

20
23

ANNUAL

REPORT



OREGON
WHEAT

01

Leadership

OREGON WHEAT

Vice President

Wade Bingaman



President

Collin Crocker



Secretary/ Treasurer

Erin Hansell
Heideman



Chief Executive Officer

Amanda Hoey



Past President

Ben Maney



County Presidents

Baker/Union Counties - Wade Bingaman

Gilliam County - Deacon Heideman

Klamath County - Rodney Cheyne

Malheur County - Kevin Corn

Morrow County - Erin Heideman

Sherman County - Thad Eakin

Umatilla County - Emery Gentry

Wallowa County - Kurt Melville

Wasco County - Josh Duling

N. Willamette Valley - Thomas Bernards

S. Willamette Valley - Mike Schrock

Front Cover Photo: Anne Morter

Back Cover Photo: Wade Bingaman

Financial

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Overall, the League ended the year in a better position than expected. We completed a change in our banking partners this year. Notably, the League had another clean audit, with the highest opinion presented by our auditors on the financial statements.

Income

Revenue was 95% of budget.

Contracted services with the Commission continues to represent the majority of League funding. Dues is the second largest category and essential to supporting expenses related to advocacy efforts. This year we added contracted revenue through NRCS and increased our investments to interest bearing accounts.

Expense

Expenditures were 79% of budget.

League management continued to identify organizational efficiencies to keep costs low and deliver the maximum return to growers. Notable changes this year: we extended a contract with a communications firm and continued our stewards project, increased funding allocations to address river system advocacy and hired a new Program Director.

Membership

Membership continues to be the heart of our organization. Contributions through dues are used directly to support our contract with Dalton Advocacy, Inc to provide representation at the state capitol and a voice for wheat.

Membership dues payments are more important than ever for advocacy in Salem and Washington DC. This year dues revenue increased, and we appreciate all our grower and business members supporting the League.

In addition to the advocacy and education work, membership in the League offers auxiliary benefits. Members can benefit from resources and programs available through the League such as the SAIF discount program, supervised fuels, Life Flight Network discount, group rates and more.

Membership reflected **60% active growers**, 17% 'life' members, 12% associate business members and 11% affiliate/retired/landowner members.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS!

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Your Dues at Work

- **Advocating for Farm Bill Priorities** - Worked with our national organization to communicate priorities for crop insurance, trade programs and conservation resources.
- **Expanding Partnerships**- Engaged with USDA to develop a new position at the League focused on increasing wheat producers' access to new conservation program funds.
- **Protecting the Farmer's Toolbox** - Fought for the Farmer's Toolbox, with advocacy on proposed pesticide regulations.
- **Preserving Transportation** - Provided direct support to maintain critical infrastructure and navigation along the Columbia Snake River system.
- **Investing to Research** - Successfully secured over \$5 million in continued funding for dryland wheat research.
- **Addressing Agency Issues** - Worked with state agencies to resolve issues impacting the ability to access key inputs.
- **Supporting Family Farm Continuity**- Increased communication on the stewardship and sustainability of farms.
- **Advocating for Wheat Interests** - Engaged in advocacy, coalition building and outreach on all issues impacting wheat growers in 2023 Oregon Legislative Session.
- **Building Outreach Efforts** - Grew our voice across social media and increased web traffic.

A partnership built in conservation: The League built on its relationship with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service through a new Program Director position. The position, partly funded by an NRCS grant, is designed to work with the agency to increase access to conservation programs for Oregon wheat producers.



State Legislative

Lobby Team

Dalton Advocacy, Inc.

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The 2023 legislative session included 27 new lawmakers, nearly 3,000 pieces of legislation, a Capitol under construction, Secretary of State Fagan's resignation, and the longest walkout in Oregon's history.

In a refreshing departure from previous long sessions, we did not see attacks on farmers' toolboxes, major product bans, or attempts to raise taxes on the agricultural industry. A welcomed change, particularly for wheat producers, who continue to grapple with employer mandates such as paid family medical leave and agricultural overtime, both of which took effect on January 1.

We were also pleased to bring back Wheat Day at the Capitol. The return included hosting our first Wheat Day Legislator Reception, which presented Board members with the unique opportunity to connect with over a dozen legislators and share the League's legislative priorities in a relaxed setting.

Legislative sessions are unpredictable, though, and this year proved no different. Even through the unprecedented walkout, the League's lobby team continued to advocate for industry priorities in the House and in legislative committees, which ultimately positioned us well when an agreement was reached. Among the actions in session, we were successful in supporting passage of some of our priorities and defeating bad bills. For example:

- Estate Tax Bill: Proactive priority bill for the League this session. Passed.
- Tax on Tires, Diesel, and Off-Road Machinery. Defeated.

Finally, on the funding end, both the Department of Agriculture and Oregon State University research and extension services were allocated funds exceeding current service levels. We are encouraged by this investment and hope that it signifies a renewed commitment from the legislature to support the long-term growth and prosperity of Oregon's agricultural sector.

PAC contributions: Grower memberships include a voluntary PAC contribution. With funds donated to the PAC, we contributed to a range of candidates in state elections this year, focusing resources to ensure our voice and interests are communicated across the political spectrum. Funds through the PAC help get those elected who will support our industry and make a difference in the future.

Federal Legislative

Lobby Team

National Association of Wheat Growers

Oregon participates as a full member in the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG). This year, Oregon grower Brent Cheyne served as NAWG President.

Farm Bill

NAWG had robust presence on Capitol Hill as Congress reviewed the 2018 Farm Bill and began drafting the 2023 Farm Bill. President Cheyne testified before Congressional committees, emphasizing crucial Farm Bill priorities and advocating for the wheat industry. Wheat growers had multiple opportunities to participate in fly-in activities, with Oregon sending delegates to DC in November, January, and June.

Disaster Aid

NAWG worked with USDA to implement the Emergency Relief Program and called for additional and adequate resources to be included in the FY23 Omnibus for disaster aid programs.

Crop Protection Tools

NAWG engaged with the EPA and Capitol Hill on multiple advocacy and educational efforts to maintain and update the availability of crop protection tools. NAWG joined a coalition regarding the petition to revoke tolerances and cancel registrations for certain product and urged the EPA to reject the remaking for pesticidal seed treatment. NAWG was also active in conservation program discussions.

Trade

- Advocated for investments to trade programs, with support for bills in the House and Senate proposing to double the mandatory funding for the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development program.
- Successful in urging the Senate to confirm Doug McKalip and Alexis Taylor to their positions at USTR and USDA respectively.

International Food Aid

NAWG supported activities that led to introduction of the American Farmers Feed the World Act of 2023. The Act focuses on increasing transparency and accountability and restoring the original intent of the Food for Peace program for commodity purchases.



NAWG
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF WHEAT GROWERS**

Federal Legislative

League Advocacy in Washington DC

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Each year, the Oregon Wheat Growers League travels to the nation's Capitol to meet with agencies and the entire Oregon congressional delegation. Similar to our national association, we increased our presence in D.C. at targeted points in the year given the importance of messaging related to Farm Bill renewal.

We also engaged in a Farm Bill Listening Session with members of the House Ag committee, sharing key wheat producer messages. We advocated for funding and research allocations, hosting congressional staff in tours of Oregon wheat research facilities.



League representatives at the Mission to DC in January.

Farm Bill Priorities

- **Protect the federal crop insurance program.** Crop insurance is a critical risk management tool for wheat producers.
- **Preserve the safety net provided by the commodity title of the Farm Bill.** Increase the statutory reference price for wheat, reflective of the increased cost of production.
- **Increase investment in export development programs** to expand our trade relationships in emerging markets.
- **Ensure conservation programs work for the Pacific Northwest,** understanding the geographic and preferential differences in farming practices that work for our environments.
- **Support international food aid programs.** Retain US commodities as a core component of our international food aid programs.

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Community Support

Oregon Wheat Foundation

The Oregon Wheat Foundation supports scholarships and projects to reduce hunger and develop industry leadership. This year, the Foundation awarded twelve scholarships to qualifying high school seniors:

- Dru Boyle, Central Oregon Region
- RyLee Demianew, Umatilla County
- Grady Dunlea, Klamath County
- Blake Harper, Umatilla County
- Jack Lieuallen, Umatilla County
- Kole Martin, Sherman County
- Natalie Martin, Sherman County
- Maclane Melville, Wallowa County
- Natalie Namdar, Willamette Valley Region
- Madison Orem, Morrow County
- Collin Rovey, Union County
- McConly Underhill-Wilkinson, Wasco County



Foundation Board

- Tom Winn, Chair
- Greg Goad, Vice Chair
- Jerry Terjeson, Secretary/Treasurer
- Eric Orem
- Bill Jepsen
- Brad Anderson

The Foundation undertakes a number of additional activities to support the industry:

- Sponsoring a wheat grower in the Future Leaders of Ag Program.
- Leasing property to OSU for the Pendleton Ag Research Station.
- Contributing to Farmers Ending Hunger through the Bushels for Betsy program.
- Funding Ag in the Classroom
- Sponsoring the Century Farms program to honor wheat producers who have worked the same land for at least 100 years.



Oregon Wheat Scholarship Recipients



Oregon Wheat Scholarship Recipients

Communications

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Communications Team

Oregon Wheat and Rushlight Agency

2023 in Summary

We made constructive strides this year in our external communications, reaching public audiences on the value of wheat. Outside of significant social media page growth, engagement, and increased following, we also spearheaded several initiatives to refine and enhance the Oregon Wheat brand.

Social Media / Website

Social media remained a strong avenue for dissemination of Oregon Wheat's external messaging. In 2023, our page following and reach jumped significantly due to harvest content shared from growers. The pages collectively saw an increase of 1,300 new followers and reached 1.7 million people.

The OWGL website remains consistent with 800 to 1,300 visitors per month.

Brand Development

We took on several brand development projects in 2023, including a "booth refresh", to amplify our presence at outreach events.

Member Support

Communication to members on critical issues continued, with a dedication to producing the member newsletter twice per month and supplementing with action alerts during legislative session. We published the bimonthly magazine and took on special projects at the request of the Commission, such as mailers on market issues.

Stewardship Videos

We continued messaging on stewardship, partnering with McFarland Productions on the 2023 Stewardship video series to highlight the dedication of Oregon's family wheat farms.

2023 COMMUNICATIONS: BY THE NUMBERS



40%

PAGE GROWTH
(YOY)



1.8 M

POST VIEWS
ON SOCIAL



12

BOARD PROFILE
ARTICLES



37%

INCREASE
IN ORGANIC
KEYWORDS

OREGON WHEAT



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