

FALL 2025

# IDAHO

THE IDAHO GRAIN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

G R A I N



Hollifield Ranches  
Hansen, Idaho



# VIEWS



BY JONATHAN ROSENAU  
**PRESIDENT**

Hello all, I hope your summer has been a safe and fun-filled one and your harvest is going as well as possible. As I sit writing this presidential update I am currently sitting in a semi waiting for the bankout to return so I can head back to the warehouse.



Much like the a lot of the PNW and the West at large, we are in a severe drought this 2025. If you look at the drought monitor, our farm - located on the camas prairie - is in an extreme drought condition. Much of the only moisture we



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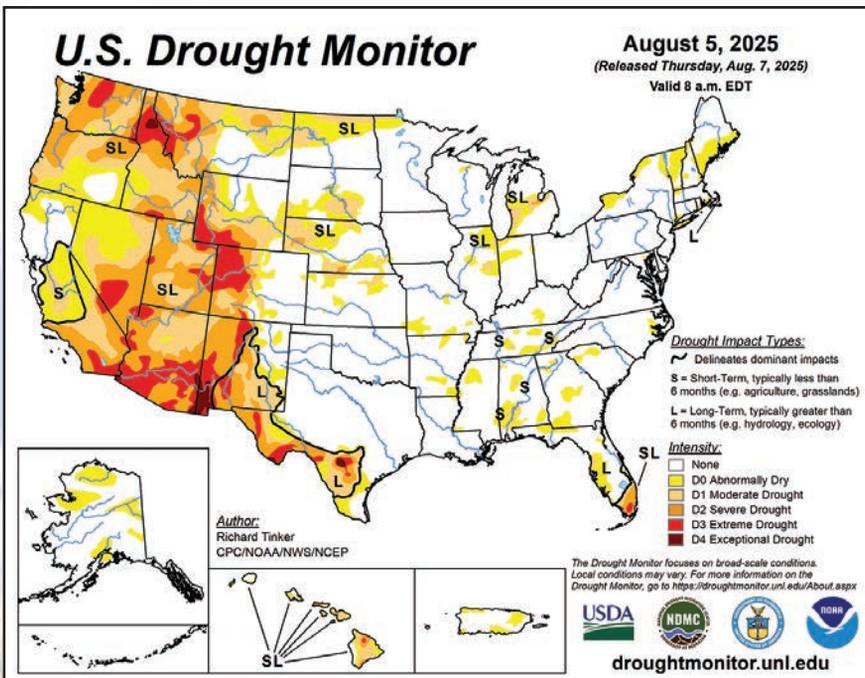
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EDITOR'S  
EDITOR'S NOTE  
NOTE 

have received has been, of course, during haying and harvest with some very harsh storms. Our farm received .70" of rain coming in 10 minute storms. My fellow farm neighbors around the area saw devastating hail storms. So much hail that the snow plows had to be sent out on the highways.

Fighting the yields, weather, markets, inputs, finding good help, ect always makes for trying times. We have to remember to stay positive during these moments, fight for our future and keep plowing forward. Remember there's always next year. God bless you all and be safe. ■



BY AMAYA AGUIRRE-LANDA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As promised in the last issue, even though it's summer, our work doesn't slow down.

Over June and July, I had the pleasure of traveling across the state, hosting district grower meetings in Bonners Ferry, Genesee, Nezperce, Filer, Idaho Falls, and Soda Springs - an IGPA roadshow of sorts. Connecting with growers and industry partners brings IGPA's mission full circle. I firmly believe that connection is key to truly understanding people's unique contributions, needs, and frustrations. Without it, genuine advocacy is difficult.

Later in July, I spent three days with Idaho elected officials for the first (of hopefully many) legislative crop tours. In partnership with the Idaho Potato Commission and the Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association, we hosted legislators from the Treasure Valley, Magic Valley, and Eastern Idaho at farms and facilities to meet with growers, hear directly about top-of-mind issues, and tour processing facilities relevant to each industry. You can learn more about these educational tours on page 12.

In the midst of all this, we're deep in planning one of the most valuable events we offer to growers: the Idaho-Oregon Grain & Oilseed Convention. Hosted in beautiful Sun Valley, this year's convention is shaping up to be one of our best yet. Details are on pages 8 and 9. ■



## Keeping the River Highway Open

### *How PNWA Protects Idaho's Grain Growers and the Columbia-Snake Supply Chain*

BY PACIFIC NORTHWEST WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

When wheat leaves the rolling fields of Idaho, it begins a journey that spans locks, barges, ocean vessels, and international markets. At the heart of this journey is the Columbia-Snake River System—America's top wheat export gateway. And standing guard over this essential corridor is the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA). Since 1934, PNWA has been the voice for river users—farmers, ports, barge operators, and communities who depend on a working waterway to remain globally competitive. From advocating for lock repairs to fighting dam breaching, PNWA's work directly impacts the bottom line for Idaho wheat growers. Without the river, grain would be stranded. With it, Idaho feeds the world.



#### **A Superhighway for Grain**

Idaho's wheat doesn't move by chance. Each year, millions of bushels are loaded onto barges at inland terminals like the one in Lewiston, then float downriver to deep-draft ports like Kalama, Longview, Vancouver, and Portland. From there, it's shipped throughout the globe.

This waterborne route is what makes Northwest wheat so competitive. Barging is not only the safest and most fuel-efficient mode of freight transportation — it's also the most cost-effective. One four-barge tow carries as much as 538 trucks, and does so using far less fuel and producing fewer emissions. That means lower transportation costs for growers, fewer trucks on the highway, and timely delivery of grain to export terminals.

In 2022, over 13.2 million metric tons of U.S. wheat—more than 60% of all exports—traveled the Columbia-Snake River System. Nearly 10% of that moved by barge on the Snake River alone, much of it grown right here in Idaho. The river system also handled 6.8 million tons of corn and 9.1 million tons of soybeans,



making it the nation's second-largest export corridor for both crops.

#### **Infrastructure Idaho Relies On**

This grain highway wouldn't function without infrastructure—locks, dams, dredged channels, and turning basins. That's where PNWA comes in.

With more than 150 members, including inland ports, grain elevators, barge companies, and ag co-ops, PNWA advocates in Washington, D.C., and across the region to ensure the Columbia-Snake stays open, funded, and well-maintained. The wins are measurable: In recent years, PNWA helped secure over \$120 million for Columbia River maintenance and channel deepening.

PNWA has also led the charge on lock gate replacements, dredging appropriations, and the rehabilitation of the Columbia River jetties—breakwaters critical to keeping downstream ports open and safe. These projects might seem far removed from Idaho's fields, but they're essential to getting your wheat from farm to freighter.



When any part of the system fails—say, a shoaled channel or a broken lock—the impact ripples back to the farm gate. That’s why PNWA prioritizes regular maintenance, streamlined federal permitting, and long-term planning for resilience and efficiency.

## Fighting for Farmers, Not Just Freight

Idaho’s wheat growers know the value of the Snake River dams. They’re not just about navigation—they provide affordable, carbon-free power, irrigation benefits, and recreation. But increasingly, they’ve been caught in the crossfire of national debates and litigation regarding salmon recovery and environmental policy.

PNWA has consistently defended the region’s hydropower system and opposed proposals to breach the four lower Snake River dams. Instead, PNWA advocates a balanced, science-based approach to fish recovery—investing in habitat, predator management, and modern fish passage facilities that already result in juvenile salmon survival rates increasing.

The association has been a legal intervenor in critical federal litigation, bringing the voice of farmers and navigation stakeholders into the courtroom. PNWA’s Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG), of which many Idaho & Washington agriculture leaders are members, ensures that rural economies aren’t forgotten in the push for environmental reform.

## Economic Impact You Can Feel

The economic benefit of the Columbia-Snake River System is massive—and local. The Washington wheat industry annually contributes nearly \$1 billion in production value to the state’s economy, supporting nearly 19,000 jobs directly and indirectly. In the Columbia Basin, irrigation projects tied to the river generate \$3 billion annually in agricultural production. Ports like Lewiston move over 24 million bushels of grain each year, supporting barge crews, longshoremen, grain inspectors, and truck drivers—not to mention farmers.

Nationally, U.S. agricultural exports supported 1.25 million jobs in 2022. And because barge transport is so efficient, it keeps American grain affordable in global markets. Studies show that without the Snake River dams and the barging system they enable, transportation costs for wheat would spike—cutting into grower margins and reducing planted acreage. Simply put: the river system works. It keeps Idaho wheat flowing, prices stable, and rural communities thriving.

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## A Steady Hand on the Rudder

For over 90 years, the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association has served as the maritime industry’s advocate. It brings together diverse voices—farmers, ports, and businesses—to find common ground and defend the river that connects us all.

In the face of changing weather, global trade shifts, and regulatory pressure, PNWA remains vigilant. It champions upgrades to infrastructure and supports modernizing the Columbia River Treaty with Canada. Most importantly, it ensures that when decisions are made about the river, the needs of agriculture are front and center.

As long as Idaho wheat is grown for export, PNWA’s work will matter. The river system is our lifeline to the world. And PNWA is making sure it stays that way.

## Want to get involved or learn more?

Visit [www.pnwa.net](http://www.pnwa.net) or explore PNWA’s updated fact sheets and priorities at [pnwa.net/pnwa-fact-sheets-and-backgrounders](http://pnwa.net/pnwa-fact-sheets-and-backgrounders). ■



REPRESENTATIVE  
**John Shirts**



**WEISER, ID • DISTRICT 9**

**Tell us a little bit about your hometown, where you grew up and where you live now?**

I grew up in Weiser, Idaho, the 5th generation on our family farm and ranch which has been in our family since the 1880's. I graduated from Weiser High School, then the University of Idaho, and attended law school in Colorado.

After that I clerked for a year with a judge, then I served five years in the U.S. Air Force stationed in Montgomery, Alabama at Maxwell Air Force Base. I moved a lot during those years and was then off to Tampa, Florida at MacDill Airforce Base and then to Korea for a year. After that I worked as a senior prosecutor in San Antonio, Texas. I actually prosecuted cases all over Europe and the United States for the Air Force. Then I worked as a federal prosecutor here in Idaho and decided to run for the legislator—I won and came back to the family ranch. Now, when the session isn't in, I do contract work for the Air Force Reserve as well as work on the family farm and ranch. We grow barley, alfalfa, and raise some cattle.

**Who had the greatest influence on you during your childhood?**

Probably my Dad. I have good memories with him and he and my uncles were great influences. I remember feeling so lucky to go with my Dad in the combine when I was a kid—I remember the hot and dusty cab with no air conditioning!

**Was there a teacher or educator during your early years that had an impact on your life?**

One of our neighbors was Mrs. Overgaard, my high school science teacher, she was so instrumental in my life and a teacher that really cared. She really wanted to see kids succeed. My parents didn't go to college so she was always bridging the gap for me—teaching me about what else you can do with education.

**What did you want to be when you grew up and is that what you currently do for work?**



In college I didn't really know what I wanted to do, all I knew was the farm, but by the time I was done I interned with Senator Crapo and saw how lawyers worked and how they could shape agriculture policy—my family is in the sheep business and we got into a big lawsuit and that kind of drew me into a career to help ag folks. So I become an attorney to get that skillset and be able to speak both the languages of the legal side and the ag side of it.

**Tell us about your family.**

My wife and I live out in Weiser; my Dad is here too and my sister and her family.

**How did you meet your spouse? Where did you go on your first date?**

We met at Pie Hole in Boise—she was behind me in line so I got her number. Our first date was at Bardenay then we went over to the Basque Center. And the rest is history, as they say!

**What do you do in your free time and other things you do in your community?**

We like to travel a lot—hiking, fishing, and hunting all those Idaho things. We are also active in our local church.

**What one word would you use to describe yourself?**

I would say maybe hard-working or amicable.



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**If you could have dinner with one famous person, living or not, who would it be and why?**

Winston Churchill because he was such a dynamic person and he lived through a turbulent time in history. I think he would be fascinating to talk to.

**If you could be or do anything else – what would it be?**

Architect has always been kind of an interesting field to me so that might have been a fun career.

**If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would play you and why?**

(Laughs) Well many people say I look like the guy in the movie “MY Best Friends Wedding” so I guess that guy? (Dermot Mulroney)

**Why did you decide to run for office?**

I won a seat in the District where we live on the family ranch. We ran on pro-law enforcement as well as supporting our farmers and ranchers in the ag community. I also focused the campaign on veterans



issues. My district goes from Cambridge to Caldwell which is prime ag district and that's a lot of why I wanted to run—I want to protect our lands and our water and our way of life in Idaho.

**Tell us about the committees you have served on and your path to leadership?**

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I was appointed to Agricultural Affairs, Revenue & Taxation, and Judiciary, Rules & Administration.

### What challenges do you think the state faces in 2025 and beyond?

Water issue is a big deal—especially big in Eastern Idaho right now. Luckily, we committed 30 million of ongoing funding infrastructure to the state. I've been trying to look to the future and what our ag situation

and water situation is going to look like and it's tough. The majority of the legislature lives close to Boise and we had to really explain to them why this is important.

### What do you love most about Idaho?

The people. Idaho is naturally a beautiful state but the people are really what make it great—they're friendly and there's a way about Idahoans that's not the same in other states. You miss it when you're not home. Rural Idaho is even better as the people will literally give you the shirt off their back. I am proud of call Idaho home.

Continued on next page

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## Meet the Keynote Speaker

### Introducing Dr. Matt Roberts

Join us for a must-attend keynote from Dr. Matt Roberts, founder of The Kernmantle Group and one of the nation's leading voices on grain, oilseed, and energy markets. With a dynamic background that spans academia, international trading, and high-level market analysis, Dr. Roberts brings sharp insight and real-world experience to the stage.

In a time of rapid change and uncertainty, his talk, "Surviving and Thriving in an Ever More Volatile World," will deliver practical strategies and a deeper understanding of the global forces shaping agriculture today.

You've seen his insights in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and on CNBC; now hear them in person. Don't miss this chance to gain perspective from one of agriculture's most compelling economic minds.



# IDAHO-OREGON GRAIN & OILSEED CONVENTION

# 20 25

Join us November 18–20, 2025, in Sun Valley for the Idaho-Oregon Grain & Oilseed Convention — the premier event for growers and ag professionals in the Northwest. Gain valuable insights, connect with industry leaders, and gear up for the future growing season.



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## What are you most passionate about and/or hope to accomplish during your time in the legislature?

Water is going to continue to be an issue so I hope to continue to advocate for that as well as ag land protection. We have to figure out ways to incentivize farmers so they continue to farm; we need to find ways to keep farms going to pass on to the next generation. The Ag Land Protection Act pass by the legislature last year is focused on that and how we keep farmland for the future.

## Future political ambitions?

My Dad is on the Washington County Gopher Board so maybe that! 🇺🇸



# Congress Must Protect Idaho Farmers' Access to Crop Protection Tools

BY ELIZABETH BURNS-THOMPSON

Idaho farmers power an over \$11 billion agricultural economy that supports one in every nine jobs in the state—Congress now has a chance to ensure that success continues. As lawmakers return from August recess, the Modern Ag Alliance urges Congress to pass Section 453 in the FY 2026 Interior Appropriations Bill into law—a bipartisan provision championed by Rep. Mike Simpson (ID-2)—which safeguards farmers' access to essential crop protection tools by upholding science-based safety evaluations.

Despite the consensus of regulators worldwide, some state policymakers have attempted to regulate pesticides in a manner that contradicts decades of established scientific evidence. Without the uniformity of federal law, farmers could face a patchwork of conflicting state regulations that would ultimately threaten their access to critical crop protection technologies.

Idaho farmers use crop protection tools to control weeds, preserve soil, and boost yields—and have done so safely and effectively for over 50 years. For

example, sugar beet farming is nearly impossible without glyphosate—98% of all sugar beet acres rely on this essential input.

Farmers also cannot implement modern conservation practices without crop protection tools. That's especially critical in Idaho, where nearly 70% of farmland relies on irrigation. Glyphosate enables no-till and reduced-till methods that conserve water by up to 20%, preserve soil moisture, and strengthen farms' resilience to drought. Idaho farmers have spent decades refining these practices to protect their land and water for future generations. Without crop protection tools, these gains would be lost—putting both Idaho's water resources and its agriculture industry at risk of drying up.

Farmers also cannot implement modern conservation practices without crop protection tools. That's especially critical in Idaho, where nearly 70% of farmland relies on irrigation.

Nevertheless, the EPA's rigorous, science-based regulatory process—long considered the global gold standard—is increasingly under attack by those prioritizing ideology over evidence. These critics, often lacking the scientific grounding or capacity to conduct equivalent evaluations, risk undermining a system



that has safeguarded public health and environmental integrity for decades. This highlights the urgent need for consistent, federally guided policy rooted in sound science.

Without legislative clarity, misguided regulatory attacks on proven tools will continue and likely expand beyond products like glyphosate. Faced with a patchwork of contradictory state regulations, agritech companies may not only pull products from the market, they may also rethink investments in developing new innovations—undermining decades of progress in efficient, high-yield farming.

With all of the other pressures facing farming today, the stakes for American agriculture have never been higher. Without clear, science-driven policy, farmers face a future shaped by confusion—not cultivation. Congress has an opportunity to change that by ensuring Section 453 of the House Interior Appropriations Bill is passed into law. It’s a commonsense safeguard that ensures regulatory decisions are based on facts, not fear and falsehoods spread on social media. Idaho’s farmers—and farmers across the nation—deserve stability, innovation, and the freedom to keep feeding the world.

To learn more and send a letter to your Member of Congress at [ModernAgAlliance.org](http://ModernAgAlliance.org).

### About the Modern Ag Alliance

The Modern Ag Alliance is a diverse coalition that represents more than 100 agricultural organizations—including the Idaho Grain Producers Association—advocating for U.S. farmers’ access to the crop protection tools. Together with our partners, the Modern Ag Alliance works with federal and state policymakers to advance legislative solutions that ensure consistency in pesticide labeling and continued innovation in farming.

### About Elizabeth

Elizabeth Burns-Thompson is the Executive Director of the Modern Ag Alliance, leading advocacy for U.S. farmers’ access to essential crop protection tools. Raised on a family farm in eastern Iowa, she has held roles with the Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Corn Growers, biofuel manufacturers, farm cooperatives, and carbon tech innovators. She lives with her family in eastern Nebraska and holds a J.D. in Agricultural Law from Drake University and a B.S. in Agricultural Business from Iowa State. ■

## A Place at the Table: Idaho Agriculture Helps Build a Medical Camp for Families in Need

BY LONNI LEAVITT-BARKER

A unique place of healing and hope is taking shape in the heart of Idaho’s hills. Camp Rainbow Gold began over 40 years ago as a small getaway for a handful of children with cancer. Today, it has grown into a nonprofit serving hundreds of Idaho children and families navigating cancer, serious illness, and grief—offering connection, comfort, and the simple joy of being together in Idaho’s healing outdoors.

For decades, Camp Rainbow Gold rented facilities not designed for children with medical complexities. That changed when the organization purchased 172 acres outside of Fairfield, Idaho. With the help of donors and volunteers, the dream of building Hidden Paradise—Idaho’s first medically designed, accessible, and adaptive camp—is coming to life.

The beauty of Hidden Paradise is that it’s not just home

to Camp Rainbow Gold’s cancer camps. It also welcomes other Idaho nonprofit programs including Camp Hope (epilepsy), Camp River Run (medically fragile youth), AdaptAble (children with limb loss), Sunrise Retreats (recent widows), AAC (children who use talkers to communicate), Joni & Friends (families with disabilities), and more.



Campers often arrive carrying wheelchairs, medication

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spreadsheets, exhausted bodies, and a dream to just



belong. Hidden Paradise is designed to meet those needs—with ADA-accessible cabins, a health center, equestrian area, archery, pickleball courts, a playground, fishing spots, bike trails, and more.

But one crucial piece is still missing: a permanent lodge and dining hall—the heart of camp. This space will host meals,

celebrations, talent shows, dances, and serve as a safe gathering place during weather emergencies.

Now, Idaho’s agricultural community is stepping up in a big way to “raise the barn” and help build that lodge.

As the people who feed America and much of the world, Idaho’s farmers and ranchers understand the importance of nourishment and gathering. They know what it means to work the land, care deeply for neighbors, and set an extra place at the table. That spirit of generosity is now being poured into Hidden Paradise—so that Idaho children with medical challenges and their families always have a place to laugh, heal, and belong.

To learn more or join the effort, email [lonni@camprainbowgold.org](mailto:lonni@camprainbowgold.org) or scan the QR code. 



## IGPA Partners with Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association and Idaho Potato Commission to Showcase Idaho Crops

BY KELLIE KLUKSDAL

This July, the Idaho Grain Producers Association had the opportunity to showcase our greatest assets to local legislators throughout the state. Along with our friends at the Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association and the Idaho Potato Commission, IGPA welcomed legislators from across the state on three, half day tours to introduce them to what goes on in the fields of Idaho agriculture.

Partnering with several ag friends along the way, the goal of the trip was to experience the story of ag first hand by visiting production facilities and fields. The group had stops in several parts of the state including the Treasure Valley, Magic Valley and Eastern Idaho where they talked about water issues, immigration and farm labor and access cost of inputs and more.

For the Treasure Valley group, first up was a stop at Ubilla Farm in Notus where the group toured their facilities and grain and sugarbeet fields and then headed



over to Amalgamated Sugar in Nampa for a factory tour and lunch.

Samantha Parrott, Executive Director of the Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association, said that education really is key. “Agriculture is Idaho’s backbone, and educating policymakers about what we do is essential to keeping it strong. These tours are a great way to open doors, answer questions, and



showcase the incredible work happening on our farms. We're proud to partner with Idaho Grain Producers Association and the Idaho Potato Commission to tell that story together."

Next up was the group who toured the Magic Valley and visited Hollifield Ranches in Hansen and then to Reed Barley Storage in Hazelton for a tour and lunch.

"Educating Idaho legislators about agriculture is an essential role of the Idaho Grain Producers Association. It helps ensure sound policy for one of Idaho's greatest industries. The first Idaho Legislative Crop Tours were a great success! They created opportunities for meaningful conversations, helped build understanding, and showed the unique challenges faced by producers across the state. We're excited to build on that momentum in the years ahead," said Idaho Grain Producers Association Executive Director Amaya Aguirre-Landa.

The last group to tour headed over to Eastern Idaho and visited the VanOrden family farm for a look at grain harvest and tour of the farm and then a tour of the Wada Farms Potato Shipping and Packing facility in Pingree.

Sam Eaton, Governmental Relations for the Idaho Potato Commission, said "This tour was a great opportunity for legislators, local officials, and congressional staff to interact with farmers and producers and see firsthand the hard work, innovation, and dedication that drives Idaho agriculture. The tour participants were very engaged and were able to hear about the challenges facing the industry – including higher input costs, labor shortages, and water management. Agriculture is the backbone of Idaho's economy, and I believe this type of open dialogue is helpful for when our state and federal policymakers are making key decisions that affect Idaho's farmers and ranchers."

IGPA was also happy to bring along our partners at Veritas Advisors. Elizabeth Criner agreed this was a fun event to hold. "It was great to be out on the farms with our members and legislators to learn more about the current challenges to farming. Having these conversations while watching harvest activities provides a better perspective than just meeting in a conference room. Meeting like this takes more time, so we appreciate the commitment from our elected officials who participated." ■





# Control of Wheat Stripe Rust

BY XIANMING CHEN, USDA-ARS AND WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Stripe rust is a major problem for wheat production in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). The disease affects all marketing classes and occurs in all agronomic zones but is more damaging in the high rainfall areas and in irrigated fields. The disease can cause yield losses over 90% with an average of 33% on susceptible varieties over the last 40 years while the potential average yield loss on susceptible varieties has increased to 42% since 2002. Severe or potentially severe epidemics occurred in 11 of the last 26 years throughout the PNW as stripe rust caused yield losses of 56.1–74.7% on winter wheat and 29.6–83.8% on spring wheat of susceptible varieties in 2020–2024 except 2021, the only year without significant stripe rust since 2000. Without fungicide application, commercially grown varieties could have had average yield loss of 11.6% on winter wheat and 10.7% on spring wheat in 2020, and 7.5% on winter wheat and 4.5% on spring wheat in 2024. Although the potentially huge yield losses have been successfully prevented, PNW wheat growers spend almost every year multimillion dollars on fungicide applications to reduce stripe rust damage.

Stripe rust is controlled mostly by planting resistant varieties and applying foliar fungicides. Growing resistant varieties is the most effective approach as



Figure 1. Stripe rust on wheat leaves.

it does not add additional cost to growers. Thus, our research focuses on stripe rust resistance. We have conducted studies for identifying stripe rust resistant germplasm, mapping resistance genes and developing molecular markers. Recently, we have completed a study on mapping stripe rust resistance genes in a panel of 465 winter wheat entries presumed to have high-temperature adult-plant (HTAP) resistance and identified 39 resistance genes including 31 for HTAP resistance and developed ten markers for eight of the HTAP resistance genes. We have completed another study and identified four genes for HTAP resistance in a spring wheat germplasm ‘William Som’ using a bi-parental population and developed eight markers tagging the genes. To develop new germplasms for breeders to use, we have recently registered 29 wheat lines, including 13 lines each carrying two different stripe rust resistance genes on the same chromosomal arms. These two-gene lines are especially valuable to breeders for developing new wheat varieties with diverse resistance genes. Every year, we test more than 1,000 wheat lines from Idaho wheat breeding programs in addition to the wheat variety trials and western uniform regional nurseries. The individual breeding nurseries are tested at Pullman, Central Ferry, and Mount Vernon; and the variety trials and regional nurseries are tested in these locations plus Walla Walla and Lind. We also tested the entries in the variety trials and regional nurseries in the greenhouse with selected races of the stripe rust pathogen at both seedling stage

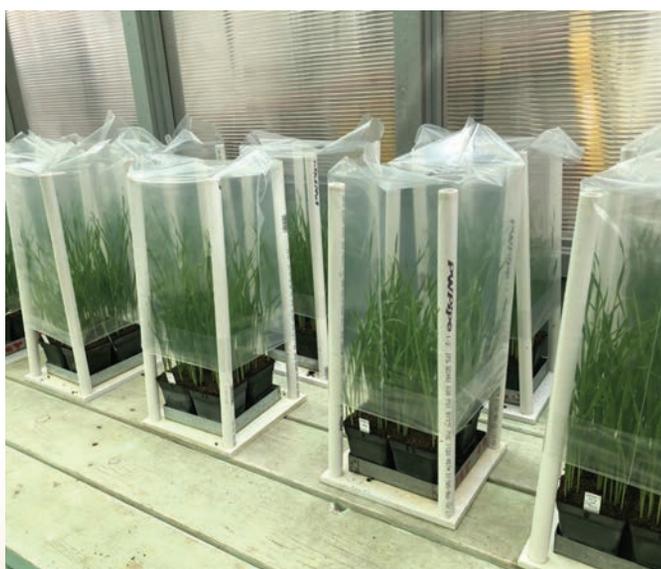


Figure 2. Testing stripe rust samples on seedlings of wheat differential varieties for identification of virulent races of the pathogen under controlled greenhouse conditions.



and adult-plant stage under low and high temperatures, respectively, to detect all-stage resistance and HTAP resistance. The data are used to update the stripe rust ratings in the Seed-buying Guide. Over the years, we have collaborated with Idaho breeding programs in releasing wheat varieties like UI SRG, UI Sparrow, and UI Gold.

The stripe rust fungus evolves rapidly, and changes in virulence can overcome resistance in wheat varieties. To monitor changes in the pathogen population, we collect stripe rust samples in the PNW and receive samples from collaborators. We test wheat stripe rust samples on a set of genetic lines carrying specific resistance genes in the greenhouse to identify races of the pathogen. From the 2024 collection of 436 stripe rust samples throughout the country, of which 274 samples (63%) were from the PNW, we detected 20 races of the wheat stripe rust pathogen and 8 races of the barley stripe rust pathogen. Race PSTv-37 (virulent to resistance genes Yr6, Yr7, Yr8, Yr9, Yr17, Yr27, Yr43, Yr44, Yr85, and YrExp2; not virulent to Yr1, Yr5, Yr10, Yr15, Yr24, Yr32, YrSP, and Yr76) was continually identified as the predominant race at the frequency of 62.2%, followed by PSTv-39, with the same virulence plus virulence to Yr10, at 6.7% and PSTv-35, with the same virulence of PSTv-37 but without virulence to Yr27, at 6.2%. The first two races with frequencies of 62.1% and 27.6%, respectively, were also the top races in Idaho among four races detected. In 2025, we collected and received over 300 samples including 16 from Idaho so far. Although the testing is undergoing, the good news is: Yr5 and Yr15 are still effective against all the races identified in the United States although virulence to



Figure 3. Experimental field near Pullman, WA for screening wheat breeding lines for resistance to stripe rust in 2025.



Figure 4. Experimental field near Pullman, WA for testing commercially grown winter wheat varieties for yield losses caused by stripe rust and responses to fungicide application in 2025.

these genes have been reported in Asia and Europe. These genes for high level of all-stage resistance have been widely used in breeding programs and exist in some of our regional varieties like Seahawk and Espresso. The information on races and virulence is used to guide breeding programs for using effective resistance genes in developing resistant varieties, and from the identified races the selected races with different virulence patterns are used in screening wheat breeding lines for stripe rust resistance.

Although all currently grown PNW wheat varieties have some level of resistance to stripe rust, not every variety has the level completely preventing damage. For example, UI Magic had a yield loss of 35.7% in 2020, 44.4% in 2022 (under artificial inoculation), 21.2% in 2023, and 40.4% in 2024 in our experimental fields. When rust is present and the disease pressure is high, fungicide application is needed to prevent huge damage. Every year, we conduct field experiments to test various fungicides including new chemicals for their efficacy on control of stripe rust on susceptible wheat varieties of both winter and spring wheat. We also test commercially grown varieties for their yield losses caused by stripe rust and response to fungicide application. This year, we have collected stripe rust data and are soon going to harvest wheat from the plots. The data are used for guiding stripe rust management based on individual varieties under different disease pressures from our stripe rust forecasts and field surveys.

Everyone is welcome to check our stripe rust website (<https://striperust.wsu.edu>) for general information about stripe rust, rust updates, research data of stripe rust races, germplasm nurseries, and fungicide and variety tests. 🇺🇸



# The Idaho Wheat Commission and Idaho Grain Producers Association Host 2025 Pacific Northwest Wheat Marketing Legislative Tour

Through the support of grower dollars, the Idaho Wheat Commission (IWC) and Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA) hosted members of the Idaho Legislature and key industry partners for this year’s Pacific Northwest Legislative Export Tour. Educating growers, the public, and stakeholders is one of the core missions of IWC. This tour offers lawmakers an in-depth look at Idaho’s wheat industry—from production and research to critical policy issues like dam preservation and the essential role of waterways in transporting wheat to global markets.

“It is always a pleasure to host Idaho’s legislators on the Legislative Export Tour in Portland,” said Cory Kress, Chair of the Idaho Wheat Commission. “It’s important for our lawmakers to understand what makes Idaho’s wheat industry work and how vital the river system is to our sustainability.”

During the tour, legislators visited the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) in Portland, where they saw firsthand the research and testing that confirms the consistent quality of wheat grown in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. WMC focuses on the technical aspects of wheat utilization and marketing, serving as a bridge between U.S. wheat farmers and their customers both domestically and internationally.



Participants enjoy a guided tour at the United Grain Export Terminal in Vancouver, Washington



Tour participants stop for a picture along the Wilamette River in Portland

Discussions with representatives from U.S. Wheat Associates, along with a tour of the United Grain export facility, highlighted the global reach of Idaho’s wheat—a vital part of the state’s economy, with 50-60% of production exported to overseas markets each year. A stop at Shaver Transportation included a tugboat ride down the Willamette River and offered a memorable setting to emphasize the importance of barging and the Columbia-Snake River System in moving wheat from the farm to international markets.

“This tour was an eye-opening experience that deepened my understanding of the wheat industry, particularly through engaging with Idaho legislators,” said Amaya Aguirre-Landa, Executive Director of



A ride on a Tugboat, courtesy of Shaver Transportation



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IGPA. “It offered a well-rounded look at the complexity of the wheat market in Idaho and across the U.S.”

This year’s participants were Senator Ben Adams (R–Nampa) and Representative Shawn Dygert (R–Melba). Elizabeth Criner of Veritas Advisors, L.L.P., who has contracted with IGPA as part of their lobbying team, also participated in the tour as an advocate for the Idaho wheat industry. Lloyd Knight, Deputy Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, along with others from Idaho’s agriculture industries, joined IWC commissioners and staff as well as IGPA executive board members and staff on the tour.

“Representative Dygert’s deep-rooted expertise in Idaho agriculture, paired with Senator Adams’ thoughtful curiosity and eagerness to learn, sparked insightful questions and meaningful dialogue throughout the tour,” said Aguirre-Landa.

The Pacific Northwest Legislative Export Tour continues to serve as a vital platform for strengthening connections between Idaho’s wheat industry and policymakers. By bringing lawmakers face-to-face with the people and processes that power Idaho’s



Left to Right: Elizabeth Criner (Veritas, LLC.), Laura Johnson (ISDA), Representative Shawn Dygert (R-Melba), and Rachael Bickerton (University of Idaho) enjoying hot off the press crackers at the Wheat Marketing Center

wheat exports, IWC and IGPA ensure that informed decisions shape the future of agriculture in the state. Through collaboration and ongoing education, Idaho’s wheat industry will continue to remain competitive, sustainable, and globally known. 🇺🇸



# Getting to Know Your Idaho Wheat Commissioners

## *“Take a Moment to Enjoy This” with Cliff Tacke, District 2*

District 2 Commissioner Cliff Tacke and his wife, Sue, have been farming on the Camas Prairie since 1983. A third-generation farmer, Cliff studied soil science at the University of Idaho and was appointed to the Idaho Wheat Commission by Governor Brad Little in July 2023.

### **Tell us about your family:**

My grandparents moved to the farm in 1928, the same year my dad was born, and began renting it. They purchased the property in 1934, but my grandfather sadly passed away in 1944 at a young age. My parents married in 1953 and eventually became the owners. I’m the oldest of their large, close-knit family.

Sue and I took over the farm in 1983, the same year we were married. Today, our oldest son lives in Iowa with his wife and daughter, and our daughter lives in Boise with her husband and their two children. Our youngest son, Clark, now owns the farm with his wife, Sara, where they’re raising four energetic boys. I still lend a hand on the farm whenever he needs me.

### **What do you like to do for fun off the farm?**

I have two main hobbies—alpine skiing and playing music. Sue, on the other hand, is incredibly talented and enjoys a wide range of hobbies, especially anything creative—from making soaps to quilting. We also love to travel and always enjoy trips that bring the whole family together.



### **Tell us about your farm, and what you grow:**

Our farm sits on a prairie surrounded by mountains and deep canyons, with rivers winding through the valleys below. No matter which way we travel, we’re always gaining or losing two to three thousand feet in elevation. The soil here is heavy and rich in clay and organic matter. We receive about 15 to 20 inches of rainfall each year, mostly during late winter and early spring. While the soil can be challenging to work with, it retains moisture well—enough to get us through most crop years without significant drought stress.

Our primary crop is soft white wheat, grown in a typical three- or four-year rotation. That rotation includes





winter canola, spring wheat, spring barley, occasional pulse crops, and quite a bit of spring-planted grain hay. We're working to minimize tillage as much as possible. Though this approach brings its challenges, we're encouraged by the positive changes we're seeing in our soils.

### **What is your favorite wheat food product?**

I've always enjoyed multi-grain sliced bread, but Sue's homemade sourdough is truly something special—delicious every time. I'll admit, I also have a soft spot for sweet breads and pastries; my palate tends to lean toward the sweeter side.

### **What is your favorite part about growing/working with wheat?**

I enjoy the challenge of working with Mother Nature—seeing if I can coax a prosperous crop from her each year, and if not a prosperous one, at least a survivable one. I also find satisfaction in figuring out which agronomic records truly matter and how to organize them in a way that's actually useful. And I don't mind keeping track of the financial side of the farm either—it's all part of the bigger picture.

### **Do you have a favorite memory of working on the farm?**

For some reason, the 1994 harvest stands out in my mind. Everything was going well, the yields were good, the equipment was running smoothly, and there were few bottlenecks. About halfway through, I remember



thinking to myself, I should take a moment to enjoy this. So, I did. I'm glad I took the time to appreciate it, because as any farmer knows, much of the job can be stressful and unpredictable.

### **How have advancements in farming technology or practices impacted your operation?**

One of the first positive changes I noticed on our farm was when we bought a drill that could band fertilizer. It not only saved a pass across the field but also made more efficient use of the fertilizer itself. Switching from analog to digital measuring systems was another big step—it dramatically improved implement and application control, and it allowed us to store data for deeper analysis.

The introduction of GPS technology took things even further, increasing efficiency across the board—from automated steering and map building to more precise data collection. Learning how to reduce tillage without sacrificing productivity has brought benefits that go beyond just saving money—it's also better for our soil. And of course, creature comforts like better lighting and enclosed cabs have made long days in the field a lot more enjoyable.

### **What role does the Idaho Wheat Commission and/or other industry organizations play in supporting Idaho's wheat farmers?**

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

The Idaho Wheat Commission has three primary responsibilities: educating not only farmers, but also policymakers and end users; funding research projects that support wheat production; and promoting wheat sales both domestically and internationally. Each of these efforts is essential—not just for the short-term success of growers, but for the long-term strength of the entire industry.

The wheat business has treated me well over the years, and I consider it an honor to give back to an industry that has given me so much.

**What advice would you give to your younger self?**

Mother Nature has been around for billions of years—you’ll farm for maybe fifty. It’s clear who’s really in charge. Learn how nature works on your land, then get to work alongside it. The more you can align with natural systems, the less stress you’ll face and the more financially sustainable your operation will be.



Take time to enjoy your family through every stage of life. Live within your financial, mental, and emotional means—you’ll be better off in the long run, both personally and professionally. And don’t underestimate the importance of time spent in the office. Knowing your business inside and out is just as vital as knowing your fields. ■

## Columbia-Snake River System Protected as Administration Reverses Dam Removal Push

The current administration has ended plans to breach the four Lower Snake River dams in Eastern Washington—Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite—reversing a 2023 Biden-era agreement that sought to explore dam removal for salmon recovery. These dams are essential to the Pacific Northwest’s agricultural and energy systems, enabling the transport of U.S. grain and oilseeds, and generating renewable hydropower. Their removal would have threatened U.S. agricultural exports, rural economies, and national food and energy security.

The Columbia-Snake River System stands as a vital transportation artery and a cornerstone of the wheat export infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). It delivers critical services to U.S. wheat farmers, international customers, and the broader grain supply chain. Barging on this system moves more than half of all annual U.S. wheat exports.

Six export terminals along the PNW coast supply wheat to more than 20 Pacific Rim countries through

a seamless network of trucks, rail, and barges. The Snake River alone carries over 10 percent of total U.S. wheat exports each year. Notably, about 75 percent of all exported soft white wheat grown in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho moves by barge—emphasizing the system’s importance to both regional growers and global markets.

Barging is also among the most sustainable and efficient means of transportation. A single four-barge tow carries the same volume of grain as 144 railcars or 538 semi-trucks, while consuming less fuel and producing fewer carbon emissions. This efficiency helps farmers move high volumes of wheat at lower cost, offsetting rising rail rates and keeping U.S. wheat competitive worldwide.

The locks and dams along the Lower Snake and Columbia Rivers are irreplaceable infrastructure, ensuring the reliable, cost-effective movement of U.S.-grown wheat to high-value markets around the globe. ■



**INLAND PORTS**  
& NAVIGATION GROUP

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## **Inland Ports and Navigation Group Applauds President's Executive Action to Rescind MOU Regarding Columbia Snake River System**

Portland, OR — The Inland Ports & Navigation Group (IPNG) supports President Trump's executive action today to rescind the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the six sovereigns regarding the management of the Columbia Snake River system.

"The MOU put our region on a path toward breaching the 4 lower Snake River dams, failing to consider the devastating economic impact such action would have on the region and the vital role that the river system plays in supporting the Pacific Northwest and national economy", said IPNG Co-Chair, Leslie Druffel of the McGregor Company. "We'd like to thank our congressional advocates, including Representatives Baumgartner (5th-WA), Bentz (2nd-OR), Newhouse (4th-WA), and Fulcher (1st-ID) as well as Senators Crapo (ID) and Risch (ID) for the continuous support for reliable and efficient navigation on the river system."

President Trump's decision to rescind the MOU is a significant step towards ensuring the continued prosperity of the Pacific Northwest. The Columbia Snake River system is a critical transportation route for the region, as well as for agriculture producers in the upper Midwest, supporting tens of thousands of jobs and contributing billions of dollars to the economy each year. It is the largest wheat export gateway in the U.S.

"Dams and salmon can co-exist," said IPNG Co-Chair Patrick Harbison, of the Port of Kalama (WA). "In fact, salmon runs have actually increased since the construction of the dams due to state-of-the-art bypass systems and fish ladders that were installed at each of the dams on the system."

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (of which IPNG is a part) Executive Director Neil Maunu stated, "The divisive issue of dam breaching has prevented the type of partnerships necessary to work together on productive strategies and actions to improve salmon populations for the benefit of all Pacific Northwest residents." IPNG supports a comprehensive approach to salmon recovery in the region that focuses on projects that truly benefit salmon, such as reintroduction above Grand Coulee, habitat access and restoration, predator abatement, toxics reduction, and hatchery improvements. "We can have salmon and a robust economy at the same time", said Maunu.

*For reference, the Official Presidential Memo: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/06/stopping-radical-environmentalism-to-generate-power-for-the-columbia-river-basin/>*

*Fact sheet: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/06/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-stops-the-green-agenda-in-the-columbia-river-basin/>*

## End ##

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The **Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG)** is comprised of ports, farmers, pilots, transportation companies, terminals and water resources stakeholders who work to balance economic prosperity with environmental stewardship. They strive to protect inland navigation, hydropower, irrigation on the Columbia Snake River System, while supporting a healthy environment and robust fish runs in the Northwest. IPNG is a subset of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), a broad regional trade group representing over 150 members from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. The Columbia Snake River system is a vital transportation link for the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. The economies of these four states rely on the trade and commerce that flows up and down this critical commercial gateway. The inland portion of the system is a 360-mile long "water highway" from the Portland/Vancouver area to Lewiston, Idaho. It moves approximately 4.7 million tons of commercial cargo each year. The eight navigation locks and associated 14-foot inland channel are vital components to this river system, and significant assets to the nation's navigation infrastructure. Learn more at [www.pnwa.net](http://www.pnwa.net).



# Idaho Wheat Commissioner Ends Service with U.S. Wheat Associates

At its annual meeting on July 17, 2025, in Boise, Idaho, the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) board of directors officially seated its officers for the 2025/26 fiscal year. USW, the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry, also recognized the service of outgoing 2024/25 Chairman Clark Hamilton of Ririe, Idaho.

Hamilton formally passed the gavel to incoming Chairman Jim Pellman, a farmer from McClusky, North Dakota. Hamilton will continue serving on the USW board as past chairman.

Clark and his wife, Kristi, own and operate Hamilton Triple C Farms, a diversified, 6,000-acre family farm that produces wheat, barley, potatoes, canola, and alfalfa. During his time with USW, Hamilton represented American wheat farmers around the world—visiting international USW offices, attending conferences in Asia and South America, and meeting face-to-face with global customers.

“Clark’s involvement in USW activities both in Idaho and overseas is not only impactful but also deeply valued by USW staff and our customers,” said Mike Spier, President of U.S. Wheat Associates. “His humility, gratitude, and respect for the team have been a true inspiration to our staff as they work to promote U.S. wheat exports.”



Clark Hamilton passes the gavel to newly appointed U.S. Wheat Associates Chair Jim Pellman from North Dakota

Hamilton prioritized listening to customer needs and emphasized the importance of quality and reliability in U.S. wheat. Under his leadership, USW focused on strategic marketing efforts that strengthened the global reputation of both the U.S. and Idaho wheat industries.

“I will miss the interaction with our customers the most,” Hamilton said during his farewell speech at the annual meeting. “This opportunity was one I didn’t take lightly. When I first joined USW, I didn’t fully realize how vital the organization is in exporting our product. It’s been a pleasure to work with USW and to learn about all they do on behalf of farmers.”

Before serving with USW, Hamilton was appointed to the Idaho Wheat Commission by Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter in 2015 and reappointed by Governor Brad Little in 2020. Prior to that, he served five years on the board of the Idaho Grain Producers Association, further demonstrating his long-standing commitment to Idaho agriculture and wheat growers.

“There are certain people in this world who inspire you to be a better person simply by knowing them, and Clark Hamilton is definitely one of those individuals,” said Cory Kress, Chair of the Idaho Wheat Commission. “I’ve had the honor of working alongside him at both the Idaho Grain Producers



Clark Hamilton hosts a delegation from the Japan Flour Millers Association at his farm in Ririe, Idaho



Association and the Idaho Wheat Commission for more than a decade.”

“Clark has an undeniable passion for the wheat industry,” Kress continued. “He leads with steady hands, grounded humbly in his love for agriculture. He has represented America’s farmers around the world with professionalism and sincere pride. Clark’s presence in the wheat industry will be deeply missed.”

Hamilton’s legacy of dedicated leadership has strengthened connections between farmers and international customers, ensuring the reputation of U.S. and Idaho wheat continues to thrive on the world stage. ■



Clark Hamilton hosts a trade team from Ecuador at his farm in Ririe, Idaho

## A Critical Link is Expanded Through the Partnership Between Baking and Wheat

BY CHRISTINE KIRBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOME BAKING ASSOCIATION

The partnership between wheat and baking has a long-standing history spanning centuries. Providing education alongside essential life skills lays an important foundation for individuals across all generations. The Home Baking Association’s (HBA) mission is to advocate for increased baking by providing tools and knowledge to perpetuate home baking, with a focus on family and consumer sciences (FCS) educators in middle and secondary schools, cooperative extension FCS and 4-H educators, home bakers, after-school and youth programs, and other partners who share baking skills and knowledge.

HBA’s farm-to-oven educational mission is carried out through hands-on workshops, presentations, and



a dynamic digital media program on its website and social media, all wrapped around STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture/Art, and Math) principles in baking. This important outreach is made possible by HBA’s members and national partners.



Sharon Davis, consultant for the Home Baking Association, collaborating with educators at “The Build FCS Baking STEAM: Home to Careers Boot Camp” held at the University of Idaho.

The Home Baking Association and the Idaho Wheat Commission began their collaboration last year as keynote speakers at the Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, aiming to enhance professional understanding of the diversity and nutritional value of flour and grain-based foods in the diet.

Sharon Davis, consultant for the Home Baking Association, and Britany Hurst Marchant, Executive Director of the Idaho Wheat Commission, highlighted

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Idaho’s unique role as a leading wheat-producing state—growing five of the six classes of wheat—which enables a broad range of products to meet baking and nutrition needs locally. Attendees received comprehensive wheat and baking resources to help them provide accurate information to consumers and dispel common myths. The session, themed Flour is Not Just Flour, featured interactive activities, including demonstrations of focaccia bread artfully decorated with vegetables. Outreach from this event reached approximately 125 dietitians and nutritionists, each with the potential to inform at least 150 individuals, greatly amplifying the educational impact.

Once again, the HBA’s Sharon Davis and Idaho Wheat’s Britany Hurst Marchant partnered with Dr. Katie Miner, Senior Instructor of Family & Consumer Sciences at the University of Idaho, to deliver an immersive educational experience. Eighteen FCS educators collaborated to develop skills they could take back to their classrooms, baking with different classes of wheat grown in Idaho. Each educator is expected to reach at least 150 households annually. Many expressed strong interest in the new Baking Science Fundamentals Certification—offered through HBA and AAFCS—as well as ongoing webinars and professional training. The two-day workshop covered topics such as measurement accuracy, the functions of baking ingredients, gluten exploration, contemporary baking trends, sensory analysis of muffins made with various flours, ingredient analysis, and the preparation of multiple dough types for everyday meals.

“The Build FCS Baking STEAM: Home to Careers Boot Camp, held in the University of Idaho’s Carmelita Spencer Foods Laboratory, was a powerful example of what can happen when passionate partners unite with a shared purpose,” said Dr. Katie Miner. “Through the collaboration of the Home Baking Association, the Idaho Wheat Commission, and the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences, participants didn’t just gain hands-on skills—they left inspired, empowered, and better equipped to connect classroom learning to real-world careers. Each partner brought unique strengths to the table, and together they created an unforgettable learning experience that will continue to ripple through classrooms, kitchens, and communities for years to come.”

Each participant received a comprehensive HBA Bakers Dozen Lab Manual, supplemental educational resources from various HBA members, and flour for the baking



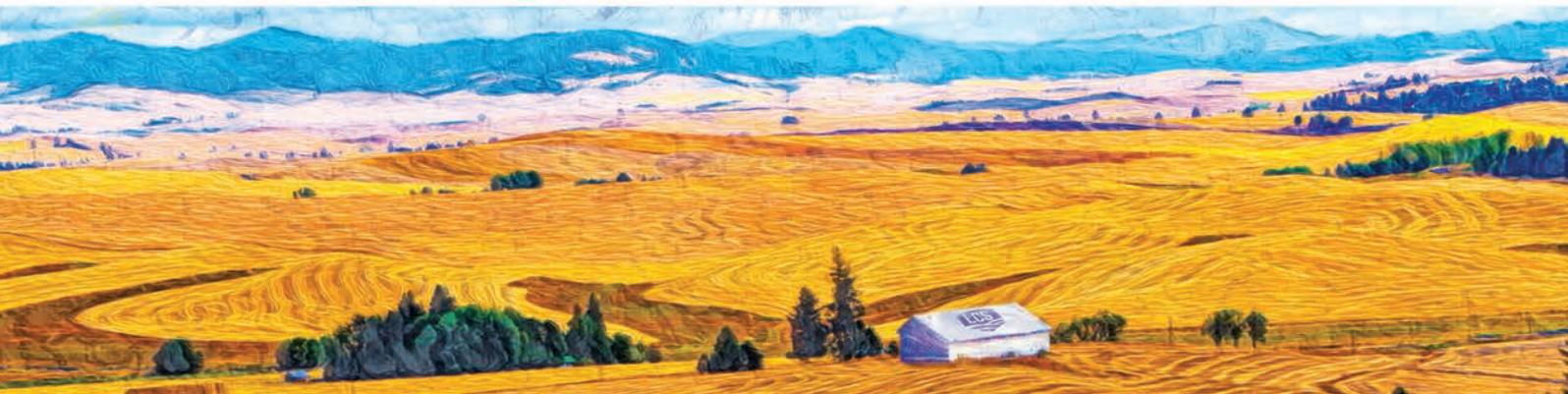
Idaho Wheat Executive Director Britany Hurst Marchant attending the Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with the Home Baking Association

labs—along with samples—courtesy of Grain Craft. The positive impact of early baking education was highlighted by guest speaker Cayllie Trujillo, a teenage cottage baker who shared how baking helped her develop valuable skills and achieve financial growth. The industry offers a wide range of career opportunities in milling, baking, agriculture, and ingredient supply sectors.

“The Home Baking Association (HBA), focused on family and consumer science educators at middle schools, high schools, and universities, is uniquely positioned to promote wheat foods as part of a healthy and nutritious diet to tomorrow’s consumers and consumption influencers,” Britany Hurst Marchant said. “Correcting misinformation and building students’ relationships with wheat now is a strategy with long-term impacts. Investing grower dollars in a collaborative partnership with HBA provides an avenue by which the Idaho Wheat Commission can promote Idaho wheat, increase domestic consumption, and help secure domestic market demand today and in the years to come.”

The ongoing collaboration and partnership between the Idaho Wheat Commission and the Home Baking Association furthers the mission of expanding baking education through family and consumer sciences outreach across Idaho and the nation. Flour remains an essential ingredient, and baking continues to be both a scientific discipline and a rewarding, enjoyable pursuit. ■

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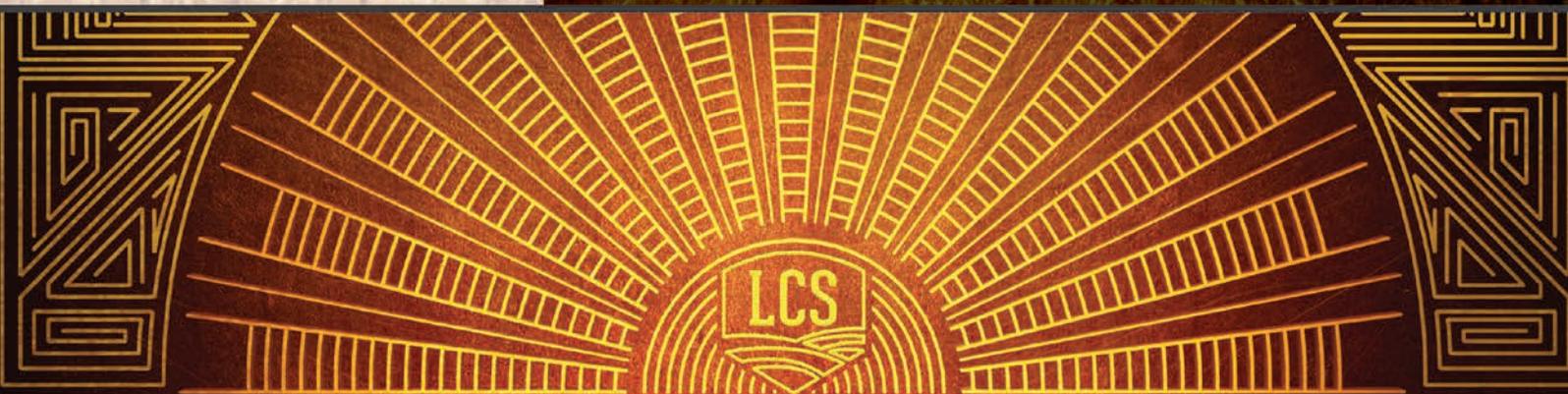
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# Looking Before a Leap into HB4 Wheat

BY JULIA MCCARTHY, FREELANCE WRITER

*This article was originally written for Ag Proud – Idaho. You can view more content like this at [www.agproud.com](http://www.agproud.com)*



Genetically modified (GM) crops grown in the U.S. include corn, soybean, sugarbeets, canola, cotton,

alfalfa, papaya, apples, potatoes, summer squash and pink pineapple. Following a decision released by the USDA last August, wheat could be joining that lineup within the next decade.

HB4 is a drought-tolerance trait that originated in sunflowers and has been successful in soybean. It has also been integrated into wheat in South America. Bioceres Crop Solutions, the company that developed HB4 wheat, has now received regulatory approval for cultivation for research purposes and consumption in the U.S. and will likely pursue approval for commercialization in the U.S. and other nations, including some of the U.S.’s export partners.

## A slow start ...

Though regulatory hurdles are cleared for HB4, U.S. farmers will not be growing GM wheat within the next year, or probably even five. It must first be bred into a U.S. wheat variety.

“It’s not a trivial process,” says Idaho Wheat Commission (IWC) research consultant Dr. Jim Peterson, of inserting a GM trait into a new crop. “Once you’ve got it into a recipient wheat plant you can work with, then you can begin conventional breeding with the trait.”

A program in Colorado is now in the early stages of the process, but conventional breeding takes time. “They have made some early crosses,” Peterson says, “but even if you fast-track developments, it will be a number of years.” To breed a spring wheat variety and bring it to market commonly requires six to eight years at minimum, and a winter wheat variety, eight to 10 years.

“There are few wheat varieties used as recipients for GM traits due to difficulties in regeneration from tissue culture,” says Peterson. Then, too, he says, breeders must consider other important traits that the HB4 trait could affect. The result must contain the agronomic and end-use traits demanded by U.S. producers and consumers.



Much of the wheat grown in Idaho is of a soft white variety, like this crop in north-central Idaho. Idaho producers also typically see yields above the threshold where drought-tolerant HB4 wheat outperforms non-GM varieties. Image by Julia McCarthy.

## ... but a long reach

For agronomic reasons, HB4 wheat is unlikely to be planted in Idaho. Cory Kress is a dryland grower in Power County and District 5 Idaho wheat commissioner. “It’s really only beneficial in places that yield in the 20 to 30 [bushel per acre] range,” he says. “The benefit all but disappears when you get over 50 to 60 [bushels per acre].”

This means dryland producers on the High Plains will probably be most interested in HB4 wheat, which places the target for breeding efforts on hard red varieties. “Hard red winter wheat is the most widely grown class of wheat in the U.S. and is widely grown in the Great Plains,” says IWC Executive Director Britany Hurst Marchant.

But even if drought-resistant wheat never ventures beyond the High Plains, its effects likely will. Currently, nonuniform weather patterns across the U.S. stabilize the total wheat crop. “There is concern that a drought-tolerant wheat could upset the balance, increasing wheat supplies and driving down prices,” says Hurst Marchant. Another question is whether yields will impact protein levels, an important consideration for end-use quality in hard red varieties.



Whatever the direct impact of HB4 wheat, the precedent may be the most important aspect for Idaho ag. “Once we have approval to use GM technology in grain, it won’t stay in hard red wheat,” says District 4 Idaho Wheat Commissioner and U.S. Wheat Associates Chairman Clark Hamilton, a producer in Bonneville County. “It opens the door.”

### Public perception

The big question is whether consumers are ready for that door to be opened. “The public has accepted [GM technology] in some areas, such as the medical field,” says Hamilton. Synthetic insulin, for example, has been produced by recombinant bacteria since the late 1970s.

But skepticism around genetic modification in food crops remains. “Just because USDA has approved it for the U.S. doesn’t mean our markets will accept it,” says Peterson. A 2016 Pew Research Center report stated that about a sixth of Americans “care deeply” about GM technology in food production, with a majority of those holding a negative view of GM crops. The same report showed that 39% of Americans believe GM foods are less healthy than non-GM foods. A 2019-21 study based on social media mentions yielded similar numbers.

“I think GMO technology is 100 percent safe, but public perception is reality,” says Kress. “Right now there is already a lot of questioning around our food supply – I wonder if now is the time for something like this.”

### Protecting the export option

Pushback in the domestic market is not the only concern. About half of Idaho’s wheat – and half the nation’s – is exported. “I can’t overstate how important the overseas market is,” says Hamilton. Trade partners have come to expect consistently high-quality grain, and not all of them look favorably upon GM technology.

Mexico, the Philippines, Japan and China together purchased about half of the U.S.’s 2024 wheat exports. Although some trade partners are open to importing GM food and feed, both Japan and China are expected

to push back on purchasing GM wheat.

So it may benefit Idaho growers to wait and watch while Argentina pioneers this technology. “Let’s see how consumers around the world respond to what’s being done in other countries,” says Kress. “I don’t think there’s any harm in tapping the brakes a bit. It’s not a bad thing to be behind.”

That goes for other wheat sectors in the U.S., too. “By not introducing the trait into soft white wheat, we can preserve those export markets if there is pushback on it,” Hurst Marchant says.

### Are we there yet?

The issue, says Hamilton, is about “balancing staying up on technology and being competitive versus maintaining those overseas markets.” Before growers move ahead, they will need destination markets to set the tolerances for contamination.

Another big issue will be infrastructure to maintain separation between GM and non-GM wheat, as the latter will likely maintain a niche market. This means everything from planting equipment to elevators to mills, as seen in the organic market.

Hurst Marchant says the growers she’s talked to seem to have mixed feelings about the development. “The more

you talk about it, the more circular the conversation goes,” she says. While many are optimistic – and eager to compete with corn and soybeans – they are also cautious.

“I think GMO food is safe. It’s a way to feed the entire world with less chemicals, less erosion and less land,” says Kress. “I’m not anti-GMO in any way, and I think it’s perfectly safe, but I think we need to let the consumer tell us when it’s time instead of trying to dictate to the consumer.”

“I have no fear of raising GM wheat, no fear that it is unhealthy,” says Hamilton. “If the market demands it and I am confident that I am growing a quality product, yeah, I’d grow it. But I have enough respect for the people I sell wheat to, to listen to their concerns.”

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# Showcasing Idaho Barley to the World – Mexican Brewing Representatives Visit Idaho

Earlier this summer, the Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) hosted U.S. Grains Council (USGC) trade teams from two major multinational brewers based in Mexico in an effort to showcase Idaho’s high quality barley supply for increased potential sales of Idaho barley and malt to Mexico.

The visits included stops at Idaho barley farms to help educate the representatives about barley production practices, irrigation, soil health management, agricultural technology, barley varieties and conservation practices, as well as meetings with University of Idaho and U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) scientists, maltsters, grain elevators, grain inspection services and

Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) plant industries staff.

“Providing opportunities for potential buyers to meet with stakeholders all along the value chain is crucial in fostering trust and strong business relationships,” said IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder who coordinated



Ivor Gibbs of Gibbs Farms in Grace discusses drone use on their farm as a precision tool for efficiency and cost savings.



A major brewer based in Mexico visited Young Family Farms near Blackfoot to learn about barley production and energy saving efforts on farms.



A Mexican-based multinational brewer learned about Idaho grain inspection and export processes from Dustin Young of Idaho Grain Inspection Service in Pocatello.



Dr. Juliet Marshall, University of Idaho, and Dr. Gongshe Hu, USDA-ARS, discuss barley varieties with a Mexican based international brewer at the Aberdeen research station.



the Idaho visits. “The connections made during these visits will help solidify growth in export demand for Idaho barley in the coming years.”

“Team members were impressed with how, through sustainable practices, farmers lower input costs like water and fertilizer and evaluate new barley varieties

for potential future trials,” said Javier Chavez, USGC senior marketing manager and escort for the teams.

“These programs help buyers see first-hand how Idaho barley growers can be consistent reliable suppliers for their brewing operations, as well as help their companies meet their sustainability goals.” ■

## Idaho Barley Commission Hosts Multi-Commodity Education Program in Idaho

The Multi-Commodity Education Program (MCEP) is an annual educational exchange, sponsored by John Deere and coordinated by the National Cotton Council. MCEP offers growers from cotton-growing regions the opportunity to experience farming of different commodities in a northern-tier state and to foster understanding and collaboration across the agricultural sector. The location of the tour rotates each year, alternating between northern growers visiting the Cotton Belt and cotton growers visiting states like Idaho, Montana or North Dakota.

This year, the Idaho Barley Commission coordinated the tour, highlighting Idaho’s role as the top barley producing state and its integral connection to the malting and brewing industries. MCEP gives participants a fresh perspective on management practices, builds understanding of regional challenges and forms lasting connections among growers.

In June, ten growers from Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Arizona, Alabama, California, and Tennessee learned about the diversity of Idaho agriculture with stops that included the Anheuser-Busch malting facility in Idaho Falls, Bayer’s phosphate mine in Soda Springs, Walters Produce in Newdale, and many others. Local growers and industry leaders explained how water, climate and elevation, as well as crop rotations and agricultural technology contribute to Idaho’s agricultural success.

“As someone from the South, I deeply value good hospitality and genuine people. During my visit to Idaho for the Multi-Commodity Education Program (MCEP), I felt right at home. The Idaho Barley Commission staff were exceptional hosts and put together an educational and enjoyable program. Participating in the MCEP reaffirmed my belief that



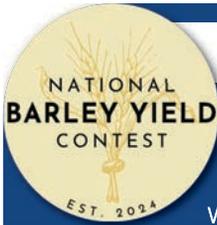
MCEP participants toured the Anheuser Busch malting facility in Idaho Falls to learn how barley is processed, malted and stored for brewing.

whether you’re in a cotton field in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina or a barley field in Idaho’s High Desert, the roots of agriculture are its people,” said David Parrish, Chief Executive Officer for North Carolina Cotton Growers Association and participant in this year’s MCEP rotation.

Barley, wheat and mustard grower, Idaho Grain Producer’s Association (IGPA) Past President, Justin Place welcomed the group on his family farm where they learned about mustard, wheat and barley production. The Place Family hosted lunch at their home, where other local growers and industry representatives joined the group, adding to the educational and community atmosphere.

“Having participated in the Multi-Commodity Education Program and now hosting southern cotton growers, I’ve seen how valuable this exchange is,” said Place. “The National Cotton Council brings thoughtful leaders who are eager to learn. I host each year because

Continued on next page



## Think You've Got a Bin-Buster? Prove It! It's not too late!

No matter the state of your current crop, we want your entry! Whether you're harvesting in a high-yielding county or growing on dryland, there's a category for you. With multiple divisions and categories, it's truly anyone's game!



### PRO TIP:

Chat with your field representatives about entry fee sponsorships!

Winners from last year earned a paid trip to the Commodity Classic, and this year's grand prize is still to be revealed (but trust us, it'll be worth it). This year, the entry process is simpler than ever! We've streamlined the forms to make submitting quick and easy.

Download the 2025 National Barley Yield Contest Rules and Harvest Entry Form at <https://www.idahobarleycommission.org/barley-yield-contest/>

Please read through the contest rules thoroughly.

Continued from previous page

I believe in the power of shared knowledge. I've even applied water-conservation practices from cotton growers back home."

Programs like MCEP foster connection, collaboration, and continued innovation across commodities and state lines. As agriculture evolves, opportunities like these ensure producers stay informed, inspired, and united. ■

## Dustin Camphouse Appointed Idaho Barley Commission Industry Representative

The Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dustin Camphouse, Farm Business Manager for Great Western Malting (part of Soufflet Malt), as its newest Industry Representative. IBC Chairman, Allen Young appointed Camphouse as IBC Industry Representative on June 4. He succeeds JC Olson.



Dustin Camphouse, New IBC Industry Representative

IBC is governed by a board of four commissioners – three growers from each of the three barley districts within the state are appointed by the Governor, and the Industry Representative is selected by the three grower commissioners. Camphouse will be eligible to be reappointed for an additional 3-year term.

Based in Blackfoot, Camphouse brings nearly 20 years of industry experience and a deep-rooted passion for agriculture to the Commission. He began his career with Anheuser-Busch, where he held various roles over nine years ranging from seed operations and quality control to malting operations and capital project management. In 2015, he joined Great Western Malting as a Field Representative and was promoted to Farm Business Manager in 2022.

In his role at Great Western Malting, he works closely with farmers across the region to ensure high-quality grain supply, manage delivery logistics, and support operational efficiencies. His collaborative approach, strategic mindset, and passion for the industry make him a valuable addition to the Commission. Camphouse earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Idaho State University, a background that supports his strengths in budgeting, forecasting and long-term planning.

"As the IBC Industry Representative, I look forward to bringing a practical, boots-on-the-ground perspective to the Commission, grounded in years of hands-on experience in the malting and barley sector. My goal is to be strong advocate for industry needs, helping bridge the gap between producers, processors, and end-users to drive innovation. I'm committed to serving with transparency, collaboration, and focus on global solutions that will benefit Idaho's barley industry," said Camphouse.

With his blend of technical knowledge, grower relationships and strategic insight, Camphouse will help guide the Idaho Barley Commission as it continues to support a resilient profitable future for Idaho's barley industry. ■



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