" or financial sensitivity analysis. Alter production, price, cost, and interest rate levels to determine the guardrails or boundaries of outcomes.

Your lender will often examine the worst-case scenario to determine their potential risk level. The average case provides clarity when you have historical trend analysis. Develop the best-case scenario to test your goals and aspirations from a "cup half-full" vantage point.

Create cash flow discipline by transforming your budgets into monthly or quarterly cash flows to determine the seasonality of revenues and expenses. This promotes disciplined behavior rather than emotional decision-making. Don't get caught in the trap of spending a dollar to save \$.20 in taxes, which results in long-term financial obligations or forfeiting reserves in cash, working capital, and financial liquidity. Too often, financials are only examined once a year with an accountant for tax reasons. This reactive approach limits your strategic flexibility.

Leverage risk management tools. A behavioral advantage in agriculture is using marketing and risk management programs effectively. Crop and livestock insurance plans vary and need customization for your specific situation. An outside advisor can be valuable as a sounding board. The key is incorporating your budgeted breakeven and risk tolerance levels into the plan.

Risk management plans must examine:

- Farm liability coverage.
- Crop, livestock, and equipment insurance.
- Disability insurance.
- Life insurance.

A good rule of thumb is to have enough life insurance to cover debt obligations.

Plan your management transition. A behavioral management mindset involves developing, executing, and monitoring a management transition plan. Warren Buffett had his plan in place before his announcement.

The sobering reality is that less than 50% of farmers and ranchers have basic wills. Our research shows fully developed transition and estate plans exist less than 25% of the time among top producers.

A business builder often struggles to give up control, particularly management and sometimes assets. There's an old saying, "To maintain control in transition to the next generation, owners must give up control."

Separate business and personal finances. Lifestyle creep and the

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increase in family living costs, burdens cash flow. This becomes more complex when multiple families from different generations withdraw proceeds for living expenses, creating complexity, confusion, and conflict.

Maintain separate business and family living budgets. Co-mingling expenses can be a killer, resulting in over-drawn credit lines or lender refinancing requests.

Living costs continue rising and include insurance, education, everyday expenses, and daycare and adult care. However, clarity in this area is critical for success.

Finally, take care of yourself. Physical and mental health are critical. Take time to:

- Shut off technology.
- Listen to hear what is being said — and what isn't being said.
- Read and listen to podcasts.
- Explore business authors of yesteryear.

You'll find that as much as things change, basic principles often stay the same. Mark Twain's favorite saying captures this well, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." ■

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

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Little future farmers, Kolter Sieverkropp (2) and Calvin Sieverkropp (7 months) checking out the canola crop in mid-October 2024 at K & M Family Farms in Creston. Photo by Moriah Sieverkropp.



December sunset over wheat fields in Creston.
Photo by Reo Megrue.



Harvest 2024 at Jon Semingson Farms in Pullman included (clockwise from top left) Beth Semingson, Kristen Springer, Robin Hevly, Heidi Washington, and Tia Sinclair. Photo by Emily Boller of Hindsight Photography.



(Above) Pep and Jean Nelson (front) and family celebrating Christmas Eve in son, Mike Nelson's, shop near Prescott. The family meets each year to visit, shoot trap, potluck, and play games. Mary Nelson always decorates the combine for Christmas. Photo by Norman Dull. (Left) Bob (left) and Jerry Guhlke at Guhlke Farm near Davenport. Photo by Eric Gauger.



Sunset near Walla Walla.
Photo by Jeanne Rich.



Karmen (4) and Korbin (1) during harvest 2024 at Green View Farms in Fairfield. Photo by Carly Green.

Send us photos of your wheat life!

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

HAPPENINGS

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

AUGUST 2025

1-3 KING SALMON DERBY. Over \$10,000 in cash and prizes available. Registration required. Brewster, Wash. brewstersalmonderby.com

2 SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES.

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

6-9 YAKIMA VALLEY FAIR AND RODEO.

PRCA rodeo, car show, parade, beer garden. County Fair Park in Grandview, Wash. yvfair-rodeo.com

7-9 MOXEE HOP FESTIVAL. Parade, beer garden, live entertainment, food and crafts, games, BBQ cookoff. Moxee, Wash. evcea.org

7-10 OMAK STAMPEDE. Parade, carnival, art show, rodeo dances and vendors. Omak, Wash. omakstampede.org

12-16 GRANT COUNTY FAIR. Ag exhibits, livestock competitions, carnival, arts and crafts, entertainment, food. Moses Lake, Wash. gcfair.fun

15-24 NORTH IDAHO FAIR AND RODEO. Fireworks, rodeo, petting zoo, entertainment, carnival. Kootenai County Fairgrounds in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. northidahostatefair.com

16 NATIONAL LENTIL FESTIVAL. Stop by and see the world's largest bowl of lentil chili. Fun run, parade, softball tournament, beer garden. Pullman, Wash. lentilfest.com

19-23 BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR AND RODEO. Demolition derby, parade, live entertainment. Kennewick, Wash. bentonfranklinfair.com

21-23 LINCOLN COUNTY FAIR. Rodeo, livestock, exhibits, food and games. Davenport, Wash. lincolncountywa.com/497/Fair-Rodeo

21-24 NCW FAIR. Live entertainment, carnival, livestock sale, rodeo and horse. Waterville, Wash. ncwfair.org

23 SPRINT BOAT RACING. Enjoy 5 grass terraces, two beer gardens and a great

atmosphere to watch fantastic racing in St. John, Wash. Fun for the family! Bring the lawn chairs, sunscreen and blankets. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until racing is finished. webbsslough.com or (509) 553-1014.

28-31 WHEAT LAND COMMUNITIES' FAIR. Rodeo, exhibits, entertainment, vendors. Ritzville Rodeo Grounds. wheatlandfair.com

29-SEPT. 1 PIG OUT IN THE PARK. Music and food. Riverfront Park in Spokane, Wash. spokanepigout.com

29-SEPT. 1 ELLENSBURG RODEO AND KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR. Carnival, midway, hoedown, pancake breakfast, parade. Ellensburg, Wash. ellensburgrodeo.com

30-31 METHOW VALLEY RODEO. Saddle bronc, bareback, bulls, barrel racing, team roping and junior events. Held at the rodeo grounds, about halfway between Twisp and Winthrop beginning at 1 p.m. methowvalleyrodeo.com

SEPTEMBER 2025

2 WASHINGTON WHEAT FOUNDATION MEETING. Meeting begins at 1 p.m. at the Wheat Foundation Annex in Ritzville, Wash.

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

5-14 SPOKANE COUNTY INTERSTATE FAIR. Livestock exhibits, rides, food booths, rodeo and entertainment. Fair and Expo Center, Spokane Valley. spokanecounty.org/fair/sif/

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

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

10-13 OTHELLO FAIR. Adams County Fairgrounds in Othello, Wash. othellofair.org

18-21 DEUTSCHESFEST. Music, food and crafts. Parade. Biergarten, fun run. Odessa, Wash. deutschesfest.com

19-21 SE SPOKANE COUNTY FAIR.

Cornhole tournament, soapbox derby, parade, fun run, truck pulls. Rockford, Wash. sespokanecountyfair.org

20-21 VALLEYFEST. Pancake breakfast, car show, entertainment. Centerplace Regional Event Center and Mirabeau Point Park in Spokane Valley, Wash. valleyfest.org

26-28 GREAT PROSSER BALLOON RALLY. Sunrise balloon launches from the Prosser airport. Weekend also includes a harvest festival and farmers market. Prosser, Wash. prosserballoonrally.org

OCTOBER 2025

3-4 OKTOBERFEST. Biergartens, food, music, vendors, kinderplatz. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

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

4 RIVERFEST. Celebrate our rivers and learn why they are so important to our region at this free, family-focused event. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Columbia Park in Kennewick, Wash. riverfestwa.com

10-11 OKTOBERFEST. Biergartens, food, music, vendors, kinderplatz. Leavenworth, Wash. leavenworth.org/oktoberfest/

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

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20 WASHINGTON WHEAT FOUNDATION MEETING. Meeting begins at 1 p.m. at the Wheat Foundation Annex in Ritzville, Wash.

29 EPA/ESA WORKSHOP. This workshop will get growers up to speed on changes to pesticide labels related to EPA decisions and the Endangered Species Act. The workshop will be held at the William A. Grant Water & Environmental Center in Walla Walla, Wash., time to be determined. No background knowledge is required. Pesticide credits pending approval. To register, email Andrea Cox at andrea@wawg.org. ■

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