

FEBRUARY 2025

# OREGON WHEAT

*An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Economic Assistance in the American Relief Act
- 19 Industry Leader Awards
- 22 Tips for Effective Advocacy



OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE  
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## ON THE COVER



League Board of Directors.

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**Erin Hansell Heideman**

President

# MY TWO CENTS WORTH



Following in the footsteps of several presidents before me, I'm embracing the theme of "My Two Cents" to share my thoughts, reflections, and goals for the Oregon Wheat Growers League. This theme resonates with me, as it reflects the value of each small contribution—whether in farming, leadership, or life—adding up to something greater than the sum of its parts. I hope my message carries both the weight and worth of the pennies we carefully save and invest in our shared future.

As I flip through the pages of my life as a sixth-generation farmer, I find myself holding onto the small yet profound reminders of what binds me to this land. Each acre worked feels like a penny saved—adding value to the legacy, the labor, and the love passed down through generations. Farming isn't just what we do; it's who we are. It's a treasure trove of values, community, and vision for the future.

Being elected as the President of the Oregon Wheat Growers League is a shiny new coin in my collection of life's achievements. I am deeply humbled and truly honored. First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to my husband, Deacon; our three boys, Jake (23), Liam (17), and Gage (15); and my in-laws, Loren and Della. They are the gold standard of support, ensuring everything at home stays polished while I take on this role. Together, our family is a valuable currency—a team that makes it all possible.

At Blown Away Ranch, Deacon and I grow dryland wheat in Morrow and Gilliam counties. Deacon also serves as the Gilliam County President, and our three boys, along with my father-in-law Loren, pitch in during harvest. Watching three generations working side by side feels like finding a rare coin—precious and irreplaceable.

The responsibility of being a farmer is one I don't take lightly, and the role of League President even more so. We're part of a 98-year legacy—a penny for each year—deeply rooted in Oregon's soils. Farming, like coins, has seen its share of wear and tear, but it's also a source of immense pride and resilience. The work we do doesn't just feed our families and communities; it feeds the world.



In stepping into this role, I've minted two key goals. First, to be a significant voice for farmers at every level, advocating for policies and recognition. Second, to ensure our industry remains an attractive option for the next generation, much like a collector cherishing the coins of tomorrow. Oregon's wheat industry plays a critical role in our state's economy, environment, and food systems. Yet, challenges like policy shifts and market fluctuations persist. My priority is to amplify the voices of Oregon's wheat growers—whether in Salem or Washington, D.C. Farmers deserve recognition not just for what we produce but for the stewardship we uphold. Investing in education, mentorship, and opportunities for young farmers is like putting pennies in a jar—small investments that lead to big futures. We need policies that ease access to land, improve financing, and support sustainable growth. It's about crafting a future where farming is not just a livelihood but a legacy worth embracing.

Farming is tough. It's unpredictable and requires immense grit. It's like flipping a coin every season and hoping for heads. But for me, it's the most rewarding thing I can do outside of being a mother. Ensuring that farming remains a viable and fulfilling career for the next generation is a goal I hold close, much like a lucky coin in my pocket.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

I'm inspired by the farmers and agricultural leaders who share a common goal: sustaining and growing Oregon's wheat industry. As much as I pour my heart into this work, I can't help but wonder about the next chapter for my farm and for all our family farms. The difference we make today will be the coins of progress left for future generations.

I'm eager to help Oregon Wheat move forward. Thank

you for this incredible opportunity. Together, let's turn our collective cents into a wealth of change. Let's get to work!



## Economic Assistance Detailed in American Relief Act

Congress avoided a government shutdown in December 2024 and provided needed bridge funding for farm operations, passing the American Relief Act of 2025. As passed, the stopgap spending bill includes a one-year extension of the 2018 Farm Bill; \$21 billion in disaster aid for farmers affected by hurricanes, wildfires and drought in 2023 and 2024; and \$10 billion in market relief to farmers.


Avoiding a government shutdown and ensuring viability for farms were two essential components for the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Wade Bingaman, 2024 League President, outlined the need for the investment included in the end of year package, noting that "Wheat producers are facing a challenging combination of elevated input costs, coupled with reduced market prices. We have seen significant deterioration in the overall financial situation for individual farms. Economic assistance included in this package is an essential bridge for sustaining farms and our agricultural communities."

Estimated payments under the \$10 billion in market relief include a projection of \$30.69 per acre for wheat and \$21.76 for barley, as calculated by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri and the Rural & Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center. The economic assistance consists of per-acre payments, paid on both 2024 planted and 50% of prevent-planted acres. It is based on an overall estimate of the expected revenue loss relative to the estimated total cost of production, subject to a minimum payment based on statutory reference prices and program yields for Title 1 commodities. For wheat, payments are calculated using the USDA-Economic Research Service's national average cost-of-production forecasts, projected 2024/25 market year average prices set in the December 2024 World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) and a 10-year average of the national average harvested yield per acre.

Economic aid will be capped at \$125,000 for farmers and ranchers with less than 75% of their average gross income

across tax years 2021, 2022 and 2023 derived from farming, ranching or forestry. The cap is increased to \$250,000 for farmers with 75% or more of their average gross income derived from farming, ranching and forestry. The payments will only partially offset the loss in farm economic viability as the primary payment will be calculated by multiplying projected per-acre losses by a factor of 26%. However, assistance will help address gap in Farm Bill support and timeliness is key: USDA must distribute the funds within 90 days of the bill becoming law to provide timely relief.

The League appreciates Congressional leaders who responded to messages from farmers. Bingaman stated, "We thank the leadership for their work to ensure assistance is included in this package to address the severe downturn in the agriculture economy." The League joined the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and additional agricultural and banking groups in a unified effort to ensure a bridge in resources would be available, as well as a commitment to working on a long-term Farm Bill with the 119th Congress. Chandler Goule, NAWG CEO stated "NAWG applauds members of both the House of Representatives and Senate for coming together to provide much-needed economic assistance and disaster relief for farmers nationwide. While this legislation also includes a one-year farm bill extension and short-term relief, it is not a replacement for a long-term farm bill. As we enter the 119th Congress, NAWG urges lawmakers to work quickly to pass a farm bill that strengthens the farm safety net and provides long-term certainty for producers and rural America."

We remain resolute in working with lawmakers to get the right Farm Bill passed that provides long-term certainty for growers. A full Farm Bill is critical to maintaining the production of vital food crops, the productivity of our farmlands, and the continued flow of jobs, investment and tax revenues from our operations and supply chains. 

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# Focusing a Message on Food Aid

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



Advocacy is a large part of the function and purpose of the Oregon Wheat Growers League. At the federal level we are usually tackling big issues through the National Association of Wheat Growers. This past year focused on the need for passage of a vibrant Farm Bill passage and economic assistance for wheat producers, with visits to Washington D.C. targeted at bringing in our executive leadership for conversations with agencies and

legislators. While we move into 2025 continuing that Farm Bill message, we appreciate the resources for producers secured at the end of the year. For members of the League who added their voice to action alerts and supported the organization through their membership dues, you can see the return. Some of those are small wins that impact a handful of our growers, such as correction of an agency data component that impacted program eligibility for producers in a county. At other times they are big wins that affect most of the state: members and non-members. For instance, the inclusion of wheat in CFAP2 payments and the most recent securing of funds in the American Relief Act.

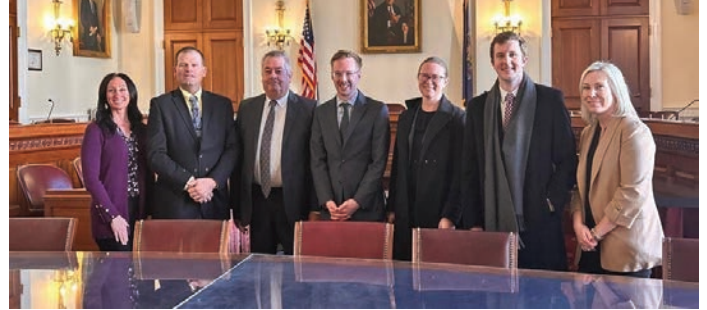


Past USW Chairman Michael Peters (OK) and Oregon Wheat CEO Amanda Hoey joined the December Food Aid Fly-in.

Each year we also engage in advocacy narrowly directed at specific policy changes, regulatory modifications or program supports. That extends to conversation in the Farm Bill as well, with targeted fly-ins related to research objectives and food aid reforms, for example. In December, I participated in one of those targeted fly-ins as chair of the USW/NAWG Food Aid Working group. Coordinated by U.S. Wheat Associates, the North America Millers Association and the National Association of Wheat Growers, the Food Aid Fly-in to Washington DC took place December 4-5, 2024.

### Targeted Messaging

The visit was focused on further elevating the



Representatives from Idaho, Oklahoma and Oregon joined the larger national team for the Food-Aid fly-in.

importance of funding programs for international food aid that includes U.S. grown commodities, as part of the larger work taking place in addressing global hunger and food security. As Congress was moving towards another one-year Farm Bill extension at the time, we sought to emphasize the importance of food aid reform in the Farm Bill once meaningful negotiations resumed in the 119th Congress.

Included in our overarching message on the need for certainty in a long-term Farm Bill, the message for Food Aid focused on increasing awareness of provisions in the American Farmers Feed the World Act. International food aid programs are often overlooked, but are a unique overlap of farm policy and foreign policy. In particular, we focused on the program in which Oregon wheat is used: Food for Peace.

The Food for Peace Act (PL 480) was signed into law in 1954. This program plays an integral role in alleviating hunger throughout the world while also strengthening the United States' diplomatic efforts. Operated by USAID, Food for Peace lives under Title II of the Farm Bill. It is the largest program, by far, for shipping large volumes of U.S. commodities to starving people around the world. It provides a substantial export market for U.S. commodities and builds a

### Did you Know? Dues v. Assessment

Assessments on wheat and barley are paid to the Oregon Wheat Commission and used for activities ranging from research funding to market development to grower education (including this magazine). How assessments are used is restricted and not used to lobby. Membership in the Oregon Wheat Growers League and the associated dues allow us to contract with our lobbyists and advocate for growers. Learn more at [www.owgl.org/membership](http://www.owgl.org/membership)


critical foundation for future commercial markets, while also fulfilling a global humanitarian mission. On the market side, a couple of the countries which are now regularly top five markets for Oregon soft white wheat initially benefited from Food for Peace. With a subsequent change in their economic conditions and a preference for U.S. wheat, they reflect the success of this program.

In recent years, we have seen troubling trends in reduction of wheat purchases, which also reduces the number of individuals fed. The American Farmers Feed the World Act ensures that Food for Peace will efficiently feed as much American grown food to as many people as possible.

### A Joint Approach

December's meetings provided a critical opportunity to defend robust funding for Food for Peace Title II through a coalition. The visit also included discussions on the need for appropriation of funds for the Food for Peace program. Unless we secure ongoing meaningful funding for Food for Peace in the annual appropriations process, there will be no role for American grown food in our international food assistance programs.

Split into two groups, we covered a wide range of key contacts, with my group meeting with 15 offices over the course of two days. We were joined by maritime representatives to discuss shipping and efficiencies, as well as millers to discuss the processing. The team approach elevated the message further: reauthorizing a multi-year Farm Bill as soon as possible will provide critical certainty that farmers need, including for exporting commodities around the world. Funding for Food for Peace will support that objective, as well as meet diplomatic and humanitarian objectives.


We are looking forward into 2025 as Farm Bill discussions resume. The League will be back in D.C. in January, this time for our annual Mission, with a discussion on big priorities for Farm Bill... while not losing sight of the smaller program reforms needed as well. 



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## Why Research Matters to Oregon's Wheat Industry

**Tyler Hansell**

OWC Chair

# OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

When many people think of wheat, they picture fields of golden stalks waving in the breeze without giving a second thought to what it takes to grow that wheat. While this image captures the beauty of agriculture, there's a lot more to growing wheat than meets the eye—especially here in Oregon. Our state is one of the top producers of wheat in the United States, and we as farmers work hard to grow high-quality crops that feed people across the world. To stay competitive, we rely on research, technology, and innovation. As we approach our research reviews for the Commission in February, the value of these research investments is an element we scrutinize and consider for where we can have the highest impact for dollars entrusted to us through assessments.

### Research: Solving Problems and Improving Crops

As an Oregon wheat farmer, I know well the challenges we face every year, including unpredictable weather, pests, and diseases. I also know that the investments from the Oregon Wheat Commission into long-term research help tackle these problems. We continue to focus on funding work that makes wheat stronger, healthier, and more resistant to disease. Our wheat breeder at Oregon State University (OSU) works to develop new varieties that can thrive in diverse climates, from the rainy Willamette Valley to the drier eastern Oregon regions, along with varieties that are more adapted to drought and other challenging conditions we face. Wheat breeding is done as a team, with pathology and wheat quality working hand-in-hand. For example, integrating into each variety a resistance to stripe rust is a critical part of breeding and could not be done without the collaboration between researchers. The improved genetics ensure we spend less on crop protection sprays with a higher degree of natural resistance.

Our research investments are also focusing to the health of our soil and the nutrient base. These projects allow researchers to take risks and evaluate different rotations, nutrient management programs, and farming practices. In some cases, it provides us with an independent third party view of private company claims on efficacy to truly understand the value in wheat systems in Oregon and the return on investment to a grower (or lack thereof).

### Building a Sustainable Future: Quality, Innovation and Collaboration

Innovation is all about finding new and creative solutions, and it's central to Oregon's wheat industry. We collaborate to further ideas that enhance sustainability and productivity in wheat production. It includes those that start at the farm level (as they often do), in the lab, and in a research field plot and it crosses over geographies.

One of the more powerful cross-geography collaboratives spurring innovation originates through the Pacific Northwest Wheat Commissions. Annually, we have an opportunity to meet with the Idaho Wheat Commission and Washington Wheat Commission prior to the Tri-State grain convention. This year, we met in November in Coeur d'Alene, with discussion on collective market development approaches to further unlock export potential in new markets, training in communications, highlights of work in sustainability and... support on research development.

That support in research development for the Commissions continues to be grounded in an emphasis on the quality of our wheat. We have held early discussions on a PNW brand wheat, and continued a commitment to investments in wheat breeding and quality research that will ensure a differentiated product in the market.


There are numerous other occasions in which we coordinated throughout the year. One that I particularly look forward to is the PNW Wheat Quality Council meeting in January. Not only does it bring together our researchers, but it also brings in international cooperators each year to evaluate promising new varieties from an end-user perspective. It helps keep us tied directly to the needs of our customers.

### Why It All Matters

Wheat is more than just an ingredient in bread, pasta, and pastries. It's a vital part of Oregon's economy and a staple food for people worldwide. By investing in research, technology, and innovation, we grow higher-quality crops while preserving our way of life and the future of our industry.

The next time you enjoy a slice of artisan bread or a bowl of homemade pasta, take a moment to appreciate the innovation and hard work that brought the wheat to your table. Thanks to the continuous efforts in research, technology, and innovation, we as Oregon's wheat farmers remain a leader in feeding the world. Want to learn more about those investments? February 17th is our research review in Corvallis and it is followed by the regular Commission meeting the next day to evaluate and discuss proposals. The February meetings are an important

time to share insights on issues impacting your profitability and sustainability.

I want to thank all of the researchers at OSU, both on campus and out at the research stations around the state, the Western Wheat Quality Lab and Washington State University. It is because of great collaboration between many parties including researchers, us as growers, agronomist and our customers that helped shape are current landscape of Oregon wheat, and our future. 

## Glyphosate Resistance Confirmed in Marestalk and Hairy Fleabane in NE Oregon

Judit Barroso, Associate Professor, Oregon State University

Marestalk, also known as horseweed [Erigeron canadensis L. (syn. Conyza canadensis (L.) Cronq.)], and hairy fleabane [Erigeron bonariensis L. (syn. Conyza bonariensis (L.) Cronq.)] are among the most problematic weed species across the world. In the Pacific Northwest, they are considered troublesome annual weeds during fallow periods. The success of these species in such systems can be attributed to their high seed production and dispersal capacity, as both species produce small seeds capable of traveling long distances by winds.

Wheat growers from northeast Oregon recently reported poor control of these two weed species following glyphosate applications. Thus, research work was initiated. We first performed experiments to study a potential glyphosate resistance in those species. Two suspicious marestalk populations were collected in fallow fields of Umatilla County and two hairy fleabane populations were collected in Wasco County.



Photo 1. Hairy fleabane plant in a small grain field.

Two control populations (potentially susceptible) were collected from a roadside near Adams, OR and from an uncultivated area that does not receive herbicides at the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center. Seeds of the six populations were sown in pots and placed in the greenhouse. When seedlings reached approximately 4 to 5.5 inches in diameter, they were treated with glyphosate

### Commission Funding FY 2024/2025:

\$57,939

### Project summary:

Effective weed management is one of the critical components to have successful wheat production. The goal of this project is to help wheat growers improve weed management through four particular objectives. Objectives 1 and 2 are focused on improving grass control by learning the best management practices of Aggressor herbicide (quizalofop) in CoAXium wheat and cultural practices to design more integrated weed control strategies. Objective 3 is focused on reducing herbicide inputs to maximize profits with the use of precision sprayers in fallow and post-harvest. Objective 4 provides a service to growers that have problems to control weeds with herbicides.



(Gly Star 5 Extra) at 0 fl oz A-1 (0X; untreated check), 18 fl oz A-1 (1X; commercial dose), 36 fl oz A-1 (2X), 72 fl oz A-1 (4X) and 144 fl oz A-1 (8X) plus adjuvant (Downrigger at 3 qt/100 gal). The applications were carried out using a spray chamber equipped with a single nozzle (Even Flat Spray TP8002E tip, Teejet Technologies), set to deliver 15 gal A-1. After 21 days of treatment, the plants were evaluated

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Photo 2. Seedling of a horseweed/marestail on the left and a suspicious glyphosate-resistant horseweed infestation in a fallow field at the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center, Adams OR on the right.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

for visual control using a scale of five values, with 5 representing healthy plants (as the untreated check; 0X), and 1 indicating complete death (Photo 3). The plants were then harvested and weighed to assess biomass accumulation as well. A log-logistic model was applied to the experimental data to estimate the rate required to achieve a 50% reduction in growth (RG50) and with that value, the resistance ratio (RR = RG50 of a suspicious population divided by the RG50 of the susceptible; Figure 1). All populations suspected to be glyphosate-resistant survived the commercial rate (1X) and had a RR that varied from 5.5 to 15, indicating moderate to high resistance levels. A RR of 15 means that the population needs 15 times more glyphosate than a susceptible population. Based on these results, alternative herbicides and/or integrated weed management must be considered to control these weeds and avoid the development of new cases.

Next, experiments with some alternative herbicides were initiated. Seeds from the same six populations were grown in trays and transplanted to individual pots. Three weeks after transplanting, plants were sprayed using 0X, 1X and 2X of different herbicides. The products tested were glufosinate-ammonium (Forfeit® 280) at 29 fl oz/A, halauxifen-methyl + florasulam (Quelex®) at 0.75 oz/A,

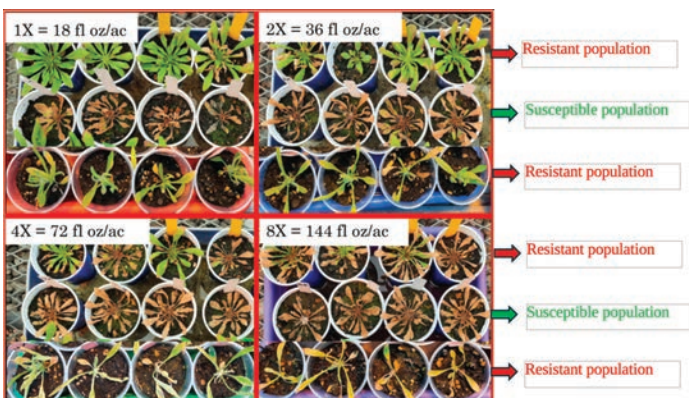


Photo 3. Two marestail populations (top and center) and one hairy fleabane population (bottom) after being sprayed with different rates of glyphosate (Gly Star 5 Extra).

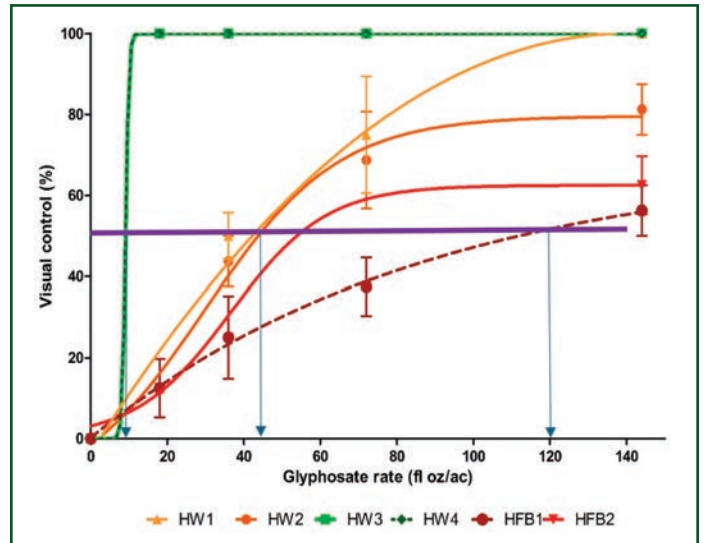


Figure 1. Visual control of four populations of horseweed (HW) and two populations of hairy fleabane (HFB) treated with different glyphosate rates. Experimental data are indicated with circles, squares and triangles, and models fit to the data with continuous and dashed lines. The arrows indicate the RG50 of several populations (8 fl oz A-1 for the susceptible, 44 fl oz A-1 for two HW populations, and 120 fl oz A-1 for one of the HFB populations). The whiskers of the experimental data at the different glyphosate rate used are the standard error of the mean.

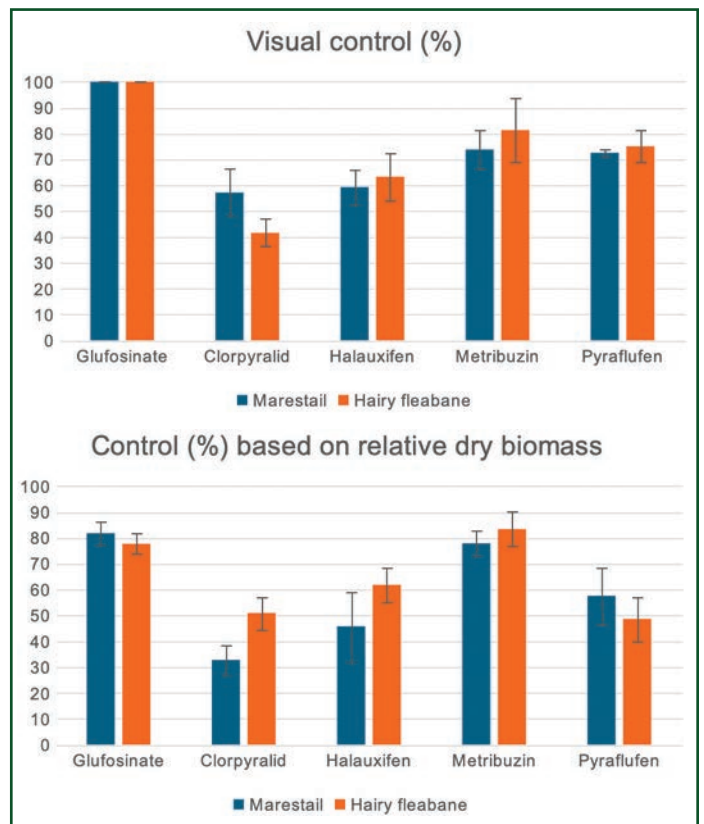



Figure 2. Percentage of marestail and hairy fleabane averaged control with several alternative herbicides based on a) a visual evaluation and b) the relative dry biomass of the plants.

clopyralid (Stinger®) at 5 fl oz/A, pyraflufen ethyl (Vida®) at 1 fl oz/A, and metribuzin (Metribuzin 75) at 6 oz/A, as 1X for all these herbicides. Visual weed control and dry weight were evaluated at three weeks after the herbicide treatments. Based on visual evaluations (Figure 2a), glufosinate showed the best visual control among 1X treatments for both species, with 100% control. This was followed by metribuzin with 74% and 81% for marestalk and hairy fleabane control and pyraflufen with an average of 73% and 75% respectively. The lowest visual control was seen with halauxifen + florasulam and clopyralid. We noticed that metribuzin had a slow effect in controlling all populations. Two weeks after treatment, plants treated with metribuzin were still healthy looking, only showing signs of stunting. By three weeks after treatment, the plants were showing necrosis symptoms and signs of more control. Control percentage based on relative dry biomass showed a similar control between metribuzin and (78-83%) and glufosinate (78-82%) (Figure 2b). However, the control exerted with pyraflufen was lower than based on the visual evaluation.

While hairy fleabane is not listed on any of the “Weeds Controlled” lists for the chemicals used, we saw that it did follow a similar trend in control as the marestalk. There are other products that their labels indicate control of these two weed species, but this study was focused on herbicides with low to null volatility. If you have questions or need any of your weeds to be tested, do not hesitate to contact me (email: [Judit.barroso@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Judit.barroso@oregonstate.edu), phone: 541 278 8967). 



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## Corporate Transparency Act: Being Prepared

Confused about filing requirements related to the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) for Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI)? You are not alone as the reporting requirements shifted multiple times in December 2024 and January 2025.

The CTA initially required most business entities—including farm operators with corporations, LLCs, or other business entities filing with the state- to report information about all individuals who own or control the company (“beneficial owners”) to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. While intended to combat financial crimes, many organizations including the National Association of Wheat Growers opposed the Act due to the additional burden placed on small farms.

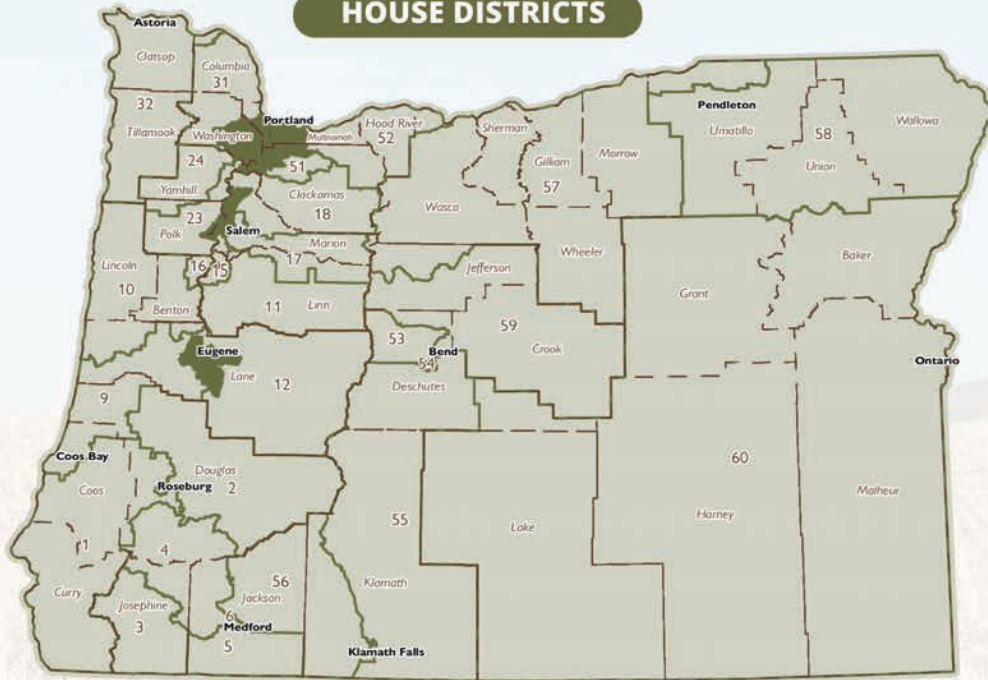
On December 3, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas judge blocked the enforcement stating that the CTA “is likely unconstitutional as outside of Congress’s power.” Then, on December 23, the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the injunction, temporarily reinstating reporting requirements. The same court then overturned the ruling on December 26, delaying the deadline indefinitely once again. Despite the regulatory back and forth, the League encourages members to collect reporting materials and be prepared in the event of a new deadline announcement.

If filing, use the FinCEN website for seamless reporting. Be aware of other sites asking you to pay to file. The Better Business Bureau has warned on a variety of scams being used to target individuals with fake letters, websites and QR codes. We recommend you go direct and use the official site at [www.fincen.gov/boi](http://www.fincen.gov/boi). 

# FIND YOUR 2025 REPRESENTATIVE



## HOUSE DISTRICTS



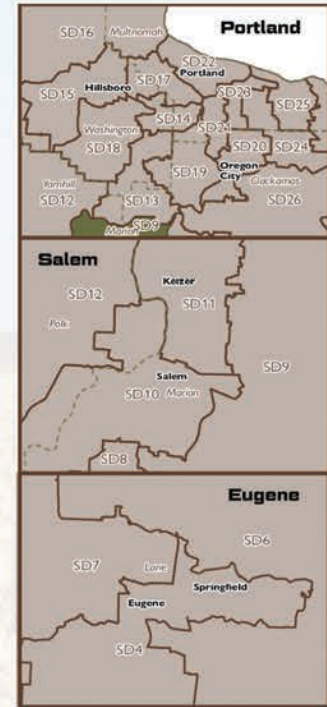
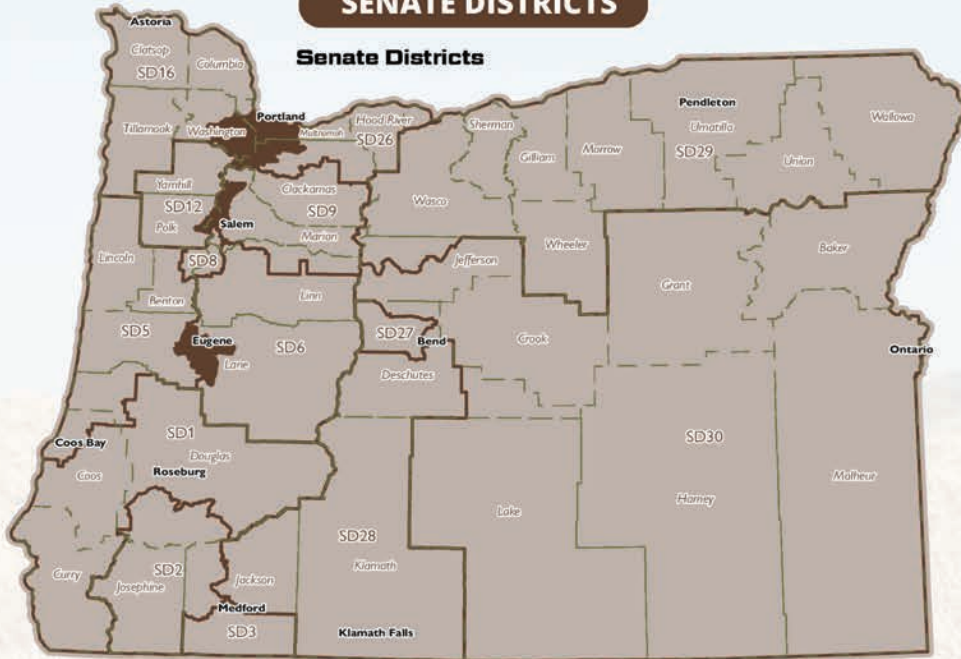
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2. Virgle Osborne	R-Roseburg	32. Cyrus Javadi	R-Tillamook
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7. John Lively	D-Springfield	37. Jules Walters	D-Tualatin
8. Paul Holvey	D-Eugene	38. Daniel Nguyen	D-Lake Oswego
9. Boomer Wright	R-Coos Bay	39. April Dobson	D-Clackamas
10. David Gomberg	D-Lincoln City, Newport	40. Annessa Hartman	D-Oregon City
11. Jami Cate	R-Lebanon	41. Mark Gamba	D-Milwaukie
12. Darin Harbick	R-Dexter, Junction City, Cottage Grove	42. Rob Nosse	D-Portland
13. Nancy Nathanson	D-Eugene	43. Tawna Sanchez	D-Portland
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
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17. Ed Diehl	R-Stayton	47. Andrea Valderrama	D-Portland
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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

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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. Khanh Pham	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	D-The Dalles
11. Kim Thatcher	R-Keizer	27. Anthony Broadman	D-Bend
12. Bruce Starr	R-McMinnville, Newberg, Dallas	28. Diane Linthicum	R-Klamath Falls
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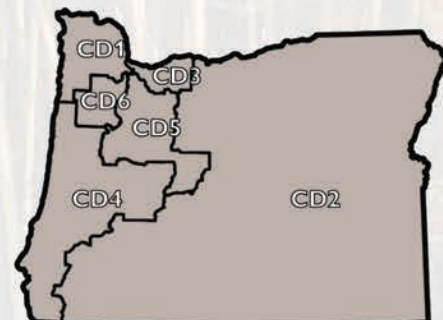
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District 3	Maxine Dexter - D
District 4	Val Hoyle - D
District 5	Janelle Bynum - D
District 6	Andrea Salinas - D



# Annual Convention Brings Together PNW Wheat Growers

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

With another harvest complete and seeds for another season tucked into the ground for the winter, Oregon wheat growers traveled to Coeur d’Alene, ID, from November 19 to 21 for the 2024 Tri-State Grain Convention. Each year, growers, stakeholders, and exhibitors from Oregon, Idaho, and Washington come together to learn, share, and hear updates on the industry’s future.

“This convention is essential for any grower committed to advancing their operation and staying connected to the industry. This annual event brings together experts, peers, and industry leaders, offering invaluable insights into the latest trends, research, and policy changes that impact wheat growers,” said League President Erin Hansell-Heideman. “The opportunity to network, attend workshops, and share ideas is critical to what we do.”

“I enjoy meeting with our neighboring wheat-growing states and comparing notes on everything from legislative issues to new farming practices and technology to challenges and priorities we may share,” said League Vice President Thad Eakin. “Determining how we can lean on each other and leverage our unified voices is important.”

## A Full Agenda

Accustomed to rising early, Oregon wheat growers had a full convention agenda. The League Board of Directors met Wednesday morning to conduct business and receive timely updates from the USDA Risk Management Agency, the Farm Service Agency, and the National Resource Conservation Service.

“I always look forward to the updates from the government agencies, learning more about current programs and benefits,



and hearing their input on what is headed our way,” said Eakin. “Having it all packaged into one week at one location with our neighboring farmers also helps us understand how some of the challenges affect our region overall.”

Later that afternoon, the League held its annual meeting, which focused largely on what to expect in the 2025 Oregon legislative long session. Growers heard from a panel of Oregon State Representative Mark Owens (R-Crane), Nicole Mann, Legislative Advocate with Dalton Advocacy, and Katie Murray, CEO of Oregonians for Food and Shelter. Jake Westlin from the National Association of Wheat Growers added context from the federal perspective. After updates from the Oregon Wheat Commission and Oregon Wheat Foundation, the membership also conducted official business to prepare for the upcoming legislative session, adopting the 2025 League Policy Resolutions, which guide the League’s actions and priorities. Members can view these resolutions on the League website at [www.owgl.org](http://www.owgl.org).

The meeting concluded with the election and installation of the 2025 League officers. President Wade Bingaman passed the gavel to incoming President Erin Hansell-Heideman from Morrow County. Thad Eakin from Sherman County joins her this year as Vice President, and Kevin Corn from Malheur County as Secretary/Treasurer.

Growers welcomed Dr. Staci Simonich, Dean of the Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences, as the keynote speaker at the annual gala. Simonich updated the crowd on recent OSU growth and successes, including ongoing investment in wheat research led by the Oregon Wheat Commission and supported by the Oregon Wheat Growers League.





### Continuing Education

This year, the convention included a range of speakers and educational sessions. On Wednesday, growers heard from keynote speakers Derrick Josi, better known as “@tdf\_honest\_farming” on social media, who spoke on having an online presence as a farmer, and motivational speaker John O’Leary, who shared an uplifting message on perseverance and family. Thursday, during breakfast, Dr. Bart Fischer from the Ag and Food Policy Center shared insights on the current economic landscape. At lunch, convention regular Eric Snodgrass shared the latest on weather and utilizing artificial intelligence.

“As a fellow farmer, Josi’s message on the importance of telling your story regardless of how uncomfortable it makes you is so important to keep hearing,” said Hansell-Heideman. “Sure, it’s not always convenient when we have so much else on our plate, but if we don’t, we risk losing the legacy of what we’ve worked so hard to continue, and it won’t end with me.”


The educational breakout session format allowed growers to dive deeper into what interests them most and engage with speakers.


During a session with the founders of AgrisAcademy, growers learned how to benchmark their merchandising and future risk management skills in five steps to better understand their full risk position and identify areas to focus on. AgrisAcademy is an educational platform that empowers growers, agricultural businesses, and industry stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to merchandise, manage risk, and increase profitability.

“There is simply too much value slipping away from the farm and ending in the hands of the market. Education, not additional risk-taking, can move these dollars to the farm side of the ledger,” said co-founder Jeff Kazin. “Growers are more respected when they speak the same language as the buyer.”

For those interested in a more in-depth market outlook, there were two sessions to choose from. U.S. Wheat Associates staff led a session on the global wheat market outlook with

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updates on HB4 drought-tolerant wheat and the new Regional Agricultural Promotion Program that adds funding for export market promotion and food aid commodity programs. Dr. Randy Fortenberry’s session on the wheat market outlook focused on his Washington State University research program, which concentrates on ag price performance in local and national markets and the impact of future actions on the stability of cash prices.

Oregonians for Food and Shelter’s Dr. Dani Lightle provided an overview of the EPA’s proposed Pesticide and Herbicide Strategies, upcoming label changes, and mitigation measures. She also reviewed how and when growers will need to utilize Bulletins Live! Two.

Other breakout sessions covered how to lobby effectively, financial planning, USDA energy grants, NRCS program updates, and federal legislative updates. To round out the educational breakout sessions, a large panel was convened to discuss all matters related to the Columbia-Snake River System, including perspectives from agriculture, transportation, tourism, and more.

### Collaboration

The convention concluded with a joint dinner and auction with Idaho and Washington. The auction is the

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primary fundraiser for the Oregon Wheat Foundation’s scholarship program, which provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors in Oregon each year. Thank you to everyone who contributed items and bid at the auction—your contributions help support the future of the Oregon wheat industry!

Looking ahead to 2025, Eakin encourages any Oregon wheat grower interested in getting more involved and engaging on issues that impact their operation to plan on attending the Convention. “Convention is a great way to showcase our membership dues at work and their impact on Oregon wheat growers, as well as the value in working together with our

fellow growers in other states,” says Eakin. “I’m looking forward to building on that collaboration in 2025 and having a voice at the table.”

Thank you to all sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, and so many helping hands that make this event possible, and to Oregon wheat growers for showing up for yourselves and the industry. Next year’s convention will be held jointly with the Idaho Grain Producers Association at the Sun Valley Resort in Sun Valley, ID, November 18 - 20, 2025. We hope to see you there!

More photos are available on the Oregon Wheat Facebook ([facebook.com/OregonWheat](https://facebook.com/OregonWheat)) and Instagram (@[oregonwheatgrowers](https://instagram.com/oregonwheatgrowers)). 

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# Focusing on the Next Generation: Auction Raises Funds for Scholarships and Research

Always a highlight of the Tri-State Grain Convention is an evening filled with competitive bidding at the Foundation auction. Tucker Cool, Professional Auctioneer and PRCA Rodeo Announcer, provided both the entertainment and auctioneering services for the evening, keeping the crowd on its feet. The funds raised were all for a good cause, with donations dedicated to the Oregon Wheat Foundation to support future leaders of agriculture and the Oregon Wheat scholarship program.

All three states are involved in coordinating the event through their respective Foundations. While each state individually secures donations and all proceeds return to that state's Foundation or PAC, Oregon growers actively bid on the range of packages available across the three states. "We encourage our growers to support all aspects of the tri-state grain convention auction," stated Amanda Hoey, CEO. "Collectively, the funds raised help support the next generation of wheat industry leaders across the Pacific Northwest states."




A table of silent auction items gathered intense interest throughout the evening with competitive bids raising funds for the scholarship program.



Jason Flowers, League Program Director, joins the auctioneering team to give a view of live auction products.

There was a lot to bid on, with over thirty silent auction packages and a range of live auction items from Oregon including a custom cornhole set paying tribute to the American farmer, a Let Er Buck Package in Pendleton, a vacation in Sun River, a Plasma Cutter, and more. Adding to the evening was a special donation of a custom etched Magnum of The Boss wine, with the Tri-State Wheat Conference logo and Jerry

Zahl's signature. Funds raised from this item went directly to support the Columbia Basin Ag Research Center, designated in memory of Jerry Zahl and in honor of Dr. Dick Smiley.

The Oregon Wheat Foundation thanks the sponsors and supporters who made the evening a success. "I am impressed by the continued generosity of our industry and our growers," stated Tom Winn, Oregon Foundation Chair. "From financial contributions, to product donations, to time in coordinating the auction packages, I am incredibly grateful to our supporters." Already preparing for 2025, the Foundation invites you to join us for the convention in Sun Valley, ID and consider making a donation. 



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- Tillamook Creamery
- Tom Winn
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Photo credit: Amy Kaser

# Industry Leaders Shine at Annual Oregon Wheat Gala

The Oregon Wheat Growers League placed a spotlight on the dedication and service of four outstanding individuals during the 2024 Oregon Gala annual awards ceremony at the Tri-State Grain Convention.

## Distinguished Service Award: John Zielinski

Several well-qualified individuals were nominated for the Distinguished Service award. John Zielinski, a third-generation farmer, was selected as the 2024 recipient. Zielinski understands the challenges faced by growers and works to help them achieve success. He has led the Oregon State University (OSU) Oregon Seed Certification Service for 24 years: a period that saw a three-to-four-fold increase in the number of varieties and acres submitted for certification.

Zielinski was nominated by Lee von Borstel who emphasized the time spent developing relationships with wheat producers around Oregon to ensure seed certification happens without a hitch. “Timing of inspections is critical to see the crop at the right stage of maturity, and most importantly, to not cause delays in harvest,” noted von Borstel. The process is challenging and critical to get right as grain growers seek to use high quality seed for the crop. “During his years of leadership, John has consistently used person to person communications to make the seed certification process a success for both the producers and users of certified seed.”

## Above and Beyond Award: Dr. Richard Smiley

Dr. Richard (Dick) Smiley received the Oregon Wheat Above and Beyond Award. Smiley has been a champion for the wheat industry and wheat research. He conducted research at OSU’s Columbia Basin Ag Research Center in Pendleton for an impressive 30 years, with a portion of that serving as the Station Director. He has collaborated with grain producers and research scientists around the world to address issues affecting our industry and improve local grain production.

The nomination for Dr. Smiley came from the late Jerry Zahl, a prior Above and Beyond award recipient. Jerry held a high regard for Dr. Smiley, stating that he “has demonstrated the desire and the ability to warmly connect with grain producers and agricultural research scientists across the state, the Pacific Northwest, the nation, and around the world; seeking cereal plant physiology challenges and solutions, in regard to improving local cereal grain production returns.” Describing Dr. Smiley as an individual “of great importance to the Oregon State and PNW grain industry,” he highlighted Dr. Smiley’s work in helping grain producers identify and manage many common grain diseases, assisting product manufacturers in developing more effective seed treatment



The League Executive Committee joins 2024 Oregon Wheat Awards at Tri-State Grain Convention. L to R: Wade Bingaman, Thad Eakin, Erin Hansell Heideman, John Zielinski, Ernie Moore, Dick Smiley, Bill Hansell and Kevin Corn. Photo credit: Holly Hannah Photography.

products, and identifying wheat varieties or production practices to help prevent yield reduction from pests.

## Outstanding Volunteer Award: Ernie Moore

The Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Ernie Moore. Moore is chair of the Sherman County Research Station Liaison committee where he works with OSU leadership and producers to ensure the station is serving the needs of wheat producers in Sherman and Wasco counties. He was active in establishing the endowment for the Sherman station which has helped stabilize the station and supported investment in equipment. The League recognized the significant effort he and other growers placed into formation of the endowment for the Sherman research station and the expansion of that effort to further benefit dryland producers throughout eastern Oregon. Most recently, he was instrumental in raising funds for facilities to benefit Oregon wheat producers through the OSU modulars at the Columbia Basin Ag Research Station.

In accepting the award, Ernie provided a history of his work directly with the station to benefit the industry, as well as other volunteer roles that have had a long-term impact. Among those was the establishment of a rural fire district. Moore lives the motto of service above self. He now joins the Oregon Wheat Foundation Board of Directors to help represent the north central portion of the state.

## Friend of Oregon Wheat: Senator Bill Hansell


The Friend of Oregon Wheat award was established to honor members of the Oregon state legislature. This year, the League decided to present the first Lifetime Achievement Award to Senator Bill Hansell. In presenting the award Erin

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Hansell Heideman reviewed all he has accomplished to benefit Oregon wheat producers while working in Salem for the District. “For over a decade he fought to protect our industry from bad legislation and championed bills important to the League. We are proud to call him a friend (and some of us call him family),” stated Hansell Heideman. She noted that he has had “an outsized impact on Oregon Wheat.” The League sincerely appreciates the leadership and support from Senator

Hansell, his bi-partisan approach to challenging issues, and his steadfast support to rural communities and wheat producers.

As is true each year, we have an outstanding group of wheat growers, researchers, legislative champions and industry supporters. The League is soliciting nominations for the 2025 Above/Beyond and Distinguished service awards, with nomination forms available at <https://www.owgl.org/awards>. We thank our awardees for their passion, dedication and knowledge. 

## Risk Management Agency Empowers Growers

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

In today’s farming landscape, crop insurance is widely utilized as the primary farm safety net in the United States to address the inherent risks of agriculture. For some, crop insurance is the difference between staying in business or going out of business after a disaster.

Established in 1996, the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) plays a critical role in helping growers protect their operations from the uncertainties of agriculture. Its mission is to “serve America’s agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools to strengthen the economic stability of agricultural producers and rural communities.” Tasked with overseeing the federal crop insurance program and increasing its availability and effectiveness, the RMA provides tools to manage risks associated with weather, finances, market fluctuations, production, human resources, and other unpredictable challenges. By working with private insurance providers, the RMA ensures growers can access affordable coverage options tailored to their crops and regions.

Ben Thiel, director of the RMA Spokane Regional Office, which covers Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska, joined growers at the recent 2024 Tri-State Grain Convention to provide an agency update.

“The question that is always at the top of my mind, especially when there is a Farm Bill on the table, is how it impacts crop insurance,” said Thiel. “I always want to remind growers that crop insurance is protected and funded outside the Farm Bill. So, if a new bill hasn’t been authorized, crop insurance will go on as usual. Of course, if and when there is a new one, we can expect some modifications.”

### For Your Consideration

When talking about crop insurance to growers, Thiel likes to focus on the options they may not know about to customize and scale their insurance to suit their needs better.

“Across the region, we are seeing an increase year-to-year in producers enhancing their coverage by adding one or more of these options to their policies,” said Thiel.

### *Supplemental Coverage Option*

The Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) is an add-on that provides additional coverage for a portion of the deductible on a grower’s primary insurance policy. SCO offers county-level protection against yield or revenue losses, complementing their primary policy. If the county’s average yield or revenue falls below 86% of the expected level, SCO covers a portion of the gap before the grower’s primary policy kicks in. So, a grower could have an individual loss and get paid while the county side is not triggered, or vice versa. This option is especially beneficial for managing risks tied to broader market or weather-related trends, offering an extra layer of financial security. If a grower elects Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) for a crop with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), that crop would not be eligible for SCO.

### *Enhance Coverage Option*

The Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is an add-on designed to provide additional protection above what traditional insurance offers. ECO offers county-level coverage when losses occur at a higher trigger level—either 90% or 95% of expected county yield or revenue. This option allows growers to fill the gap between standard insurance and full protection, covering shallow losses that might not otherwise result in a payout. The benefits include more comprehensive risk management, particularly for those concerned about minor losses due to adverse weather or market conditions. ECO works alongside a grower’s primary policy and can be customized to align with specific coverage needs, providing a tailored safety net for wheat growers. Unlike SCO, ECO coverage is unaffected by participating in FSA’s ARC program. In 2025, RMA made ECO more affordable by increasing premium support to 65%, the same level offered for SCO.

### Margin Coverage Option

The Margin Coverage Option (MCO), developed by Watts and Associates, is a recently approved insurance endorsement available starting in the 2026 crop year. MCO has a similar design as ECO but adds coverage for increases in input costs that track futures markets for nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, natural gas, and diesel fuel. For wheat, MCO will only attach to coverage for spring wheat and not for winter wheat.

### Studies

As part of its commitment to improving effective coverage, RMA initiates studies that address questions, concerns, and gaps.

One study important to Oregon wheat growers is the Quality Adjustment Study, which RMA recently contracted with an independent company. This study aims to research and analyze current discount factors, how they were established, how they are currently used, and potential options to more accurately reflect growers' quality discounts to production. This entails looking at the current methodology based on national discount factors and determining whether new methodology is needed. This evaluation could also include looking at other discounts where no factor is published by RMA, like high protein levels in soft white wheat. Thiel shared that this study will take several years to complete.

Another study focused on replanting factors was recently completed. As of January 1, when this article was submitted, an announcement was still pending. However, Thiel shared that growers can expect that replanting factors for several crops, including wheat, will be announced and could increase starting in 2026.

### Quality of Service

Thiel likes to remind growers to focus on the quality of the agent's service when shopping for crop insurance. "For other types of insurance, you see all of these goofy commercials for different companies offering a range of rates. In the case of federal crop insurance, as long as your insurance parameters are the same, the rates will be the same between any agent and company underwriting the policy," said Thiel. "So, crop insurance agents and companies are competing on their quality of service. How thorough and responsive are they? How well do they answer your questions and help you consider your options?"

"I encourage growers to focus on a good relationship with their agent, visit with them regularly, and make sure you are lining out what you want and asking a lot of questions," added Thiel. "Discuss how to implement a good record-keeping system, what records are required, and how your units should be structured."

Thiel reminds growers that in the case of crop insurance, there is no penalty for multiple notices of loss. So, if they experience any weather events that could potentially cause damage—even if signs of damage are delayed or undetectable



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until harvest—they should file a notice of loss with their agent just in case.

"If you have a loss, you need to contact your agent within 72 hours of initial discovery of damage or loss of production but no later than 15 days after the end of the insurance period," said Thiel.

"Another thing we often hear from growers are concerns regarding program integrity. For those who really value crop insurance and want to see it remain strong and affordable, it can be disheartening to see a neighbor intentionally abusing the program," said Thiel. "Whether they want to report it by name or remain anonymous, people can either come directly to my office with that information, and we'll refer it to our compliance office, or they can call the Office of Inspector General (OIG) hotline."

For educational resources focused on training and tools to help growers learn how to effectively manage long-term risks and challenges and better understand crop insurance, visit <https://www.rma.usda.gov/about-crop-insurance/managing-your-farm-risk>. Growers can also find a list of crop insurance agents online at <https://www.rma.usda.gov/tools-reports/agent-locator>. 

# A Lesson in Lobbying

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

On Tuesday, January 21, the 83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly convened to mark the start of the 2025 Oregon State Legislative Session. This year is a long session, which happens bi-annually, that extends from January to June. During this time, thousands of bills will be proposed.

Growers had the opportunity to prepare for the legislative session at the recent 2024 Tri-State Grain Convention. Oregon State Representative Mark Owens (R-Crane) led an insightful educational session on how to lobby effectively with former Washington state senator Kevin Van De Wege.

## Lobbying Effectively

During the session, Owens and Van De Wege conducted a mock legislative constituent meeting. They took turns acting as the consistent and walking through some examples of do's and don'ts.

Each shared advice and tips on how to make the most of one's time in front of elected officials and how to advocate for one's position successfully.

Owens encouraged growers to do their research before their meetings to understand the legislative process and which committees that official has an impact on.

"After you've brought up the issues you came in to talk about and shared your story, you should always have an 'ask' for the legislator," said Owens. "Ask them to support a bill and have the bill number ready to share. Ask them to request a committee hearing or be involved in a bill's Ways and Means process. Ask them what you can do to get their commitment or how to best stay in touch to continue the conversation."

Owens reminded growers that the long session is demanding on everyone, so consistency and kindness make a difference.

"Legislators value genuineness. As much as you can, positively frame your message. Be respectful, be yourself, and be unified and consistent in your message if you are lobbying as a group," said Owens. "Given the opportunity, find something you have in common and build a relationship with your legislator. Stop by their office even if you don't have an ask."

Owens also gave growers other practical tips, including researching a legislator's preferred form of contact and emphasizing, "If they give you their phone number, use it." He also shared that visitors don't need to mention whether they voted or donated for the legislator in the past; they should focus on the issues and share their stories. Despite best efforts, Owens shared that sometimes meetings don't go as planned, or there are scheduling conflicts.



While there are several opportunities to get involved in the legislative process and advocate for the Oregon wheat industry throughout the session, growers are encouraged to participate in the League's annual Wheat Day activities this year on February 13-14.

"If you have a bad experience, do your best to be considerate and personable," said Owens. "We all have bad days."


"We appreciate Representative Owens taking the time to attend and participate in several components of our convention," said League President Erin Hansell-Heideman. "His advice on how to lobby effectively will be beneficial during the legislative session. We may know the farming side of our businesses well, but we need to do a better job of speaking up for ourselves."

## Wheat Day

While there are several opportunities to get involved in the legislative process and advocate for the Oregon wheat industry throughout the session, growers are encouraged to participate in the League's annual Wheat Day activities this year on February 13-14.

"There is a lot of tradition tied to February 14 in Oregon. In addition to being Valentine's Day, it is also Oregon's birthday and Wheat Day—which aligns with the League's history," said Hoey. The founding of the League occurred in February 1926 when wheat growers came together for an economic conference in Moro, Oregon.

During Wheat Day, growers will visit the Oregon Capitol to meet with legislators, discuss agricultural priorities, and celebrate the industry. The League encourages grower participation and emphasizes the value of having strong visibility while in the building, which can further develop relationships with legislators. "Building relationships takes time, but when things happen quickly during the session, those relationships can change everything. You are your industry's strongest advocates," said Nicole Mann, Legislative Advocate with Dalton Advocacy, on a panel during the League's annual meeting at Tri-State.

The 2025 Wheat Day is approaching quickly. If you are interested in participating, please contact us at 541-276-7330 or [info@owgl.org](mailto:info@owgl.org). 

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