

FEBRUARY 2024

OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry

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*Photo by
Theresa Peterson*

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Wade Bingaman

President

After being elected as the Oregon Wheat Growers League Secretary/Treasurer two years ago, it seems like time has gone by very quickly and now I have been elected to serve as your President for the upcoming year. It is a position I am honored to serve, and I appreciate the trust that the membership has placed in both me and the Executive team. I have been asked often what made me want to serve in a leadership role with this organization, so I wanted to share a little background on myself, to help explain why farming is so important to my family.

For those of you who don't yet know me, I am the seventh generation on a farm in Union County near Imbler. We are a diversified farm growing wheat, barley, oats, grass seed, and alfalfa. Next year I am planning to add canola seed and camelina to our rotation. Even though I have different crops, at any one time at least a third of our farm is planted with wheat. It is a very important crop to both Union County and the rest of Oregon, and it is for that reason that I am willing to take on the responsibility of this role; to advocate its importance and tell people our story.

We have a number of challenges in farming; not the least of which is a misperception of what farmers do on their land and whether farming, as we know it, is sustainable. This is not an argument that we should hide from. It is one that we should lean into. Farmers are the first and most important environmentalists in the world today. Many of us are farming land that has been in our family for generations and we need to send a clear message as an industry that our first priority is that we are managing that land so that it will be passed along to the next generation. Sustainability is the most important reason for the business and farming decisions that we make. Tillage practices, crop protection tools, careful management of water to grow our crop and ways to get it to market are all part of this.



Ange and Wade Bingaman

MY TWO CENTS WORTH



The importance of advocacy: supporting the eighth generation on the farm.

As I say this, these are the practices that continue to be under threat for more regulation, restrictions, and oversight. This is the challenge: Tell our story about how and why we use these tools and resources. Tell consumers why American farmers are the best at what we do and how we do it. Challenge legislators to protect family farms with meaningful legislation that protects our land, crops, transportation, and the country's food supply.

American farmers are very good at what we do. Sometimes, too good. We are taken for granted because we go about our work, supplying the world with food that the average consumer then eats without much thought as to how it got to their plate. I, too, am guilty of putting my head down, doing my job and then wondering why farming went from such a respected occupation to one often seen as harming the land and resources we depend on, and in need of more regulation. I go about my work every day, but I realize now that it's not enough. I need to tell my story. And so do you.

We have challenges ahead and the League is positioned to face them head on. These include EPA rules, meant to protect endangered species but threaten our way of life. A water resources department that wants to monitor and control every drop of water that is used. Legislative rules designed to change how land, water

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and other resources are managed. A growing movement to remove the Snake River Dams that will create logistical difficulties and increase costs of transportation, making it harder to get wheat to our markets around the world. Finally, costs of doing business that make growing wheat more difficult and a market price that can't support it.

These are the reasons that the work the Oregon Wheat Growers League does is so important to the industry, and it is our challenge to explain what we do, how we do it, and why. In the past few years as my involvement with the League has increased, I have seen what a powerful voice farmers have as we meet with lawmakers and farm-related agencies. They are interested in what we have to say and how different actions

and policies will affect our farms. If we are not there to speak for ourselves, other interests will.

I look forward to hearing from farmers around the state in the upcoming year and how the Oregon Wheat Growers League can help continue to advocate for you. We have a longstanding tradition of representing farmers and I am honored to continue the work that is so important to make Oregon's farms thrive.



Inland Elevator Operators Visit Markets


Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO

Commissioner Jason Middleton traveled to Thailand and the Philippines in November as part of the Inland Country Elevators tour sponsored by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). There, he and four other elevator operators from the Pacific Northwest visited with customers about how wheat is segregated and handled in the PNW to meet the quality demands of customers abroad. It was the first time this type of trip was scheduled, and it offered value to all the participants. "In my role with United Grain as an originator of U.S. wheat and one who is tasked with the duty of promoting U.S. wheat with the Commission around the globe, having the opportunity to get in front of our end users face-to-face was absolutely invaluable" stated Middleton.

The visit was intended to provide elevator operators with a better understanding of the supply chain at the point of discharge. It allowed them to receive feedback from customers on segregation needs and discuss means to increase customer satisfaction with the value received from the U.S. marketing system. Middleton noted that "We visited a couple of URC Thailand's facilities where they process our wheat into the products their population consumes. Being there and having the operators show us the different products that our wheat becomes was really educational for me. Hearing them talk about the difficulties they've had using non-U.S. wheat really solidified my understanding of why we go to such great lengths to breed and grow the best milling quality wheat in the world. It made me proud to be a part of the U.S. wheat industry that spans from the wheat breeders to the farmer to the handlers."

As part of the trip, Middleton also participated in the final Crop Quality Seminar in Bangkok, Thailand to

deliver a presentation to about 150 industry professionals regarding sourcing wheat and the logistics entailed in reaching port facilities. "We talked about our grain handling systems, protocols, and people ... people that go to great lengths and expense to ensure the product that we are shipping to them exceeds their expectations." The importance of delivering crop quality and consistency was central to the seminar conversations.

Throughout the trip, Middleton and the team of elevator managers were able to strengthen relationships with customers and reaffirm commitments to meeting the needs of millers in Thailand and the Philippines. Overall, as Middleton reflected on the visit, he highlighted the value returned to the Commission and producers through assessments paid to USW and the importance of having USW staff in regional offices around the world. "A personal highlight of the trip was seeing how appreciated and valuable the US Wheat staff are to all of the people we visited," stated Middleton. 



Middleton with USW staff and elevator operators for the SE Asia 2023 visit.

League Finalizes NRCS Baseline Report

Jason Flowers, Program Director

“We have run out of enhancements that work for us in this region” is a common theme when talking with producers about their participation in USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. It was also the genesis of a partnership between the League and NRCS to host a position focused on increasing access to federal resources. The Oregon Wheat Growers League recently completed a baseline report on growers’ utilization of NRCS programs to better understand how the struggle of limited program enhancement options and other issues affect wheat producers. The report is the culmination of outreach and research over several months to inform the agency of the program areas working for producers and to assess opportunities to overcome limitations.

The outreach to establish baseline figures in the report was substantial. I attended meetings with growers to discuss current practices, program utilization, and ideas for new NRCS enhancements. I also launched an online survey to gain more data on individual program use and limitations. Additionally, I worked with NRCS staff to gain a perspective from the agency side and learn more details about the programs available for producers.

The findings in the report review the enhancements currently being used and the programs’ challenges and limitations. The most commonly used enhancements are the Nutrient Management and the Pest Management Conservation System. These were not a surprise since they included necessary tools in the no-till summer fallow system used on most of the state’s wheat acres. Also mentioned in the report are Residue Management, No Till, and Reduced Till. While they may not be the most widely used enhancements because many producers have already shifted production practices, there were still a number of new no-till proposals in the last round of Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. With the agency’s focus on carbon sequestration and keeping living roots in the soil, Cover Crop was also noted as an enhancement used by producers in the state who receive the needed precipitation to support the integration of cover crops. While researchers continue to assess the feasibility of this practice in lower rainfall zones, the applicability is limited in its use currently. Finally, the report highlights irrigation efficiency related enhancements which continue to be of interest to producers in areas of the state that face water supply challenges.

Overall, it was clear in the report that producers already have a strong understanding of the programs offered through NRCS, with over 90% of respondents indicating

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Overall, it was clear in the report that producers already have a strong understanding of the programs offered through NRCS, with over 90% of respondents indicating familiarity with the program and application processes.

familiarity with the program and application processes. The agency has been proactive in its engagement with producers to highlight the options available under current programs. Producers’ most significant challenge in program participation is that programs or enhancements are limited in how they fit with the farming practices used in Pacific Northwest regions. The narrow range of usable enhancements creates additional challenges when trying to renew CSP contracts. While that was the greatest barrier, other obstacles were hitting the dollar cap before the new practice was fully implemented and the delay between producer innovation and adoption of new technologies versus when the agency can incorporate those into new enhancements.

A list of recommendations is included in the report based on the input received from growers and NRCS staff. At the top of that list were:

- Developing a procedure to incorporate new technologies into enhancements sooner.
- Expanding options for individual enhancements under a practice to account for a producer’s progression through conservation technologies. The agency recently made positive strides in this area by allowing the reuse of enhancements. However, expanding enhancement options would further increase program applicability.
- Creating a program to enable producers to test enhancements on a smaller scale before signing up for a full contract.

Other recommendations involved developing a program to compensate early adopters, adjusting Oregon’s bird nesting dates, and creating a handful of specific enhancements.

The report will be used as an essential piece of communication with the NRCS to ensure that growers can continue their conservation efforts with the financial backing of the agency. After sharing the report, the League will work with the agency to identify means to implement the recommendations. I look forward to continuing this relationship and supporting our producers in continuing the hard work of raising sustainable, high-quality wheat. 

Educational Trainings Add to Knowledge of Wheat Industry

Jessica Chambers, the Rushlight Agency

Over 1,600 miles apart, the League and Commission visited labs and test mills in Washington and Kansas in early December. These educational trainings and visits highlighted the intricacies of the flour milling process, emphasizing the importance of maintaining top-tier quality standards in Oregon wheat that cater to the demands of international customers.

Oregon Wheat Commissioner Tyler Hansell participated in the IGP Institute at Kansas State University, a comprehensive course aimed at providing wheat growers

and industry professionals with a nuanced understanding of the flour milling process and the relationship between wheat quality and flour performance. Organized annually by the IGP Institute, this course serves as an educational platform for members of the U.S. wheat industry. It covers the fundamental principles of flour milling, delving into the entire process and principles related to milling. The course also explores how the grade and quality of wheat impact flour extraction. Each component of the course is designed to offer valuable insights into the milling process.



IGP Course Participants touring the Hall Ross Flour Mill.



Commissioner Hansell prepares for the hands-on milling portion of the IGP course training.



One of only a few in the world: seeing the Miag mill at the Western Wheat Quality Lab.



Alecia Kizonas demonstrates the difference of wheat quality on end-product performance.

The course, attended by participants from seven western states, contained both classroom sessions and hands-on training. The itinerary included hands-on learning at the Shellenberger Hall milling laboratory, providing an up-close view of major milling equipment and the opportunity to mill all six classes of U.S. wheat. A tour of the Hal Ross Flour Mill offered a firsthand experience of the operations of a flour mill and the diverse range of products it can yield. Additionally, participants engaged in baking tests at the baking lab, exploring how different classes of wheat influence end products like bread, cakes, and cookies.

Commissioner Hansell reflected on the experience, stating, “I didn’t realize how much went into the milling process. This course gave me a much better idea of what customers look for in flour quality and how that quality translates into value during the milling process.”

Meanwhile, League staff explored the USDA Agricultural Research Service Western Wheat Quality Lab in Pullman, Washington. Nestled on the Washington State University campus, this lab is an important partner to Oregon Wheat. Focused on analyzing new varieties and researching wheat quality, the lab aims to enhance the economic benefit of the Pacific Northwest wheat industry. Staff received an insightful overview of sample testing processes, including the baking and grading of products which are vital for international customers relying on soft white wheat from this region.

Throughout the year, various opportunities, including these technical and research-based training sessions, provide staff and Commissioners with ample chances to deepen their understanding of the wheat industry. These gatherings not only offer insights into the industry as a whole, but also illuminate customers’ perspectives and preferences. By actively participating in these events, Oregon’s wheat producers and professionals contribute significantly to the continuous support of promotion and export market development efforts crucial for the region. 



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Green, Blue, Yellow and Red: Getting Back to Work

Dana Tuckness

OWC Chair

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

With spring just around the corner, here's hoping you got all the field work done you had hoped for prior to winter setting in. I suspect most farmers are like me and do most of the service and repair to their equipment during the winter months. On my farm, my equipment is getting older, as am I, which means more breakdowns and less getting repaired due to this slower moving mechanic. No engines need overhauled, clutch replacements, or transmission repairs, so I can leave the splitting stands hanging on the wall (always a good feeling). Just a few minor hydraulic leaks and hopefully minor electrical issues, means it should be a quick and easy repair season. Makes one wonder why I will be scrambling (as in years past) to finish repairs when spring does break.

Your Oregon Wheat Commissioners and staff have been working diligently through the winter months. Commissioner Hansell and I attended the U.S. Wheat (USW) fall conference in Cincinnati, Ohio in early November. There was a lot of discussion on transportation issues, concerning rail freight costs and concern over the low water levels on the Mississippi River. Low water problems are also causing major slowdowns on getting freight moved through the Panama Canal. USW is also working on a campaign "Stories of Stewardship" which highlights several wheat farms across the U.S. and will be released to customers and stakeholders in early 2024. 2023 was a busy year for USW, which hosted visitors from 42 countries. One of those was the first trade team from China since 2014. And of course, there were several trade teams that spent time in Oregon.

The Tri-State Grain Convention was held in mid-November in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, which included a regular commission meeting and discussions with our counterparts from Idaho and Washington. Much of the conversation with our PNW states was focused on how to get more of our Pacific Northwest wheat to additional markets, including Latin America. We are continuing to work on logistics issues and have some ideas on how to make progress there in the near future. The Oregon Wheat Foundation held its annual auction on the last evening of the convention. Thank you to all who participated. The auction yielded very good results for the scholarship program.

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The Commission voted last spring to put up \$250k for this endowment with the condition of getting some matching funds from the University. As of this writing, the t's are being crossed and the i's are getting dotted, and we should see this come to fruition soon.

Commissioners and staff were also traveling abroad at the same time these events were taking place in November, connecting with overseas customers.

The Commission will be sending two commissioners to the USW winter conference in late January, in Washington D.C. In February, the Commission will meet to go over the research proposals from Oregon State University (OSU). These are a very time-consuming couple of days, deciding which proposals will benefit Oregon's wheat growers the most and also how much we are willing to invest in said proposals. The Commission is also putting the finishing touches on an endowment for the important OSU cereal grains pathology department. The Commission voted last spring to put up \$250k for this endowment with the condition of getting some matching funds from the University. As of this writing, the t's are being crossed and the i's are getting dotted, and we should see this come to fruition soon.

Since spring is coming up on us fast, it's time to think about getting the horses out of the barn. Whether they be green, blue, yellow, or those pretty red ones, it's time to think about putting them back to work. I think most people and farmers in particular, enjoy spring as it is the beginning of hope for the new year, with new life springing from the earth. We have been and continue to be the world's breadbasket due to our free-market system and being able to make our own decisions in our businesses. Here's to a safe and prosperous 2024 to all!

Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much.

(John Wayne) 

Weed Management in Oregon Wheat: Navigating Challenges and Seeking Solutions

Dr. Pete Berry, Associate Professor of Weed Science in the Department of Crop and Soil Science

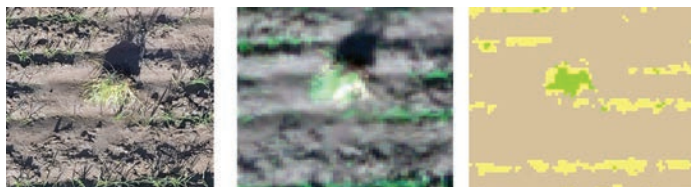
The adage suggesting two certainties in life—death and taxes—warrants an expansion to include a third inevitability: weeds. Every grower understands the persistent challenges associated with weed management, and this article serves as an update on the ongoing developments within my Weed Science Program at Oregon State University. Before delving into program updates, allow me to provide a brief introduction. I completed my Ph.D. at Oregon State University in 2019. Subsequently, I spent 3.5 years as a field scientist for Syngenta in Central Illinois. The prospect of returning to Oregon beckoned, and since the fall of 2022, I have been in my role at Oregon State University. This journey has afforded me valuable experiences and insights that continue to shape my commitment to advancing weed science and supporting growers in navigating the landscape of weed management.

My program primarily focuses on utilizing precision agriculture to improve weed management. Within the area of weed management, precision agriculture includes spot spraying technology, image analysis for weed identification, drone imagery and applications, utilization of RTK/autosteer GPS spatial data for weed mapping, precise herbicide applications and efficacy, as well as other technologies focused on weed control. Additionally, my program integrates studies on herbicide rotations, weed biology, herbicide resistance and other aspects of weed science. The following are ongoing projects in my lab aimed at advancing weed management in wheat production.

Drone Imagery

Spot spraying of weeds has been a longstanding practice in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), primarily employed during fallow years to reduce herbicide costs. However, other large acreage row crop production systems such as corn,

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1 mm and 1 cm resolution using different sensors of Italian ryegrass in a wheat field. The Italian ryegrass was identified using training software and isolated with the green pixels. Each pixel is geo-located and can be found in an image/field.

2023 Grant Title and Commission Funding Levels:

Oregon Wheat Weed Management Research,
\$27,878 (2022-23) and
\$29,887 (2023-24)

Dr. Pete Berry



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soybean and cotton are now utilizing in-season spot spraying where weeds are identified and sprayed in real-time due to advancements in image analysis and precision technologies. One of the challenges with the use of this technology in wheat involves the visual similarity between grassy weeds and wheat during post-application herbicide timings. To help with weed identification, I am using drone imagery at different resolutions to help train a model that can be used to isolate weeds within wheat fields. The current model is focused on the slight color variation among grassy weeds and wheat. I select pixels within an image to train the software what is the weed verse the crop.

The more images collected, the better the model is at identifying and separating weeds from wheat. Different weed species are being grown in greenhouses and placed in wheat fields for imaging to determine if software can detect the weeds, the quality of the image (resolution) needed, and weed species separation. The research is ongoing and as the model improves, the identification of weeds in wheat will be more accurate.

Plant Health Detection for Spot Spraying

An alternative method for identifying weeds for spot spraying involves detecting variations in plant health between weeds and wheat. Weeds can absorb more nutrients than necessary, a phenomenon known as luxury consumption. I am currently evaluating whether there is a discernible difference in plant health that can be used as a basis for identification. I am utilizing a Weed-It System to evaluate its ability to detect chlorophyll variation among weeds and wheat. The Weed-It system uses artificial red-light to cause a plant to photosynthesize. The sensors detect the photosynthesizing plant(s) and spot sprays it. A greener plant (more chlorophyll) can trigger the system compared to surrounding less-green plants. We are presently assessing this technology in my program to determine its potential for calibration to selectively target greener weeds. This evaluation is particularly focused



Custom built Weed-It system. The red light causes plants to photosynthesize and individual nozzles are activated. The sensor is being assessed for discriminating chlorophyll content among weeds and wheat.

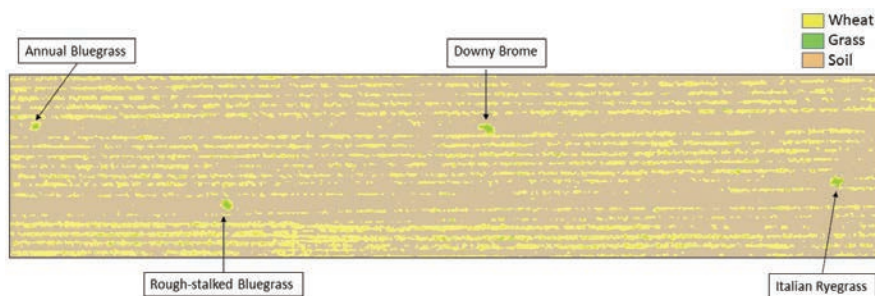
on early and late crop stages, where chlorophyll levels can significantly differ based on the amount of green tissue present. Various weed species will be cultivated in a greenhouse and introduced into wheat plots to gauge the system's sensitivity. To verify system activation, water with dye and spray cards will be used.

Assessing Herbicide Carryover in a Co-AXium Variety

Continuous rotations of wheat have resulted in varying levels of imazamox herbicide (Beyond) carryover in non-Clearfield varieties. We are currently evaluating a new CoAXium wheat line developed in the OSU wheat breeding program to assess its potential for reduced phytotoxicity compared to non-Clearfield wheat lines when planted in fields previously treated with imazamox. This study is in its second year, and the new line has been planted in wheat plots that received different rates of imazamox. Ongoing herbicide plant-back injury assessments are being conducted at the Moro and Hyslop research locations.

Evaluating Speed of Canopy Closure in Varieties


Another ongoing project in partnership with the OSU wheat breeding program involves evaluating the speed of canopy closure and its impact on weed growth across six distinct wheat lines. Wheat varieties



Four different grass weeds identified using software that separates soil, wheat, and weeds. The classification system does not distinguish among weed species but classifies wheat and non-wheat pixels based on color variation.

exhibit diverse growth habits, with some displaying more tillering and denser canopies, while others exhibit upright growth from a primary stem. The rate at which canopies close influences the type of light penetrating the soil, with far-red light inhibiting seed germination. Faster canopy closure has the potential to decrease weed seed germination because more red light is intercepted from the wheat, increasing the amount of far-red light penetrating the soil. We are assessing six varieties for their canopy closure speed and its impact on weed growth. A sensor measuring the ratio of red to far-red light will be placed under the canopy of each wheat line to measure the red to far-red ratio, and weed growth rates will be measured based on the leaf area index (the amount of area a plant covers). Depending on the results, the speed of canopy closure and plant growth type may be considered

desirable traits for new wheat lines developed at Oregon State University.

Since becoming a faculty member at Oregon State University in 2022, I have experienced tremendous support from both the Oregon Wheat Commission and the community of growers. The backing of the wheat community has been invaluable, and I am genuinely grateful for their support. I am eager to continue in my research efforts aimed at enhancing weed management in wheat production across the state of Oregon. The ongoing collaboration with the Oregon Wheat Commission and growers is instrumental in advancing our collective goal of improving agricultural practices and ensuring the sustainability of wheat farming in the region. 

River System Agreement Filed with Court


Marking a significant turn in discussions, the U.S. Government and plaintiffs are seeking to settle long-standing litigation surrounding the Federal Columbia River Power System and the lower Snake River dams. Despite public concern regarding an agreement negotiated without stakeholder involvement, the U.S. Government and Six Sovereigns filed a settlement agreement with the Court in December. The Six Sovereigns include the State of Oregon, State of Washington, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation.

The plaintiffs have agreed to a five-year stay in litigation, with an additional five-year option, pending implementation of a series of commitments for the Columbia and Snake River systems. These include several commitments regarding funding and a set of proposed operational and spill changes that could impact safe navigation. The Commitments are an outgrowth of a process that was supposed to support collaborative development of “a durable long-term strategy to restore salmon and other native fish populations to healthy and abundant levels, honoring Federal commitments to Tribal Nations, delivering affordable and reliable clean power, and meeting the many resilience needs of stakeholders across the region.”

Judge Simon gave all parties until December 29, 2023 to enter a response to the Motion to Stay. The Judge gave

the plaintiffs and U.S. Government until January 12, 2024 to respond to those filings before he issues a decision in the case. That decision may take months.

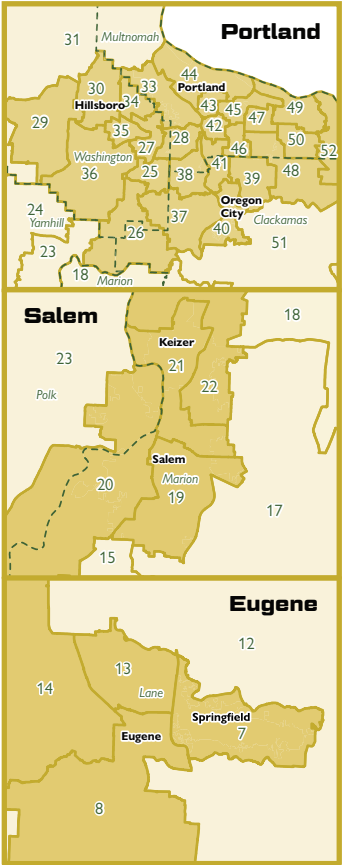
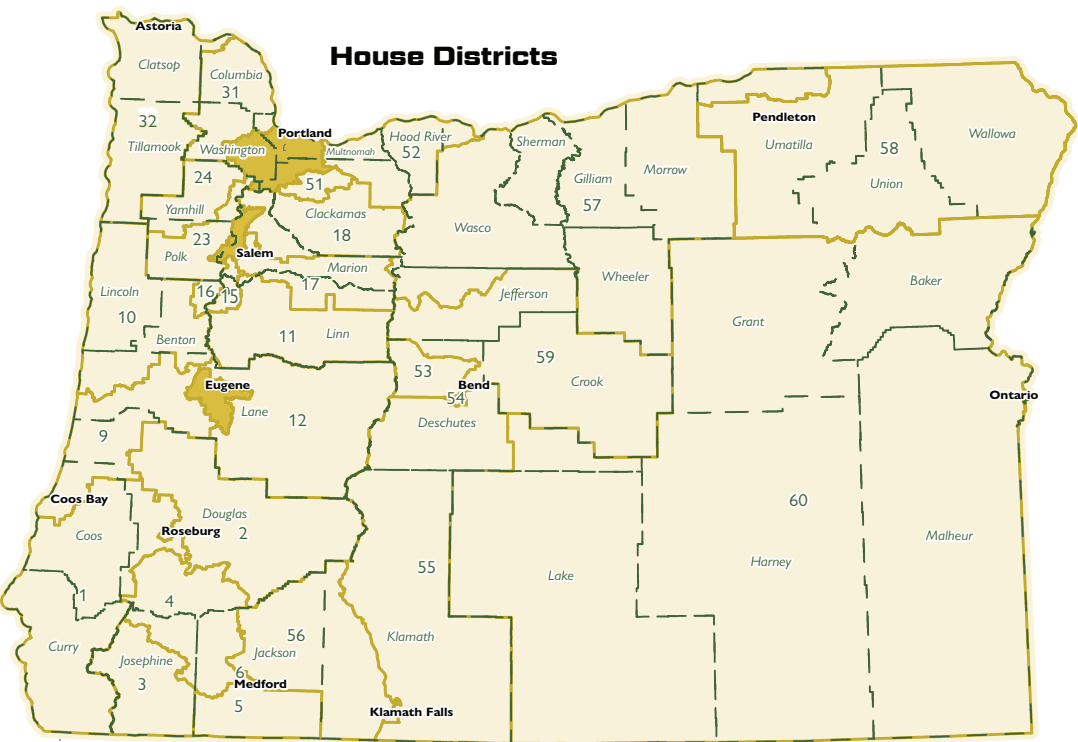
Responding to the filing, the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) noted that “This secretly negotiated agreement threatens a broad swath of regional stakeholders beyond river users – from ratepayers, farmers, barging, cruise operations, ports, irrigators, and more.” Neil Maunu, PNWA Executive Director stated “The Administration has sidestepped critical discussions on river transportation and irrigation, disregarding the livelihoods of local communities. We’re facing a decision that could decimate communities, trade, and economies that rely on the Lower Snake River Dams without stakeholder engagement or public scrutiny.”

While the agreement has a myopic focus on the Lower Snake River Dams, any decisions relating to dam breaching would have to be made by Congress. An oversight hearing held by the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries emphasized this point. As such, the Oregon Wheat Growers League will continue in its efforts to engage with members of our Congressional delegation to emphasize the importance of the river system and the opportunities to ensure investments can support healthy salmon populations and a functional river system serving the myriad of operational uses: from irrigation to electrical generation to navigation. 

FIND YOUR 2024 REPRESENTATIVE

OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVES

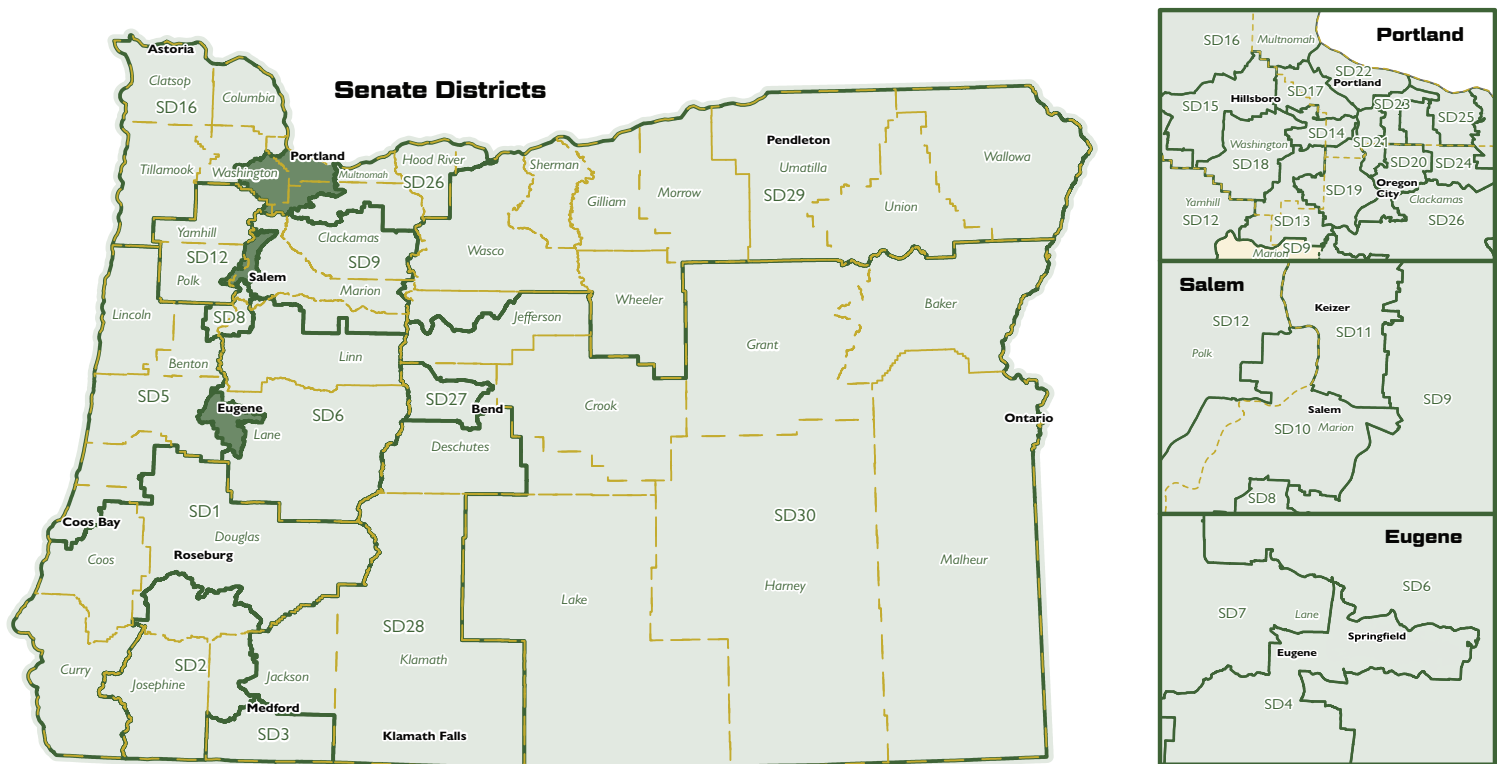
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14.	Julie Fahey	D-Eugene, Junction City	44.	Travis Nelson	D-Portland
15.	Shelly Boshart Davis	R-Albany, Millersburg, Tangent	45.	Thuy Tran	D-Portland
16.	Dan Rayfield	D-Corvallis	46.	Khanh Pham	D-Portland
17.	Ed Diehl	R-Stayton	47.	Andrea Valderrama	D-Portland
18.	Rick Lewis	R-Silverton	48.	Hoa Nguyen	D-Damascus
19.	Tom Andersen	D-Salem	49.	Zach Hudson	D-Troutdale
20.	Paul Evans	D-Monmouth, Salem	50.	Ricki Ruiz	D-Gresham
21.	Kevin Mannix	R-Salem, Keizer	51.	James Hieb	R-Canby
22.	Tracy Cramer	R-Woodburn, Salem	52.	Jeff Helfrich	R-Hood River
23.	Anna Scharf	R-Newberg, Dayton, Dallas	53.	Emerson Levy	D-Sisters
24.	Lucetta Elmer	R-McMinnville, Sheridan, Grande Ronde	54.	Jason Kropf	D-Bend
25.	Ben Bowman	D-Tigard	55.	E. Werner Reschke	R-La Pine
26.	Courtney Neron	D-Sherwood, Wilsonville	56.	Emily McIntire	R-Eagle Point
27.	Ken Helm	D-Beaverton	57.	Greg Smith	R-Hermiston
28.	Dacia Grayber	D-Portland	58.	Bobby Levy	R-Echo
29.	Susan McLain	D-Hillsboro	59.	Vikki Breese-Iverson	R-Prineville
30.	Nathan Sosa	D-Hillsboro	60.	Mark Owens	R-Crane, Baker City, Hines



FIND YOUR 2024 REPRESENTATIVE

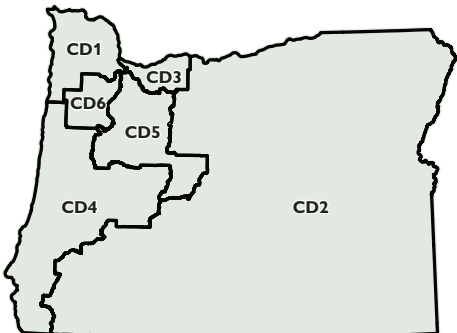
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DISTRICT	NAME	PARTY/LOCATION	DISTRICT	NAME	PARTY/LOCATION
1.	David Brock Smith	R-Port Orford	17.	Elizabeth Steiner	D-Portland/Beaverton
2.	Art Robinson	R-Cave Junction	18.	Wlinsvey Campos	D-Aloha
3.	Jeff Golden	D-Ashland	19.	Rob Wagner	D-Lake Oswego
4.	Floyd Prozanski	D-Eugene	20.	Mark Meek	D-Oregon City
5.	Dick Anderson	R- Lincoln City	21.	Kathleen Taylor	D-Milwaukie
6.	Cedric Hayden	R- Roseburg	22.	Lew Frederick	D-Portland
7.	James Manning Jr.	D- Eugene, Veneta	23.	Michael Dembrow	D-Portland
8.	Sara Gelser Blouin	D- Corvallis, Albany,	24.	Kayse Jama	D-Portland
9.	Fred Girod	R-Stayton	25.	Chris Gorsek	D-Troutdale
10.	Deb Patterson	D-Salem	26.	Daniel Bonham	R-The Dalles
11.	Kim Thatcher	R-Keizer	27.	Tim Knopp	R-Bend
12.	Brian Boquist	I-McMinnville, Newberg, Dallas	28.	Dennis Linthicum	R-Klamath Falls
13.	Aaron Woods	D-Tigard, Sherwood, Wilsonville	29.	Bill Hansell	R-Athena, Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande
14.	Kate Lieber	D-Beaverton	30.	Lynn Findley	R-Vale, Baker City
15.	Janeen Sollman	D-Hillsboro			
16.	Suzanne Weber	R-Tillamook			



FEDERAL DELEGATION

US SENATORS	SEATS	NAME & PARTY
	1.	Ron Wyden - D
	2.	Jeff Merkley - D
US REPRESENTATIVES	DISTRICT	NAME & PARTY
	1.	Suzanne Bonamici - D
	2.	Cliff Bentz - R
	3.	Earl Blumenauer - D
	4.	Val Hoyle - D
	5.	Lori Chavez-DeRemer - R
	6.	Andrea Salinas - D



Pacific Northwest Wheat Producers Convene for Annual Conference

Tayleranne Bray, the Rushlight Agency

The 2023 Tri-State Grain Convention returned to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in November. Organized by the Oregon Wheat Growers League, Washington Association of Wheat Growers and Idaho Grain Producers Association, this event brought together a diverse community of growers, industry leaders, and experts from the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Featuring a lineup of engaging speakers covering topics from global trade to market trends, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about their industry. Beyond the informative sessions, the convention served as fertile ground for networking and collaborative learning, fostering the exchange of experiences and insights among participants.

Erin Hansell Heideman kicked off day one of the conference with a message about using time at the conference to get to know other growers, and to learn from industry professionals. "Attending the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention is an important part of being a farmer. The opportunity to form relationships and gain more knowledge will help you improve your business and create that long term legacy we strive for as farmers," said Erin. "If you want to improve your craft as a farmer, get involved and attend your county meetings, field days and conventions."

The roster of speakers at the 2023 conference featured crowd favorites, including Eric Snodgrass' presentation on "High Impact Meteorology: 2023 Review and Outlook for 2024." Snodgrass told growers that current models predict a weaker El Niño, which typically means a milder, slightly dryer winter for the Pacific Northwest. He also discussed how



Laurie Schrock and Debbie Crocker enjoy interacting with vendors at the trade show.

artificial intelligence programs are making more accurate global weather forecasting possible.

Attendees were also heard from Kip Tom, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, and chief of the United States Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome. Ambassador Tom delved into the vital connection between food security and national security, emphasizing the crucial role the U.S. plays in leadership within this realm. He gave a brief history of U.S. food production, highlighting how World War II forced the country to figure out how to make shelf-stable foods, and then ship it to troops around the world. That success helped build the foundation of America's food security, which includes networked and navigable waterways, a temperate growing climate, great land quality, an educated and skilled workforce, and geographical security. Ambassador Tom warned that as the population moves away from the farm, consumer tastes change, and the regulatory climate shifts, we may be at risk of losing our advantage as a food power. "I urge you to get involved. This is about protecting the future of your family farm and many to come after that," he stated.

Agricultural influencer Rob Sharkey, also known as the Shark Farmer, took the stage to discuss the importance of farmers sharing their lives and stories with broad audiences. Leveraging his expertise in social media, podcasts, and various forms of mass communication, Sharkey shared



Eric Snodgrass discusses weather predictions and impact to growing conditions.



Attendees Jerry Marguth and Collin Crocker collaborate at Convention.

his unique perspective as a farmer and an influencer with attendees. He also shared his struggles with mental health, and how prevalent mental health issues are in the agricultural community. He encouraged attendees to seek help if they needed it. “Don’t just do it for yourself, you do it for your family, you do it for your friends. Because that’s going to hurt everything, including your farm,” Sharkey stated. His presentation paired well with a breakout session hosted by Geoff Vetter from Clyde titled “How to Tell Your Ag Story”. He spoke on why sharing the stories and perspectives of farmers matters, and how to effectively communicate with lawmakers about the issues farmers face.

Annual Meeting

The annual Oregon Wheat Growers League meeting is held during the convention, focusing on regulatory and policy changes in the state. This year, Representative Ken Helm, Chair of the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water, shared legislative updates and his perspective on the upcoming 2024 short session.



Oregon Wheat Growers League 2024 officer induction.

Representative Helm stated that he is working on a couple of issues that are of special importance for growers, including water issues, and how the state can better manage the needs of users statewide. He also touched on land use laws and how siting renewable energy facilities may affect farmland.

Members also heard from Keira Franz and Jack Long from the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



BOB QUINTON
John Day



LAURA GEORGES
Burns



DAVID STIREWALT
La Grande



Bank of Eastern Oregon

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Convention attendees enjoy the Oregon annual gala event.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

latest from Washington, DC, including an update on the Farm Bill. With the recently signed extension in place, lawmakers will have until the end of 2024 to pass a new Farm Bill. National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) staff Kiera Franz, environmental policy advisor, and Jack Long, government relations representative, hosted a breakout session to update growers on issues NAWG is monitoring in Washington, DC. Franz touched on 2024 being an election year, and how things tend to get more political during an election cycle. She said many seats are vacant, which will mean many new faces in Congress in 2025. One prominent member not running for re-election is Senator Debbie Stabenow, who is currently chair of the Senate Ag Committee. Other issues highlighted by NAWG included herbicide and pesticide regulations, ongoing treated seed litigation, potential legislation that would impact the lower Snake River dams, and monitoring ongoing Waters of the U.S. legislation.

Nicole Mann from Dalton Advocacy, OWGL's contract lobbyist, gave members an update on recent legislative changes in Oregon, and shared anticipated agricultural issues that may come up in the 2024 legislative session.



Convention attendees participate in supporting the Oregon Wheat Foundation at the annual silent and live auction.

At the end of the meeting, the election of League officers for 2024 was held. Our congratulations to incoming officers: Wade Bingaman, President; Erin Hansell Heideman, Vice President; Thad Eakin, Secretary/ Treasurer; and Collin Crocker, Immediate Past President.

Honors and Celebrations

During the Oregon Gala celebration, attendees enjoyed a keynote from Geoff Vetter with Clyde on the importance of telling your story. Outgoing League President Collin Crocker reflected on his time as President before formally passing the gavel to new League President, Wade Bingaman.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the sponsors of the 2023 convention, whose support played a pivotal role in making the event a resounding success. Above all, we extend our deepest gratitude to the attendees who, with their commitment to learning and unwavering support, contribute to the well-being of wheat producers throughout Oregon and the Northwest. Save the date for our next gathering in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho November 19-21, 2024! 🌾

Updated Resolutions Prepare League for Legislative Session Advocacy

Amanda Hoey, CEO

Policies related to Taxes, Regulation and Market Access all received updates and additions during the League's annual meeting hosted in November. The updated policies adopted by the membership reflect the multitude of pressures facing our grower members and affirm the positions of the League on topics ranging from environmental stewardship to crop

protection products. The policies represent the guiding principles to the Board and staff for League positions on state and federal legislative issues.

Policies are included in categories covering environment/regulations, labor, taxes, research and technology, farm policy,

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market development, transportation, public education and other issues. In the policies adopted for 2024, the membership approved a couple of key changes:

- Ag overtime was revised to discuss the challenges imposed by the ag overtime bill passed in the 2022 session. It highlights the need to identify improvements to those new ag overtime regulations.
- Market access funding policies were updated to reflect current funding programs, with an emphasis on the need for continued funding to keep pace with our competitors.
- An increase to the estate tax exemption with escalation clauses were incorporated to tax policies, even as we saw a beneficial bill passed in the last legislative session.
- Accessibility of the farm endorsement was incorporated into a transportation policy as a proactive measure. As many farm operations struggle to find truck drivers, we do not want to see future new requirements on an endorsement that could further limit the pool of potential drivers or increase the complexity of getting them safely trained.

Additions to policies were also approved as follows:


- Taxes: Oppose imposition of sales taxes.
- Markets: Support development of domestic Oregon wheat markets and associated infrastructure.
- Environment Regulation: Support recognition of the economic and societal contributions of wheat production in land use discussions.

Policy efforts in legislative advocacy are funded through the League membership dues. Recommendations for new or revised policy resolutions can be submitted by members to their County President for League Board consideration and presentation to the membership at the annual meeting. Find



League Board members discuss policies and resolutions.

the full policies on the League website at owgl.org/policy.

As we prepare for the short Legislative session in 2024, these policies will help direct our grassroots efforts advocating for legislation that ensures we can continue farm operations and wheat production in Oregon. 

Celebrating Excellence in the Oregon Wheat Industry

Each year the Oregon Wheat Growers League recognizes outstanding individuals whose remarkable contributions have left an indelible mark on the industry. During the Tri-State Grain Convention's Oregon Gala event, the 2023 Oregon Wheat Awards were presented in front of a room full of growers and industry partners. The noteworthy group of recipients are genuinely deserving of recognition and appreciation for their roles in fortifying and advancing the wheat industry.

Distinguished Service Award: Dr. Chris Mundt

Dr. Chris Mundt received the Distinguished Service Award, an accolade presented for unwavering dedication and service to the Oregon wheat industry. Dr. Mundt, a cereals pathologist at Oregon State University since 1985, has tirelessly collaborated with growers, fostering relationships throughout the industry. Walter Powell, who presented the award, spoke highly of Dr. Mundt's commitment, stating, "We know him

well, because if you have an issue at 5:30 in the morning related to the pathology of your wheat, I can almost guarantee that by the next morning at 5:30 Chris Mundt will be on your doorstep waiting for you so that you can show him the problem. No doctorate that I know of, that works with us, has worked any harder than Chris. He's fantastic." This year, Dr. Mundt will be retiring from OSU after nearly 30 years of service. The League thanks him for his commitment to the industry and all the work he has done to move wheat science forward.

Above and Beyond: Kathleen Cathey

The Above and Beyond Award is awarded to an individual who has repeatedly stepped up for Oregon's wheat producers and this year its deserving recipient was Kathleen Cathey. Serving as regional field staff for Senator Ron Wyden, Cathey has been an invaluable partner for the wheat industry. Her efforts include working with growers seeking support for the Pendleton research station during a time when it was facing financial challenges. She helped identify appropriate federal pathways that ultimately led to the Resilient Dryland Farming Appropriations funding secured by Oregon's congressional delegates and subsequently worked on efforts to support the long-term plots in Pendleton. "Kathleen has provided guidance to navigate through federal issues and concerns. She has been a strong advocate for rural communities and wheat producers," said Ben Maney, Past President for the League.

Volunteer of the Year: Chris Williams

Chris Williams was awarded the Outstanding Volunteer Award. Chris served as chair of the Columbia Basin Ag Research Station Liaison Committee through 2023. He has been closely involved with the Pendleton Experiment Station for the past 14 years as a member and chair of the OSU-ARS Liaison Committee. He partners with scientists in on-farm research projects, some of which have included investigating




Dr. Chris Mundt and Darren Padget accept awards for Distinguished Service and Voice of the Industry.

the benefits of soil amendments; alternative crops; residue management techniques; and spring wheat variety performance. "The scientists at the station rely on him for his leadership and vision. It is obvious that Chris loves farming and agricultural research," said Dr. Francisco Calderon, Director of the Columbia Basin Ag Research Center.

Voice of the Industry: Darren Padget

The final award of the evening was the Voice of the Industry Award, presented to Darren Padget. This award is presented to an individual who is, or has been, active in the industry and has contributed to the improvement of the industry. With leadership roles spanning the Oregon Wheat Commission, Oregon Wheat Growers League and chairmanship of U.S. Wheat Associates, Padget has been an influential figure in the industry. Oregon Wheat Commission Vice Chair Tyler Hansell emphasized Padget's global impact, stating, "There are few individuals more recognizable to our customers than Darren. He has worked to develop a close relationship with individuals from Japan to Korea to the Philippines and more - from hosting farm tours to traveling abroad, he has served as the voice for all of us."

We express our gratitude to all the remarkable individuals who have contributed to the industry. Their unwavering dedication, profound knowledge, and steadfast commitment have not gone unnoticed—rather, they are deeply appreciated. We urge our members to consider nominating individuals for the 2024 Above and Beyond and Distinguished Service awards. The deadline for nominations is September 1, 2024. 



Chris Williams and Kathleen Cathey accept awards for Volunteer of the Year and Above and Beyond.

A Year of Perseverance

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



Perseverance or ‘grit’ is a trait I admire in the individuals I work with through Oregon Wheat. Whether dealing with a tractor stuck in a field’s most challenging access point or developing a marketing plan when facing extreme volatility and uncertainty, I continually see our members tackling challenges head-on. Sticking with the problem and often finding a ‘farmer solution.’

Perseverance is also what defined 2023 for Oregon Wheat and will likely define 2024. Even as we saw several positive shifts, there are areas which continue to encounter obstacles. That includes our work in feeding the world. At the end of a year marked by multiple crisis around the world, I traveled for both advocacy and policy work to discuss the essential work our Oregon and U.S. farmers do in growing food to feed the world. The first: a November fly-in to Washington D.C. to support the American Farmers Feed the World Act (AFFWA) through the League. The second: a December trade and policy visit with U.S. Wheat Associates.

The November fly-in focused specifically on the AFFWA. Collectively, we met with over 15 Congressional offices. During the meetings, I advocated for using American-grown commodities in food aid and discussed the work of Oregon wheat farmers to produce high-quality wheat for these programs. AFFWA proposes reasonable changes to the Food for Peace program: changes necessary to continue the important role in addressing acute hunger crisis and global food insecurity. It involves reducing administrative cost burdens, ensuring a minimum percentage of funds are allocated to costs associated with acquiring food / getting it where it needs to be, and adding oversight through the Secretary of Ag.


The U.S. and U.S. farmers have historically played a significant role in international aid, and our federal policies should emphasize the beneficial relationship. For countries where there is no surplus or capacity for local production, there is a distinct gap in addressing hunger. It is a problem that cash alone cannot solve, and one which can be best served through commodity donations. This message was also reinforced by program delivery partners who are anxious to have wheat as a tool for delivering aid. Yet, while we take pride in the wheat we grow and deliver, we have experienced a significant drop in the amount of U.S. ag products being used in the Food for Peace program and other international aid programs. A trend that needs to reverse.



November fly-in Washington DC.

In December, I then joined USW’s Director of Trade Policy for meetings in Europe. The purpose of the visits: discuss the European Union regulatory trade environment and work on relationships for supporting international food aid programs using commodities. The primary meeting related to food aid was with the World Food Programme. It included conversations on their capacities, limitations and needs based on funding country specifications- but also the opportunities to partner further. From crop updates to technical assistance in milling capacity to derive the greatest value from each shipment, there were multiple connection points beyond the need for increased resources for countries using wheat in their food basket.

The visits also included a significant focus on trade policy. We had a unique opportunity to visit with the Director General for the Food and Agriculture Organization and to sit down with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on trade issues. We met with agribusinesses regarding the current regulatory environment in the EU on their sustainability focus areas, biotech and pesticide regulations. Finally, we engaged with farmers unions who are facing very similar challenges to our own in how to support growers, address farm input costs, and tackle inaccurate public perceptions.

It was a tough year and, while we have a more promising start to the winter wheat for 2024, the challenges ahead of us remain: from increased regulations to market volatility/ downside to escalating input costs. Where I gather my hope is looking at my neighbors, my family and our members. Those who find that extra reserve on the toughest days to get out in the field. Those who have the courage to reach out and ask for assistance and those who do not blink an eye to provide the assistance. I look forward to working with you in 2024 in meeting our challenges. 

A Survey to Determine Cereal Leaf Beetle's Current Biocontrol Status by its Parasitoid Wasp in the Wheat Growing Regions of the Pacific Northwest

Dr. Navneet Kaur, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension entomologist

The cereal leaf beetle (CLB) (Fig. 1), is native to Europe and Asia, where it is widely distributed and is considered an occasional pest of small grains. Its first U.S. detection was observed in Michigan in 1962, and it has since spread throughout North America. In the Pacific Northwest, it is a pest of economic concern to cereal grains, grass forage and grass seed crops, and other grass-host species.



During the early 2000s, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities initiated a biocontrol release program to manage CLB damage in the Pacific Northwest. Soon after their release, a small larval parasitoid wasp, *Tetrastichus julis* (Fig. 2), approximately 1/8 inch in size, was found to be an effective biocontrol agent of CLB populations.

Surveys conducted from 2010 to 2014 found successful overwinter recovery of *T. julis* and consistently high parasitism rates of CLB larvae (greater than 80%) from commercial fields in northeastern and Western Oregon. However, in the

Commission Funding Level:

\$7,500

Grant summary:

Dr. Navneet Kaur, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension entomologist and Darrin Walenta, OSU Extension Agronomist led an area-wide survey to understand the extent of an established parasitoid wasp for the management of Cereal Leaf Beetle (CLB), *Oulema melanopus* L. (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae). Oregon Wheat Commission and Washington Grain Commission provided funding to conduct the field surveys to determine if this biocontrol agent is still providing active biocontrol to suppress cereal leaf beetle and its damage in the cereal production systems across the wheat growing regions of the Pacific Northwest.

last few years, CLB numbers have risen, and it appears that previously effective biological control regimes have been disrupted. Some have speculated that the life cycles of CLB and its parasitoids are moving out of sync due to the warming climate. Sporadic CLB outbreaks have been reported since 2021, underlining the importance of regular pest monitoring at different crop growth stages to maximize insecticide effectiveness and improve parasitoid survival.

Tetrastichus julis have two generations per year, mostly aligned with CLB larvae occurrence in the field. *T. julis* overwinters primarily as larvae inside CLB pupa buried in

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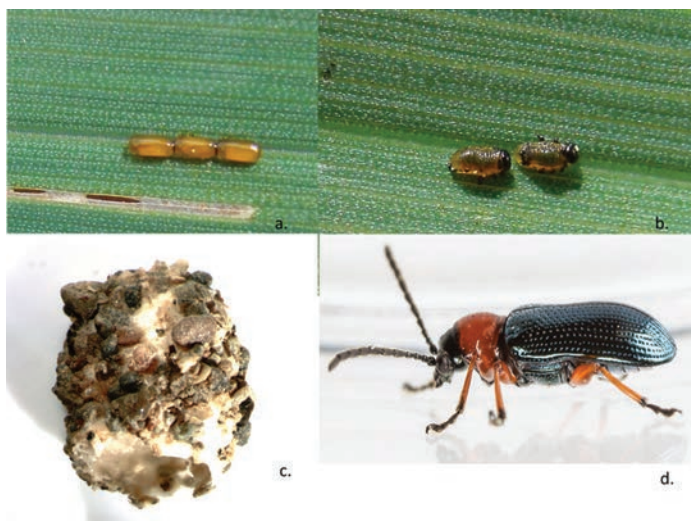


Fig. 1. Different life cycle stages of cereal leaf beetle, (a) egg, (b) larvae, (c) pupa, (d) adult



Fig. 2. Parasitoid wasp beginning parasitizing the cereal leaf beetle larva.

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the soil. The female wasp inserts its eggs into a CLB larva. Several young can complete development within the same larval host. Upon hatching, the parasitoid larvae feed within the CLB larva and slowly destroy it during pupation in the soil.

CLB control is not achieved in the current season, since CLB larvae continue to feed until pupation. However, the new summer adult population is reduced based on parasitoid wasp parasitism levels.

However, recent study on climate change implications on arthropod pests and their biocontrol agents in the Pacific Northwest revealed that warmer spring conditions undercut the parasitoid's impact on the host. CLB eggs hatched late in spring relative to the emergence and activity of parasitoid adults. The mismatch in spring development of both the CLB and parasitoid wasp, as influenced by a warming spring climate across the region, could weaken this biological control of the insect pest. A similar trend was discovered in our recent field surveys. Grower cooperators and crop consultants helped us identify 16 commercial small grain field sites infested with CLB throughout the PNW region. Sweep net or leaf sampling was performed at each site to collect CLB larvae from random locations within each site (Fig.3). Larvae were brought back to Kaur's entomology lab and dissected under microscope to determine the parasitism levels (i.e., presence of parasitoid wasp's eggs and larvae within the CLB larva).

Out of the 16 commercial cereal fields sampled across the major cereal-producing regions of the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 2023, we discovered unexpectedly low parasitism levels of CLB larvae (0–28%) (Fig. 4). This may be because CLB and parasitoid wasps were active at different stages of development. Then again, the low levels could be due to prophylactic insecticide applications over the last decade or so without paying attention to active biocontrol services in the field.



Fig. 3. A researcher (left) collecting cereal leaf beetle larvae samples (right) from an infested commercial field location during summer 2023.

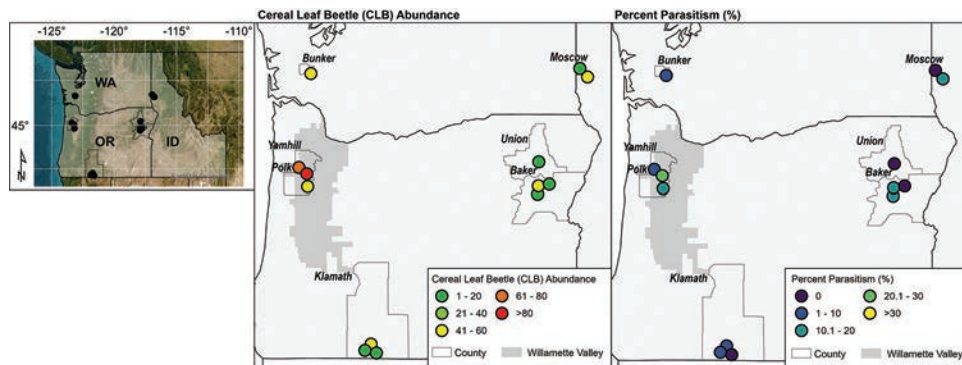


Fig. 4. Cereal leaf beetle larvae collection sites (2023) across small grain production areas in the Pacific Northwest.

“

Out of the 16 commercial cereal fields sampled across the major cereal-producing regions of the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 2023, we discovered unexpectedly low parasitism levels of CLB larvae (0–28%) (Fig. 4). This may be because CLB and parasitoid wasps were active at different stages of development.

How do you determine if biocontrol is still working in your field?

Growers in the Pacific Northwest can determine parasitism rate of CLB larvae either by contacting their county Extension office for assistance, or by sending 25 to 50 CLB larvae to the OSU Insect ID Clinic. Collect larvae at least 1/8 inch in length, or preferably the most mature larvae (approximately 1/4 inch), by clipping off the leaf that supports the larvae and placing leaves and larvae in a plastic container. See the Insect ID Clinic, <https://bpp.oregonstate.edu/plant-clinic/insect-id-clinic>, for submission forms and instructions.

Current *T. julis* parasitism rate guidelines for applying an insecticide for CLB control are:

- If 75% or more of CLB larvae are parasitized, no chemical control is needed.
- If 40%–74% of CLB larvae are parasitized, apply a registered insecticide only to the heavily infested areas of the field (usually field borders).
- If less than 40% of CLB larvae are parasitized, apply a registered insecticide to infested areas of the field if economic threshold levels are met.

An extension publication, “Integrated Pest Management Guidelines and Biocontrol of Cereal Leaf Beetle in the Pacific Northwest” covering CLB biology, damage, integrated pest management options and current biocontrol status will be made available publicly in early 2024. 📖

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