

## **Telly Wirth Brings a Focus on Valley Grower Engagement**

Leadership in the Oregon Wheat Growers League is rooted in growers stepping forward to represent their neighbors, share their perspectives, and help guide the future of Oregon's wheat industry. Telly Wirth recently joined as the South Willamette Valley region's president in 2026, to replace outgoing president Mike Schrock.

Operating as Wirth Farms, Inc. in Linn County, Wirth grows wheat, grass seed, clover seed, vegetable seed, hazelnuts, stocker cattle, peppermint, corn, barley, and meadowfoam seed. After growing up on the family farm, he took on a major role in his early 20s because of his father's health concerns. "It's what I grew up doing. I got up in the morning, did chores, and worked on the farm in the summer. It just felt like what I was supposed to do, so I kept doing it and never looked back."

Wirth went to Oregon State University to study crop and soil science, where he also met his wife, Amorita. They have two sons, Mason, who is a state trooper in training, and Jaxon, who currently works alongside them on the farm. Wirth is also a seed distributor, as South Valley Feed & Seed, selling Oregon State University varieties. Wirth says his family has been League members for as long as he can remember. However, it wasn't until he and his wife attended the annual growers workshop in Portland a few years ago that he became more interested in getting involved. When Mike Schrock approached him about a leadership role, he decided it was time to jump in.

As he assumes this leadership role, Wirth's goal is to ensure the voices of wheat growers in his region continue to be represented within the League's statewide leadership. "I represent a different perspective than some board members. Growing wheat looks very different on the west side than on the east because of different climates and marketing challenges," says Wirth. "Growers in the South Willamette Valley are generally more diversified, and fewer farms grow wheat, but it remains an important rotation for those of us who do."

"The last few years have been challenging for everyone," says Wirth. "We're trying to navigate these challenges, and while prices have to come back at some point, we're looking at how to make farming make sense in the meantime and improving cost efficiencies."

In his position, Wirth also looks forward to strengthening grower engagement. "There's an opportunity to focus on outreach to growers in this area who still don't know much about the League and its value," says Wirth. "It's all about taking the time to make those personal connections and sharing my perspective as a member of the League and fellow grower."

Oregon Wheat Growers League is governed by a Board of Directors composed of growers from each of the 12 wheat-growing counties (or regions) across the state. The board guides the League's priorities and activities, represents the Oregon wheat industry at events, and board members each host an annual grower meeting in their area.