

JUNE 2023

OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 OSU Facility Upgrades Benefit Growers
- 6 Oregon Farmer Elected NAWG President
- 22 Follow the Wheat



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On the Road and In the Field

Collin Crocker

President

MY TWO CENTS WORTH



Every field and every place I farm is different. Not a single field I own that is the same. Even in a small area, a dip in the field, proximity to a road, a change in the soil characteristic or a dozen other factors means that each is unique. As a result, while I am farming in an area that has similar characteristics and needs, I farm every field to its own aspects.

The same is true for our Oregon Wheat Growers League membership. The issues impacting producers as a whole are similar, such as our increased cost for fuel and changes in weather (we all struggled with an unusual spring that delayed work). However, each farm operation is different, and the degree of impact varies. As do the issues of a particular county or region. I fight with the challenges of handling too much water most of the year, whereas most of the people around the League board table are struggling with too little water most of the year. Wheat is wheat... but each area is distinct and the only way to truly know it, is to experience it.

Throughout the winter and spring, I took the opportunity to get out and do just that: experience wheat operations around the state and talk about what is affecting our members. I attended as many County meetings as I was able: from my own backyard in Monroe to Klamath Falls to Moro to Heppner. Each of our County Presidents did an excellent job in lining up speakers to talk about changes in federal programs, current research underway, marketing updates and the status of federal and state legislative actions. While I



Morrow County meeting.

was there for the discussion as the main reason, I will say that you can't beat the food as the second reason to participate in the county meetings: our small towns have some excellent barbecue!

At each County meeting, I learned something. For instance, in South Valley, Kevin Duling with KD Investors provided insight on market conditions and how to go about marketing wheat. In Heppner, Oregon State University Extension agent Jordan Maley described the impact of Mormon Crickets and cross-agency partnerships that were developed for a suppression program to minimize the destruction. In Moro (besides some excellent dancing), the challenges of dryland farming operations and the value of conservation programs and variety development were highlighted.

Finally, in Klamath Falls, I heard more about dealing with very complex agency issues as it relates to water. In Klamath, I also an opportunity to ride along with Brent Cheyne to visit both the Klamath and Tulelake research stations and to see the water situation up close and in-depth. It was a tour that provided an understanding I could not otherwise have achieved. I also have to give a note of appreciation to my wife, Debbie. It was our 41st wedding anniversary the day of the Klamath County meeting. There are not very many spouses who would happily spend their anniversary meeting with farmers and traversing wheat country, but somehow I won the



Klamath County meeting

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lottery. Our 42nd wedding anniversary might require a destination of her choosing. Good thing there are a lot of areas growing wheat!

Experiencing someone else's operations gives whole new insight to the challenges faced and why League advocacy is important. Throughout each visit and County meeting, I and the League staff provided updates on the League, legislative updates and the value and need for active members. The County meetings offer an opportunity to hear the issues impacting our members. I encourage our members to take advantage of them when they come up annually. Finally, a

note of appreciation to our industry partners and sponsors who also help make the events happen.

We hear a lot about the diversity of ag and the diversity of wheat operations around the state. Getting out to see it is the best way to truly understand. I look forward to seeing you out on the road for future County meetings!



Pacific Northwest Wheat Growers Will Benefit From New Facilities at CBARC

Francisco Calderon

The Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center (CBARC) is one of the oldest Branch Experiment Stations from Oregon State University, with research stations in Pendleton and Moro. The station was originally established in 1909 in Moro, and a second station was opened around 1930 in Adams. From its inception, CBARC has had a close relationship with co-located federal researchers. Our mission is to carry out practical research about how to grow dryland grains in a commercially successful and efficient way. The faculty at CBARC has been tasked with generating fact-based solutions and new knowledge, identifying management practices that improve grain yields and protect our soils, both of which sustain our rural communities. The climate and soils at the Moro and Adams research fields are representative of a sizeable portion of the Northwest's dryland grain production region. Findings generated at CBARC have wide applicability, and our research has impact nationally and internationally.

As we all know very well, dryland grain production is subject to fluctuations in fertilizer prices, fuel costs, emerging diseases and pests, and constantly evolving choices for soil amendments, seed varieties and alternative crops. The wheat growers of the Pacific Northwest are forward thinking and want tested and true answers about how to farm more efficiently, what works and what doesn't. Thus, having an innovative research team looking at local answers to regional questions is essential.

Scientific research requires dedicated facilities with state-of-the-art specifications for efficiency and safety. CBARC has relied on facilities that are more than 50 years old, with outdated ventilation and accessibility among other challenges.



Aerial view of the new building in the center. Landscaping and concrete work around the building will follow soon. Photo credit Paulina Ramirez.

Because of this, CBARC is in the process of adding new office and laboratory space at a cost of \$1.5 million. The new facilities will consist of a new building of approximately 3000 sq ft. Half of the building will be dedicated to offices, cubicles, and a break room. The other half will be a common soil laboratory that will house several of the research programs, as well as new cutting edge instrumentation. These facilities will enable not only the progress of CBARC's research but are also essential to attract and retain well-qualified staff.

The new building adds much needed office and meeting space, which is required to house future hires and visiting

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scientists. The new laboratory space will enable the station to carry out cutting edge research about soil health, soil acidification, carbon sequestration, water conservation, grain quality, and wheat productivity. The lab will have new soil sampling instruments, and it will provide a modern setting with ADA accessibility. A new focus of the soil scientists at CBARC will be to use cutting edge spectral analysis to streamline and speed up data gathering. This new lab capacity will be a great complement to ongoing field experiments at CBARC, allowing for more frequent and detailed sampling of soil health and grain quality. Our long term experiments are the best agricultural living laboratories in the Pacific Northwest, showing how decades of residue management, fertilizer rates, cropping frequency, and other aspects of

dryland wheat production affect grain yields, soil quality, and management needs. We will also have new equipment to quantify soil carbon, assess soil water conservation, analyze wheat and barley quality, as well as several field-ready sensors to analyze soil compaction, and plant health.

The new facilities are a result of the great support that CBARC has from the College of Agricultural science, the wheat growers, the wheat industry, and the local community. Growers know that the return on investment is assured. Our stakeholders from Sherman County also came through with big support. This makes sense because these new facilities will benefit growers throughout all the dryland grain production region in the PNW. The fundraising campaign continues to pay for this new building and for future facility needs. The new building will be fully operational very soon, allowing us to better serve our stakeholders and work more productively and safely. 

4th Generation Oregon Farmer Elected NAWG President

Devon Lyon, Rushlight Agency

As a fourth-generation Klamath Basin farmer and rancher, Brent Cheyne has deep roots in Oregon agriculture. Together with his son, Rodney, they farm a few thousand acres, raising wheat, barley, alfalfa, hay, occasionally oats, and Angus cattle. As the newly-elected president of the North American Wheat Growers (NAWG), Cheyne will have even more time to focus on shaping a healthy future for wheat. He plans to be 100% retired from day-to-day farm operations within a year. "I don't want to be the dad who isn't willing to relinquish control. I am not going to be that person," said Cheyne.

Brent strongly believes that active political and industry engagement by farmers is critical to protecting agricultural interests both locally and nationally. He has certainly led by example. Starting in 2011, Brent served as OWGL's Klamath County president, and continued his service through his term as OWGL President in 2018. At the national level, he has served NAWG as secretary, treasurer, and vice president before being elected president. His own activism aside, he urges others to do the same, including younger farmers. "I truly hope that everyone out there will get involved, stay involved, and be part of the process," he said. "This is something that we can no longer hide from or not be a part of. We need your support, suggestions, ideas, and we need your voice."

Cheyne has a clear vision for his term as NAWG's president. Among many important issues on NAWG's agenda, he emphasized four priorities: maintaining crop insurance,



NAWG Officers. L to R: Nicole Berg, Brent Cheyne, Keeff Felty, Pat Clements, Jamie Kress.

updating the wheat index price, encouraging farmer involvement in lobbying and supporting the wheat industry, and educating elected officials in Washington, D.C., about the challenges and opportunities facing wheat growers.


Crop Insurance: Cheyne ties the importance of crop insurance to the fact that farmers in the US now constitute less than one percent of the population. With the ever-shrinking number, and the continued consolidation of small farms

into larger operations, any disruption can have a significant and far-reaching national impact. “With crop insurance, if Mother Nature deals us a disaster, we have a means to survive. Just because you have the insurance, doesn’t mean you want to use it, but the insurance will keep you whole enough that you can be in business next year,” Cheyne said.

Wheat Index Price: NAWG will work to increase the reference price in the government crop program, which is the average price of wheat across different regions and classes. He said that the current wheat index price hasn’t been increased in approximately twenty years, is too low, and does not reflect the true value of wheat.

Farmer Involvement: Cheyne made it clear that he and the national staff at NAWG are laser-focused on these issues, and many more. But, in the end, they still need active engagement and involvement from farmers countrywide. He said, “We are a grassroots, grower-driven organization, and I aim to keep it that way.”

Educating Elected Officials: Cheyne said that a critical priority for him is to educate elected officials about the realities and challenges of wheat growing. He said that many of them have little or no connection to agriculture and do not understand the issues that affect wheat growers. Cheyne also mentioned that NAWG works closely with other commodity groups, such as corn, soybean, and cotton growers, to find common ground and present a united front in Congress. “We’ve got a lot of education to do with the legislators who have simply not been there to be a part of a farm bill before. We’ve got an incredible educational process to undertake.”

Cheyne closed with these thoughts, “I’m really excited about the role I’ve been handed. Failure is not an option. And it’s an opportunity that I think that we in the wheat industry can make the most of moving into the 2023 farm bill. We’re going to go out there and we’re going to work and do everything we can to get the American farmer the best farm bill that we can possibly negotiate out.” 



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Keeping the Food in Food Aid

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



Within the trade title of the Farm Bill is a lower profile item important in serving to alleviate hunger and improve global security: international food aid. Given that energy, time and resource is limited and since such a small set of provisions of the Farm Bill relates to this area, it is often overlooked when addressing the larger topics at hand, such as crop insurance, reference price, conservation programs and the nutrition title.

However, as we look at the upcoming Farm Bill renewal, an expanded emphasis is placed on the effort to “Keep the Food in Food Aid.” It is premised on the need to ensure a fully functioning international food aid system while recognizing that we have seen a series of incremental changes to program administration and resources which have consistently eroded the U.S. in kind commodities portion of food aid.

I have reflected in prior articles about the leadership the U.S. and the wheat industry has provided in international food aid programs. The U.S. is the largest single country donor to global food security efforts and as crises have continued to escalate due to global conflict and natural disasters, we have played an increasingly important role in assuring resources are available. We do so in two manners:

- Providing **‘in kind aid’** which is the provision of U.S. grown commodities shipped to individuals and regions in need. For Oregon wheat, much of our product currently ships to Yemen to provide direct relief.
- Providing **‘cash based aid’** which is the provision of direct funding through vouchers and direct cash transfers to individuals and regions in need, as well as sourcing commodities from competing global exporters instead of the United States.

Historically, beginning with the Food for Peace Act (P.L. 480), the focus on international food assistance was through in-kind aid. However, a shift to a combination of in-kind and cash-based aid began in the late 2000’s with the intent to offer multiple approaches to addressing emergency needs in cases where in-kind aid may not be able to arrive timely or safely. There is certainly a place and a need for a variety of forms of aid. However, we must ensure that these programs, which have benefitted from bipartisan support, do not replace U.S. agriculture with cash allocations or purchases from competing countries.


In-kind commodity donation leverages on the strength of our food production system and provides an accountable

mechanism assuring that resource gets to individuals who need it. Increasingly this aid is being directed to respond to emergency situations in unstable areas where markets are not fully functioning or are entirely disrupted. In addition, areas impacted by natural disasters where sufficient local food resources are not available continue to expand.

Priorities are therefore focused to ensure that there is needed flexibility for international food aid programs, but to return the “food” to food aid programs more strongly. A coalition of agricultural organizations, through the leadership of the North American Millers Association, has outlined five specific areas of focus for improvements:

- Restoring the Farm Bill authorized programs with in-kind commodity donation programs, recognizing the unique value these programs and American commodities provide as part of the overall humanitarian assistance tool box.
- Limiting administrative costs and subjecting spending to transparency and accountability requirements.
- Revitalizing the Food for Progress program by adjusting the funding cap on transportation costs so we are not hindering the ability to donate more commodities.
- Strengthening the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, including by authorizing an automatic funding replenishment mechanism.
- Addressing the expansive waiver authority provided to USAID to bypass program requirements and providing a better connection to USDA which has the relevant subject matter expertise to make decisions around global food and agriculture supplies, commodity costs, and accountability to American agriculture.

With the exception of replenishment of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, which had an extraordinary draw-down of funds in response to the recent global crisis situations, these are changes that have no additional real funding figures attached. It maximizes existing resources and the authorities for agencies to use aid to address dire hunger needs. And as noted, it is an integral part of our national and international security interests and should be an ongoing cornerstone of foreign policy.

These programs have provided resources and food assistance for more than 65 years, and Oregon wheat farmers have been at the forefront of support. It is our intent to keep them strong and ensure that Oregon wheat remain a key component of international food aid. 

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Working to Improve Programs: Grower Participation in Survey Requested


Jason Flowers, Program Director

The Oregon Wheat Growers League has launched a survey for growers to document the use of USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs and the need for changes to programs to be more accessible to wheat producers. The online survey takes 3-5 minutes to complete and covers the grower's general location, past and current participation in NRCS programs, barriers faced, and ideas for new enhancements.

Conservation programs through NRCS are necessary tools for wheat farmers wanting to update their operations with more efficient practices. These can include a wide range of activities, such as pest and nutrient management, but the cost of updates can be burdensome when farmers try to make them without any outside funding. With how fast technology in agriculture is advancing, the League wants to

ensure programs are keeping up with innovations in the field.

That is why it is essential to develop a baseline of what farmers in the state have done with NRCS programs and what they want to be able to do now and in the future. With that data, we will be able to work on changes to practices and enhancements so that growers can utilize the latest technology in a way that works for our unique growing region in the Pacific Northwest.

Please take a little bit of your time to take the survey and help us get changes made to benefit you. Access the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HGY3LW8>. 



USTR Challenges India Over Subsidies


Tayloranne Gillespie, Rushlight Agency

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) recently filed a counter-notification to the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding India's wheat and rice subsidies. A similar filing was made in 2018, but this time the U.S. is joined by five other wheat or rice exporting countries, including Australia, Canada, Paraguay, Thailand, and Ukraine. Together, the countries claim that India is not accurately reporting the level of support it provides to its domestic farmers.

According to its current commitments with the WTO, India is allowed to provide subsidies that do not exceed 10% of the total value of crop production. However, information collected from India's own records shows that the country has significantly and repeatedly exceeded this limit. In the data presented in the WTO counter-notification, subsidies for wheat and rice in 2020 and 2021 were as high as 81% and 94%, respectively.

As noted in the filing, India's approach to wheat subsidies encourages overproduction and discourages farmers from

growing other crops. This practice leads to excessive public stocks of wheat that are often dumped into the international market, suppressing global prices. According to U.S. Wheat Associates, "When India's government releases those grain stocks into the export market, it often does so at prices below what it initially paid to purchase the wheat." This, in turn, harms producers in other exporting countries, including Oregon wheat producers. U.S. Wheat Associates also reported that "Studies show the distortion of international wheat and rice trade from these policies cost U.S. wheat farmers anywhere from \$500 million to \$800 million per year in lost potential income." It also harms customers who depend on stable markets.

U.S. wheat organizations welcomed the new counter-notification filing. U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers stated that they are committed to working with USTR and other government officials to address these challenges and to ensure that U.S. wheat farmers have a fair chance to compete in the global marketplace. 

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LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

By Nicole Mann, Dalton Advocacy Inc.

As of April 5th, the Oregon State Legislature officially passed the halfway point in the session.

The “first chamber deadline” marked the last day for policy bills to move out of their originating committees. Bills either had to be voted out to the Floor, or sent to a committee that is deadline exempt such as Revenue, Rules, Transportation or Ways & Means.

In April, there were 1,500 bills in play, with several of the League’s priority bills having passed their policy committee, been amended, or died. Below is a brief overview of notable bill movement:

STATUS AS OF APRIL 5, 2023

AGRICULTURE BILLS

SB 789 - Canola Production Restrictions in the Willamette Valley

Status: **ALIVE**

Makes permanent the current limit for canola production within the Willamette Valley Protected District.

SB 955 - Establishes an AgriStress Helpline

Status: **ALIVE**

Appropriates funding to implement an AgriStress Helpline, a free & confidential crisis/support line available 24/7.

SB 958 - Establishment of a Wheat Endowment Fund

Status: **DEAD**

Establishes a state match for private donations to the OSU Foundation for cereal grain research.

HB 2675 - Agricultural Structure Capacity Limits

Status: **DEAD**

Increases capacity limits for agricultural exempt buildings.

HB 2842, HB 2843, HB 2844 and SB 429, SB 532- Agricultural Co-op Bills

Status: **DEAD**

Establishes certain requirements for members of a board of directors, allows co-op members to rescind contracts with co-op in certain instances, and makes changes to co-ops sharing of financial information.

HB 3098 - Establishment of a Pesticide Outreach Program

Status: **ALIVE**

Establishes a new Farmworker Outreach Program within the Oregon Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Pesticide Analytical and Response Center, to serve as the single point of contact for pesticide education, concerns and incidents.

HB 3124 - Drought Relief and Water Security Package

Status: **ALIVE**

Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security package of near-term relief and mid to long-term actions that target root issues related to drought.

HB 3158 - Omnibus Tax Bill (tires/diesel equipment/etc.)

Status: **DEAD**

Imposes an excise tax on the retail sale of tires, privilege tax for engaging in the business of providing nonroad diesel equipment, tax on the use in Oregon of nonroad diesel equipment that is purchased out of state, rental tax for nonroad diesel equipment, privilege tax on heavy-duty vehicles, and a license tax on dyed diesel for transfer to the Clean Diesel Energy Fund.

HB 3244 - Oregon Agriculture Economic Competitiveness Taskforce

Status: **ALIVE**

Directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture to study the economic competitiveness of Oregon’s agricultural sector.

ENVIRONMENT BILLS

SB 530 - Natural and Working Lands

Status: **ALIVE**

A comprehensive bill aimed at helping the state achieve its climate goals.

SB 803 - Diesel Phase Out

Status: **AMENDED TO A STUDY BILL & ALIVE**

Phase out of petroleum diesel in Oregon over the next 7 years.

HB 2396 - Indirect Source Emissions

Status: **DEAD**

Directs the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt rules to create and implement an indirect source review program to regulate emissions from indirect sources.

LAND USE/SOLAR SITING

HB 3179 - Increase in Solar Siting Acreage

Status: **ALIVE**

Expands the acres available to Counties to allow for solar project development.

- Not more than 240 acres located on high-value farmland;
- Not more than 2,560 acres located on land that is predominantly cultivated or is predominantly composed of soils that are in capability classes I to IV;
- Not more than 3,840 acres located on any other land.

HB 3180 - Solar Siting

Status: **DEAD**

Proposes a significant and fundamental change in the way Oregon views agricultural lands.

HB 3181 - Long Term Solar Siting Planning

Status: **ALIVE**

Formalizes and continues discussions among stakeholders of where and how solar energy facilities should be allowed in Oregon.

LABOR BILLS

SB 907 - Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

Status: **AMENDED & ALIVE**

As amended, the bill aligns Oregon's OSHA language with federal OSHA's existing Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

HB 2469 and SB 448 - Ag Overtime Fixes

Status: **DEAD**

Senate Bill 448 repeals the overtime law passed last year, and HB 2469 raises the threshold to 48 hours and provide farmers with a seasonal exemption accommodation.

HB 2800 - Expansion of Age Discrimination Law

Status: **DEAD**

Expands Oregon's Age Discrimination law by prohibiting employers from considering experience in job hiring and keywords in job postings.

SB 925 - Pay Transparency

Status: **DEAD**

Requires employers to include wage rates and ranges in all job postings and create new record retention requirements.



The League's lobby team will continue to remain proactive and engaged in policy conversations through the remaining duration of the session to advocate on behalf of the Oregon wheat industry and producers. **A complete session summary will be available for members after the legislature adjourns in June.** 🌾



A Year to Remember

Dana Tuckness

OWC Chair

What a difference a year can make! Last year we were so dry during early spring planting, we weren't sure we should even plant a crop. Then came the April and May rains that got us through the year. As I write this in mid-April, we are still struggling to get in the field due to all the March snow and rain this year. The cold has been the biggest issue with the winter wheat crop. I don't ever remember a year with the crop being this far behind, with many fields having plants still emerging. With high run-off and water being dumped from a local reservoir, the Malheur River has been out of its banks this past week, with many fields under water. I remember 1993 as being a cold year with late plantings, and wheat harvest didn't start until the 10th of August, which was about a month later than normal for the Treasure Valley. This year is starting to look like it will be one of those "years to remember".

In April, the Commission held its annual meeting for pre-review of the budget for this coming fiscal year. With inflation running high, margins are growing thinner, making it tougher to fund projects the Board deems as most pertinent. This is my fourth such budget review and I can assure you your Board of Commissioners does not take spending the grower's money lightly. A lot of time is spent reviewing research proposals. Each growing area of the state is well represented, and special needs for those same areas are taken into consideration when choosing which research projects to fund in whole or in part. We are fortunate in Oregon to have so many qualified Oregon State University researchers to stay on top of any problems or situations we may face in the wheat industry. We also had an ask from the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) to help purchase an SRC shaker. The SRC test analyzes the functional properties of soft wheat and the results help our customers make decisions in purchasing, milling and blending. The test involves dissolving flour in four different solvents, which can be done by hand or by mechanical means. The SRC Shaker will eliminate quite a lot of time, as the shaking had to be done by hand at WMC, and the equipment will greatly improve consistency in these tests. Mike Moran, Executive Director of the WMC also reported 60 tours were given last year, with 38 being trade teams. Anyone who grows wheat in Oregon should take the time to tour the WMC. The Commission sponsors a

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION




With virtually no in-person teams traveling for two years prior, we saw quite an increase last year, and this year looks to be exceptionally busy.

growers workshop every year (usually in February), which is a good chance to see the work being done there.

Speaking of trade teams, since travel restrictions associated with the pandemic are easing a bit, it looks like a busy year in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. With virtually no in-person teams traveling for two years prior, we saw quite an increase last year, and this year looks to be exceptionally busy. These in-person trips are very important as to give buyers a first-hand look at where their wheat is grown, seeing it being grown, and hopefully get to see work being done in the field, whether it be ground preparation, planting, or harvest. Most importantly, they want to meet the person or persons that are growing the crop. Growers: if you ever have a chance to be involved in meeting with one of these trade groups, it is an excellent chance to meet with buyers and end users of your product. Fair warning, be prepared to answer a lot of questions; they are most interested in what you do. Just as important, your Commission will be sending representatives to help peddle a little wheat at buyers conferences overseas and in Latin America.

Last but not least, for the first time in several years Oregon has one of its own as the President of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG). Brent Cheyne was elected to that position at Commodity Classic in March. I have come to know Brent pretty well, as we both started on the League board at roughly the same time, and went through the chairs at the same time. I know he will take this job seriously and tackle the challenges head-on. Congratulations Brent!

"We must reject the idea that every time a law is broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions." Ronald Reagan. 

All in the Name(s) of Barley....

Patrick Hayes

Successor

“Successor barley: why just survive when you can succeed?” is a good-natured ping on Washington State University (WSU) “Survivor” - the first feed barley that growers of Clearfield wheat could put into their rotations with confidence. We crossed “WSU Survivor” with “OSU Lightning” and fast-tracked the doubled haploid progeny as described in our 2022 Oregon Wheat article “Survival, Success, and everything in between”. We grew out the two top selections (and Survivor) on David Brewer’s farm in 2022. David’s smile, as the yield monitor confirmed the top yield of Successor, tells the rest of the story. There will be Foundation seed production with Washington State Crop Improvement in 2023.



Dr. Pat Hayes, photo credit Ron Silberstein

Lontra

Getting at the why and what of “Lontra” requires some background. “Maris Otter” is a famous “heirloom” variety from England, released in 1966 – the year of the third and final U.S. tour by The Beatles. The variety has sacred status for many brewers, who perceive that it does amazing things for beer flavor. The variety survives thanks to an envelope of ownership property that limits its production to a small area in England. Maris is the name of a road near Oxford, where the institute that developed Maris Otter was located. An otter is, well, an otter. Old World otters belong to the genus *Lutra*. The genus of the New World otter is *Lontra*, so we chose that as the name for our new variety, which has Maris Otter as a parent. Clearly OSU Lontra is a new animal compared to its parent - Maris (*Lutra*) Otter.

With that background – on to Lontra (the barley). We started out by crossing 04-028-36 (a 2-row winter malting selection from Germany) and Violetta (a 2-row winter malting variety from Limagrain Cereal Seeds) with Maris Otter. We produced doubled haploids from these crosses, tested them in replicated trials, and winnowed the set down to four selections based on agronomic performance and malting quality specifications. The Romp (as one properly refers to a group/flock/herd/assemblage of otters) of four went through extensive malting, brewing, and flavor assessments. We selected Lontra (DH142010) and increased seed at Tulelake, California (2022 harvest) in collaboration with the University of California Intermountain Research and Experiment Center

Researchers’ Names and Titles:

Patrick Hayes, Professor

2023 Grant Titles and Funding Levels:

Oregon Barley Variety Development and Deployment, \$35,000

Grant summary:

The project will develop, test, and deploy barley varieties for Oregon. Two varieties released in 2023 - Successor and Lontra - are direct outcomes of this research. Successor is an imazamox-tolerant spring habit 2-row feed variety adapted to Oregon’s dryland production areas. The final selection of Successor was made in 2022 thanks to an on-farm trial with David Brewer. According to David’s yield monitor, Successor beat Survivor and a sister line. There will be Foundation seed available in 2024. Lontra is a winter habit 2-row malting variety specifically targeted to the Klamath Basin, although the variety merits testing in other Oregon environments. Lontra will be of particular interest to the craft malting and brewing industries due to the fame of one of its parents - Maris Otter. There will be Foundation seed available of Lontra in 2024. Two additional winter 2-row varieties are planned for release in the fall of 2023, pending results from the 2023 field season. Both are targeted to the distilling industry because they possess a unique trait - “zero glycosidic nitrile”. Prospective variety names are Cervus and Canis. Breeder seed will be harvested in 2023, leading to Foundation in 2024. The backstories behind these varieties are the focus of the article.



David Brewer harvesting Successor. Photo credit Pat Hayes

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(IREC). IREC is an outstanding, representative test and target site for winter barley since this renowned barley production area is experiencing severe water shortages. Fall-planted barley has the potential for more effective use of available precipitation and limited irrigation water than spring-planted barley. Grain from the 2022 IREC increase, along with grain from OSU “Thunder” from the same site, was malted in 2023 in the OSU malthouse, and at Admiral Maltings (Alameda, California), in order to compare pneumatic and floor malted barley in terms of brewing metrics. Deschutes Brewery of Bend, Oregon brewed beers from these malts. Sensory analyses of beer flavor and aroma will be conducted at the 2023 Master Brewers Association of the Americas regional meeting in Hood River, Oregon and at pFriem Family Brewers, also in Hood River. Lontra seed from the 2022 IREC increase is also being used for a pre-commercial increase near Tulelake, contracted by Admiral Maltings under a research Materials Transfer Agreement. The 2023 harvest will be used for pre-commercial assessment by Admiral Maltings and their brewing partners. There are still many rivers for the Lontra to swim – but please join us in raising a glass to its success. There will be Foundation seed available in Fall, 2024.

“310” and “472”


Distillers require malts with different attributes than brewers, and a key characteristic is zero glycosidic nitrile content. What is glycosidic nitrile, you may ask? It all starts with a gene encoding a compound called “epiheterodendrin” (EPH), which is a cyanogenic glycoside - that’s where the term glycosidic nitrile (GN) comes from. Indeed, “cyanogenic” implies cyanide (hydrogen cyanide in this case), which is the result of chemical reactions during fermentation and heating during distillation. In the presence of copper (think copper stills), ethyl carbamate – a carcinogen – is produced. No one wants carcinogenic whiskey, right? The simple solution – varieties that do not have a functional EPH gene. This makes them non-producers of glycosidic nitrile and as a result ethyl carbamate is not formed during distilling. Almost all spring varieties used for Scotch whisky production have this gene deletion, as do two OSU spring varieties “Full Pint” and “Oregon Promise”. What’s been missing is the GN0 trait in winter barley. Over several cycles of selection, we transferred the GN0 trait from Full Pint to DH162310 and DH170472. These are sister lines from the same pedigree (DH130939/Calypso). The reason we are considering releasing the two sisters as varieties is that they have very different malt profiles. “310” may best fit the needs of distillers who use other malts/grains in distilling whereas “472” may best suit distillers who use only malted barley for making their spirits. Both selections are in Breeder seed increase in anticipation of release and in on-farm trials in Washington and Idaho. We welcome your suggestions for variety names to replace these boring numbers!



Field of Lontra. Photo credit Darrin Culp

It takes a team to launch a Successor, raise a Lontra, and ensure the safety of American single malt whiskey. In alphabetical order, our team:

- Harmonie Bettenhausen, Hartwick Center for Craft Food and Beverage – Malt analysis and moral support
- David Brewer, Emerson Dell Farm – Successor. The Man
- Daniela Carrijo, Pennsylvania State University – Kicked off the drive to Successor
- Darrin Culp, UCANR-IREC – Our man on the ground at Tulelake
- Curtis Davenport, Admiral Maltings – Malting and faith in otters
- Tanya Filichkin, OSU – Doubled haploid production genius
- Scott Fisk, OSU – Outstanding manager of field trials and maltster
- Patrick Hayes, OSU – Principal Instigator
- Laura Helgersen, OSU – Doubled haploid seed producer nonpareil, field note-taker extraordinaire and crew boss
- Campbell Morrissy, OSU – Lontra research lead, Successor release motivator and pFriem, head brewer
- Ron Silberstein, Admiral Maltings – The Admiral

Thanks to you all – Oregon growers, the former Oregon Grains Commission, and the current Oregon Wheat Commission for 37 great years breeding barley at OSU! 

Federal Mediation Could Impact Future of Columbia River System Barging

Jessica Chambers, Rushlight Agency

The future of the Federal Columbia River Power System and the associated navigation locks on the Columbia Snake River System face uncertainty as ongoing mediation continues regarding plans for managing the river system's operations. These decisions may have significant implications for the Pacific Northwest.

Central to the mediation is the focus on the dam breaching of the four Lower Snake River dams as part of the effort to save declining salmon populations. Over the years, the issue of dam breaching has been studied and rejected numerous times. Most recently, a nearly four-year, \$40-million process of regional collaboration studied its complex components, resulting in the Columbia River System Operation Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which was released in the fall of 2020.

The EIS concluded that breaching the four lower Snake River dams was not warranted in order to remain compliant with relevant environmental laws and regulations relating to the protection of salmon and other protected species. They maintained that the dams are critical infrastructure for communities in the Pacific Northwest. Federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration, approved the EIS and were supported by Biological Opinions from both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. Despite these findings, a federal lawsuit was filed following its release.

In late 2021, the federal government and plaintiffs agreed to a stay in the litigation in order to focus on a negotiated path forward through mediation, which is set to expire on August 31, 2023. The Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG) - which is part of the Pacific Northwest Waterway Association (PNWA) - and the Northwest RiverPartners have been involved in the mediation process surrounding the litigation, along with a number of federal agencies, tribes, environmental groups, and the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. The process is being led by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service under the instruction of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.




IPNG and RiverPartners have raised serious concerns surrounding the mediation process. In a letter submitted earlier this year, the groups stated that the process seemed to be on a path to create a dam removal plan rather than a salmon recovery plan. It pointed out that because of the lack of input,

transparency, or third-party accountability and validation, the process appeared to be moving toward removal of the lower Snake River dams as a predetermined outcome.

The river system is a crucial asset to the Pacific Northwest and plays a critical role in transportation of U.S. wheat and other agricultural product exports to international markets. Barging remains the most efficient, environmentally friendly and safest mode of cargo transportation. Additionally, the system provides hydropower, irrigation and recreation for rural communities across the Pacific Northwest.

Breaching dams along this river system would end barge transportation on the Snake River, requiring massive investments to effectively replace the barging system with


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BOB WILLIAMS
Enterprise, OR

JON MCPHEE
Madras, OR

MIKE SHORT
Pendleton, OR



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rail and trucking. It would also more than double the risk of power shortages in the region and have significant impacts to climate change goals.

Further complicating the issue is the fact that there are multiple factors that affect salmon runs, calling into question the benefit breaching would have on salmon populations. Declining ocean conditions, in particular, have a significant impact on salmon returns along the entire west coast, not just for Snake River runs. State of the art fish passage already in place at the dams along the Columbia Snake River System have seen juvenile survival rates averaging 95-98%, and adult salmon returns on par with levels seen in undammed rivers.

“

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PNWA has long been supportive of salmon recovery efforts, including a wide range of environmental improvements to bolster salmon recovery and habitat restoration. IPNG and RiverPartners are committed to continuing participation in the mediation process in good faith and advocating for a balanced, science-based solution going forward. 🌱

Oregon Minimum Wage Set To Increase in July

The projected State minimum wage increase, effective July 1, 2023 has been set at \$0.70. The last of statutory

proscribed step increases for minimum wage occurred July 1, 2022. Accordingly, going forward the ‘Standard’ wage rate will increase tied to the Consumer Price Index. By April 30th of each year the Bureau of Labor & Industries will calculate the adjustment.

Portland Metro

Current: \$14.75 per hour

July 1, 2023 – Projected Increase \$15.45

Within the urban growth boundary, including parts of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties

Non-Urban

Current: \$12.50 per hour

July 1, 2023 – Projected Increase \$13.20

Baker, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, and Wheeler counties

Standard

Current: \$13.50 per hour

July 1, 2023 – Projected Increase \$14.20

Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Wasco, Yamhill, and parts of Clackamas, Multnomah, & Washington outside the urban growth boundary.

Although there were attempts to change the method which the minimum wage is calculated via legislation this session, none of the bills are moving forward. 🌱



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Grower Workshop: From Farm to Consumer

Jason Flowers, Program Director

The Oregon Wheat Commission held its annual Grower Workshop in the spring, giving growers and industry partners a chance to learn what goes into getting wheat from the field to the end consumer. I was excited about the opportunity to participate as a new Oregon Wheat Growers League employee.

Day one started at the Albers Mill Building with a welcome and background of the Commission by CEO Amanda Hoey. The group learned more about how assessment funds are used and the focus on research and marketing. We were also some of the first people to view the new 2023 Preferred Wheat Varieties brochure, which is funded in part by the Commission. We then moved to our first tour of the day at Marsee Bakery. Marsee is a local, artisan, family-owned wholesale bakery that delivers baked goods from Eugene, Oregon, to Burlington, Washington, out of two locations. We were fortunate to have their General Manager, Daniel Bes, as our tour guide. He has an impressive resume, literally baking around the world. When asked about flour, Daniel started listing the protein levels needed for the various goods they were baking. We may have left there with some cookies and a birthday cake! It is evident that quality is the priority.

After a tour that left us craving baked goods, we headed to the Columbia Export Terminal. It is an impressive facility that can unload trucks, trains, and barges and transfer the product into ocean-going ships that deliver to our overseas customers. The group received market updates from Jordan Van Zante, Export Handler member of the Commission who works for Pacifcor LLC. We then returned to the Albers Mill Building, where we received a tour of the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC). The WMC provides technical training, grower



The Pilot Production Line making crackers.

workshops, innovative research, product development, and crop quality testing services. Every year they host individuals and teams from around the world to promote US wheat by demonstrating its quality and functionality. We had an opportunity to dive into the lab to see firsthand how the wheat quality testing equipment operates, including a machine that blows bubbles out of dough to measure the strength of the gluten and one that does the falling numbers test. Following that, we experienced the pilot production lines. They can produce several products, including Asian-style noodles, tortillas, bagels, and crackers. We watched the cracker line in use and sampled the finished product.

Tyllor Ledford, Market Analyst with the US Wheat Associates, rounded out the day for us with an informative presentation about the global wheat market. We learned about the current state of the market, where different classes of wheat are shipped, and the challenges around the world that affect the US wheat industry. The first day ended with a group dinner in downtown Portland, allowing us to relax and visit with everyone.

The morning of the second day started with a presentation at Shaver Transportation. Shaver is a regional tug and barge company that services the Columbia Snake River System. Their four lines of business are bulk commodity transportation, ship assist, harbor/marine services, and emergency response and rescue. The company was founded in 1880 and is owned by the 5th generation, with the 6th generation working their way up the ranks. During their presentation, we learned about the efficiency at which they can move wheat down the river



The group at the Columbia Export Terminal.



Participants learning about the science behind an amazing cake.

to ports where it is transferred to ocean-going ships. The group boarded a tugboat for a ride around the port, with some participants finding themselves at the controls. This tour is the one I was most looking forward to, and it did not disappoint!

Next on the agenda was a stop at Overseas Merchandise Inspection Service (OMIC USA). OMIC is an independent analytical laboratory that provides impartial services to foreign and domestic customers. They have several accreditations, including the Japanese and Korean governments, two of the largest importers of Oregon wheat. They can test for pesticide residue, microbiology, heavy metals, GMOs, mycotoxins, nutrition, and allergens in grains. While they test many different crops and products, grains for export were a focus for us. Our host did a great job of taking very technical information and communicating it in a way we understood.


Once back at the Albers Mill Building, Ryan Graebner, Assistant Professor overseeing the wheat and barley trials across the state, gave an overview of the OSU variety trials. The information is compiled into reports that include yield over multiple years, height, test weight, and protein levels. We learned how to use the information from the reports to help make variety selections on the farms. To finish the workshop, we had a hands-on explanation of grain inspection from Jared Malone, a Quality Assurance Specialist with the Federal Grain Inspection Service.



Vern Fredrickson at the helm of the tug boat.

Everyone paired up and was given wheat samples and shown how to recognize the different classes of wheat and damage. It was a fun exercise that made us understand how difficult of a job it is to inspect the grain.


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The workshop was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the side of the industry that takes over after the wheat leaves the farm. Not only does it show you the behind the scenes of the other side, but it also gives you a perspective on the importance of the quality of the wheat we produce. I enjoyed the two days of tours and presentations and would highly encourage growers to participate, given a chance. 🐉



Mike and Laurie Shrock learning to inspect wheat.

Follow the Wheat

Have you ever been curious about the journey Oregon wheat takes to reach its final destination? Use this easy-to-follow infographic to trace its path to its end destination, whether that be a local customer, or the other side of the world.

1 Cultivation

Wheat is grown on about one-third of Oregon's cropland and includes both winter and spring wheat. Winter wheat is planted in the fall, while spring wheat is planted in the spring and both are harvested in the summer. The exact planting and harvesting dates vary depending on many factors including weather, wheat variety and soil type.

2 Leaving the Farm

During harvest, wheat is loaded into grain trucks and transported either to grain bins located on the farm or to a local grain elevator. At the local elevator, it is often separated based on factors related to its quality and characteristics and stored in large bins or piles.

3 River, Rail and Road

Wheat is typically transported from Oregon's different growing regions' smaller distribution hubs, to larger distribution facilities. These facilities also have additional cleaning capacity. At this stage, the most common methods of transporting large quantities of wheat are river barges and rail cars.

4 Shipping

Approximately eighty five percent of Oregon wheat is exported internationally. The wheat is loaded onto ocean going vessels in large quantities. During the journey, the wheat is stored in a way to ensure it remains dry and free from contamination. Oregon wheat is carefully graded and each shipment is officially inspected.

5 End Destination

The popularity and quality of Oregon wheat has made it a sought-after commodity. Currently, much of it travels to countries in north and southeast Asia. Additional markets exist around the world and Oregon wheat also ends in locations to support international food aid and hunger relief.

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