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OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry

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Wade Bingaman

President

MY TWO CENTS WORTH



So far, spring has treated us kindly in Northeast Oregon; I hope that farmers around the state are experiencing growing conditions conducive to a record crop. With the prices that we have seen so far in 2024, we are going to need it. At this time of year, I am often overwhelmed with everything that needs to get done, without enough time in the day to do it. Farming gives us freedom during downtime to do things that we enjoy, but for me, when the work needs to be done, all that takes a backseat to the job. Much to the dismay of my family sometimes, it is usually on a weekend that the weather finally breaks and that's what we must do.

Our spring, summer and fall are consumed with growing and taking care of the crop that we have spent the year producing, but Mother Nature has a way of reminding us of who is really in charge. I don't know of any occupation that relies so heavily on weather to earn a living. Most farmers can tell you what the weather is going to do for the next week as well as any meteorologist. Storms can wipe out a crop that we have worked so hard to grow in a matter of minutes. There is a quote that I often think of from Mike Tyson that says, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth". Farmers get punched in the mouth in different ways all year long. It's how we respond to them that separates us from the rest. We keep going.

When I travel in Oregon, I can't help but notice what a unique landscape we have. Wheat grows in all types of conditions, and we see many of them right here in our own state. Some farmers pray for a tenth of an inch of rain to help make their crop, while others build ditches to drain excess water away. That is part of the reason that I enjoy working with farmers around our state; no matter what we grow and how, most often our interests are alike. When we advocate for wheat, we are advocating for every farmer in Oregon.

In March, Past President Collin Crocker and Amanda Hoey attended the NAWG meeting in Houston, held during the Commodity Classic. Committee meetings had important discussions with our industry partners about the future of the industry, the impacts of foreign land ownership, opportunities for alternative crops, the challenges of EPA regulations and how to

shape policy moving forward. From both an offensive and defensive angle, NAWG's Board of Directors did some critical work at the annual meeting ahead of Farm Bill committee markup discussions. The meetings in Houston also provided an opportunity to recognize outgoing NAWG President, Brent Cheyne, who has also been an advocate for every farmer in Oregon, while advocating for every wheat farmer in the U.S. I want to thank Brent for the significant time he put into his role at NAWG and the dedication to ensuring we have a better industry and prospects ahead.

We are trying something new this year, hosting a Legislative Wheat Workshop, to highlight wheat product development, research, quality testing and marketing. Like the annual Grower Workshop in Portland, we will take legislators on an afternoon tour of the Wheat Marketing Center to talk about the work that is done there, demonstrating a pilot scale production line of how Oregon wheat quality and functionality translates to expansive international markets for our wheat customers. Following the lab visit, we will see grain flow with a tour of an export facility to understand how product gets to millers and food manufacturers around the world. I am excited about this opportunity to spend time with lawmakers and help show them the importance of the crop we grow and its significance to Oregon's economy.

Thank you to all that hosted, sponsored, and attended the county meetings held around the state. They are a great way to learn about changes in the industry and the work that the Oregon Wheat Growers League has done throughout the year. I always go into any meeting looking to pick up at least one thing that sticks with me. I hope that you have had a productive spring with some timely rains mixed in there and wish you a safe and abundant harvest; hopefully without too many punches thrown at you along the way.



Engaging Conversations Through Wheat Talks

Jason Flowers, Program Director

The Wheat Talk series allows members of the Oregon Wheat Growers League to hear from researchers, agency staff, and industry leaders on topics that affect their operations, but they are more than that. While it is a venue where information is received, it also allows participants to share their perspectives with presenters, initiating conversations that can lead to positive outcomes. The series this spring consisted of four Wheat Talks.

Our first one occurred in February with Danielle Lightle, the IR4 Specialty Crops Pesticide Registration Research Leader from Oregon State University. She presented on current pesticide restrictions from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and how to navigate Bulletins Live Two. With little information being previously distributed on the topic, this talk was helpful for producers who apply their own pesticides. As the EPA finalizes the Herbicide Strategy and Vulnerable Species Pilot, look for more educational opportunities.

The next Wheat Talk in the series focused on the NRCS CSP application and scoring process. Misty Beals, the C-Program Specialist with Oregon NRCS, presented information on the steps that applicants and staff must take to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program. She then walked through the complexities of the scoring, giving participants knowledge on what affects their ranking.

In May, we received a disease update from Christina Hagerty, Associate Professor in Oregon State University's Cereal Pathology Department. She informed growers of the current challenges faced by stripe rust. This was timely information given the current disease pressures on the 2024 wheat crop.



Wrapping up the series for the spring, we will welcome Darcy Sexson, Relationship Manager at AgWest Farm Credit's Pendleton office, in June. She will share information on inflation and interest rates and their effects on operations.

As we seek to support producers navigating these challenging times, we welcome your participation in the Wheat Talks; either live during the event or viewing them on our website at www.owgl.org. 

Wheat Groups Welcome New Funding for Food Assistance

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

USDA and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will invest \$1 billion in Commodity Credit Corporation funding to provide for the purchase, shipment,

and distribution of U.S. wheat and other commodities for USAID international food assistance programming.

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


to be a reliable source of food for the world.”

USW and NAWG thanked Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack for releasing the new funds that will directly benefit wheat farmers and people affected by hunger in several countries. Additionally, the organizations thanked Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and John Boozman (R-AR) for a letter they sent to Vilsack this past fall formally requesting additional support for food assistance.

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

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

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

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



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Columbia River “Returns To Service”

Oregon, Idaho and Washington wheat commissions and producer associations recently extended their gratitude to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the exemplary coordination and effective communication between the Portland and Walla Walla Districts during extended lock closures along the Columbia River system.


A planned extended closure of five locks on the Columbia and Snake Rivers was executed from January through March of this year. The routine maintenance performed on the locks and dams helps ensure the safe, efficient, and ongoing delivery of essential services provided by the Columbia-Snake River system. The Corps states that the locks and dams have now fully returned to service.

This collaborative effort ensured minimal disruption to vital river transportation for the movement of wheat. By coordinating between districts to minimize closure time and communicating proactively with stakeholders, the Corps enabled the industry to work seamlessly with markets. The early communication facilitated:

- Pre-positioning the maximum number of barges to load wheat before the extended closing.
- Moving more rail cars and locomotives into the region to manage increased demand from rail-loading interior elevators.
- Pre-positioning additional soft white and club in Columbia River district export elevators before the closure.
- Loading soft white in barges from elevators below the John Day dam during the closure.
- Coordinating truck delivery.

- Engaging with customers to discuss the timing of their wheat purchases.


This coordination helped safeguard the Pacific Northwest wheat industry’s interests. Mr. Sergio Morales, Director of Molino San Cristobal flour mill in Chile, said “for the United States to continue to be a competitive supplier for our company, the transportation system that feeds the Columbia-Snake River system must continue working in a stable and efficient way.” This regular maintenance helps assure continued and uninterrupted service. Similar comments were reflected by Mr. Ric Pinca, Executive Director, Philippine Association of Flour Millers. “As I have traveled to the United States and seen its robust supply chain from the farm to inland elevators, the railroads and barges along the Snake and Columbia rivers, and finally to its export facilities, it has become clear to me how each piece is essential to maintain the reliability and competitiveness of the U.S. wheat supply which is critically important for Filipino flour mills and consumers.”

The work completed during the planned extended closure underscores the critical role that navigation locks and dams play in maintaining our international competitiveness. Wheat producers in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington rely heavily on the Columbia-Snake River system. Approximately 80% of wheat produced in the three Pacific Northwest states is exported overseas each year, and 65% of those exports are barged downriver, making reliable transportation essential to the livelihoods of PNW wheat growers. We appreciate the work of the Corps to keep a flow of trade that allows us to be the reliable supplier of quality wheat to the world. 

Wheat Representative Takes Seat on Eastern Oregon Solar Rulemaking Committee

Thad Eakin, Secretary/Treasurer of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, assumes a pivotal role with his appointment to the Eastern Oregon solar rulemaking committee. This appointment, stemming from the directives of House Bill 3409 enacted in 2023, signifies a crucial step towards addressing the complexities surrounding the siting of photovoltaic solar power generation facilities in the region.

House Bill 3409 tasked the Land Conservation and Development Commission with formulating administrative

rules aimed at reducing conflicts in the solar siting process, with a specific focus on eastern Oregon. Over the course of the next year, the committee will delve into various aspects of solar power facility siting, including land use compatibility, environmental impact assessments, and stakeholder consultations. Impacts to productive wheat lands will be central to the conversation. Eakin will be central to the conversation in addressing complex issues at the intersection of agriculture and renewable energy. 


McNary Dam: A Key in Navigating the Columbia River

Jason Flowers, Program Director

Members of the Oregon Wheat Growers League and staff had the opportunity to tour McNary Dam with U.S. Representative Cliff Bentz and his staff in April. The tour was led by the dedicated team at Walla Walla Corps of Engineers and included representatives of Umatilla Electric, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, and other local officials.

“We were pleased to be invited to participate in this tour. It allowed us to showcase the functionality of the Columbia-Snake River System and its importance to wheat producers in our state,” stated League Program Director Jason Flowers. A couple of wheat producers also joined the tour, discussing the

ability for farms to remain competitive in the global market. “I appreciate Representative Bentz’s efforts to keep our dams operating in a capacity that allows for safe navigation of wheat up and down the river,” said Vice President Erin Hansell Heideman.

The tour showcased the dams’ value in power generation and allowing for the most efficient mode of transporting wheat to market. U.S. Army Corp of Engineers personnel also elaborated on measures that have been taken to ensure that fish passage survival rates are exceeding 95%. 




Feeding the Economy: Wheat Growers Among Key Contributors to New Study

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), along with more than thirty other food and agriculture organizations, unveiled the eighth annual Feeding the Economy report. This farm-to-fork economic analysis is aimed at quantifying the direct and indirect contributions of the food and agriculture sectors to the nation’s economic vitality. The 2024 report unveils compelling insights, revealing an impressive increase in the total economic impact of food and agriculture-related industries over the past year, soaring to a staggering \$9.63 trillion. This figure now constitutes a formidable 20% slice of the entire U.S. output, underscoring the sector’s pivotal role in driving economic prosperity.

Delving deeper, the report highlights key indicators of growth:

- Total Jobs: Surging to 48,665,870.
- Total Wages: Reaching an astounding \$2.77 trillion.
- Total Taxes: Reflecting a robust \$1.25 trillion.
- Exports: Though experiencing a slight dip of 2.70% to \$181.36 billion compared to 2020, showcasing the sector’s global reach and resilience.

NAWG was amongst some of the sponsors of this groundbreaking study. NAWG’s involvement underscores its commitment to fostering economic understanding within the wheat farming community and beyond. 



Oregon Wheat: Beyond Feeding the World

Dana Tuckness

OWC Chair

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

“Oregon Wheat Feeds the World”. That phrase promoting Oregon wheat has been around as long as I can remember, and a truer statement could not be made. There may be an addendum to that phrase, though. How about, “Oregon Wheat Educates” or “Oregon Wheat Stimulates Excitement in the Classroom”. Oregon Wheat has been involved in promoting education for many years, with the Oregon Wheat Foundation offering up to 12 county scholarships annually, to help high school seniors further their education. However, other ways to educate were recently brought to my attention.

A couple weeks ago my wife, Kathy, an SLP (Speech, Language Pathologist) in the local schools came home very excited about a breakthrough with a struggling middle school student. The breakthrough came via a coffee can of soft white wheat taken off our combine last harvest season. The wheat was placed in a flat Tupperware container and the second the lid was taken off, the four students in the classroom immediately began asking questions (along with speech issues many of the kids she works with are afraid to ask questions). Q1: What is that? A: Wheat, Q2: Where did you get it? A: My husband’s farm, Q3: Did he get mad when you took it? A: No, Q4: Do you have a combine? A: Yes, Q: 5 Does it have one of those pointy things on the front? A: Yes, we have a corn head but don’t use it harvesting wheat.

After the initial barrage of questions, their hands immediately went into the wheat. It was a bit messy, but the kids loved it! Sensory is important as many students learn by touching; it helps them stay focused. Kathy worked one-on-one, hiding things in the wheat for them to find. The student she was most excited about was learning to pronounce the planets. He would dig through the wheat and find a picture of a planet and then they would work on pronunciation. One of the students even drew a thank you card and left it on my wife’s desk at the end of the day. All the kids met their goals that day. A major role was played by a couple of pounds of good ol’ Oregon wheat!

On the Commission side of things, it is budget season, which has been the main focus of the last meetings in April and May. Your Oregon Wheat Commission (OWC) remains in good financial shape, even though 2023 was a very tough year for yields. Not a lot of changes to the budget, even though as everyone knows, costs of everything are soaring with inflation.

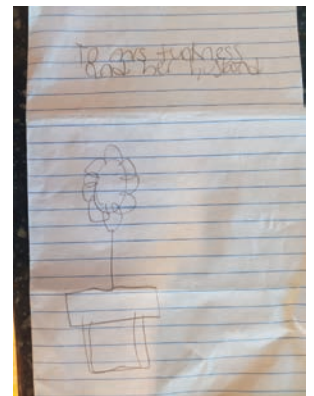
The OWC continues to squeeze the most out of your nickel that we can. Keeping expenses at a minimum while trying to give the growers as much benefit as possible. We have several trade teams coming to the area this season to meet with growers and experience in-person how our wheat is grown and sent to market. It is hard to put a dollar amount on the value of these visits but if you could, it would be tremendous. There are also upcoming overseas visits by Commissioners and staff as well as U.S. Wheat Associates. Once again, hard to put a number on, but benefits to the grower far outweigh the cost. As far as research goes, the biggest chunk of funds are going to the OSU breeding program where we now have Dr. Margaret Krause in place for her first full year and we are looking forward to a long and prosperous relationship moving forward.

I have reported on the endowment for the OSU pathology department in the past thinking it was a “done deal”. After working through all of the hurdles, it is now a “done deal”. I would like to make a special thanks to OSU Dean of Agriculture, Dr. Staci Simonich for making that possible with funds from the College to match the Commission’s allocation. Just when it looked like things were going to stall out, she stepped forward with a major commitment to get things finalized.

I would also like to thank the great staff we have working for us at OWC. They are working hard for us behind the scenes every day, to keep things flowing smoothly while sometimes putting up with cantankerous old farmers (this one in particular). Thank you, Tana, Corey, and Amanda. I would also like to share the thank you card Kathy got from her student, as a thank you to all Oregon wheat growers! Have a safe and prosperous harvest!

“One thing I’ll say about my wife’s cooking..... It sure cured that ol’ hound dog from begging at the table”

(Red Skelton) 



Thank you card for Oregon Wheat

New Collaborative Soil Acidification Research

Francisco Calderón, Director, Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center

Soil acidification is a regional problem that is receiving growing attention due to increasing risks to grain production and soil health in our fields. The mitigation of soil acidification has been an active area of research for a long time. However, continued local research is warranted given that different soils, climates, crops, and liming agents all have different solutions for different situations. Scientists from Oregon State University, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, and Washington State University have teamed up with local growers to start a new research project to answer several locally relevant questions about soil acidity and how best to deal with it.



A plot experiment has been established to test several treatments, including a control, prilled lime treatments, an alkaline biochar application, plus plots receiving boron and base cation supplements (Figure 1). The project is located in the cool/moist zone that represents an important section of the wheat production area of Oregon and Washington. The project started last fall with the deployment of the treatments and the planting of a no-till winter wheat crop, on a field with documented pH issues. The team intends for this to be a long term experiment in which the effects of the different strategies are evaluated and adjusted to find a workable solution to soil acidity that makes economic sense.

Several of the questions that will be explored include:

1. How does a reduced lime rate affect long term wheat yields?
2. How does the effectiveness of alkaline biochar compare to lime?
3. How does the improvement of soil acidity affect grain quality?
4. What is the return on investment of the different amendments?

These plots will be a living laboratory for the future, and the results of this work will guide soil management practices in the coming years for this important wheat production region.

The need for continuing soil acidification research

Soil acidity is considered a master variable of soil health. As soil pH falls, nitrogen, potassium, phosphorous, calcium



Figure 1. Soil sampling the experimental plots in the Fall of 2023.

and magnesium are harder to take up by roots. Eventually extremely acidified soils start to develop aluminum toxicity, which damages wheat roots. In the inland Pacific Northwest, soil acidity is expected to become a major limiting factor to dryland grain production, with no cheap or quick solution.

Soils of different types and locations vary in how resistant they are to pH adjustment, due to differences in their mineral and organic matter makeup. This is one of the reasons why a one size fits all liming dosage will not work equally well for all soils. Because of this, soil acidity research should be carried out for each particular soil, climate and cropping system in order to get locally relevant answers.

Soils of the inland Pacific Northwest did not generally have acidic pH issues before cultivation due to naturally occurring lime. Today, however, areas within the Columbia Basin have instances of acidified soils mainly due to addition of fertilizers that carry the ammonium form of nitrogen (N) such as anhydrous ammonia, and others.

Soil acidification arises because of several reasons, and these will vary for different soils and locations. Besides the regular use of nitrogen fertilizers, the leaching of calcium and other bases from the topsoil due to rainfall, and the loss of organic matter all contribute to acidify the soil. Many soils in the region are seeing progressively increased acidity. One of the long-term experiments at the Pendleton station illustrates what can happen when excessive nitrogen fertilizers are

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applied over a long time. Plots under a wheat fallow rotation receiving repeated applications of 180 lbs. N per acre have pH values reaching below 5.0 in the top four inches of soil, well within the problem range for soil pH. Seedlings can be particularly sensitive to acidified soils as they begin rooting in the acid stratified layer. However, roots that grow into the underlying neutral soil, will support healthy growth. Limiting excessive use of nitrogen fertilizer, or rotating wheat with nitrogen fixing legumes are potential useful strategies to slow the progress of soil acidification.

It is thought that if soils are left untreated, wheat yields will reach a proverbial cliff, and it will become increasingly challenging and expensive to return to profitable production. Wheat varieties can differ in their resistance to acidity. Depending on variety, wheat grain yield can be negatively affected below 5.0 soil pH. One of the reasons that we haven't seen widespread damage due to acidic soils is because of the planting of aluminum tolerant wheat varieties.

Lime, or ash are the gold standard treatments for acidified soils. Biochar is also a potential solution because it can improve soil organic matter content as it neutralizes the soil

pH, and organic matter increases the soil's buffering capacity. Liming attempts to bring the soil pH to a mid-range value close to seven. This is where many crops perform best, and also where several soil nutrients are more readily available to plants. Liming agents can also supply soil with important nutrients like calcium or magnesium.


There are different methods for applying liming agents. Surface applications are easier but contact of the lime with the soil is limited, which might delay the effect. In direct-seeded dryland cropping, soil pH is lowest at the depth where N fertilizer is banded. Injection or incorporation by tillage can speed up the process, but it comes with added costs. Soil pH values below 5.5 have been recorded in several places in the Columbia Basin, at depths of 5 feet or more. This is difficult to remedy because lime movement into subsoil can take years.

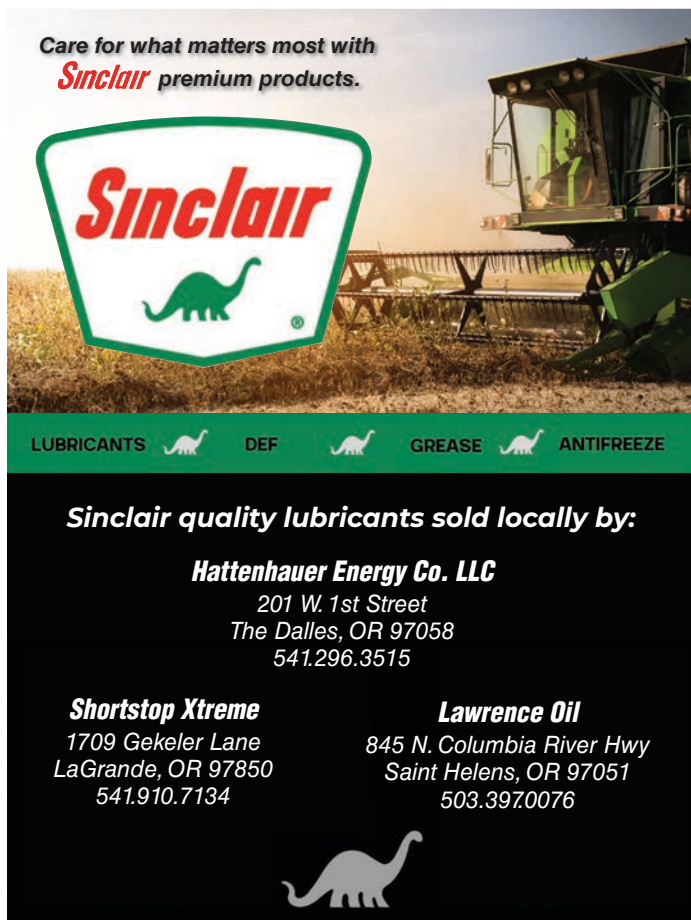
Soil acidification develops over a long time, so it makes sense that fixing the problem quickly is not easy. Lime needs to be applied well in advance of the target crop, but this timeline can vary depending on the crops, soils, and climate. The team wants to evaluate the effectiveness of a gradual approach to liming. We are applying lime at reduced rates and full rates, so we will be able to see how quickly both approaches work, as well as evaluate the economic validity of each strategy. Another important objective is to see how bringing the soil back to a favorable pH affects soil microbiology and soil health in general. For example, biochar deployment and soil organic matter increases can bring additional long-term benefits on top of the soil pH correction.

We will also be monitoring plant health. Important quality parameters like wheat grain protein and pea brix values will also be evaluated for the different treatments. This will allow us to determine if liming has a beneficial effect on crop quality besides increases on crop quantity.

Legumes are sensitive to low soil pH because nitrogen fixation declines when soil is too acidic. Low soil pH also reduces the solubility of molybdenum (Mo), a nutrient that is essential for nitrogen fixation. We will rotate wheat with peas, which will allow us to evaluate the effects on the different crops over the years. Grain yield response to liming can be most apparent in years with high yield potential, so crop yield response to liming can be inconsistent over time. A long-term experiment is needed to keep tabs on year-to-year impacts of liming as the pH gets adjusted.

Conclusions

This new research project brings together a regional team of researchers from multiple institutions to find solutions to an encroaching soil quality issue. We aim to evaluate how to get ahead of the encroaching soil acidification in our fields and maintain the productivity and profitability of dryland agriculture for decades to come. 



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FARMER Act and Oregon Bounty Research Act Introduced

As House and Senate Ag committees continue to make progress on Farm Bill reauthorization pathways, two Acts were introduced in April that focus on support for wheat producers. First, Senator Merkley (D-OR) and Senator Wyden (D-OR) introduced the Oregon Bounty Research Act, seeking to authorize funding for research projects that benefit Oregon’s agriculture and forest product sectors. The Act includes several projects secured by Senator Merkley during his time on the appropriations committee, including the Resilient Dryland Farming Appropriation and the Soil Health Carbon Center funds which support the Pendleton Research station. The introduction of the Act provides an opportunity to secure long-term investments in research stations focused on dryland wheat research. Second, Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) introduced the Federal Agriculture Risk Management Enhancement and Resilience (FARMER) Act, aimed at bolstering crop insurance and making higher coverage levels more affordable for producers. The National Association of Wheat Growers joined other ag organizations in support of the legislation, emphasizing the critical role of crop insurance as a risk management tool for wheat growers and applauding Senator Hoeven’s efforts to enhance affordability for farmers. 

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ERIC SNODGRASS is the Principal Atmospheric Scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, where 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.

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



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

More details to follow later this summer of additional speakers/topics.

Annual Grower Workshop a Success

Mia Pedersen

In the heart of Portland, the Oregon Wheat Commission recently hosted its annual Grower Workshop. This event brought together farmers and wheat enthusiasts from across Oregon. The workshop provided a unique opportunity to delve into the intricate journey of wheat production, from the fertile fields to the bustling export markets. Spanning two days, the workshop offered a comprehensive itinerary designed to enlighten attendees on every aspect of the wheat industry. Participants were treated to insightful visits to key locations, each playing a pivotal role in the wheat supply chain.

The workshop kicked off its itinerary with a flavorful visit to Marsee Bakery. Led by General Manager Daniel Bes, attendees were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of this local establishment. From buttery croissants to intricate specialty cakes, each treat showcased Marsee's commitment to artisanal quality. Marsee's dedication to craftsmanship and innovation shone through, but beyond the delicious creations, the bakery's ethos of sustainability and community resonated deeply with attendees.



Marsee Bakery creations ready to package

Next, the group embarked on a tour of the Columbia Export Terminal, located within Terminal 5's expansive 159-acre footprint. Operated by Columbia Grain, the terminal's rapid-handling grain elevator showcased the precision and



Checking out Columbia Export Terminal

efficiency of grain handling and exportation. As a crucial hub for Canpotex, one of the world's largest potash exporters, it highlighted the terminal's ability to cater to diverse commodities. Amidst the hustle and bustle of loading bays and docks, and through an in-depth overview from Pacifcor, participants witnessed the seamless flow of goods destined for international markets.

The group then returned to the Albers Mill Building, where they met with the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). Through interactive exercises, participants gained practical insights into the intricate procedures involved in wheat inspection and certification. This firsthand experience equipped growers with the tools needed to ensure their product meets the stringent quality standards demanded by global consumers. 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 Federal, State, and private laboratories that provide impartial official inspection and weighing services. FGIS establishes and maintains official standards for barley, canola, corn, flaxseed, oats, rye, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, triticale, wheat, mixed grain, rice, and pulses.

Day one ended with a tour of the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) facility. Executive Director Mike Moran welcomed the group and expressed his gratitude towards the Oregon Wheat Commission and their generous support throughout the years. The WMC acts as a bridge between wheat growers and customers. WMC is a technical crossroads of the wheat world linking wheat producers, millers, end product manufacturers, and consumers. WMC provides



Attendees visit the Wheat Marketing Center




A look at the science of grains with Dr. Mense

technical training for customers on improving end product quality, grower workshops focused on the importance of wheat quality, innovative research, product development, and crop quality testing services. The immersive experience at the WMC was one of the highlights of the workshop and here, attendees gained invaluable insights into the intricate process of wheat grading, quality analysis, and market trends. This hands-on session underscored the critical role played by quality standards in ensuring Oregon’s wheat maintains its esteemed status in global markets.

Day two started off with a participant favorite – a tour of the Port of Portland via Tugboat, courtesy of Shaver Transportation. Since 1880, Shaver Transportation has served the Columbia Snake River System. With a fleet of fifteen tugs and twenty-two barges, Shaver focuses their efforts on four lines of business: ship assist, bulk commodity transportation,

harbor/marine services, and emergency response and rescue.

The afternoon was a platform for knowledge exchange. Esteemed speakers from organizations such as the Oregon State University Breeding and Variety Trial Program and U.S. Wheat Associates delivered engaging presentations. These sessions provided attendees with a deeper understanding of cutting-edge research, market dynamics, and regulatory processes shaping the wheat industry.

Beyond the educational aspects, the workshop served as a hub for networking and collaboration. Growers, industry experts, and stakeholders converged to share ideas, forge partnerships, and explore avenues for collective growth. These interactions not only fostered a sense of camaraderie but also laid the groundwork for future collaborations that promise to further elevate Oregon’s prominence in the global wheat market. 



Captaining the tug with Shaver Transportation


Oregon Wheat Producers Receive Diamond Pioneer Awards

Oregon State University’s 2024 Diamond Pioneer Award includes several Oregon wheat producers in its roster this year. The Diamond Pioneer Agricultural Achievement Registry celebrates individuals whose lifetime contributions have significantly impacted agriculture, natural resources, Oregon State University, and the residents of the state. Among the distinguished recipients this year are three individuals from the Oregon Wheat community: David Bielenberg from Silverton, Tom Crawford from Amity, and John Zielinski from Gervais.

The recognition of these Oregon Wheat members underscores the vital role that wheat producers play in Oregon’s agricultural tapestry and their efforts to continue their legacy of excellence for generations to come. Their contributions extend far beyond the fields. As the Diamond



2024 OSU Diamond Pioneer Awardees

Pioneer Award continues to shine a spotlight on those who have dedicated their lives to advancing agriculture, we take pride in the achievements of our members. 


A Swing for a Cause

On May 1, 2024, more than 100 golfers gathered at the Wildhorse Golf Course in Pendleton for an annual tradition: raising money to support the Oregon Wheat Foundation. It was a day of camaraderie, competition, and charitable giving.

This year marked the 27th year for the Foundation to host a Golf Scramble fundraiser and with 27 total teams participating, the numbers seem to line up perfectly. The event offered not only an exciting day out on the course, but also an opportunity for participants to contribute to a worthy cause. The fundraiser benefits a range of programs that support agricultural education, preserve Oregon’s rich agricultural heritage, and foster innovation within the industry.

With a record number of teams out on the course, competition was fierce. Bringing home trophies were the following:

- First Place Team: *Nutrien*
- Second Place Team: *Brynes Oil*
- Third Place Team: *United Grain*
- KP (Closest to Pin): *John Whitmore*
- Long Drive: *Ely Kimble*

Beyond the thrill of competition, this event exemplified the spirit of community and philanthropy that defines the Oregon wheat industry. “Thanks to the support of sponsors, volunteers, and participants, the 2024 Oregon Wheat Foundation Golf Scramble was a resounding success.” stated Tom Winn, Oregon Wheat Foundation chair. 



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Hope Springs Eternal: A New Market Year

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



The beginning of June marks a transition point for many families. Students wrap up their final examinations, marking the culmination of a school year with the start of summer break. Community gatherings celebrate a new crop of graduates. Full of a mixture of confidence, promise and some trepidation, it is exciting to see graduates preparing for their next life adventures.

The beginning of June also marks a transition point for wheat markets. We begin our own new season as the end of May marks the end of the marketing year. By all accounts, it was a difficult year. With robust global wheat supply in competitor countries, a strong U.S. dollar, global conflict, and a host of other factors, we were challenged to compete for export business. An extended period of low prices led to Oregon wheat producers holding onto more wheat than in a typical year. Effectively, producers were waiting for conditions to change, to the extent finances allowed.

Despite the challenges apparent in the export sale reports, we closed this market year in a position that reflects a typical set of destinations for Oregon wheat. The Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and China held as the top five destinations of total soft white sales. These top five include a mix of stable/mature markets and growth/expansion markets. All have been part of the focused attention of market development efforts.

In spring, I had the opportunity to spend dedicated time with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) engaging in the preparation of strategies to sustain and bolster market development work in North and South Asia. Through the detailed Unified Export Strategy (UES) process, USW focuses its investments on targeted market development activities. Trend analysis, market overviews and assessing changing conditions were all part of the robust discussions leading into the strategies in the UES that will be most effective for increasing U.S. wheat market share and driving success for Oregon wheat producers. Accountability is a primary aspect of the process, with the UES recording the tangible results of wheat sales resulting from market development activities. The process includes assessing the

The Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and China held as the top five destinations of total soft white sales.

The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Export Sales Report tracks weekly sales. USW publishes that data in an accessible weekly Commercial Sales report, documenting wheat export sales-to-date by country and class.

highest areas of return and making adjustments in relation to what has and has not been effective.

During the North and South Asia UES, each of our top five market destinations from this marketing year were analyzed, along with a number of other country markets, including some that I would expect to see in our future top five listing. Reflection on themes from those discussions at a high-level include the following:

- Increased emphasis on stability and food self-sufficiency have emerged in many nations post-covid. That focus in-turn reinforces the relationship with reliable suppliers like U.S. wheat producers.
- The importance of a positive image of a safe, healthy and sustainable product.
- Increased scrutiny and concern around sanitary and phytosanitary issues, which highlights the value of third party testing available for U.S. wheat.
- The critical role wheat plays in political stability for democracies.
- Extensive benefits of quality, leading to further opportunities in training millers and bakers to take advantage of the quality of Pacific Northwest wheat.
- The impact of the increasingly competitive price environment in which millers are also operating--- leading to the need to continue providing good information to assist purchasing managers.
- With further mechanization, the value of consistency of our wheat year-over-year in its functionality in the mill.
- Innovation for wheat-based products with prepared / pre-mix foods and new product development are continuing to grow per capita wheat consumption.

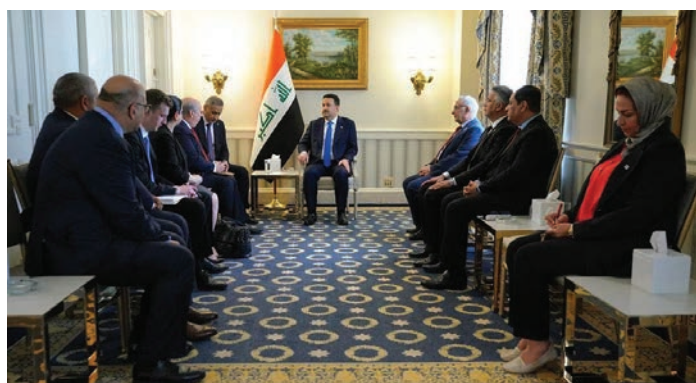
The UES outcomes certainly underscore why both trade teams and technical teams are essential. It also emphasized the value of the country office staff for USW who are working tirelessly on behalf of the U.S. wheat producer. While we have been operating within an environment of enhanced

competitiveness as other counties invest in their trade relationships, I am excited about the future. In particular, when considering funding factors with the potential for new Regional Ag Promotion Program (RAPP) funds. The substantial level of RAPP funds available on a federal level for cooperator agencies like USW will allow implementation of the UES, enhancing our growth in current markets and expanding to new markets.

Now, we are welcoming teams for the new season. The Oregon Wheat Commission kicked off in April with multiple Korean technical groups, an Egyptian team, and a delegation of Japanese Flour millers hosted through USW. We continue with a full schedule from China, southeast Asia, Japan, and Korea. Hope springs eternal. For the new graduates and for the new market year. 

Iraqi Prime Minister and U.S. Wheat President Discuss Trade


In April, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) had a unique opportunity for a high-level meeting to support advancement of trade. USW President Vince Peterson, Director of Trade Policy Peter Laudeman, and Planning and Administrative Assistant Nada Obaid met with Iraq Prime Minister Mohammed S. Al-Sudani. They discussed future cooperation on the supply of high-quality wheat to Iraq for flour production that can be supplied to the local market. The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Director General of the Grain Board of Iraq. The visit presented an opportunity to promote USW's long-standing relationship with Iraqi Grain Board, which exceeds 50 years. It also provided an opportunity for discussions on USW's efforts in working with Iraq's flour milling industry.



USW meets with Iraq Prime Minister to discuss trade.

An announcement issued by Prime Minister Al-Sudani highlighted the ongoing cooperation with USW, praising its efforts in facilitating contracts with the Ministry of Trade and providing wheat during a critical phase when Iraq urgently needed large quantities to bolster its food security. Al-Sudani also emphasized the government's commitment to continue cooperation with American companies to produce flour for the local market and reduce imports, alongside continued

efforts to enhance food security through support for farmers and the private agricultural sector in Iraq.


In a highly competitive global market, USW regional staff continue to do an exceptional job in promoting the value of USW. Working through a U.S.-Iraq government to government Memorandum of Understanding, USW has continued to ensure every opportunity for the wheat producer is brought to the table. 

Minimum Wage Increases Take Effect in July

Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) recently announced new state minimum wage rates. The rates reflect a 50-cent increase based on year-over-year inflation. As of last year, BOLI's Labor Commissioner calculates an adjustment to Oregon's minimum wage rate each year by April 30th. The minimum wage is adjusted annually based on the U.S. city average Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers increase.

Oregon's minimum wage depends on the employee's work location. The new minimum wage rates for each region effective July 1, 2024, are:

- Portland metro area within the urban growth boundary: \$15.95 per hour
- Standard minimum wage: \$14.70 per hour
- Non-urban Oregon: \$13.70 per hour

Employers are required to post current minimum wage posters in the workplace. Posters need to be in a conspicuous location that employees frequently access. Updated minimum wage posters will be available for download on BOLI's website by June 15, 2024. 

2024 Legislative Session in Review

Nicole Mann, Dalton Advocacy Inc

In a whirlwind 31-day session, we saw Republicans and Democrats come together to tackle some remarkably complex issues including affordable housing, homelessness, campaign finance, and addressing Oregon's drug crisis.

One of the most significant challenges facing legislators was addressing Measure 110, which decriminalized possession of small quantities of drugs in 2020. After months of deliberation and negotiation, lawmakers reached a consensus with stakeholders, culminating in the passage of HB 4002. This legislation not only marks the end of Oregon's experiment with drug decriminalization but also offers individuals caught with substances like fentanyl and methamphetamine a pathway to treatment instead of facing charges.

The Legislature also moved forward on Governor Tina Kotek's priority for the session: increasing investments in housing and homelessness. The Legislature passed a robust housing package, investing \$376 million to enhance affordable housing construction, support counties in acquiring land for development, and expand emergency shelters for the homeless. As encroachment on agricultural land for housing and renewable energy continues, the importance of the Right to Farm language in future legislation rises as a priority. Unfortunately, this language was not included in this bill, but the League will continue to advocate for its inclusion in the future.

Notably absent from this session were proposals that posed a significant threat to our industry, a welcome change from previous sessions. Below is an overview of some key bills the League focused on:

HB 4049 – PFAS in Biosolids Applied to Agricultural Lands: An early priority bill for League, as it would have directed Oregon State University Extension Services and the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences, in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, to study the fate and transport of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) found in biosolids applied to agricultural fields and to report the findings to the legislature in 2027. Our lobby team met with key legislators early in session, resulting in amendment language being added to the bill. The final bill focused the study on fields that do not produce crops for human consumption and included language adding privacy protections for volunteer landowners who participate in the study. The bill moved out of the policy committee and to Ways and Means but did not receive funding. We anticipate a similar bill will be introduced in 2025.

HB 4059 – Canola Production in the Willamette Valley: After an extended conversation in the interim with stakeholders and the Oregon Department of Agriculture regarding canola production in the Willamette Valley Protected District, agreement was not reached on bill language for the 2023 session to allow for coexistence of both canola farms and specialty seed farms. As a result, amendment language was proposed by the specialty seed and organic industry to impose new permanent restrictions on all genetically engineered (GE) canola. These new restrictions were not based in science and set a dangerous precedent for the legislature to pick which types of crops farmers can grow on their land. After strong opposition lobbying, the amendment was not adopted. As passed, the bill simply extends the existing regulations (500-acre cap) on all canola grown in the district until the end of 2027. The extension sets the stage for additional discussions in the legislature about GE crop production in Oregon in 2025, which will be a priority for the League to engage in.

HB 4015 and HB 4090 – Solar Storage and Siting Legislation: Solar energy siting continues to be a topic of discussion in the legislature. This session, two bills were introduced and the League engaged in both.

HB 4015, was the result of an interim workgroup which met a handful of times to discuss how to best site standalone battery energy storage systems in Oregon. The League participated in the workgroup and appreciated that the discussion on siting these facilities on Exclusive Farm Use land was sidelined. We took a neutral position on the bill, and it passed with bipartisan support.

HB 4090 was legislation that unfortunately was not discussed with stakeholders prior to session. As introduced, it would have had negative impacts to federal land currently leased for agricultural production. Our lobby team worked with the chief sponsor of the bill to successfully have language added to protect those leases. However, we remained concerned about the removal of the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) from exercising jurisdiction over or requiring a site certificate for siting a renewable energy facility or transmission line if it is sited wholly within federal lands. The bill did not move forward out of the Senate this session.

With approximately 300 bills introduced in the session, it was an active one for the League and our ag partners. Additional activity with impact to wheat producers that our lobby team engaged in included:

HB 4111 – Farm Machinery and Equipment Tax Fix: A reintroduction of a bill from 2023, which expands the farm

machinery and equipment exemption to include real property, thereby making all farm machinery and equipment property tax exempt. The goal of this legislation was to reduce confusion and administrative work for both farmers and tax assessors while ensuring that the resulting change to statute does not constitute a major expansion of the exemption or large financial impact to counties. An example of equipment that would qualify is a seed cleaner. The League joined the coalition supporting the bill, which passed this session.


HB 5701–Budget Reconciliation: The omnibus budget reconciliation bill for 2024 Session. The bill modifies state agencies 2023-2025 legislatively adopted budgets and adjusts General Fund appropriations to the Emergency Board. For agriculture, a few specific areas of interest include the addition of \$5.8 million for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund, an allocation of \$1.25 million to the Department of Agriculture for grasshopper suppression efforts and \$250,000 for invasive species outreach and education.

The legislature did not address wildfire funding concerns or move forward with several wildlife bills including HB 4061 – Elk Damage Prevention and Compensation Pilot Program, which the League supported. It also did not move forward with the proposed Corporate Activity Tax Threshold Increase (HB 4055) which would have increased the amount of taxable

commercial activity exempt from the Corporate Activity Tax, and the commercial activity threshold for filing a tax return from \$1 million to \$5 million.

The biggest surprise of the session came in the final two weeks when legislative leaders, business and industry, unions, and good governance groups reached a historic compromise on campaign finance reform; bringing Oregon to the group of states with controlled campaign contributions. The new limits will not become effective until 2027. Passage of the bill includes an agreement by measure proponents to withdraw their competing ballot initiatives that were likely to appear on the November ballot.

As the dust settles on the legislative session, all eyes turn to the upcoming campaign cycle, with candidates gearing up for primary and general elections. With various state and local positions at stake, the importance of maintaining existing seats for the Republicans cannot be overstated, as a loss in seats in the House or Senate could lead to a super majority for Democrats. Similarly, Democrats have their eyes set on picking up seats in both chambers. Stay tuned for an election update from the Dalton Advocacy lobby team after the May primary!

Oregon Wheat Growers League contracts with Dalton Advocacy, Inc to provide direct lobbying and advocacy at the state Capitol. 

Crop Progresses with Early Beneficial Conditions

The 2024 crop is beginning to take shape. In the early part of the year, snow graced the landscape, offering a protective blanket for the wheat crop and delivering additional moisture. As Spring progressed, it brought forth a range of


weather conditions, but some warmer growing weather. As we venture forward into this season, we eagerly await the crop development and invite you to share your photos for our customer crop reports. 



Photo Credit: Erin Heideman



Photo Credit: Josh Macnab



Photo credit: Josh Duling

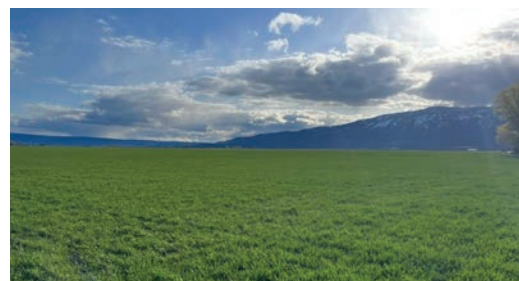


Photo Credit: Wade Bingaman

Korea Ag Trade Mission Highlights

With more than 50 years working with Korean millers, a recent Ag Trade Mission to Korea provided fresh conversations about an important market for Oregon Wheat. Joining an agricultural trade mission led by USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Alexis Taylor, Oregon Wheat CEO Amanda Hoey traveled to Seoul in March. She joined U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) Vice President of Overseas Operations Mike Spier and Vice President of Planning Jennifer Sydney on the visit. With a delegation of officials from 48 agribusiness and farm organizations, along with representatives from five state departments of agriculture, the trip aimed to forge and expand strong connections with Korean partners.



Dongchan Bae, Mike Spier and Amanda Hoey participate in a USDA roundtable.

The series of meetings in Seoul included a roundtable session with Taylor, which allowed U.S. ag groups to describe efforts, challenges and successes in the Korean market. USW South Korea Country Director Dongchan “Channy” Bae effectively shared how building partnerships, promoting quality and educating customers has helped USW

develop one of the top and most promising markets for U.S. wheat exports. South Korea is the fifth largest importer of U.S. wheat, accounting for 1.2 million metric tons in the most recent marketing year. The U.S. has a 48% market share, followed by Australia (44%), and Canada (7%.) With current marketing year commercial sales to Korea running 12% ahead of last years pace, the U.S. share could reach 50% in 2024.

Knowing the market and adapting to changes has been key, Mr. Bae notes. “Currently, South Korea faces many



USW and Oregon Wheat meet with customers in Korea.




U.S. delegates meet with USDA Under Secretary Taylor.



Jennifer Sydney and Amanda Hoey visit with a flour miller.

challenges such as low birth rates, economic slowdown, and geopolitical tensions,” Bae said. “Nevertheless, wheat flour consumption is gradually increasing, replacing the country’s traditional staple, rice. Furthermore, Korean food companies are expanding to the overseas market by utilizing the popularity of K-Pop, and K-drama. Especially, exports of instant noodles and frozen dough for bakeries are on the rise.”

While the influence extends, the base remains. USW celebrated the 50th anniversary of its office in Seoul last May. The United States and Korea commemorated the 10th anniversary of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement in 2022, reinforcing the bilateral trade relationship.

In conjunction with the trade mission, USW Country Director Bae and staff coordinated visits to customers. It allowed for a roundtable discussion with the Korea Flour Millers Industry Association, as well as a visit to a flour mill. USW-South Korea office also put together a robust itinerary, including visits to end-product manufacturers. Among those was a focus on a noodle manufacturer, as noodle flour is the largest market for flour in Korea. 

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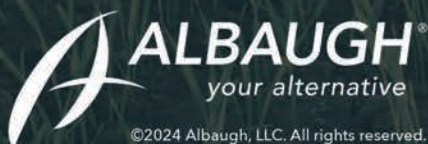


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