



**Oregon Wheat Commission and Oregon Wheat Growers League Joint Meeting
September 18, 2023 Minutes**

Call to Order:

Pursuant to notice made by press release to newspapers of general and local circulation throughout the state and e-mailed to persons on the mailing list of the Commission a regular meeting of the Oregon Wheat Commission (OWC) was held at the Pendleton Convention Center in Pendleton, OR with video/phone conference availability.

Commissioners in attendance for all or part of the meeting included Dana Tuckness - Chairman, Tyler Hansell – Vice Chairman, David Brewer – Secretary/Treasurer, Jason Middleton, David Prybylowski, Darren Padget and Rob Rye.

League members in attendance for all or part of the meeting included Collin Crocker - President, Wade Bingaman – Vice President, Erin Heideman – Secretary/Treasurer, Ben Maney – Immediate Past President, Bryan Bachelder, Thad Eakin, Deacon Heideman, Mike Shrock, and Thomas Bernards.

Staff members present were Amanda Hoey, CEO; Tana Simpson, OWC Associate Administrator; and Corey Shrader, OWC Project and Office Coordinator and Jason Flowers, OWGL Program Director.

Guests present for all or part of the meeting include Ryan Graebner, Grayson Namdar, Jim Doherty, Jake Lindsey, Eric Morris, Jake Westlin, Jack Long, Dalton Henry, Peter Laudeman, Mike Moran, Nicole Mann, Sam Birikorang, Francisco Calderon, Shawn Donkin and Dylan Frederick

Chair Tuckness called the meeting to order at 12:39 p.m.

County and Commissioner Status Updates

- Bryan Bachelder, Malheur County, reported yields were down on his end of the county. They did have good rains a few weeks ago so they are hopeful for seeding.
- Thad Eakin, Sherman County, reported a good harvest with a few slow downs for rain. The new Sherman County FSA Office is set to open the 1st of October. He is excited to be participating in the Bayer Leadership Training.
- Mike Schrock, South Willamette Valley, noted that the wheat looked good during harvest. Fall planting has started but things are dry.
- Deacon Heideman, Gilliam County, noted that conditions are very dry and the crop was slightly below average with low test weights.
- David Brewer, Wasco County, stated they got some rain last week and are hoping that will get the wheat established as it has been very dry. Yields in his area were uniformly disappointing.
- Jason Middleton, noted that Umatilla County had yields down and the crop was high protein and low test weight. About 40% of the crop was bought by the end of September

which is pretty normal for this point of the year. The Treasure Valley did have a small amount of sprout and most will go to feed channels.

- Rob Rye, Pacifcor, provided a trade update. He noted that demand is slow and export sales are down 600,000 tons. Australia had a big crop that took some of the South Asian market demand. Alternative country supplies have been filling a lot of the US market positions. He noted that most buyers are covered into November. With the upcoming planned temporary river closure, they are encouraging customers to plan purchases ahead. There was a CCC tender this week but they would usually have seen more of those at the beginning of the crop year than they have thus far.
- Dana Tuckness, Malheur County, reported that yields for wheat were down 20-25% below average and baled straw was down 40%-50%. The reservoirs still have water in them.
- Collin Crocker, South Willamette Valley, reported that harvest yields were close to average, but that the area has been very dry since May. There are a lot of grass seed acres being pulled out, but with current wheat prices they could remain fallow or go to another crop rather than transition to wheat. He noted the issues with a shortage of storage for wheat this year.
- Wade Bingaman, Union/Baker County, reported that it was one of the worst years they have experienced with the very dry conditions throughout the summer until August when they received rain impacting harvest operations. It should, however, provide good conditions for planting. He estimated they were off about 30% from average in yield.
- Erin Heideman, Morrow County, stated that the harvest was below average with low test weights and high protein.
- David Prybylowski, Bend, noted that his area has been dry and smokey.
- Thomas Bernards, North Willamette Valley, reported that yields were average, but they did get a few thunderstorms. They are hopeful for some rain to be able to plant on time.
- Tyler Hansell, Umatilla County, reported that they have seen decent rains since harvest but continue struggling with high winds and high heat.
- Ben Maney, Umatilla County, stated that the direct seeded ground in his area was about 20% below average in yields and the summer fallow ground was average. Weather patterns have been spotty, and planting is expected to start next week.

Federal Legislative Update: Farm bill

Jake Westlin reviewed NAWG's Farm Bill policy priorities. NAWG remains focused on protecting and enhancing crop insurance. They are also working on meaningful increases to the PLC and enhancements to the MAP/FMD and conservation titles. He discussed the Farm Bill fly-ins and highlighted the grassroots advocacy campaigns, along with the opportunity NAWG President Brent Cheyne had to testify before the House Sub-Committee and the Senate Agricultural Committee. There are some obstacles in the Farm Bill process including Congressional Budget Office delays, the debt ceiling, base acres debate, permanent disaster aid, politicking and the 2024 elections. Jake stated that they anticipate baseline as a flat farm bill in resources. In the process, there will not be further farm bill language until appropriations are addressed. He reviewed the recent CCC funds conversation for MAP/FMD and international food aid, stating that it is not a permanent fix and funds will be needed in the Farm Bill.

Discussion: Wade Bingaman asked if NAWG has discussed PNW growers concerns with

RMA regarding protein as a quality issue for soft white. Jake stated that they would follow-up on that issue.

Trade and Markets Update

Dalton Henry, Vice President-Policy for U.S. Wheat Associates, provided an update on the new advancements in transgenic technology and the work of a company in Argentina, Bioceres. Bioceres is a small start-up that has developed HB4 wheat, which is a drought tolerant wheat variety. It is in full production in Argentina and Brazil and approved for food and feed use in many countries, including the U.S. Dalton reviewed the agencies in the US involved in approvals: FDA, USDA and EPA. USDA is the primary as it would relate to any cultivation considerations.

Discussion: Dana Tuckness asked which class of wheat. Dalton noted that with the origination in Argentina and Brazil, it would be all winter wheat but they have limited classes of wheat. With a joint venture in Australia, we can expect an expansion into additional wheat classes. Dana asked that customers are saying they expect from US Wheat Associates and US wheat growers. Dalton noted the areas more open in approval (eg Nigeria and Indonesia) and the response from more GM sensitive markets the PNW serves. TJ Hansell asked if the US was falling behind in tech and if it would hurt us in the long run. Dalton responded that we have a tremendous amount of horsepower in wheat breeding in both public and private sectors and can easily catch-up, when needed. In addition, we start with a higher quality product. Our head-to-head it more Australia than Argentina and Brazil and so far Bioceres has not shown interest in another of our competitors, Canada.

Dalton Henry reviewed the U.S. Wheat Associates Principles of Commercialization and a Biotech Position Statement. Current policy states that release will require acceptance from any export market purchasing over 5% of U.S. wheat exports. One concern was expressed that with the release in other countries segregation within the supply chain will be necessary.

Discussion: Amanda Hoey asked about the timing of review of the current biotech and commercialization policies. Dalton responded that those could be reviewed at the fall and winter meetings and discussed those likely to have recommendations for revisions.

State Legislative Update

Nicole Mann, Dalton Advocacy, provided an update on state legislative issues. The short session is coming up which will be 35 days and have limited bill numbers. She reviewed the schedule and noted that we will see a preview of where committee chairs are headed and major issues when we get to December/January legislative days. In the interim, the main activities were regulatory and she provided an update on the DEQ Aquatics Life Toxics Criteria working group, DEQ Recycling Modernization Act/Recycle Advisory Council, BOLI Paid Family Medical Leave rulemaking, ODA Canola working group and Oregon OSHA Agricultural Labor Housing. The other one upcoming is related to land use and solar.

She provided an overview of the 2024 election and the impact of Ballot Measure 113. She noted the upcoming impact of Senator Hansell's retirement who has been a strong champion for the wheat industry.

Nicole highlighted a few issues, including IP 3 which would criminalize hunting, fishing, trapping and the killing of animals. The proponents are still collecting signatures to get it on the ballot and the is actively opposing.

Wheat Marketing Center and Crop Quality Update

Mike Moran, Managing Director of the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC), provided an update on the WMC activities and the Crop Quality Analysis. WMC has hosted a large number of teams this summer. One of the team participants expressed an interest in WMC's Visiting Scholar program focusing on the comparison of the SRC and the RVA. In addition to traditional trade teams and technical courses, they have hosted several industry groups. Mike thanked the League for arranging a visit with staff for Senator Merkley which included a discussion on potential resources for larger equipment upgrades at WMC. They have also wrapped up the RVA and the sponge cake mechanization studies.

WMC has processed week 8, the final Crop Quality weekly report. The average soft white protein was higher than average. Even with these higher proteins, Mike stated that the SRC indicates functionality is well within normal parameters. They have conducted a time audit on this year's SRC processing and found that the new automated shaker that is due to arrive in October or November will not only greatly increase accuracy, it will also save a great deal of time.

Discussion: Jason Middleton asked about the status of WMC's fee review for private entities. Mike stated that the increase was put in place on July 1 and they actually seen an increase the requests for testing. Deacon Heideman asked about the interaction in the market with functionality vs. proteins, for which growers are receiving discounts.

Research and OSU Updates

Shawn Donkin, Vice President of Research for the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences, reported that they have been very active in recruitments and hiring over the last few months. Margret Krause, the new Wheat Breeder, will start on November 1st. Marsha Walker was hired to replace Dave Stone as the Director of the Food Innovation Center as he moves to a new role as the Assistant Dean of International Studies.

Shawn was happy to report that their support for research is at record levels and that they received strong support from the state legislature which will allow them to move forward with the Priority staffing process. The OSU barley breeder, Cereal Pathologist and Agricultural Economist are in this process for consideration.

Franciso Calderon, Director of the Columbia Basin Agricultural Experiment Stations in Pendleton and Moro, reported on their projects. The Resilient Dryland Farming Alliance has recently pivoted to focus on cover crops and is being led by Christina Hagerty and Kate Reardon. The Soil Health/ Carbon Center is currently supporting the long-term experiments. They are also working on the Herbicide Resistant Weeds Initiative and a tillage and herbicide combination study in collaboration with USDA-ARS. They are working on a new strategic plan and are looking for grower feedback through a survey.

Sam Birikorang, Team Leader for the USDA-ARS Pendleton Office, reported on their two main

program areas the Sustainability of Dryland Farming and Soil and Air Quality. They have been able to complete several new hires. He thanked the League for their work to secure the priority process for staffing. They are in the process of developing a job description for a weed scientist and looking to compliment the current OSU Weed scientist. They are also looking to conduct listening sessions with staff and growers in January or February of the coming year.

Staff Reports

Amanda Hoey provided a review of the trade and technical team visits and the remaining scheduled for the year. She highlighted the variety profile survey and customer concerns in seeing a Coaxium variety in the list without Preferred Variety assessment/ ranking. She noted the status on endowments, which is pending release of the University strategic plan prior to any provost match consideration. She reviewed the 2024 draft policies passed by the League board earlier in the day which will be available to the membership and considered at the annual meeting in November. On the operational side, she noted the status on assessments and engagement with feed lots as first source purchasers.

Jason Flowers provided an overview of activities in coordination with NRCS for his position.

Dylan Frederick provided a communications report, highlighting the success of outreach on social media with harvest posts that reached over 1.7 million people. He requested additional seeding photos and reviewed the upcoming action items for the communications team.

Other Business

No other new business was presented.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 pm.

Approved



Dana Tuckness, OWC Chair

Prepared and submitted by OWC Associate Administrator, Tana Simpson and CEO Amanda Hoey