

OCTOBER 2025

OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry



IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 The Future of Flour Milling
- 17 'Making the Cut' Wheat Harvest Wraps Up
- 19 U.S. Soft Wheats as Essential Ingredients



OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE
115 SE 8th St., Pendleton, OR 97801
Address Service Requested

OREGON WHEAT



Erin Heideman
President



Thad Eakin
Vice President



Kevin Corn
Secretary/Treasurer



Wade Bingaman
Immed. Past President

County Presidents

Dana Heideman, Gilliam County
Rodney Cheyne, Klamath County
Bryan Bachelder, Malheur County
Jake Lindsay, Morrow County
Josh Macnab, Sherman County
Ryan Rea, Umatilla County

Paul Reed, Union/Baker County
Kurt Melville, Wallowa County
Josh Duling, Wasco County
Thomas Bernards, North Willamette Valley
Mike Schrock, South Willamette Valley
Kyle Bender, Central Oregon

Staff

Amanda Hoey, Chief Executive Officer



Growers

Dana Tuckness, Ontario
Brent Martin, Lexington
Collin Crocker, Monroe

Public Member

David Prybylowski, Bend

Handlers

Rob Rye, Export Handler, Pacifcor, LLC, Portland
Jason Middleton, United Grain Corp., Pendleton

Staff

Amanda Hoey, Chief Executive Officer
Tana Simpson, Associate Administrator
Corey Shrader, Program and Office Coordinator



Tyler Hansell
Chair



David Brewer
Vice Chair

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** My Two Cents Worth
- 4** The Future of Flour Milling
- 5** USDA Announces Reorganization Plan
- 6** Survey Says?!
- 7** Growing in Spite of Adversity: Growers to Gather for Convention
- 8** OWC Chair Column
- 9** Farm Provisions in HR 1 and Farm Bill 2.0
- 10** Global Connections, Local Value: 2025 Trade Delegations in Review
- 13** Bangladesh Signs MOU to Purchase U.S. Wheat
- 13** Variety Trial Program Yields Results
- 14** An Updated Roadmap: Setting the Direction on Oregon Wheat
- 16** EPA Releases New Mobile Tool for Implementing Pesticide Mitigation Measures
- 16** Supplemental Disaster Relief Program Opened
- 17** 2025 Oregon Wheat Harvest Wrap Up
- 18** A Quality Investment
- 19** Positioning U.S. Soft Wheats as Essential Ingredients for Colombian Snack Maker
- 20** Selecting for Quality 2025: Routine, innovation, and history
- 22** U.S. Wheat Installs New Officers, Names Key Personnel
- 22** Tootie Smith Appointed as State Director, Oregon Farm Service Agency
- 22** League Member SAIF Discount Increases!

ON THE COVER: Photo by Amanda Spoo

SUBSCRIPTIONS

For address changes, extra copies, or subscriptions:

Oregon Wheat Growers League
541-276-7330 admin@owgl.org

SALES & ADVERTISING RATES

If you are interested in advertising for this publication, please contact our sales representative.

Leah Anderson - Ad Sales • NDP
406-475-1856 • landerson@ndpub.com

Oregon Wheat is published bimonthly by Oregon Wheat Growers League, 115 SE 8th Street, Pendleton, Oregon 97801. Oregon Wheat is sent to all Oregon wheat producers through funding provided by the Oregon Wheat Commission. **Receipt of Oregon Wheat magazine does not indicate membership in the Oregon Wheat Growers League.**

Every effort is made to ensure accuracy in articles published by Oregon Wheat; however, the publishers assume no responsibility for losses sustained, allegedly resulting from following recommendations in this magazine. Consult your local authorities.

The Oregon Wheat Growers League has not tested any of the products advertised in this publication, nor has it verified any of the statements made in any of the advertisements. The League does not warrant, expressly or implicitly, the fitness of any product advertised or the suitability of any advice or statements contained herein.



Erin Hansell Heideman

President

MY TWO CENTS WORTH



Hello, fellow wheat growers!

Well, here we are—celebrating Oregon wheat with the embossment ceremony for the bill recognizing 100 years of Oregon Wheat in 2026. I'll be honest, seeing our hard work recognized in such a public way has me feeling like a proud parent at graduation—if graduation involved a lot of dirt and heavy machinery. But seriously, this milestone is no small feat. It's a reminder of all the sweat, grit, and countless hours we've put into this industry. And it's a reminder that wheat is big business in Oregon—so much so that we now have an official day to celebrate it!

Behind the scenes, we had a lot of help getting here. Several folks in the state legislature rolled up their sleeves and invested the time to make sure our voices carried weight—and that wheat wasn't just loose change in the policy dryer. Their backing gave us the capital we need to grow—literally and figuratively. And being at the ceremony marking this special day felt like a real payday moment for me—worth every penny of effort it took to get here.

Let's talk about the real life of a wheat grower—the part where you question your life choices, wonder why you didn't become a banker, and look at your field and think, “This crop better sell for more than my kid's college tuition.” Farming isn't always sunshine and rainbows. In fact, it can feel like the opposite sometimes. It's often more like broken-down equipment, scorching heat, and the occasional mental breakdown. Just ask my neighbor and friend, Shelly Rietmann. Shelly, another multi-generational grower, recently sent me a note about the chaos during harvest. She summed it up perfectly: “farming is stupid.” I laughed so hard I cried, but also... it hit home. We've all been there. And in a true Shelly moment, she even joked about being the next inspirational speaker at the wheat meeting. If that doesn't sum up the farming life, I don't know what does. Jokes aside, her note is a reminder of the stress and burnout that many of us face.

But here's the thing: as funny as the note was, it was also a reminder of the tough times we're all facing. The constant feeling of having to reinvest in just about everything while facing market prices that don't match our inputs. And when things get tough, it's easy to wonder if it's all worth it. But I'll tell you this: if the amount of money I've spent on equipment fixes could be turned into a crop, I'd be the richest wheat grower

in Oregon. And you'd better believe the next time our tractor breaks down, I'll probably reinvest in a life coach just to get through it.

Sure, we have our “farming is stupid” moments—but at the end of the day, it's all about the return on investment. Every acre is a high-stakes gamble, but the payout keeps Oregon's economy rolling. Wheat isn't just some grass we plant; it's a multi-million-dollar industry that quite literally puts bread on the table. And that's my two cents—adjusted for inflation.

With all that in mind, I'm excited about our upcoming convention this November, where we'll come together, laugh at our collective pain, and probably spend more money than we should on new ideas. It's always a blast, but this year, I'm particularly excited because we'll be hearing from my dear friend Fred Ziari, the founder of Farmers Ending Hunger. Fred is a true inspiration. He's a 50th-generation farmer, YES! 50; as in 2000 years. I can't wait for him to share his story with you. Fred's work with hunger relief here in Oregon and on an international scale is incredible, and his deep understanding of farming—rooted in centuries of tradition—brings valuable insight to everything we do.

Farming is not all sunshine, and it's not all easy money, but in Oregon it's something we can all be proud of. We are the backbone of this state's agricultural economy, and even if it feels like we're barely keeping it together sometimes, we keep showing up.

And here's where I put my two cents in: There's no industry out there quite like ours. We're not just growers—we're innovators, community builders, and stewards of the land. And when times are tough, we make it through together.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the convention in November. Bring your best stories, your best laughs, and, of course, your best ideas on how to make farming more profitable (because who doesn't need a little more money to offset the latest breakdown?).

With gratitude (and humor),



The Future of Flour Milling

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

Once Oregon wheat growers deliver their grain to the elevator, their focus shifts to everything else on their post-harvest to-do list—what needs to be repaired, what needs to be done to prepare for planting the following year’s crop, and more. But for the grain they delivered, the journey from kernel to flour has just begun. Flour milling may feel far removed from what happens on the farm, yet the future of flour milling is closely connected to the future of U.S. wheat production. Everything from technology and consumer trends to business practices that impact flour mills is also shaping what millers expect from wheat growers, including the varieties they grow, how they market it, and how they discuss it with customers.

Earlier this year, Shawn Thiele, Associate Director and Flour Milling and Grain Processing Specialist at the IGP Institute at Kansas State University, shared his insights on the future of flour milling with customers at a marketing conference hosted by U.S. Wheat Associates. Thiele’s presentation focused on several key factors driving market changes and shaping the future of flour milling: shifting consumer trends, industry consolidation, advancing technology, artificial intelligence, global competition, and an innovative workforce.

Consumer-Driven Change

In a trend that has been developing over the past few decades, both here and abroad, consumers continue to be more conscious of what goes into their food and how it is produced. “We continue to see a demand for grain-based foods that check multiple boxes at once—nutritious, transparent, sustainably-sourced, and, of course, great tasting,” said Thiele. “The majority of consumers believe grain-based foods are an affordable way to eat nutritiously, and most say ingredients play a role in what foods they choose.”

According to a recent consumer survey conducted by Ardent Mills, while younger adults, in particular, are focusing on plant-based diets and seek label transparency, overall domestic consumers still prioritize taste. Over 90% say taste remains central to their eating choices, and two-thirds buy sweet baked goods at least a few times a month. These consumer preferences directly influence what millers look for. Mills are investing in equipment and processes that can deliver the functional, nutritional, and sensory qualities bakers need to meet customer demand. For Oregon wheat growers, this means placing greater emphasis on wheat quality characteristics.

Consolidation

Despite wheat’s vital role in our diets, domestic flour consumption per person remains near its lowest point in 40

years at about 129 pounds annually. However, globally, wheat consumption is still rising, with recent USDA projections estimating global consumption at approximately 809.5 million metric tons for the marketing year 2025-26. Even so, the flour milling industry has been consolidating, as the number of mills has decreased while their capacity has increased.

According to Thiele, larger mills are investing heavily in food safety, efficiency, and precision. The industry’s ten-year average capacity utilization is nearly 86%, meaning mills are operating close to full capacity. With fewer buyers controlling more volume, growers face a landscape where consistency and quality are increasingly important.

“Consistency is key,” said Thiele. “Even small improvements in uniformity can deliver big cost savings for mills, including fewer adjustments, higher extraction rates, less waste, improved flour quality and, ultimately, happier customers.”

Technology and AI

As mills invest in efficiency and precision, Thiele notes that we continue to see advancements in technology changing the landscape. “Walking into a modern flour mill is a far cry from the facilities of just a generation or two ago. Fully automated equipment, touch-screen controls, and optical sorters have become the norm,” said Thiele. “Companies are retrofitting old roller stands and milling equipment with digital controls and sensors or replacing them with new state-of-the-art equipment featuring food-safe designs with easy cleaning and maintenance. Food and employee safety continues to be a top priority for flour mills, and work continues to find an affordable and efficient method for safe, ready-to-eat flour without compromising product quality or labeling.”

Overhead dust control systems utilize high-velocity air to prevent combustible buildup in overhead spaces. Handheld scanners now deliver lab-grade results on flour quality at the push of a button, with data immediately uploaded to cloud platforms. These innovations may sound like minor details, but they ultimately help reduce downtime, increase extractions, and foster greater trust in the final product.

Beyond other emerging technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have the ability to transform how mills operate. Unlike traditional automation, which follows pre-programmed rules, ML systems learn from data patterns and recognize variances that humans would miss. Sensors on mill equipment provide real-time data on temperature, vibration, energy consumption, and many other variables that can be measured. ML can analyze this historical data to predict failures before they

occur, suggest adjustments for better performance, and spot inefficiencies that might otherwise go unnoticed. Integrating this technology can add another layer of AI to translate all that data into actionable insights for operators, maintenance teams, and plant managers, simply by asking.

Still, Thiele emphasizes that AI is not a replacement for human expertise. “Ultimately, AI doesn’t think like we do. It amplifies existing systems based on knowledge patterns to create and predict the most logical response,” he says. “If you have strong data, clean operations, and skilled people, AI can unlock major value. But it doesn’t solve chaos—it amplifies it.”

Looking Ahead—Here and Abroad

While the majority of Oregon wheat is exported each year, the U.S. wheat industry is still significantly impacted by how U.S. mills compete with overseas mills. As new large-scale mills are built overseas, often with government support, the global race for international markets grows. However, U.S. mills continue to compete and differentiate themselves through their standards for food safety, technology adoption, and integrated supply chains. Staying competitive, however, relies on the entire U.S. wheat supply chain, including growers, working together. “Oregon wheat remains a key ingredient for export customers,” said Thiele. “But a highly competitive milling landscape means that growers should expect more questions about sustainability, quality consistency, and traceability in the years ahead.”

Another challenge, however, is the ability to recruit and retain employees with the necessary training and expertise. Institutions like the IGP Institute at Kansas State University, where Thiele works, play a vital role by offering short courses that range from basic milling to executive-level training. According to Thiele, the next five to ten years in flour milling will be shaped by consumer-driven innovation and advancements in technology and digitalization. However, at the end of the day, training a skilled and reliable workforce remains as important as ever. And, even as U.S. mills face



Care for what matters most with
Sinclair premium products.

Sinclair

LUBRICANTS DEF GREASE ANTIFREEZE


Sinclair quality lubricants sold locally by:

Hattenhauer Energy Co. LLC
201 W. 1st Street
The Dalles, OR 97058
541.296.3515

Shortstop Xtreme
1709 Gekeler Lane
LaGrande, OR 97850
541.910.7134

Lawrence Oil
845 N. Columbia River Hwy
Saint Helens, OR 97051
503.397.0076


global competition, their ability to produce safe, consistent, and innovative flour products continues to be a key competitive edge.

For Oregon wheat growers, staying informed about these changes is critical. Understanding what mills need helps growers make better planting decisions and position their wheat as a valuable ingredient in a rapidly changing food system. 

USDA Announces Reorganization Plan

On July 24, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced a major reorganization of the USDA. The plan involves relocating more than half of its employees from Washington, D.C., to regional hubs in Raleigh, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Fort Collins, and Salt Lake City, reducing staff in D.C. to around 2,000. According to the USDA, voluntary retirements and deferred resignations have already caused over 15,000 employees to leave. Under the plan, USDA would also eliminate the Agricultural Research Service area offices, aiming to transfer remaining responsibilities to the central

Office of National Programs. These changes will affect both USDA and university-led wheat research programs.

The Oregon Wheat Growers League submitted comments on the USDA reorganization plan, emphasizing the importance of maintaining accessibility and responsiveness of core agencies serving our farmers, preserving an expert-level presence nationwide for resolving issues from the state level, and continuing programs essential for effectively facilitating trade. The comments also delivered a request for addressing wheat research needs. 

Survey Says?!

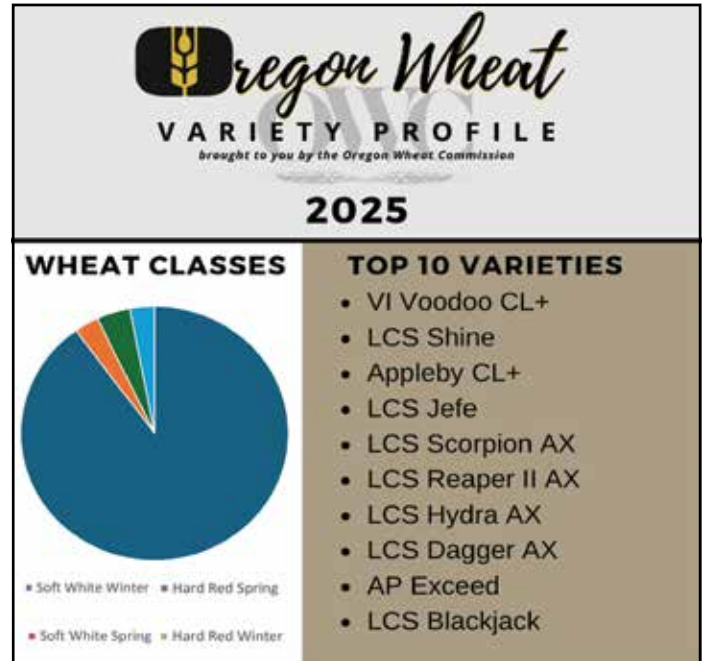
Tana Simpson, Associate Administrator

Over a decade ago, seed dealers began providing assistance to the Oregon Wheat Commission to compile an annual survey of wheat and barley variety preferences and planted acres. The survey with seed dealers was initiated after a grower survey conducted by the National Agricultural Statistic Service became cost prohibitive. Since then, we have seen increases in the number of new varieties released and the development of new technologies. One thing that has not changed, though, is the cooperation of our local seed dealers. They continue to submit data which the Commission compiles to provide breeders and industry decision makers with information on the traits preferred by Oregon growers.


In some years we see big changes in variety preferences and other years we see only minor changes; this year is the latter. Soft white winter remains the dominant class of wheat, at 91% of the total acreage in this year's survey. For the remaining acres planted in Oregon, 4% was to soft white spring, 3% to hard red winter and 2% hard red spring.

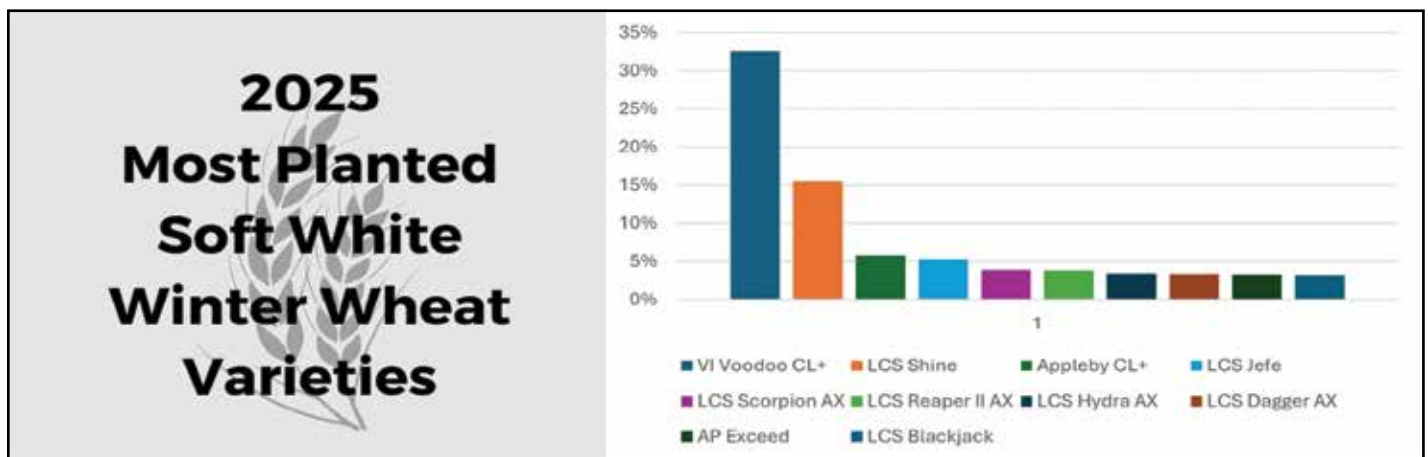
For soft white winter wheat, VI Voodoo CL+, a two gene Clearfield variety, continued to take the largest share of acres, with 33% of the total acreage. It has displaced UI Magic CL+, with this year being the first for that variety dropping out of the top ten due to improvements in disease resistance from other CL+ options. The second most popular soft white winter variety, with 15% of the acres, was LCS Shine which has performance spanning a range of environmental conditions and rainfall zones. Appleby CL+ was third, with 6% of the total acreage, and LCS Jefe was fourth, with 5% of the total acreage. These top four varieties are all ranked desirable or most desirable in the Preferred Variety quality ratings.

We also saw continued growth in the total acreage of CoAXium varieties in soft white winter, hard red winter




and hard red spring, with total acreage increasing by an approximated 10,000 acres. In the soft white spring class Ryan continued to dominate with 65% of the acres, with Tekoa (10%) and UI Stone (8%) a distant second and third. Hard red winter was led by Eclipse AX (46%), Brawl CL+ (26%) and LCS Jet (23%) and hard red spring was AP Venom (21%), Hale (15%) and WB 9668 (15%). Barley acres increased overall this year, led by Lenetah (21%), Hayes (19%) and Hoody (11%).

Find more on the survey and preferred variety characteristics on the Commission's website. We appreciate the partnership of seed dealers to support the survey. 



Growing in Spite of Adversity: Growers to Gather for Convention

The Oregon Wheat Growers League is pleased to sponsor the 2026 Idaho-Oregon Grain and Oilseed Convention. Taking place in Sun Valley, Idaho, events hosted by the Idaho Wheat Producers Association center on the theme of “Growing in Spite of Adversity.” In addition to a vibrant keynote speaker, the convention will include breakout sessions on succession

planning, leadership development and market development. We encourage you to join for the networking and education throughout the full event, as well as activities for Oregon day with the annual League meeting on Tuesday, November 18 and the Oregon gala the following evening. Learn more at www.owgl.org/convention/ 

OREGON DAY 2025 SPEAKERS



National Association of Wheat Growers

NAWG leadership will be present to provide an update on the status of federal policy issues.

Tyllor Ledford

Market Analyst with U.S. Wheat Associates. Providing global and domestic market analysis, including unique information on U.S. wheat export pricing.

Nicole Mann

Senior Legislative Advocate with Dalton Advocacy. Nicole will be joined by Oregon Wheat legislative champions for policy updates and insights.

Elizabeth Burns-Thompson

Executive Director of the Modern Ag Alliance, an advocate for U.S. farmers' continued access to essential crop protection tools.

Oregon Wheat Growers League day events are scheduled for Tuesday, November 18 in Sun Valley, ID, with a virtual connection option for League members.

IDAHO-OREGON GRAIN & OILSEED CONVENTION FEATURED 2025 SPEAKERS



Matt Roberts

Keynote Speaker: Surviving & Thriving in an Ever More Volatile World

Sally Anderson Hansell

Breakout session: Succession Planning in Oregon.

Kevin Duling

Breakout session speaker: Wheat Markets.

Fred Ziari

Oregon Gala Speaker: Founder of IRZ Consulting.

November 18-20 in Sun Valley, ID. Find the full agenda and details at <https://tmnevents.swoogo.com/igoc2025>



A Season of Oregon Wheat Connections

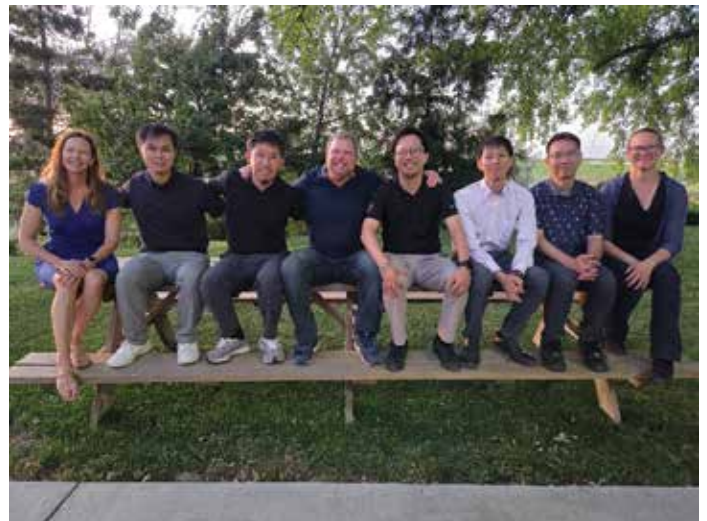
Tyler Hansell

OWC Chair

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

I hope everyone reading this had a great summer and a great harvest. Many of my summer highlights involve the Oregon Wheat Commission and Oregon Wheat Growers League. The OSU Extension Stations' field days were in June, sandwiched between the end of school, graduation parties, and state track meets. Field days are great for seeing other farmers and friends that I don't see very often, and for sharing information. The League ice cream social and CBARC lunch is always a highlight! We have great researchers in the wheat world, and I hope field days are as exciting for them as it is for us farmers.

This summer had some major changes at the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Vince Peterson, USW CEO, retired after 40 years with USW and eight years as CEO. Vince is a wonderful and thoughtful person. He will be sorely missed by me and many others in our organization. Vince's retirement ushered in the fifth new CEO, Mike Spier, who was promoted from Vice President of Overseas Operations. Mike officially took over July 1st, and he attended his first USW meeting as CEO in July in Boise, Idaho. I am excited to have Mike at the helm, steering the USW ship into the future.



Nisshin representatives enjoy a farm visit in Hermiston.

July was all about harvest. While we work all year stressing about our crop in the field and the decisions we made over the last 24 months, when day one rolls around, our crew is pumped: the combines are repaired, fueled and greased; bank-out is hooked up and set; and trucks are hooked up, licensed and patches are fixed. This year, our crew was hard at work most days of July, with our major workforce being six of our kids with an average age of 14. Yes, we had a lot of "learning lessons," but they were worth building our next generation of farmers and developing hard-working people.

August saw the end of harvest, then county fairs, rodeos, trade teams, and my favorite: back to school. There were several trade teams visiting our area this year, and the Southeast Asia trade team got a special treat: they went to Saturday night Farm City Pro Rodeo! They also were treated to dinner among rodeo fans, a guided tour of the grounds, an up-close view of world-class livestock, and a history lesson about rodeo. They loved the rodeo: they hooted and hollered, and cheered and laughed with the other 8,000 rodeo fans. I'm sure this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I would like to recognize Mike Kay, Dennis Barnett, Tori Phillippi, and the FCPR directors for their hospitality and generosity.




SE Asia Trade Team takes in a real slice of rural America at the Farm City Pro Rodeo.

The following week, there wasn't a rodeo to attend in Hermiston, so the group visiting from Nisshin Flour Milling Inc. (a Japan company with nine milling plants in Japan and several around the world) had a far more sedate visit to my house. Every year, Nisshin sends a few representatives to the Pacific Northwest to review wheat quality, and to see production and transportation of our wheat through its arrival in Japan. They include stops with elevator operators throughout Oregon, Washington and Idaho. As they made their way to Portland, they included an evening dinner with my family at the farm.

USW does a great job of showcasing our wheat and our growers through the travels of these trade teams, the support for technical teams in Portland, and company-supported visits like Nisshin. Each team with whom I have interacted has

expressed their appreciation with our growers' knowledge, kindness, and readiness to answer questions about how we grow wheat in the PNW.

In 2026, USW will celebrate 70 years of its trade relationship with Japan. That relationship started in 1956, when Oregon Wheat helped open an office in Tokyo. Its express purpose was to expand U.S. wheat sales to Japan. The success of this office and its purpose led to the establishment of the Western Wheat Associates, which then joined with the Great Plains Wheat. That new organization formed what is now USW. USW has carried on the tradition of continuing and building new relationships with our overseas partners. These relationships help all wheat growers from every part of the United State. We have a great foundation to work from, and I am proud to be part of this. 


Farm Provisions in HR 1 and Farm Bill 2.0

President Trump signed HR1, the reconciliation bill, into law on July 4. The bill passed through the House on a party-line vote and in the Senate with a 51-50 vote, with Vice President Vance casting the tie-breaking vote. The final bill includes changes to tax provisions, the Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program, Medicaid, and the farm safety net, among others.

Specific to agriculture, the bill included a broad reauthorization of the farm bill's nondiscretionary spending provisions, updating and funding many core agriculture titles through 2031. The National Association of Wheat Growers highlighted several additional ag provisions:

- Continues PLC and ARC payments and increases reference prices and commodity loan rates. There is no requirement to select between ARC/PLC for 2025. After 2025, farmers will again need to select between ARC and PLC before the planting season.
- Increases the statutory reference price, setting it for wheat at \$6.35 per bushel beginning with the 2025 crop year. Increases the effective reference price escalator formula from 85% to 88% of the five-year Olympic moving average marketing year average price. Implements an annual adjustment mechanism beginning with the 2031 crop year, increasing reference prices by 0.5% annually (multiplier of 1.005). Caps total increases at 113% of the base reference price to provide stability while allowing for moderate growth
- Enhances supplemental disaster assistance programs.

- Increases crop insurance premium subsidies, the top coverage level, and the premium subsidy for the area-based supplemental coverage option. Increases premium support for individual-based crop insurance policies across all coverage levels by 3-5%. Raises Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) insurance plan coverage level to 90%, with premium support increased to 80%. Extends the definition of beginning farmer and rancher from 5 to 10 years, providing five additional years of premium support benefits. Allows producers to simultaneously enroll in both SCO crop insurance and the ARC program, expanding risk management options.
- Renews or makes permanent many income tax provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, including the 20% Section 199A deduction for pass-through business income and the estate tax exemption increase to \$15 million per individual, or \$30 million per couple, and indexed to inflation. Reinstates the 100% bonus depreciation through 2030 and permanently increases the Section 179 deduction to \$2,500,000 and indexed for inflation.
- Increases agricultural export trade promotion programs.

While HR1 incorporated a number of provisions that would have been negotiated for an updated Farm Bill, additional work remains. House Ag Committee Chair "GT" Thompson has stated that he wants to take action on a Skinny Farm Bill / "Farm Bill 2.0 this fall. 

Global Connections, Local Value: 2025 Trade Delegations in Review

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

Every year, the Oregon Wheat Commission collaborates with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) to host U.S. wheat customers from overseas to assess the current crop and learn more about the U.S. wheat supply chain. These trade delegations and technical teams are essential strategies for export market development, offering transparency, technical assurance, and opportunities for customers to connect with wheat growers, breeders, and other supply chain professionals.

From farm tours to grain elevator visits and meetings with wheat breeders and the grain trade, team itineraries are packed with information about the current wheat crop, the long-term investments made by Pacific Northwest wheat states toward quality, and how USW can help customers get more value from U.S.-grown wheat. For Oregon wheat growers, the trade team season provides a chance to put a face to the product and strengthen relationships with customers, some of which have been established for years.

Engaging Top Markets

This year, the Commission helped host eight trade delegations from April to October, welcoming customers from Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, which are consistently the top three markets for Oregon wheat, as well as customers from Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Typically, these teams include delegates with different responsibilities and levels of experience, such as executives and mid-level managers in quality assurance, production, and procurement.

A visit from the Japan Flour Millers Association (JFMA), which included executives from five flour milling companies, provided Oregon Wheat Commissioner David Brewer an



Ryan Rea shows delegates of the Philippine Trade Team how a combine works.



HT Rea Farms hosted a Philippine Trade Team during harvest.



A team of mid-level managers from the Japan Flour Millers Association visited the Commission office in Portland.

opportunity to reconnect with customers he met last year on the USW Crop Quality Tour in North Asia. Another team of mid-level managers from JFMA also visited this year. JFMA is the largest flour millers’ association in Japan, comprised of the country’s top 21 flour milling companies. The annual demand for food milling wheat in Japan is approximately 6 million metric tons (MMT), with 5 MMT imported from the United States, Canada, and Australia. “The opportunity to meet with some of these customers again to reinforce those key relationships is invaluable,” said Brewer.

In addition to strengthening ties in established markets, building connections in growth markets remains a key objective. This year, the Commission welcomed multiple teams from Southeast Asia, including both new and established customers. According to USW, Southeast Asia has become a key export region for U.S. wheat, accounting




Thad Eakin hosted a delegation of customers from Korea during harvest.



The Nisshin Crop Survey team visited Commissioner Jason Middleton at United Grain.


for nearly a quarter of all sales. Southeast Asia presents an opportunity for further export market growth,” said Oregon Wheat CEO Amanda Hoey. “Our interaction with delegations from this region provided our growers with an opportunity to build trust with those customers and discuss how high-quality soft white wheat from Oregon benefits their milling industries and helps meet consumer demands.”

Some trade delegations are designated as crop survey teams because they visit specifically to assess the current year’s crop firsthand, helping to inform their upcoming buying decisions. One such team from South Korea included purchasing managers from six of the nine major Korean flour millers that import Oregon wheat. South Korea is a key and growing market for Oregon wheat, with millers expressing a preference for the characteristics of soft white wheat for cookies, biscuits, cakes, and instant noodles. For these teams, the Commission includes discussions with representatives from Oregon State University about Oregon Wheat’s



FREIGHT HAULING
STORAGE TANKS
FUEL

Convenient locations to serve you:



We Feature
Chevron Lubricants

Baker City, OR
2885 13th Street
541-523-4779

Redmond, OR
213 E. Antler Ave
541-548-1035

LaGrande, OR
804 21st Street
541-963-4932

Walla Walla, WA
1205 N. 11th
509-527-3400
1-800-572-8900

Pendleton, OR
513 S.W. 6th
541-276-3361

www.byrnesoil.com



A Southeast Asia delegation with customers from Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam stopped by the Northwest Grain Growers seed plant.

investments in new varieties that include end-use quality characteristics required by markets.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Additional crop survey teams are coordinated directly through individual companies, such as the visit with Nisshin, Japan’s largest flour milling company. They annually perform a detailed analysis of the crop, which includes visits to elevator operators across the Pacific Northwest to collect samples and complete questionnaires about production practices, crop progress, and the current year’s crop quality expectations.

Technical Courses

In addition to traditional trade delegations and crop survey teams, the Commission also helps welcome USW-sponsored teams that travel to the Wheat Marketing Center for technical training and testing. In 2025, the Commission is scheduled to engage with seven of these technical teams from April to December, welcoming customers from Mexico, Colombia, Korea, China, and Taiwan.

The team from Colombia visited the Wheat Marketing Center to assess options for using soft white or a blend as a replacement for non-U.S. origin wheat. Meanwhile, a team from Korea spent a week assessing different options for using U.S. wheat classes in their products, including low-protein soft white, a blend with Western White, and whole wheat applications. Outside the lab, the Commission often takes these teams on farm tours to give delegates a better understanding of the scale of Oregon wheat production, the status of the current year’s crop progress, and the investments the Commission has made in university research programs for new varieties and enhanced quality. “These teams give us valuable insight into what quality characteristics our customers want and value the most,” said Hoey. “This information helps shape our export market development strategy and is also vital information to pass along to our wheat breeders and researchers, especially as we develop our preferred variety list each year.”



Participants from the China Contracting for Wheat Value Workshop did an elevator tour in The Dalles with Northwest Grain Growers.




The Korea Bakery Products team spent a week at the Wheat Marketing Center for testing and analysis.

One staple course that the Commission supports every year is the Contracting for Wheat Value (CFWV) workshop. This particular USW program highlights the strengths, value, and reliability of the U.S. wheat supply chain and is designed to help customers better understand supply chain management challenges and opportunities so they can write tenders for U.S. wheat that will yield the greatest return on their investment. This year, the Commission helped support two CFWV workshops for customers from China and Korea. Visits for these teams include meetings with partners along the Columbia River to understand the efficiency of the entire transportation system and how investments in river facilities benefit customers.


A Team Effort

Hosting these trade delegations and engaging with customers really requires a team effort. “A majority of these delegations visit during Oregon’s harvest season, which is a great opportunity for customers to witness harvest in action, but it also means we are asking a lot from our growers and partners,” said Hoey.

A typical trade delegation itinerary focuses on opportunities to deepen the delegates’ understanding of the U.S. wheat supply chain. Farm tours are often the highlight, where customers can physically get in the field. Their visit also includes formal updates from the Commission on the crop’s progress, as well as meetings with industry partners, including local elevator operators. Showcasing stops along the supply chain aims to highlight the unique reliability of the U.S. wheat industry.

The Commission appreciates every grower and partner who dedicates time each year to supporting these market development activities vital to Oregon wheat’s competitiveness. Thank you to all members and guests who took the time to welcome our customers. A special thanks to our grower and partner hosts for opening their homes and facilities. 

Bangladesh Signs MOU to Purchase U.S. Wheat

Under a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding with U.S. Wheat Associates, the Government of Bangladesh has committed to purchasing 700,000 metric tons (25.7 million bushels) of U.S. wheat annually for the next five years. At the end of August, the first ship was loaded since the two countries reached the agreement. Carrying 55,000 metric tons of U.S. wheat to Bangladesh, it is one of additional shipments of hard red winter and soft white wheat that are scheduled soon. U.S. Wheat Associates said the agreement strengthens food security ties and could stabilize demand from a market that has historically been unpredictable. 

Variety Trial Program Yields Results

The Oregon State University Cereal Extension program has released 2025 variety trial data. With variations across sites, Dr. Ryan Graebner noted that “Overall, 2025 continued to be an inconsistent year in terms of variety performance, with many of our key varieties performing well in some locations but poorly in others.” When accessing the data, growers can see both the current year information, as well as averages and a ‘best estimate’ yield. The use of Best Linear Unbiased Estimators provides more powerful predictions of variety performance in Oregon’s key growing regions. Data is compiled and analyzed throughout the harvest season. Information is available on the program’s site at <https://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/wheat/variety-trials/2025>.

Time to Plan for Next Season





Equipment Loans • Farmland Loans
Operating Lines of Credit

<p>BOARDMAN Shane Lazinka</p> <p>BURNS Laura Georges</p> <p>CONDON Amber Schlaich</p> <p>ENTERPRISE Bob Williams</p> <p>HEPPNER Amber Schlaich</p>	<p>HERMISTON Jared Lathrop Kolby Currin</p> <p>IONE Shane Lazinka</p> <p>JOHN DAY Bob Quinton</p> <p>LA GRANDE David Stirewalt Kristy Nelson</p>	<p>MADRAS Jon McPhee</p> <p>MORO Shane Lazinka</p> <p>ONTARIO Jed Myers Stacie Talbot</p> <p>PENDLETON Mike Short Sheehan Barnhart Tracy Hamby</p>
---	--	--



Bank of Eastern Oregon
Member FDIC

An Independent Community Bankers Assoc. **TOP-PERFORMING AGRICULTURAL LENDER OF 2024** \$300M-\$1B in assets

For the upcoming year, the Commission approved a revision in two trial locations. Variety trials are anticipated to cover the range of Oregon wheat producing areas with sites in Athena, Confon, Dufur, Helix, Hermiston, Kent, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Lexington, Milton-Freewater, Moro, Ione, North Willamette Valley, Ontario, Pendleton, South Willamette Valley and Tulelake CA (collaborative). 

DOWNLOAD THE "OSU CEREALS" APP

for results from the Oregon State University Wheat and Barley Variety Trials, including data from regional and disease summaries.





iPhone Users



Android Users

An Updated Roadmap: Setting the Direction on Oregon Wheat

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO



My internal compass has its own unique directional sense. When my husband asks me if we should go ‘right or left,’ inevitably I will choose the opposite direction of what the map indicates would be the most efficient route to a destination. In which case, I remind him that it is not just about the destination, but the journey, and that a choice for a longer route just means more quality time together. Good thing he has a sense of humor and adventure.




In the case of Oregon Wheat, as we set our destination through an updated strategic plan, we have an excellent guiding framework given a history of more than 100 years of leadership to the organizations. As the current League and Commission members reviewed that history in our last joint session, marking a handful of significant milestones over the last century, several members remarked on the investments that have been made over the course of time. These investments-of time and funds- have allowed the Commission and League to be at the front of addressing major issues facing wheat growers and the industry.

Lessons Learned

Beginning the revised strategic planning process involved the reaffirmation on our mission and core purposes, but also a reflection on the ladder to success. The ladder rungs that ensure we are stronger together included:

- Alignment between the Commission and League through shared management and joint board planning. Engaging constructively and with one voice allows us to get more done with a small budget.
- Collaboration with other entities is critical, as is rapid responsiveness. Partnering allows us to go further, faster.
- Advocacy is based on a bipartisan approach and cultivating a respected team to have influence ‘across the aisle.’ It recognizes that an active grower base is more powerful in advocacy and an understanding that a coalition can better drive policy.
- Education, research, and political action together make a lasting impact.
- The strength of research and the cereal grain breeding program has improved our varieties to make us more profitable.

Oregon Wheat Brief History

<p>1900-30</p> <p>1909: Sherman Station established 1926: Oregon Wheat Growers League formed 1928: Pendleton Station established 1933: Ag Adjustment Act 1933: Construction begins on first Col River Dam 1933: Commodity Credit Corporation Est. 1938: PNW Wheat Quality Council formed</p> 	<p>1986-99</p> <p>1986: Kronstad Endowment created 1989: Wheat Marketing Center created 1989: Renovated Albers Mill opened 1991: Assessment rate increases to 3 cents/bu 1996: Freedom to Farm Act</p> 
<p>1940-50</p> <p>1947: Oregon Wheat Commission formed 1951: NAWG established 1954: PL 480 passes 1956: Soil Bank Act of 1956 1958: Oregon Wheat establishes office in Tokyo 1959: Western Wheat Associates formed</p> 	<p>2000-15</p> <p>2008: Oregon Wheat PAC Formed 2008: Assessment rate increases to 5 cents/bu 2011: Grains and Wheat Commissions merge 2013: GM wheat discovered in OR field 2014: Current royalty agreement split signed 2016: Foundation purchases land for research</p> 
<p>1960-70</p> <p>1972: Wheat Foods Council formed 1973: Food Stamps (SNAP) added to Farm Bill 1975: Assessment rate increase to 1 cent/bu</p> 	<p>2016-20</p> <p>2018: Current Farm Bill passed 2019: North Dakota leaves NAWG 2020: RDFA funds secured for research stations</p> 
<p>1980-85</p> <p>1980: Oregon Wheat Foundation incorporated 1980: US Wheat Associates created by merger of WWA and Great Plains 1980: US Grain embargo enacted 1981: Assessment rate increases to 2 cent/bu</p> 	<p>2021-26</p> <p>2021/2: OSU Cereal Quality Lab Renovation 2022: Pendleton Mill Fire 2024: Cereal Pathology Endowment created 2025: Cereal Quality Endowment created 2026: 100 Years Oregon Wheat!</p> 

- Durable funding mechanisms are required to protect long-term investments.
- Personal relationships and trust with overseas customers takes focused attention and resource to build and sustain.

Finally, they noted that while it is simpler to concentrate where progress and impact is easier, we cannot lose sight of important issues even if they seem intractable. Ultimately, they sought to stay the course and invest in the future of the industry but be open to shifting positions as the situation warrants, giving some flexibility in our three focus areas.

Markets

The top priority area reflected within our strategic direction is in market development, recognizing that additional demand will stabilize and increase prices for producers. Robust growth in international markets requires a strong presence and dedicated engagement but offers an opportunity to expand the reach of Oregon wheat sales. Domestic markets are also needed to provide stability and increased revenue options.

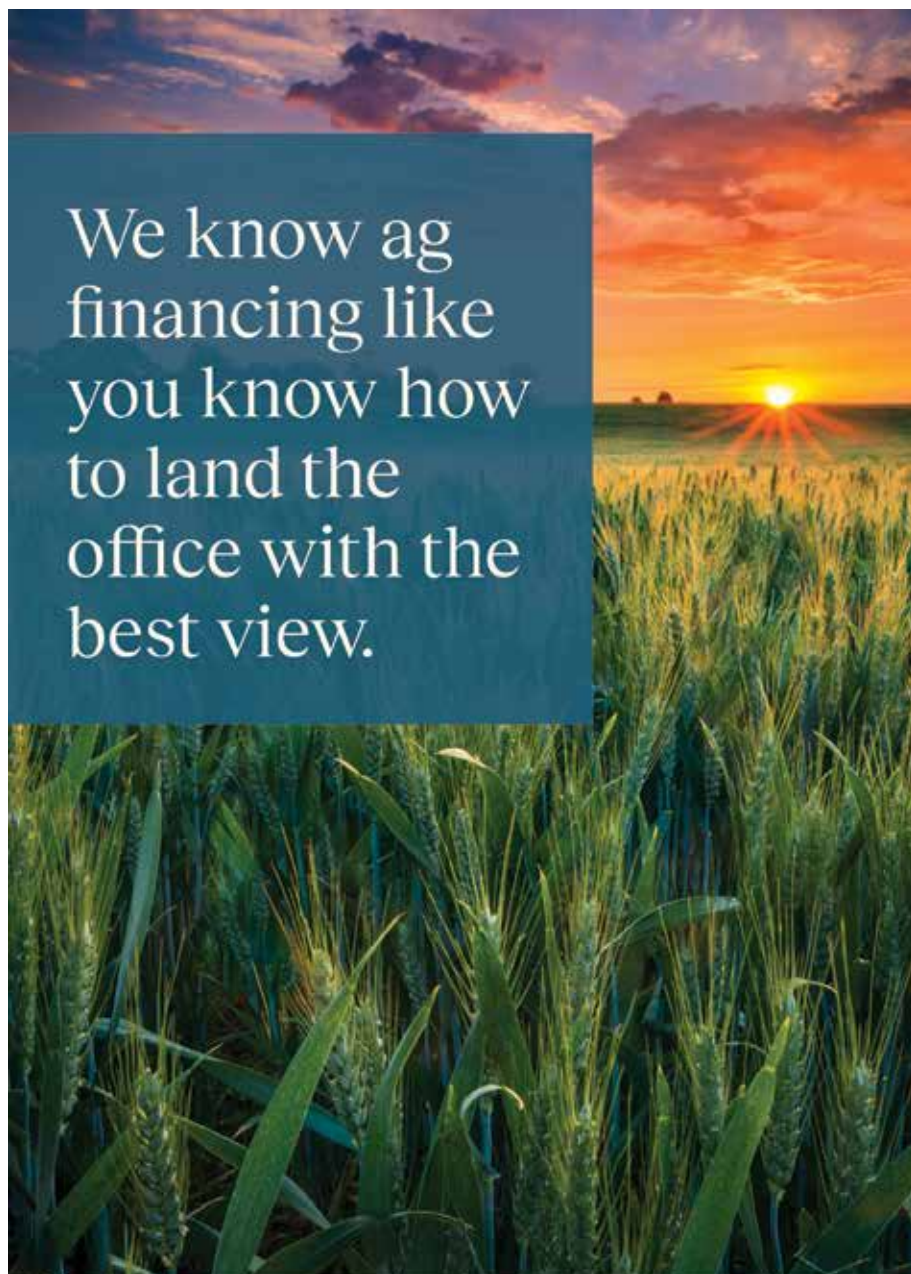
Discussion focused attention into four areas. 1) Maintain established markets, even through volatility; 2) Explore and reach new international markets; 3) Expand options in alternative products; and 4) Develop new domestic markets and demand.

Research

The second priority area is conducting relevant, innovative and cutting-edge research that can be effectively used by wheat producers throughout the state to help improve production practices, sustainability, yield and bottom lines.

Focused attention is provided to: 1) Aligning research with grower interest, needs and priorities; 2) Coordinating research for maximum return; and 3) Investing in research that improves yield, quality and productions practices.


CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



We know ag financing like you know how to land the office with the best view.

For over a century we've served customers who can do just about anything. You deserve a financial partner who works as hard as you do.

AgWestFC.com

 Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

AgWest 
FARM CREDIT


CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Growers

Finally, grower services is the last priority area. A comprehensive, clear, and focused proactive policy strategy is necessary to impact regulations and policies that are important to Oregon wheat producers.


Work within this goal area involves four focused initiatives: 1) Effectively and proactively advocating for Oregon wheat; 2) Engaging and building opportunities for the next generation of wheat producers; 3) Ensuring engaged and involved wheat producers; and 4) Effective and relevant communications.

Our strategic plan development continues with refinement of tactics (what we will do) and the outline of the metrics, before adoption and execution. While expecting a few speedbumps and detours, we will have a roadmap worthy of a long-term successful venture.

Are we headed right or left? We are headed on a pathway to ensure we remain viable over the long run. I am glad I have a car full of Board members and Commissioners providing thoughtful consideration of where we can make the most impact over the next few years. 

EPA Releases New Mobile Tool for Implementing Pesticide Mitigation Measures

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released a new online calculator: the Pesticide App for Label Mitigations, or PALM. The intent of PALM is to aid in calculating required run-off and erosion mitigation points or ecological spray drift buffers reductions listed on pesticide labels for endangered species protections. The tool also provides a useful summary to show what field characteristics


or application parameters are applicable to individual applications. The calculator is the next in a series of tools that EPA has developed, which also include a print-and-fill mitigation menu and a downloadable Excel spreadsheet. Find the tool at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pesticide-app-label-mitigations> 

Supplemental Disaster Relief Program Opened

The American Relief Act of 2025, signed into law on December 21, 2024, provided the USDA with over \$30 billion to deliver disaster recovery assistance to farmers and livestock producers. To deliver those resources to producers, in July the USDA announced the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP), which allows producers who experienced eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 to apply for financial relief. The program is divided into two stages, with the first stage open to producers with eligible crop losses that received assistance under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program during 2023 and 2024.

USDA has been accepting applications at local FSA offices for Stage 1 qualified losses. The agency said that pre-filled

applications are being mailed directly to eligible producers. The League encourages producers to work with their local FSA office on applications and eligibility considerations. In Stage 1, qualified losses must be due to wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freezes, smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions occurring in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024.

Enrollment for Stage 2, which is focused on eligible shallow or uncovered losses, is targeted to begin in the fall. USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov and more information is available through your local USDA Service Center. 



Kurt Melville, Wallowa County



Kyle & Melissa Weimar, Wasco County



Brent Martin, Morrow County



Kyle Bender, Central Oregon



Kevin Corn, Malheur County

2025 Oregon Wheat Harvest

As we wrap up harvest, Oregon takes a look back at a busy season. In the August report, USDA NASS estimated Oregon's 2025 winter wheat production at 54.76 million bushels. Wheat quality is well reflected across our wheat classes, with solid test weights, low dockage, consistent protein levels to the five-year average, and low moisture content. We appreciate all those who submitted photos throughout harvest as they are used in the monthly crop reports to customers.



Josh Duling, Wasco County



Nathan Rea, Umatilla County



Jessie Fields, Sherman County



Karen Kirsch, Marion County



Wade Bingaman, Union County

A Quality Investment

Amanda Spoo, ajae communications

When it comes to maintaining and growing Oregon’s export wheat markets, quality matters, and our customers have high expectations for receiving accurate and objective quality assessments. Fortunately, the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) has positioned itself as the technical crossroads of the wheat industry, connecting wheat growers, millers, end product manufacturers, and consumers. The Oregon Wheat Commission invests funds into the WMC’s mission, supporting its focus on promoting U.S. wheat by demonstrating its quality and functionality in end products.

Earlier this year, the WMC identified a need to replace an essential piece of equipment regularly used in its lab and asked state wheat commissions to help cover the \$50,000 cost. The Oregon Wheat Commission supported this request and contributed \$6,250 toward the purchase of a new Calibre C-Cell Digital Imaging System.

Safeguarding Continuity

The Calibre C-Cell is an advanced digital imaging system that captures high-resolution color images of baked products, including bread, sponge cakes, and biscuits. The system generates objective, quantifiable data on crumb and crust characteristics and measures a wide range of other critical parameters, including dimensions, shape, cell number, cell size, cell elongation, wall thickness, uniformity, and more. This technology replaces subjective human assessment with consistent data-driven quality evaluation. It has become a vital tool—especially for export-grade wheat, where buyers require objective evidence of performance in end products.

As part of its services, the WMC relies on reliable, high-precision testing and equipment to support its research, product development, technical training, and customer inquiries. Unfortunately, their previous C-Cell unit was aging and risked failure, which could disrupt essential test services. By proactively replacing the equipment, the WMC can continue its work without interruption. This investment reinforces the reliability of the U.S. wheat supply chain and supports consistent access to export markets by strengthening buyer confidence.”


“The Calibre C-Cell is an important tool that ensures the technical integrity of our data and reporting,” said Mike Moran, Wheat Marketing Center Executive Director. “By being proactive in replacing the equipment, we’ve ensured that Oregon wheat continues to be evaluated with the most precise, objective data available.” For example, Moran shares that his team recently identified flour blends offering improved crumb openness in ciabatta bread, using the reliable objectivity of



the C-Cell. The data showed important differences among the flour blends that would have been challenging to quantify accurately with human assessors.

Making an Investment

The Oregon Wheat Commission’s mission is to improve the profitability of Oregon wheat growers. While growers do their part on the farm, the Commission depends on other partners along the wheat supply chain, such as the WMC, to help support its mission. “Building trust and long-term relationships with our customers is a cornerstone of our export market development strategy,” said Oregon Wheat CEO Amanda Hoey. “Supporting the WMC in replacing and purchasing this essential equipment highlights the Commission’s own mission and underscores our credibility and commitment to customers.”

Hoey says that investing in this equipment is another step toward safeguarding market access for Oregon wheat growers. The C-Cell generates objective, export-grade, data-driven proof of product performance that customers look for, boosting the industry’s credibility. The equipment also enables early screening of breeding lines, helping to identify varieties with desirable end-use traits faster, which can ultimately speed up variety improvement. This level of precision and reliable data is empowering. It opens more doors for the Wheat Marketing Center to offer improved, sought-after technical assistance to customers evaluating Oregon wheat,” said Hoey. “It’s an investment with visible returns for Oregon wheat growers and stakeholders—in quality, reliability, and industry confidence.” 

Positioning U.S. Soft Wheats as Essential Ingredients for Colombian Snack Maker

Ralph Loos, U.S. Wheat Associates

Some “outside the cracker box” thinking by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) staff in South America resulted in a major customer expanding its use of both U.S. soft red winter (SRW) and U.S. soft white (SW) wheat for production of popular snack foods.

Two separate activities led to the purchasing decisions. Both are examples of technical support at its best. According to Miguel Galdos, USW regional director for South America, a major cookie and cracker maker had been milling SRW for many of its products. Recognizing potential growth and opportunities created by the company’s product line, USW staff offered technical service designed to maximize the performance of SRW by blending SW sourced from the Pacific Northwest.

Leveraging Flour Science to Promote U.S. Soft Wheats

With funding from the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP), USW arranged to send the company’s operations manager to attend a three-week Cookie and Cracker Technology Course at the UFM Baking School in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2024. “This was the first time a customer from outside of Asia participated in the course,” Galdos noted. “In addition to the intensive instruction on ingredients, formulas and processing, the course covered how to use solvent retention capacity (SRC) for soft wheat flour evaluation to identify direct SRW and SW flour performance advantages.”

As a service to international millers and bakers, USW provides a service to customers in applying SRC analysis to better predict the true performance characteristics of flour for a wide range of end products, including cookies, crackers and cakes. More specifically, SRC examines the glutenin, gliadin and pentosan characteristics of the flour, and the level of starch damage in the flour. These values describe the flour’s ability to absorb water during the mixing process and its ability to release that water during the baking process. SRC testing directly benefits the use of U.S. soft wheat classes, as it is the only analysis that reveals the difference between flours with and without added additives. For bakers, this testing ensures they are using the best possible flour for their products.


Turning Knowledge into Investment

Following the course, and upon the recommendation of the operation manager, the company invested in an SRC system to ensure its mill is delivering more precise flour



USW invited a Colombian miller to participate in a Soft Wheat Workshop at the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Oregon, in May 2025. The Oregon Wheat Commission joined the team throughout their visit.

blends to improve product quality. USW went a step farther in May 2025, inviting the same staff member to participate in a Soft Wheat Workshop at the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Oregon. Shortly after that workshop, the company imported 500 metric tons (MT) (about 18,400 bushels) of SW. “Based on its overall experience, the company has established an agreement with its trader to make regular purchases of SW as a complement to its annual purchases of SRW,” Galdos reported.

As of August 14, 2025, Colombia is third largest buyer of SRW thus far in the 2025/2026 marketing year with imports of 144,000 MT (5.29 million bushels), up 50% from this time the prior year. Last marketing year, combined SRW and SW sales to Colombia hit 403,000 MT (14.8 million bushels), benefitting farmers in Ohio, Illinois, Maryland, Washington, Oregon and other states. 

Selecting for Quality 2025: Routine, innovation, and history

Dr. Andrew Ross, Professor and Dr. Teepakorn Kongraksawech, Senior Research Associate

In the Cereal Quality Lab, routine testing continues year-round. Each summer, thousands of kernel hardness tests are performed and throughout the remainder of the year established methods are used to measure quality traits essential for developing new wheat varieties that meet market demands. But beyond the routine work we are committed to innovation—continually seeking faster, more effective, and more cost-efficient ways to achieve our goals. Objective 3 in our funding proposals directs us to continually review existing quality methods and either improve them or develop new ones as needed.

In line with this objective, Dr. Kongraksawech (Dr. TK) has been investigating ways to bring consistency, objectivity, and automation to the scoring of top grain (cracking pattern) in standard sugar-snap cookies, enabling this trait to be more effectively integrated into cookie evaluations and, ultimately, soft wheat quality assessments. Traditionally, top-grain scoring has been subjective and calibrated against reference photographs of cookies rated on 0–9 scales (e.g., Figure 1). There is little—if any—detailed written guidance to be found to train either people or machine-learning systems to grade cookie top grain accurately. The only written guidance we have found is a brief outline in a 1950 paper by Karl Finney and colleagues from the USDA Soft Wheat and Hard Winter Wheat Quality Labs in Wooster, OH, and Manhattan, KS. That paper is the basis of the approved sugar-snap cookie methods we still use today. Finney et al. wrote: “Using a series of especially prepared cookies as reference standards, top grain was scored on the basis of 0 for a compact, hard-appearing cookie with no breaks, to 5 for a well-broken top containing numerous small ‘islands’ characteristic of cookies baked from good-quality cookie flours.” Interestingly, the soft wheat research community now uses 0-9 (10-point) scales, rather than the original 1-5 (6-point) scale.



Dr. Andrew Ross



Dr. Teepakorn Kongraksawech

Commission Funding 2025-26:

\$82,000

Project:

Sales of Oregon wheat rely on the grain having functional qualities that satisfy or exceed customer expectations. Accordingly, identifying genotypes with class-appropriate, superior, or specialized functionality is needed when developing new cereal cultivars. The overarching task of the Oregon State University Cereal Quality Lab is to provide functionality (quality) testing in support of OSU cereal variety development. This is achieved through laboratory assessments of various traits including grain quality, milling yields, flour composition and functionality, enzyme activity, dough and batter behaviors, and end-product characteristics and encompasses improvements in those methods. Testing focuses on early generation screening but also includes detailed interpretations of later-generation functionality data created by the USDA Western Wheat and Pulse Quality Lab.

To begin this work, Dr. TK collaborated with members of the PNW Wheat Quality Council (WQC), who provided the top-grain scores and digital photographs of the cookies they made from the 2024 harvest WQC flour samples. This supplied both the data and images needed to train the machine-learning system. The 2024 WQC samples were ideal because they allowed the same breeding lines and varieties to be independently tested and scored multiple times by multiple labs. This is also one of the few occasions each year when top grain is comprehensively evaluated. For consistency, prior to testing,



Figure 1: A reference photograph showing the 0 to 9 scale used for scoring the cracks (top grain) on upper surface of sugar-snap cookies. Image courtesy of the USDA Western Wheat Quality Laboratory.

Dr. TK distributed guidelines to collaborators, covering key elements such as camera resolution, lighting, and the positioning of cookies and camera. This work is in progress, but it reflects our commitment to applying new technologies and engaging our network of cereal science and quality testing colleagues. In parallel we used a large language model to create detailed written guidance using the reference cookie photograph in Figure 1. In a related initiative, Dr. TK is attempting to develop low-cost, app-based methods for image-based measurement of bread and cake volumes, to provide an alternative to the specialized and expensive proprietary digital volume systems and to the cumbersome displacement methods currently in use.

In last year’s article, we previewed a statistical method for rapidly scoring the relative quality of experimental breeding lines. This method is an extension of the approach taken by Colorado and Kansas researchers Scott Haley, Brad Seabourn, and colleagues in 1999 when they developed a “relational database”. Similarly, we “normalize” each trait’s raw data by dividing each value’s deviation from the average of the data set by the standard deviation of the raw data. Standard deviation is a conventional statistical measure of the width of a distribution of values. The transformation “normalizes” the distribution so that every trait has a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. These normalized values, known as Z-scores, allow direct comparison across traits. Z-scores are in effect the number of standard deviations a given value differs from the average of the distribution. In the dataset used for Figure 2, the raw data ranges, or widths of the distributions, were:

- Flour ash: 0.23–0.53% (range 0.30%)
- Cookie diameter: 8.56–9.61 cm (range 1.05 cm)
- Cake volume: 1047–1298 cc (range 251 cc)

After transformation, all traits had Z-score ranges of –3 to +3, except for one flour ash outlier (Figure 2). This scaling allows traits with very different absolute units (e.g., ash, cookie diameter, and cake volume) to be evaluated on a common baseline for scoring and weighting. In this instance, a 0.05% absolute decrease in flour ash, a 0.2 cm increase in cookie diameter, or a 55 cc increase in sponge cake volume all corresponded to Z-scores of +1 and were equal to a 12-unit decrease in kernel hardness. A key advance since last year is the on-call deployment of this method to assist Dr. Krause in her selection decisions. The computing tools available in 2025 compared to 1999 make these transformations rapid and robust, even with some missing data. This enables quick,

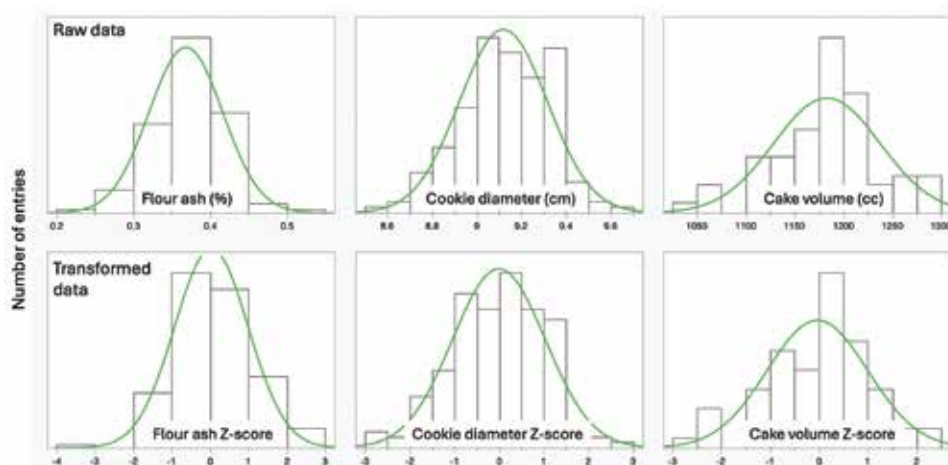



Figure 2: Raw and transformed data distributions for a subset of the quality traits used in selecting elite soft white breeding lines. Raw data is shown in the upper row. Transformed data is shown in the lower row.

targeted comparisons and the timely delivery of actionable results. For selection decisions in later-generation soft white breeding lines it is essential to have at least these core traits: test weight, kernel hardness, break flour yield, and water retention capacity. Ideally, we would also have flour ash, cookie diameter, the other three solvent retention capacity values, and—when available—cake volume. Preliminary validation showed a strong, significant correlation between our Z-scores and appropriately matched t-scores from the USDA Pullman lab where they compile the t-scores for the quality-based preferred variety lists.

Why do we need more innovation? Some of the functionality tests we still use today are antiquated. The Farinograph dough mixer, for example, may trace its roots to an 1892 U.S. patent by Scottish inventor James Hogarth. In 1940, Dr. Clyde H. Bailey of the University of Minnesota—founding editor of *Cereal Chemistry*—wrote: “Hogarth indicated... a small dough mixer provided with a dynamometer attached to the drive, and a stylus recording on a chart the force applied at all times throughout an extended mixing process,” which will be familiar to anyone who has seen an older Farinograph. The original Swanson-Working Mixograph prototype was detailed in 1933. Today, we would prefer to have app-based tools that instantly measure dough mixing properties and flour water uptake, rather than relying on 20th—or even 19th—century technology. However, as a saying goes, “thermodynamics rule.” Flour absorbs water at its own leisurely pace at normal atmospheric pressures, making it difficult to accelerate the process. In 1928, Charles O. Swanson of Kansas State College and co-inventor of the Mixograph, wrote: “The times demand that the ash, moisture, protein, and baking tests which are used most by chemists shall be performed more rapidly and also more accurately.” In that sense, nothing has changed—except that today’s demands for speed and precision are arguably even greater. 

U.S. Wheat Installs New Officers, Names Key Personnel

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) installed its 2025/26 Officer Team at the recent USW Summer Board Meeting. The officers, who were previously elected at the previous winter board meeting in January 2025, include: Jim Pellman (ND) Chair, Gary Millershaski (KS) Vice Chair, Mike Carstensen (WA) Secretary-Treasurer, and Clark Hamilton (ID) Past Chair.

With Mike Spier officially becoming USW President on July 1, he announced new additions to the USW staff.

Brian Liedl, who has two decades of experience in wheat trading and logistics, joined USW as Vice President of Overseas Operations in July. Liedl most recently served as Director of Merchandising at United Grain Corporation.


Julia Debes rejoined USW in June as Director - Communications and Stakeholder Outreach. Debes most recently served as the Director of Communications for Working Lands for Wildlife, an effort by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Ryan Olson joined the staff of USW as the director of trade policy in August. In his role, Olson will be responsible for assisting with trade policy, transportation, production technologies, sustainability and food aid issues that impact




2025/26 USW Officers

the export of U.S. wheat. Prior to joining USW, Olson most recently served as industry affairs manager at the U.S. Soybean Export Council.

The appointments continue a strong legacy of leadership and expertise. 


Tootie Smith Appointed as State Director, Oregon Farm Service Agency

In August, the Trump Administration appointed Tootie Smith as the State Director for the USDA Farm Services Agency in Oregon. Smith is a fourth-generation farmer in Oregon and currently owns a hazelnut orchard on the family farm where she was raised. She has business experience as

the owner of a hospitality center, a real estate developer, and a logging business. Smith served four years as an elected official in the Oregon House of Representatives and eight years on the County Board of Commissioners. 

League Member SAIF Discount Increases!

There are many benefits to membership in the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Providing a strong voice for Oregon wheat producers in state and federal policy is the primary benefit, but there are associated supports, including trainings and engagement with partner entities. This year, we are excited to note a bump in one of those benefits: the League has been approved for an increased 20% SAIF discount for members. Beginning July 1, Oregon Wheat Growers League members

will have access to this discount with Oregon's not-for-profit workers' compensation insurance company. SAIF remains the League's insurer of choice for members with Oregon's workers' compensation exposure. In partnership with SAIF, we are able to provide our members with information and resources to implement safety and loss control measures and work on improving accident prevention. 

Limited Edition
**PENDLETON
WOOL BLANKET**

The Oregon Wheat Growers League is celebrating 100 years in 2026.

**Preorders
are Open**

for the commemorative
Limited Edition
Pendleton Wool Blanket.

\$250

Size: 64 x 80



Each blanket will have a hand-numbered, suede label.

To preorder call (541) 276-7330 or email us at info@owgl.org.

**OREGON
WHEAT**

RIGHT FROM THE START.

FARMER-FOUNDED SPIRIT IS BEHIND EVERYTHING WE DO.

When he founded the company 45 years ago, Iowa farmer Dennis Albaugh wanted more options to protect his crops from seed to harvest. Today, Albaugh remains rooted in helping farmers make the most of every acre. And our seed treatments continue to deliver on that farmer-founded spirit, providing high-quality, competitively priced offers – right for the seed, right for you.



LEARN MORE AT [ALBAUGHST.COM](https://www.albaughst.com)
ELEVATING THE SCIENCE OF SEED TREATMENT.™

