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OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Building Trust Through Transparency
- 6 PNW Develops South American Markets
- 10 End of Year Financial Planning for Farmers



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IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 My Two Cents Worth
- 4 Building Trust Through Transparency: Federal Grain Inspection Service
- 6 Marquettas, Paneton and New Market Opportunities for PNW Wheat
- 7 NAWG Endorses Bipartisan FARM Act
- 8 OWC Chair Column
- 9 Evaluating the Impact of Fungicide Use on Dryland Winter Wheat Yield
- 10 End-of-Year Financial Planning Critical for Farmers
- 13 Standing the Test of Time: Oregon Farms and Ranches Reach Century Farm Status
- 14 Nitrogen Fertility in Spring and Winter Wheat with Biofertilizers
- 16 Safeguarding the Lifeline of the Pacific Northwest: The Columbia River System
- 18 Turning Up the Social Media Heat in the Annual Oregon Wheat Photo Contest
- 20 A Formal Dedication: SRC Shaker Makes its Debut at the Wheat Marketing Center
- 20 Farm Bill: Take Action with the NAWG Campaign
- 21 High Functionality for Soft White: Quality of Grain Reflected in 2025 Report
- 21 Winter Wheat Seeding Rings in the New Crop Year
- 22 Supporting the Next Generation of Ag: Oregon Wheat Scholarship Now Open!
- 22 Farmer Directors Elect Mike Spier as President and CEO of USW

ON THE COVER: Photo by EmmaLee Demianew

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Wade Bingaman

President

MY TWO CENTS WORTH



As I sit down to write my final message as President of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, I can't believe a year has gone by already. I want to take this time to thank past executive board members for urging me to take on the responsibility of helping to lead this great organization. It wasn't a decision that I took lightly or felt that I was the best person to take on the role, but after considering it, I realized that I have been telling other farmers that we need to do a better job of representing ourselves when it comes to the challenges that we face. What better way to do that than be involved with Oregon Wheat and meet with leaders that can have a meaningful impact on decisions for agriculture.

I said in a previous issue that it is so important for farmers to tell our story and advocate for issues that are important to our businesses and agriculture. I have seen firsthand how engaged the public and our state and federal representatives are when listening to what we do and the challenges we face. We have credibility that can't be matched when saying exactly how legislation or regulations will affect our ability to operate our farms. We can't afford to sit back and hope that the problems we face will go away; our silence will be filled by others that don't understand how and why we do what we do, or worse yet, make assumptions about farming practices that damage the reputation and livelihood of those working hard to grow the food we depend on.

Looking back on the past year, there were many highlights for me personally and for the League. I gained a much better understanding of the different issues that each region within Oregon has that are unique. Representing Oregon Wheat Growers League and the National Association of Wheat Growers in Washington D.C. showed me how effective farmers' voices are to lawmakers and agricultural policy makers; our executive team visited with nearly every office representing Oregon while we were there. In Salem, we visited key offices and discussed legislation that would affect rural Oregonians and wheat farmers.

I want to thank Nicole Mann and Amanda Dalton, our legislative advocates, for the relationships that they have developed with representatives in Oregon and for their tireless support on issues affecting agriculture. The board met in Union County as I hosted our June meeting, and I hope that we can continue to travel to different parts of the state and see board members' farms in future years. One of the best parts of being involved with the Oregon Wheat Growers League has been getting to know other farmers around the state and learning the farming practices that work in each region. I think that we all could use more perspective than just what we see every day where we live.

As I come to the end of my term, there is still unfinished business related to the Farm Bill. During an election year, it is hard to get the bi-partisan support that legislation like a Farm Bill requires, so there is still plenty of work for the Oregon Wheat Growers League to engage in. State issues related to water, crop protection tools, land use and labor will continue to be at the forefront of our minds in the coming year. Thankfully we have a team that is up to the challenge. I have confidence that the incoming officers will lead the executive team well and represent the different growing regions throughout Oregon.

I want to thank the staff at Oregon Wheat for all the hard work that you do throughout the year. Their advocacy on behalf of wheat growers across the state while providing strategic direction for the League and industry is so important. Lastly, I want to thank my wife, Ange, and my family for allowing me to travel and be away from home while serving in this role. It isn't easy to make time for everything with a busy family but in the end, it has been worth it.



Building Trust Through Transparency: Federal Grain Inspection Service

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

In today’s interconnected, fast-paced world, impartiality and transparency are commonly sought-after cornerstones of trust. With access to vast information, consumers and businesses alike demand authenticity, objectivity, and accountability from the organizations and entities they depend on. In agriculture and trade, where product quality standards are increasingly scrutinized, these values help reassure overseas customers and reinforce a reputation for integrity and reliability.

The Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) fills that role for the U.S. wheat industry, ensuring that exports meet overseas customers’ expectations for quality standards. In the Pacific Northwest, where 80% of the wheat growth is destined for overseas markets, FGIS inspections are vital to building and maintaining trust with buyers.

History

As a USDA agency, the FGIS facilitates the marketing of U.S. grain and related products by establishing standards for quality assessments, regulating handling practices, and managing a network of 43 Federal, State, and private

laboratories that provide impartial official inspection and weighing services. In addition to wheat, FGIS establishes and maintains official standards for barley, canola, corn, flaxseed, oats, rye, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, triticale, mixed grain, rice, and pulses.

Today’s FGIS was established in 1976, though its origins date back much earlier. The Grain Standards Act of 1916 marked a turning point, setting national standards for grading grains and requiring official inspection and weighing of all grains exported from the United States. The FGIS is hosted within the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, which supports economic development and access to wholesome food by creating domestic and international marketing opportunities for U.S. agriculture.

One-of-a-Kind

With its establishment, the FGIS became an agency solely dedicated to ensuring the grain supply chain’s accuracy, transparency, and integrity. However, before the grain gets to the FGIS for inspection, transparency has already been prioritized. U.S. country elevators and export elevators

THE PROCESS

A rigorous inspection process through the Federal Grains Inspection Service (FGIS) ensures that:

Sampling: FGIS personnel collect representative samples from wheat shipments to ensure that what is tested reflects the overall quality of the batch.

Grading: The samples are tested for various quality parameters, including test weight, moisture content, protein levels, and the presence of foreign materials (e.g., stones, insects, etc.). For soft white wheat, factors like color and kernel quality are also important.

Certification: Once the testing is complete, the FGIS issues a certificate that details the grade and specifications of the wheat. This document is essential for export, assuring foreign buyers that the shipment meets the agreed-upon standards.

Weighing and Loading: The FGIS oversees the weighing and loading process to ensure that the correct amount of wheat is shipped.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Wheat Associates



Transparency and accountability give the U.S. wheat export supply chain its competitive advantage in the global wheat market. FGIS certification is often required for exporting wheat to many countries, so these certificates help ensure that international transactions proceed smoothly and help mitigate disputes over quality.

inspect and test wheat based on federal regulations as it arrives and segregate by class and quality to meet customer requirements. Then, after the FGIS has inspected and graded its samples, the agency independently inspects wheat at vessel loading to certify that the quality loaded matches the customer’s specifications. No wheat is loaded onto a vessel until inspection is completed.

To emphasize its value as a trustworthy third-party inspection service and meet the growing demands of the global market, the FGIS continues to evolve, and that process also has checks and balances.

The Official U.S. Standards for Grain are based on public comment—not unilaterally prescribed by the government. This process includes a proposal in the Federal Register and a public comment period. The FGIS is required to review each of the grain standards at least once every five years to verify they still meet the needs of the industry.

Competitive Advantage


Transparency and accountability give the U.S. wheat export supply chain its competitive advantage in the global wheat market. FGIS certification is often required for exporting wheat to many countries, so these certificates help ensure that international transactions proceed smoothly and help mitigate disputes over quality.

“Without that FGIS certification, some customers might hesitate to purchase U.S. wheat if they are unsure of whether it meets their country’s import standards,” says Steve Wirsching, U.S. Wheat Associates Vice President and West Coast Office Director. “The transparency and accountability of that process is a part of our differential advantage. The world knows that the United States is a reliable source for both wheat and the information customers need in order to make their purchasing decisions.”

In addition to helping build and maintain long-term trust and trade relationships by assuring quality, FGIS certifications also help Oregon growers receive competitive prices for their wheat.

“The value FGIS brings to our exports is unique to the United States and often cited by our customers,” says Amanda


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Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO. “In some cases, customers are willing to pay a premium, knowing that they can count on the fact that the wheat being delivered will meet their contract specifications. The reliability of our supply chain also helps lower their risk and can be worth added cost.”

An Opportunity

Oregon’s wheat growers are integral to the global supply chain, with much of their product destined for overseas markets, making export quality a priority. The FGIS helps Oregon growers maintain that their wheat remains a trusted and valuable commodity in the global market.

Those Oregon wheat producers interested in learning more are invited to join the Oregon Wheat Commission for its upcoming annual Grower Workshop on February 25 - 26, 2025. The workshop allows growers to see the grain grading process firsthand. In addition, the workshop features a variety of tours, including the Wheat Marketing Center, Shaver Transportation, a wheat foods manufacturing facility, and a local grain export facility. Participants are provided updates on OSU wheat research, highlights from U.S. Wheat Associates, and other topics, including an overview of the global conditions affecting the price of wheat. Space is limited, so if you are a grower interested in participating, please contact the Commission office by phone at (503) 467-2161. 

Marquettas, Paneton and New Market Opportunities for PNW Wheat

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



Our family holiday celebrations reflect a distinct split. On one side are the fruitcake lovers, who are small in number but mighty in their opinion. On the other side are those who believe that fruitcake is a holiday treat better seen than tasted. While I belong to that latter group, this season my opinion about dough embedded with little candied fruit gems may be softening. With a recent visit to South America, the opportunity to experience the decidedly delicious paneton is helping shift that preference. While paneton is definitely not a fruitcake as the dough is more akin to a brioche than a dense cake, the concept involving dried and candied fruit is similar. The difference, then? As with most things in our industry, it is all about the right wheat and the right dough.

In a similar way, we are seeing a shift in consumer and customer preferences in certain markets in relation to flour, and that provides more opportunity for the use of wheat from the Pacific Northwest. Recognizing our price competitiveness, paired with growing opportunities throughout South America, Oregon Wheat Commissioner Dana Tuckness and I joined our counterparts in Idaho and Washington for a market development visit to Peru and Chile in October. The purpose of the visit was to gain direct insight to our markets in South America, meet with mills to discuss how they are currently using soft white wheat, and talk further with our customers about opportunities for increased utilization of PNW wheat, along with addressing any challenges in use of our products. The visit allowed us to identify barriers to importing our wheat and discuss how we can further support U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) and partners to expand those markets further.

In South America, soft white has slightly different applications than in many of our other markets. While used in cookies and crackers, it is also blended with other wheats for use in bread flour and all-purpose flour applications. One of those breads is the Marraqueta – essentially the national bread of Chile, which is as recognizable as the French baguette and even more delicious.

Of the two countries we visited this trip, they are quite different in their wheat use. Peru is largely an importer of wheat, while Chile has a strong domestic wheat production



PNW Commissioners at Molinos Cunaco. L to R: Mike Carstensen, Dana Tuckness and Clark Hamilton

side that they pair with imported wheat to take advantage of options within different wheat classes. For both, as we looked at their sourcing for wheat, a large competitor to U.S. wheat is Canadian wheat, which has historically built several inroads to the market and developed preferences for some millers, down to their technical specifications. With new dynamics in markets, though, the reception of the PNW delegation was definitely positive. That response was in no small part due to the quality of wheat they receive, but also significantly due to the relationships built by the USW team.

We began our trip with visits to two mills in Lima, Peru. We then visited mills in Santiago, Chile, met with representatives for the trade and toured the USW lab. It was well timed for the market development trip as it paired close to incoming shipments of soft white from the PNW. It also came on the heels of providing a large sample of Oregon wheat for testing in new product development work in southern Chile. I extend my appreciation to Mid Columbia Producers for assisting in the donation of the sample, given the needed timing and specifications to get the wheat to Chile.

Throughout the visit, the most common theme was the appreciation for the quality wheat received from the PNW and the good business proposition that our wheat makes in delivery of a product to their customers. In a meeting with

leadership of Molino San Cristobal in Chile, they noted that “Buying the right wheat is a key part of the process, as well as what we do on the milling process.” In buying that wheat, there is a lot to like about what we grow in Oregon, and with soft white, in particular. In most meetings, customers specifically highlighted value related to:

- Consistency of the product received, especially in relation to quality.
- Superiority in extraction for flour milling.
- Financial benefit resulting from the low moisture content of PNW soft white. However, the low moisture aspect is complex, as the ability to capture that value requires some shift in processes for tempering wheat, for which only certain mills are fully equipped.
- Preference on the white color.
- Cleanliness of wheat coming from the PNW.
- Reliability of U.S. ports, including knowing they will load timely. It was clear that the total value chain is critical to our competitiveness.

The most common statement, though, was in relation to the value of USW servicing and technical assistance in South America. A USW- Santiago based team led by Miguel Galdos is adding significant value to the sophisticated milling industry. To further that work, the PNW Commissions – and Oregon producers assessment funds- have directly supported development of the lab in Santiago and provided resources for the USW technical specialist, Andres Saturno.

We have more work ahead of us for maintaining the market development work underway, securing our position in mills that are working with PNW soft white, and expanding into some exciting new areas in southern Chile. Further investment in the technical resources we have established with USW in Santiago is one method. Another is being ready to take advantage of where our customers are growing. There is an increased willingness to try wheat classes originating from the PNW, especially if in a price-competitive position.



The PNW delegation at Carozzi, a modern facility in Chile.

The USW lab, technical specialist in Santiago, Wheat Marketing Center and programs to provide wheat samples are helping test those markets and work with customers to understand how they maximize value from our wheat. With a highly automated milling industry, our investment into wheat breeding and wheat quality programs which ensure ongoing consistent high quality wheat gives us an advantage. Finally, the farming practices which we already use can help us address a theme we heard from a number of mills: sustainability.

The final part of the visit, though, was taking a critical look at how to address common challenges. We heard customers express concerns about logistics. In putting together a full vessel for shipment, it often requires multiple mills to work together in purchasing. The cost of origination is also a challenge. However, the desire for sourcing PNW wheat is strong. Put simply, “We love U.S. soft white wheat” stated our representative when we visited Molino Cunaco in Chile.

I may not yet be able to extend my fruitcake statement to be as strong as our mills in their preference for US soft white, but I am ready to expand the horizons to paneton. While I still cannot align the candied fruit part, a cheese/olive paneton configuration we tested may have me singing its praises. 🍞

NAWG Endorses Bipartisan FARM Act

On October 25, Representative Trent Kelly (R-MS-01) presented the Farmer Assistance and Revenue Mitigation Act of 2024 (FARM Act). The bi-partisan marker bill was co-sponsored by 48 other representatives and would be intended to provide economic assistance to offset producer costs with the lack of a Farm Bill. As written, it would provide economic assistance based on a payment formula related to USDA Projected Costs and returns for commodities. The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), along with many other commodity groups, support this bill.

“Producers across the country continue to be hit hard by natural disasters, higher input costs, and low reference prices. As we wait for a new farm bill to be signed into law, farmers need assistance as we deal with external factors out of our control. The FARM Act is not a replacement for a long-term farm bill but provides farmers with the tools we need to keep our operations running,” said Keeff Felty, President of NAWG. 🍞



Cultivating Hope and Optimism

Tyler Hansell

OWC Chair

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

Farmers are known for their resilience and determination. We know that our chosen profession has many challenges: from weather, to fire, to drought, to market price fluctuations. Yet even with all of these challenges, we remain hopeful and optimistic about wheat farming. The real question is WHY? Why are we so optimistic; why are we so hopeful?

I grew up farming. I was taught by my father and his father about farming. What did I learn from them and from my schooling that told me that this is where I want to be and what I want to do for the rest of my life? I wake up every morning and thank God for my wonderful life. But still, why am I optimistic?

I live in a great farming community. A community that has strong support for each other. We share in the good times and rally together in the hard times. We are not selfish, we share knowledge, advice, tools and resources. When our combine burned down, we were back up and running in three days because our community had our back. The idea that teamwork helps solve problems is true, but it also builds long-lasting friendships and trust in the community. Most farmers are also very generous with their hours of volunteerism. How many school boards, city committees, and local charities have members that are farmers? We all know that the community is worth the work, so we donate happily to it.


In donating my time, I represent a great organization: the Oregon Wheat Commission. Before that, I had the privilege to represent the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Both of these entities represent farmers in everything from local issues to international trade negotiations. They provide the support for problems we couldn't solve by ourselves. They are part of our greater farming community.

Also included in our greater farming community is the research side. Innovations in farming have had a positive impact. We have innovations that are adding new technologies, including in precision agriculture which has been developed in my lifetime. Precision farming changed the way we farm on our farm, and I'm sure it did the same for many of you. From the size of our equipment, to the minimal amount of overlap, to the reduction in the mental fatigue we would have after a long day of constantly watching the line and a point in the far distance. We save in fuel, chemical, and hours to cover the same amount of acres. Just as important

in new technologies for farm management practices is the change in the number of plant varieties that we have at our disposal today: new wheat traits that are chemical resistant, drought resilient, rust and disease tolerant and have massive yield improvements. Thirty years ago, this would have been nearly unheard of. Today you can go out to our trials at one of our Oregon State University extension locations and see almost everything in our variety trials.

We know that our wheat is in high demand and that we have a global market that wants it. Wheat plays a critical role in global food security. As the world population continues to grow, the need for reliable food sources is more pressing than ever. As wheat becomes more of a staple in the world's diet, it also becomes more of an essential crop for the international markets. This ongoing demand provides us as farmers with a sense of security and hope for the future. Emerging markets in developing countries present new opportunities for us. As economies grow and populations become urbanized, the demand for wheat-based products also continues to rise.

One of the main reasons that I feel we each chose to become a farmer is for the livelihood. I love the land, and farming gives me a fulfillment that not many other professions could give. I get to work in the soil, see my work grow, and harvest a product that helps feed the world. This livelihood is rewarding, and it keeps me energized year after year. Farming also allows most of us to have a schedule that we are in charge of. Except when the wind is blowing during spraying, or it is too wet to seed, or when it's harvest and the wheat has to get in the bin, or it is too hot and the belts are melting during harvest (this did happen to us 20 or 30 years ago). This schedule allows most of us to be there for a football game, music recital, family birthday party, coaching and even officiating (I'm thinking of a certain 6 foot 8 inch tall man). We get to prioritize our life and who we get to spend it with.

So to answer my own question of "Why?", I can say that my hope and optimism as a farmer is not a simple, singular reason but a myriad of reasons. My optimism is from the value and importance of our commodity in the world; the community that we have built inside our industry; the future of innovation; and the livelihood it allows me to live. My hope is that each of you reading this feels that your chosen profession is as rewarding to you as it is to me. 

Evaluating the Impact of Fungicide Use on Dryland Winter Wheat Yield

Christina H. Hagerty, OSU Associate Professor, Oregon Wheat Faculty Scholar

Each season, the Pendleton Cereal Pathology program collaborates closely with industry partners to test fungicide products. Collaborative efforts between industry and academia are critical to ensure growers get the latest chemical technology, tested locally. We focus on a commercially relevant winter wheat variety that is susceptible to stripe rust, changing the cultivar yearly to maintain relevance. This past season, we tested products on a blend of LCS Dagger AX and LCS Sol AX, surrounded by “spreader rows” of a USDA-ARS cultivar highly susceptible to stripe rust, provided by Dr. Xianming Chen, USDA-ARS Research Plant Pathologist. These spreader rows typically succumb to stripe rust first, building up inoculum levels that then disperse to the main trial area—following the typical approach of fungicide testing programs.

Our trials can accommodate about 30 treatments per season, and we request entries from industry partners like Albaugh, Syngenta, FMC, BASF, and Valent BioSciences on a first-come, first-served basis. In the stripe rust trial, we can only control one of the three factors in the disease triangle: the susceptible host (i.e., the specific wheat variety). For the other two factors of the disease triangle: virulent pathogen and favorable environmental conditions, we rely on natural conditions. We typically plant early to give the best chance at favorable environmental conditions for rust, but for the

Commission Funding:

\$5,000

Project summary:

Other cropping systems (e.g. soybeans in the Midwest) have demonstrated yield benefits of utilizing fungicides in the absence of foliar disease. Some fungicides have activity in the plant stomata, which controls gas exchange and potential water use of the plant. Some research has suggested this stomatal activity can increase water use efficiency, a critical aspect of dryland winter wheat yield potential. This OWC-funded project explores the benefits of applying fungicides regardless of stripe rust disease pressure, such as using foliar fungicides on stripe rust-resistant cultivars or applying fungicides in low or no disease-pressure years.

pathogen’s presence and most of the environmental factors that contribute to disease, we rely on Mother Nature. As spring approaches, we monitor Dr. Chen’s stripe rust forecasts closely. Though we don’t wish for a heavy rust year due to yield loss, high rust pressure provides valuable data for fungicide testing. Heavy stripe rust years also help us identify up-and-coming variety releases with improved disease packages.

What if Stripe Rust Doesn’t Develop?

In seasons without stripe rust, we continue the trials, applying the fungicide treatments as planned. Industry proponents have long advocated for fungicide applications in the absence of disease, suggesting “plant health effects” that could boost yield. However, our trials have yet to show a consistent yield benefit from this practice. My background in Dr. Mundt’s program focused on fungicide resistance monitoring and fungicide resistance management. While fungicide resistance in stripe rust is currently undetected in our region, unnecessary fungicide use could increase the hypothetical risk. Effective resistance management relies on limiting fungicide exposure to preserve the efficacy of these chemistries for critical disease outbreaks.

Exploring Fungicide Effects in the Absence of Disease

This year, at the request of growers and with funding from the Oregon Wheat Commission, we added four additional

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Pendleton Cereal Pathology members Grayson Namdar and Christina Hagerty at the annual Western Wheat Workers meeting in Idaho, June 2024. Grayson mixes and applies all fungicide treatments for the stripe rust trial, while I help run the plot map. I am so thankful for Grayson’s work ethic and expertise in the field.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

treatments to a stripe rust-tolerant variety, VI Voodoo CL+, to further assess fungicide applications in the absence of disease. Treatments included a control (unsprayed), 4 oz/ac propiconazole, 14 oz/ac propiconazole/azoxystrobin, and 13.7 oz/ac propiconazole/azoxystrobin/benzovindiflupyr, applied at herbicide timing.

Conclusion

In Oregon’s dryland wheat systems, innovations that improve yield and resilience are crucial. While fungicides are traditionally applied to control foliar diseases like stripe rust, there is interest in their potential yield benefits even in disease-free conditions, known as the “Plant Health Effect.” Our goal is to evaluate this effect objectively, guided by yield as the ultimate test. Why invest in fungicides without disease presence unless they offer a meaningful yield advantage? We have yet to measure meaningful yield improvements when spraying expensive fungicide products in the absence of disease (Table 1). We

Preliminary Yield Data*

Rate (oz/ac)	Treatment	Yield (bu/ac)	Groups
n/a	Control	117.68	a
13.7	Propiconazole/azoxystrobin/benzovindiflupyr	92.32	b
4	Propiconazole	85.88	bc
14	Propiconazole/azoxystrobin	80.54	c


Variety: VI Voodoo CL+

Rate (oz/ac)	Treatment	Yield (bu/ac)	Groups
13.7	Propiconazole/azoxystrobin/benzovindiflupyr	90.56	a
14	Propiconazole/azoxystrobin	89.26	a
4	Propiconazole	83.35	ab
n/a	Control	69.45	b

Table 2. Spraying in the presence of disease; Variety: LCS Dagger AX/LCS Sol AX Blend

*Note: These data are preliminary and will be submitted for peer review in Winter 2025.

will continue our OWC funded work to spray rust tolerant varieties, and additional years of data will assist us in developing solid recommendations. In crop year 2024, we measured a ~20 bushel yield advantage in timely sprayed stripe rust susceptible cultivars (Table 2).

Stay tuned for further developments as we refine this research. We look forward to sharing additional data in the coming years. 

End-of-Year Financial Planning Critical for Farmers

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

As the year comes to a close, it is time for farmers to shift their focus to indoor tasks that are just as important as the time spent behind the wheel during harvest. End-of-year financial planning is critical to setting a solid foundation for the future and navigating the unique challenges of farming. By evaluating finances now, farmers can take advantage of available tax deductions, adjust debt management strategies, and prepare for future financial needs.

“My number one recommendation to any individual, especially farmers with businesses, is to prioritize good financial planning habits,” says Chris Cockburn, certified public accountant and partner at Cockburn & McClintock, LLC. “This starts with working with a professional. In all situations, it is easier to do the work on the front end when adjustments and decisions can be made versus waiting and having to work with what they have in front of them.” As the accountant for the Oregon Wheat Growers League and other agricultural clients, Cockburn understands the economic volatility of the industry and wants Oregon wheat growers to understand how proactive end-of-year financial planning can help ensure better stability and maximize profitability.

“There are an incredible number of unknowns that farmers face—market prices, unpredictable weather, global trade tensions, varying and sometimes unexpected input costs—and we can only plan for what we know. I encourage all farmers to be proactive, take advantage of that opportunity, and make a plan.”

Getting Started

Agronomist, mechanic, meteorologist, marketing specialist, environmental steward, electrician, HR manager, and more. Farmers do not need to be reminded of the multiple hats they wear daily to keep their operations running smoothly. But Cockburn wants to remind farmers that the financial planner hat does not have to be one of them.

“Being a successful business owner means knowing when to seek professional support. If you want to be in the business of being the best farmer you can be, that includes utilizing all of the tools and support available to you,” says Cockburn. “Adding a financial planning service to their toolbox helps farmers stay organized and be better equipped to make decisions.”

Whether working with a professional or tackling it

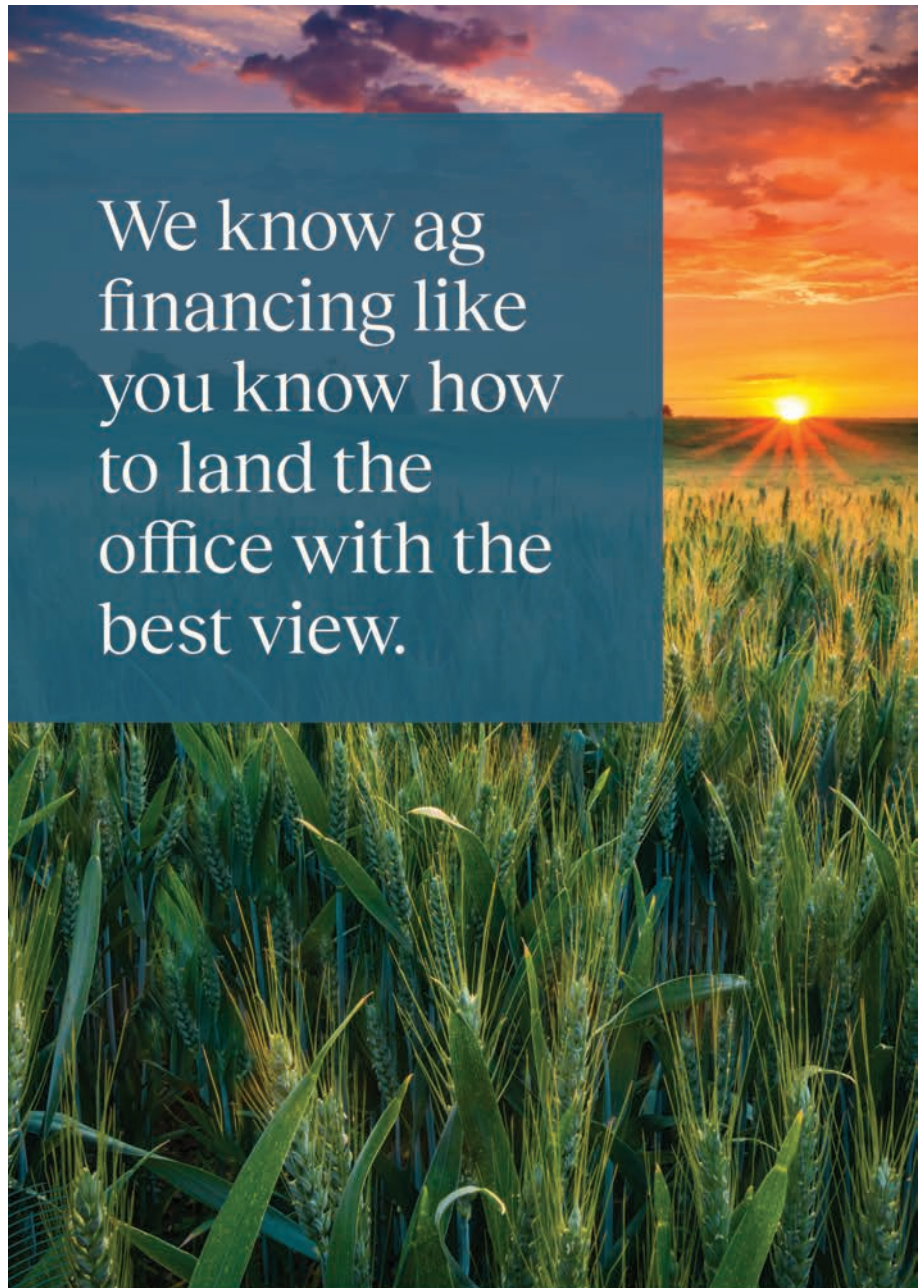
independently, end-of-year planning should start with organizing financial records and assessing the farm's overall financial health. This includes properly documenting all income and expenses, including receipts for seed, fertilizer, equipment, fuel, labor, and other operating costs. Accurate records prevent missed deductions and ensure compliance with the IRS. Next, farmers should update their balance sheets with current assets, liabilities, and owner equity. Take stock of current inventory and document any significant purchases or sales throughout the year, such as machinery, land, or vehicles.

Tax Considerations

Next, farmers should focus on leveraging their tax planning and make the following considerations:

- *Maximize possible key tax deductions:*
 - Section 179 deductions allow farmers to deduct the total purchase price of qualifying equipment and machinery up to a specific limit, which can reduce taxable income.
 - Prepaying expenses such as seed, fertilizer, and chemicals before the end of the year allows farmers to claim them as a deduction in the current tax year, which can be helpful if they anticipate a higher-than-usual tax burden.
 - Fuel and utility expenses.
 - Many farmers qualify for the QBI deduction, which allows up to 20% of net income from farm operations to be deducted, lowering taxable income.
- *Strategically time income and expenses:*
 - Deferring income, such as crop sales, can shift income to a lower-tax year if needed.
 - Similarly, advancing payments for next year's inputs or making timely, strategic equipment purchases


CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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allows farmers to take the deduction now, reducing taxable income this year.

- *Monitor upcoming tax law changes, including new and expiring tax laws (e.g., depreciation rules).*
- *Take advantage of agricultural tax credits:*
 - Review agricultural tax credits specific to Oregon, such as conservation credits, renewable energy credits, or incentives for environmental stewardship.
 - Farmers may be eligible for tax credits on fuel for farm equipment and machinery. Keep detailed records of fuel purchases and usage to claim these credits.

“When approaching year-end planning, it’s helpful to have accurate year-to-date records that include a summary of income sources and expenses by category and an estimate of what they expect to happen before the end of the year,” says Cockburn. “With that information, we can look ahead and

determine if they need to defer income, if possible, or speed up certain expenses before the end of the year.”

Long-Term Planning

While annual year-end financial planning is crucial for any farming operation, it is also vital that farmers consider long-term estate and succession planning to ensure that their farm can continue smoothly through generational transitions. This thoughtful planning helps safeguard a farm’s legacy and secures a more stable future for the families and communities that rely on these farms.

“I would also like to stress that a financially health farm also involves the support of an attorney. I know it can be an uncomfortable topic, but having an estate and succession plan in place is critical for any farming operation, especially for families,” says Cockburn. “I see many people making the mistake of not planning ahead, and it rarely ends well. It can lead to great stress and drama for those left to sort it out.”

A number of provisions from the Tax and Jobs Cuts Act related to deductions, tax rates, and lifetime gift/estate

What to Think About in the New Year?

With the end of the year and the new year approaching, here are a few additional items to consider about recent ag overtime changes:



The Oregon ag overtime tax credit reopens.

The 2024 application period opens on January 1, 2025, for the refundable personal and corporate income tax credit available to eligible employers for a portion of overtime paid to agricultural workers.



The threshold for paying overtime drops.

Starting January 1, 2025, employers will be required to pay overtime to agricultural workers after they work 48 hours in one workweek (currently 55 hours).




tax exemptions are scheduled to expire in 2025, unless Congressional action is taken. Producers should pay attention to these items and discuss with their financial planner and accountant, as appropriate.

Prioritizing Financial Health

The end of the year is indeed a time to take a breath, reflect, and hopefully celebrate another year of meaningful work surrounded by family and friends. But there is still work to be done to ensure a farm's financial health for the coming year.

In addition to tax planning considerations, further year-end planning includes looking at how farmers manage their debt and credit, forecasting for the upcoming year, and working on a budget that reflects realistic expectations and plans for cash flow projections. It can also include evaluating contributions to retirement and health savings accounts and reviewing a farm's risk management and insurance coverage.

Hiring a financial planner, especially one specializing in agriculture, can help farmers navigate year-end planning, ensure compliance, recommend farm-specific software, and build sound financial planning habits.

Ultimately, setting a solid foundation for the future and prioritizing planning for the farm's financial health contributes to prioritizing your and your family's physical and mental health. And that is one of the most important gifts you can give yourself to end the year. 



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Standing the Test of Time: Oregon Farms and Ranches Reach Century Farm Status

Providing recognition to farm families who have worked the same land for at least 100 years, the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program announced its 2024 recipients. Included in those achieving century or sesquicentennial farm status this year are several current or past members of the Oregon Wheat Growers League.

- **Chapin Ag Lands:** Founded in Marion County in 1924 by Luther John Chapin.
- **Turner Ranch:** Established in Heppner in Morrow County in 1884 by R.W. and Mary May Turner.
- **Villwock Farm:** Established in 1910 in the Salt Creek area near Dallas in Polk County by Julius Villwock.
- **W.H. Grace Ranch:** Founded in Malheur County in 1903 by W.N. & Musa Grace.
- **Wade Ranch:** Founded in Wallowa County in 1874 by Samuel & Louisa Wade. (sesquicentennial status)

The Oregon Wheat Foundation provides funding to the Oregon Century Farms and Ranches program, to help recognize those who have primarily farmed wheat or used it in their rotation. The program is a testament to the fortitude of Oregon farmers and ranchers. We commend all the farm and ranch families recognized this year. Additional farms awarded century or sesquicentennial status were Austin Farm, Douglas County; E.M. Cap Waterman Farm, Coos County; Borgard Family Farm, Coos County; Flanagan Farms, Inc, Lane County; G Bar S Ranch, Washington County; Gulick Cattle Co, Baker County; Lyda Farm, Washington County; R & B Farms, Douglas County; Shady Place, LLC, Polk County; Shiver River, LLC, Benton County; and Martha A. Maupin Farm, Douglas County.

The program is administered by the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation. More information is available at www.centuryfarm.oregonfb.org 

Nitrogen Fertility in Spring and Winter Wheat with Biofertilizers

Jacob Powell, OSU Agricultural Extension Faculty, Wasco/Sherman Counties

Over the last decade the number of biological products being marketed to farmers has grown considerably. Many of these products are developed in the Midwest where crops are grown in shorter seasons than winter wheat and receive double to triple the rain received in Eastern Oregon. Due to these significant differences, more research is needed to help wheat producers understand the benefits or costs of using these biological products. In seeking to assist growers interested in biofertilizer applications, the Commission funded research to determine the impact these biofertilizers have on wheat in Eastern Oregon in relation to grain yield, grain protein and test weight, nitrogen tissue levels and nitrogen uptake, and post harvest soil nutrients. As part of this research, I evaluated two common biofertilizer products: Envita and Fresh Tracks Universal Microbes (FT).



The term “biofertilizer” refers to a biological product with free-living bacteria and fungi that when applied to crops may enhance nutrient cycling and increase nutrient availability for crop use. Envita is a biofertilizer produced by Azotic North America LTD that contains a naturally occurring bacteria that fixes nitrogen for crops from nitrogen in the air. Envita is applied as a foliar spray and enters wheat through openings in the leaves. Fresh Tracks Universal Microbes (FT) is a biofertilizer produced by Fresh Tracks LLC. FT contains 10 different strains of bacteria that may increase nitrogen, sulfur, and phosphorus availability. It can be mixed in with seed or applied as a foliar spray.

Trial Locations and Methods

Envita and FT were tested in winter and spring wheat with variable fertilizer rates at the Sherman Station in Moro, OR. Both FT and Envita were also examined in an on-farm trial hosted by Noah Williams near Moro, OR. Envita was also tested in spring wheat under five different nitrogen fertilizer rates at the Pendleton Station near Adams, OR. Treatments were replicated four times at each location. Envita was applied as a foliar spray following label instructions in spring of 2023 when wheat was in the 4 to 6 leaf stage. FT

Commission Funding:

FY 2023/2024: \$15,000, FY 2024/2025: \$13,848

Project summary:

Biofertilizers refer to a type of biological product that contains free living microbes that can increase nutrient availability for crop use. Many of these products are being marketed to farmers with limited research by manufactures and often research focuses on high valued crops, such as corn in the Midwest. The objective of this research during the 2023 crop year was to determine if two biological products, Fresh Tracks Universal Microbes and Envita, can be effective in Eastern Oregon and if they can provide wheat producers with a return on investment. The impact of these biofertilizers on grain yield, grain quality, post harvest soil nutrients, and nitrogen concentration and uptake in wheat were examined. Trials in 2023 were located near Moro, OR at the Sherman Experiment Station (winter and spring wheat) and at an on farm trial hosted by Noah Williams (winter wheat). A spring wheat trial was also located at the Pendleton Experiment Station near Adams, OR. The Oregon Wheat Commission funded additional research during the 2024 crop year that is still being analyzed. One more year of research is planned during the 2025 crop year.

was mixed in with seed for winter wheat and applied as a foliar spray on spring wheat when it was at spike stage. Tissue samples were collected when wheat was in the hard dough stage. Yield and grain quality was determined for each treatment. Soil sampling occurred in August and sampled the top foot for nitrogen, sulfur, pH, organic matter, phosphorus, and potassium.

Results and Discussion

Envita significantly increased nitrogen concentration and uptake in spring wheat at the Sherman Station. All other variables did not show a statistically significant response to biofertilizer treatment, though soil nutrients significantly increased with fertilizer rate. Envita did not generate a yield response or positive return on investment (Figure 1). FT applied without any added nitrogen fertilizer did not influence yield, but provided the greatest return on investment, at \$25/

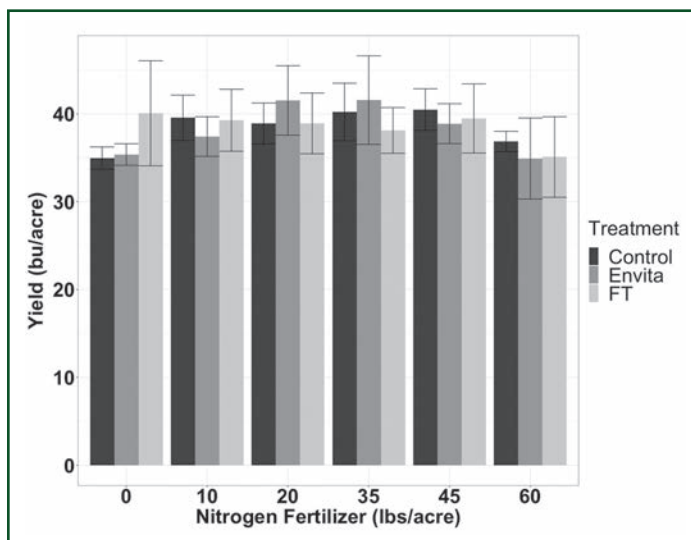


Figure 1. Average yield for spring wheat at the Sherman Experiment Station in 2023 treated with Envita, Fresh Tracks Universal Microbes (FT), and control, under 6 different urea fertilizer rates indicated by lbs of nitrogen per acre. Error bars represent one standard error.

acre more than the untreated control at the same fertilizer rate (including the cost for FT).

At the Pendleton Station, grain test weight in spring wheat was significantly reduced by Envita where no nitrogen was applied compared to the control at the same fertilizer rate. Return on investment and other examined variables were not significantly influenced by Envita, though nitrogen uptake and soil nutrients significantly increased with fertilizer rate.

Biofertilizers did not produce a significant response to any of the examined variables in winter wheat at the Sherman Station. This trial differed from the others in that fertilizer rates were not varied at the same levels for each treatment. The untreated control received 60 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer, while treatments with FT and Envita were tested with 45 lbs



Spring wheat trial at the Sherman Experiment Station in Moro, OR in 2023.

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and 0 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer. While this provided some good initial data, it limited our statistical analysis, and results should be taken with a grain of salt. Envita applied to wheat with no applied nitrogen fertilizer (90 lbs of residual nitrogen) resulted in a yield increase of 11 bu/acre compared to control plots receiving 60 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer. However, this response was largely impacted by drought development that caused the control to be over fertilized with 150 lbs of available nitrogen, yielding only 32 bu/acre. The increased yield without any applied nitrogen generated an additional return on investment of \$121/acre (including the cost of Envita), though this response was largely influenced by drought conditions. FT applied with no nitrogen fertilizer did not increase yield compared to the control with 60 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer. However, the FT treatment provided a return on investment of \$30/acre more than the control due to the reduced input costs. Envita and FT applied with 45 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer yielded the same as the control with 60 lbs of nitrogen.

Biofertilizers did not generate a significant response in the on-farm trial. Envita increased wheat yield by only 1 bushel compared to FT and control treatments and did not provide a return on investment.

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Conclusion

Overall, this research found that Envita can significantly increase nitrogen concentration in spring wheat, but this response does not translate into a yield or grain quality response. Similarly, FT did not significantly change the variables examined. Return on investment was positive for FT and Envita in only one of the four trials and was only where input costs were dramatically reduced without any nitrogen fertilizer applied. These returns would also be lower with current fertilizer prices that have lowered considerably since the trial was seeded in 2022. In addition, these treatments without added nitrogen still had 70 to 90 lbs of residual nitrogen in the soil, which was more than enough during drought conditions. Biofertilizers may have had a more significant impact in 2023 if drought had not developed. However, trials in 2024 during a more average crop year also did not find a significant yield response. Results from 2024 trials are still being analyzed and another year of research is planned in 2025. Producers should not expect a consistent response with using current biofertilizers.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Oregon Wheat Commission for funding for this research. Thanks also to the tremendous support from Don Wysocki, Alan Wernsing, Ryan Graebner, Christina Hagerty, Kyle Bender, and Noah Williams who provided significant assistance with planting and harvesting trials. 🌾



Spring wheat trial being harvested at the Pendleton Experiment Station in 2023 with plot combine operated by Christina Hagerty and grain samples being taken by Alan Wernsing with assistance from Umatilla Extension interns.

Safeguarding the Lifeline of the Pacific Northwest: The Columbia River System

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

The Columbia-Snake River system extends 465 miles from Lewiston, Ida., to export elevators as far west as Longview, Wash. It is one of the most vital lifelines for countless farmers, businesses, and communities in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and those across the United States who depend on the river's navigable waterways to transport their goods efficiently and economically. It is why the debates surrounding the river system have continued in full force for decades, fueled by complex, interwoven issues that impact communities, industries, and ecosystems alike.

Advocates for dam removal have pointed to environmental concerns, particularly the need to protect and restore fish populations. While these issues are important, the calls to dismantle the dams forego consideration of other factors. More importantly to Oregon wheat growers, it fails to account for the long-term, critical damage that removing the dams would have on the region's agricultural infrastructure,

economic stability, and trade opportunities.

"The multi-faceted debate regarding the Columbia-Snake River system continues to persist," says Anthony Peña, government relations manager with the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, a key advocate for maintaining the dams. "Currently, there are three discussions that I recommend Oregon wheat growers keep their eyes on: calls to remove the four Lower Snake River Dams, funding maintenance, and the Columbia River Treaty."

Lower Snake River Dams

With its series of federal locks and dams, the river system provides the cleanest, most efficient, and most affordable way to transport wheat globally. The PNW, including Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, exports 80% of its wheat production, of which 65% is moved to port via the Columbia-Snake River system.

However, the river system's role is national. As the nation's top wheat export gateway, the region sees over 50% of U.S. wheat exports moving by either barge or rail. An estimated 10% of those total exports pass through the four Lower Snake River Dams. And that just covers wheat. More than 60 million tons of cargo, worth more than \$78 billion, moves in international trade through PNW ports.

"This is a national issue because their [the dams] removal would have enormous national implications for not only agriculture but across several industries," explains Peña. "We also need to emphasize how serious this threat is because it would not end with the Columbia-Snake River system. It would set a precedent for other U.S. navigable waters."

Removing the dams would force a shift to rail and trucking, but neither infrastructure is equipped to handle the increased capacity efficiently. Barging is also the lowest-emission transportation method for large volumes of wheat, reducing the carbon footprint of the agricultural supply chain. In addition to transportation, the Columbia-Snake River system is a multi-use resource that benefits irrigation systems crucial for agriculture and has an essential role in producing clean, renewable energy through hydropower.

Maintenance

Part of safeguarding the Columbia-Snake River system is proactively caring for the river channel and its facilities. Maintenance dredging to keep the draft below authorized levels is an ongoing and costly task. While draft restrictions are temporarily lifted, their return would cost stakeholders millions.

Ongoing maintenance also includes work on its pile dike and jetty structures that help stabilize the channel and manage water flow and sediment. This work helps ensure safe passage for vessels entering and exiting the river and helps preserve aquatic ecosystems.

"It takes a lot of careful coordination and funding to protect the river systems infrastructure and keep everything open and working efficiently," says Peña. "But this is essential work. The Columbia-Snake River system is vital to many industries, and for U.S. wheat growers, it is a key factor in their competitive advantage in overseas markets. There is not an alternative."


Columbia River Treaty

The Columbia River Treaty was a pivotal agreement signed in 1961 between the United States and Canada that long governed the development and operation of dams in the upper Columbia River basin for power generation and flood control. Recently, the two nations reached an "agreement in principle" to modernize the treaty to address current economic and environmental priorities. For Oregon wheat growers, who depend on the river for irrigation and as a primary transportation route, the treaty's modernization will help ensure consistent water flow, energy resources, and trade stability.



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"An agreement in principle means that a framework for a future agreement has been established, and there is a consensus on key aspects," says Peña. "However, in reality, there is still a lot to negotiate. We are operating under an interim plan, but this is a long process, creating uncertainty that could impact navigators and irrigators."

Advocacy Continues

The Oregon wheat industry does not support the removal of dams. Preserving the Columbia-Snake River system is vital for the health of the U.S. wheat supply chain and PNW communities. Peña explains that while it is a complex topic, it's one that everyone can find common ground on.

"Really, this is a nonpartisan issue. We see members of both parties understanding the importance of the river system because the consequences of interrupting it would have too great of an impact," says Peña. "Ultimately, the dams are federally authorized, so removal would require an act of Congress."

Still, as the river system's integrity is discussed year after year, it is frustrating that efforts to interrupt it continue to arise. This is why, says Peña, it is imperative to continue advocating for the river system and encourage others to tell their stories and do the same. 

Turning Up the Social Media Heat in the Annual Oregon Wheat Photo Contest

Sharing photos of Oregon wheat operations is a key method of connecting with audiences- from those involved intimately connected with wheat operations from the cab of a combine to those who have not yet seen a wheat field in person. The annual photo contest is one of many ways we receive organic content for social media platforms and can help share progress from the crop.

This year's Oregon Wheat photo contest saw an incredible set of submissions from photographers around the state. We would like to thank all those who took part in the contest: Cathy Brown, Kari Pinkerton Silcox, Kathy McCullough, Kyle and Melissa Weimar, Madison Rea, Nathan Rea, Paul

Bird, EmmaLee Demianew, Rachel Murry, Skylan Myers and Theresa Peterson. Each participant received an Oregon wheat mug as a token of appreciation and the winning entry was eligible to receive a free tri-state convention registration or Oregon wheat swag bag. The winning entry, appearing on the front cover of the magazine, was submitted by Emma Lee Demianew.

We encourage submissions for next year's contest as well, so keep capturing those shots out in the field in 2025. In the meantime, find us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram and take a look through an amazing wheat year with the photo contributions to the 2024 contest. 🌾



Rachel Murry, DJM Farms, Washington County



Theresa Peterson, Photo from Will Ford Farms, Wasco County



Paul Bird, WK Ranch and Joe Danielson, Sherman County



Kari Pinkerton Silcox, Lonerock Ranch, Sherman County



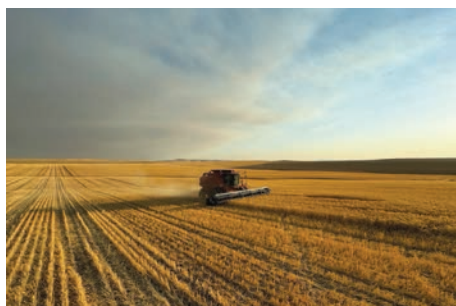
Madison Rea, Rea Farms, Morrow County



Kathy McCullough, 4M Farms, Sherman County



Nathan Rea, HT Rea Farming, Umatilla County



Skylan Myers, Generation Farms, Morrow County



Kyle and Melissa Weimar, Weimar Ranch, Wasco County



Cathy Brown, WB Ranch, Sherman County

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A Formal Dedication: SRC Shaker Makes its Debut at the Wheat Marketing Center


While dedications often involve a confetti of streamers, the most recent equipment dedication at the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) involved the confetti of quality flour. In October, following a board meeting of the WMC, members gathered at the lab in Portland to formally dedicate the new Solvent Retention Capacity (SRC) shaker.

Funded through the Pacific Northwest Wheat Commissions, the automated SRC Shaker is designed to improve consistency of results in test data used in predicting flour quality. WMC Chair Ron Williams highlighted the importance of Commission investments to enhance equipment in the lab and address the needs of customers. As Director of International Grains with Columbia Grain International, Williams clearly sees the impact of this work in supporting markets around the world and he took the opportunity to thank wheat producers for their investments in the future of the industry. He and WMC Executive Director Mike Moran discussed the foresight of Mr. Roy Chung, previous U.S. Wheat Associates Bakery Consultant, and WMC technical Director Jayne Bock in securing the equipment.

Among those present for the dedication was the Oregon Wheat Commission's new representative to the WMC board, Brent Martin. In reflecting on the event, Martin noted "I last visited the Wheat Marketing Center during a Grower Workshop hosted by the Commission. It is impressive to see the advancement in lab equipment since that time, the




Dedicating the SRC Shaker at the Wheat Marketing Center. L to R: Jayne Bock (WMC), Wayne Hurst (Idaho Wheat Commissioner), Brent Martin (Oregon Wheat Commission), Brit Ausman (Washington Grain Commissioner), and Ron Williams (WMC Chair).

sophistication of the technical team at Wheat Marketing Center and everything that goes into defining wheat quality." Martin highlighted the value of funding from the Commission, noting that "with a small investment we can help reduce staff fatigue, increase efficiency and enhance consistency of the results by removing the manual method in favor of the equipment." 

Farm Bill: Take Action with the NAWG Campaign

There is no time to waste when getting a farm bill passed this year. As Congress returns for the 'lame duck' session after the election, they must continue to hear from growers about the need to get a robust Farm Bill passed. The Oregon Wheat Growers League encourages all our producers to check out the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) new 2024 Farm Bill advocacy campaign urging Congress to work to pass a long-term bipartisan farm bill this year.

Wheat farmers play a crucial role in helping sustain our rural communities and feeding the world. To help feed families here and abroad, we, as farmers, must overcome challenges related to weather, price volatility, increased input costs, market uncertainty, and other factors. The farm bill plays an integral part in helping mitigate these risks. However, farmers have faced historic challenges in recent years, and

the reauthorization of the farm bill in 2024 presents Congress with an opportunity to strengthen the farm safety net, bolster trade, expand conservation practice adoption, and support American farmers and families. The stakes are high. The 2023 reauthorization has turned into a 2024 reauthorization, and we can't afford to wait longer. Act now and ask your elected officials to pass a robust farm bill that supports wheat growers and rural America! It only takes a minute to add your voice. Scan the QR code or visit <https://wheatworld.org/campaign/2024-farm-bill-advocacy-campaign/> 



High Functionality for Soft White: Quality of Grain Reflected in 2025 Report


The much-anticipated 2024 crop quality analysis is complete, with results being communicated to Oregon Wheat customers around the world. The product of an intensive effort through the state wheat Commissions, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), Wheat Marketing Center (WMC), Plains Grains Inc, and North Dakota State University, quality reports are used to engage with major markets.

“The report provides essential, objective information to help buyers get the wheat they need at the best value possible,” notes USW. The data is a result of samples collected during and following harvest, with analysis completed by partnering labs. For Oregon, the sample collection process requires engagement and support from local elevators, grain handlers, and NQI, a private organization. We appreciate their efforts to ensure we have a representative sample set. Samples are sent to lab partners for milling and quality testing, with the WMC conducting the soft white analysis. Official grades are determined by the USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS).

Following a complete analysis, the final report is prepared. Publication of the annual crop quality report includes essential information used by buyers- covering grade, flour data, end-product data for all six of the USW classes. A full publication from USW compiles all the wheat class information and is


made available in multiple languages. WMC publishes a separate PNW Soft White wheat report to provide additional information specific to understanding the versatility and reliability of the soft white wheat crop.

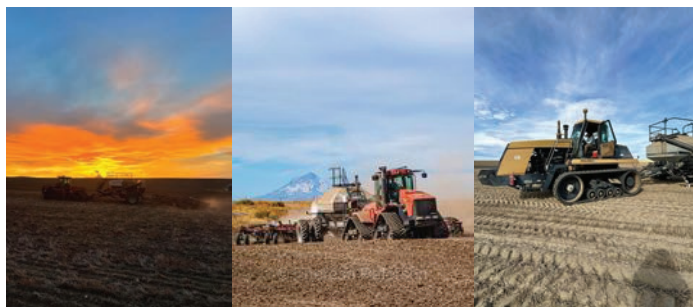
For customers, the 2024 Pacific Northwest soft white crop represents a typical protein distribution, appropriate gluten strength, and good functionality. Protein was the main question received by customers as this year’s crop was lower than the five year average and had a large swing from the high protein year last year. Noting the functionality of the grain and the carryover available from last year provides assurances to the market.

Production of the reports is followed by crop quality seminars to present the findings and engage with markets. Cereal scientists, market analysts, wheat Commission executives, USW staff and wheat producers are travelling to deliver the information on wheat class quality analysis. USW notes that “These seminars are essential for building trust and strengthening relationships with global customers by providing timely and accurate information during face-to-face meetings.” The meetings allow USW to convey a message on consistent quality and delivery. Find the information online at <https://www.uswheat.org/crop-quality/> 

Winter Wheat Seeding Rings in the New Crop Year

Despite dry conditions in much of the state for planting, additional precipitation received post-seeding continues to provide optimism for next year’s crop. According to USDA National Ag Statistical Service data, Oregon’s winter wheat planting occurred slightly ahead of the five-year timeline

average, with emergence also tracking ahead of the five-year average. Pictures of operations were received sun-up to sun-down from wheat producers getting the 2025 winter wheat crop in the ground. 



L to R: Photos from Zach Blaylock, Theresa Peterson, Jill Martin



L to R: Photos from Josh Duling, Josh Macnab


Supporting the Next Generation of Ag: Oregon Wheat Scholarship Now Open!

The Oregon Wheat Foundation announces the opening of its 2025 scholarship program, which aims to support high school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, leadership skills, and a commitment to their communities and are interested in furthering their education. Up to twelve \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors who are enrolling in a University, Community College or an accredited vocational or technical program.

The scholarship program has been central to the purpose of the Oregon Wheat Foundation since it was formed in 1980. Foundation Board Chair Tom Winn is an advocate for the value of the investments to the next generation of ag leaders. “The scholarship program plays an important role in supporting a group of talented and inspiring group of students each year. They are our future, and I am pleased to open the application process this year to contribute to their future success,” he noted. The Foundation scholarship fund is supported through generous grower contributions and through annual fundraising efforts at the tri-state grain convention auction.

Those contributions are essential, notes Chair Winn, and support the broader objectives for the industry. “The Oregon Wheat scholarship isn’t just about providing financial support to individual students; it’s about investing in the overall future of our industry.”

Scholarship recipients are selected based on school and community involvement, scholastic performance, and an essay on the wheat industry. Eligible individuals include graduating high school seniors who are children of a grower member of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, or whose parent/guardian is employed by a grower member of the Oregon Wheat Growers League. The scholarship is also open to students who have worked seasonally for grower members. ***Deadline to apply for the 2025 Oregon Wheat Foundation Scholarships is February 1, 2025.***

The Foundation looks forward to supporting our future agriculture leaders. For more details about the scholarship and the application process, visit www.oregonwheatfoundation.org. 

Farmer Directors Elect Mike Spier as President and CEO of USW


In November U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) directors elected Mike Spier as the organization’s next President and CEO, effective with the retirement of current President and CEO Vince Peterson on July 1, 2025. “I am deeply honored and humbled to be elected to this position and grateful to our officers and directors for their trust and confidence,” said Spier. “I am also immensely grateful to Vince Peterson, whose vision and dedication have laid a durable foundation for future success.”

Spier is an Oregon native who has a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Seattle Pacific University. He started his career in 1992 as an accountant and then a grain merchandiser with United Grain Corporation in Portland, Ore. In 1997, he joined USW as Assistant Director of the West Coast Office. Spier then worked in the Cairo, Egypt office before transferring to Manila, Philippines and then to USW’s Singapore Regional Office. In 2015, Spier transitioned to Columbia Grain International Inc. (CGI) as Assistant Vice President of International Marketing, establishing CGI’s Singapore office for marketing international milling wheat in Southeast Asia. In 2018, he moved to the company’s headquarters in Portland, Oregon to lead CGI’s international wheat marketing desk. In 2019, Spier returned to USW as Vice President of Overseas Operations.

Oregon Wheat congratulates Mike Spier on his promotion and appreciates the opportunity to continue working with an individual who is trusted and respected by our international wheat customers. USW is in a strong position to address the challenges we face ahead. The Commission extends appreciation to Vince Peterson for his leadership to USW. His vision has helped further secure export markets critical to our producers.



Vince Peterson (L) and Mike Spier (R)

Throughout his career, Spier has gained expertise in grain merchandising, international wheat trading, market analysis, risk management and hedging, logistics, execution, and negotiation of ocean freight contracts. He has traveled to more than 50 countries, implementing wheat export market development activities, providing insight into the U.S. and world wheat markets, and assisting buyers with wheat contract terms to meet price and quality expectations. 

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