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EDITOR'S NOTE

BY AMAYA AGUIRRE-LANDA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The timing couldn't be better for this issue. As 2026 is recognized as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, March marks Women's History Month, and National Women in Agriculture Day falls on March 27, we're proud to make the first issue of the year a celebration of the women who shape Idaho's grain industry.

In this issue, we've taken the opportunity to highlight the women you know, and some you may not. These are the women conducting vital research in the field, leading state and national organizations, owning and operating farms alongside their families, running parts, preparing meals, and advocating at the Capitol to ensure the strength and vitality of their operations at home and beyond.

On page 10, you'll meet IGPA member Sheila Hasselstrom. Turn to page 8 to learn more about University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean Leslie Edgar. You'll also get to know Idaho legislators who champion agriculture on pages 6 and 22. Throughout the issue, we celebrate the many women whose work and leadership shape this industry every day.

National Women in Agriculture Day honors the more than 1.2 million female agricultural producers in the United States, over one-third of the nation's farmers. From producers and field representatives to agronomists and advocates, women play an essential role in agriculture.

Here's to the women in agriculture, and to the lasting impact they continue to make on Idaho's grain industry!



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PRESIDENT'S VIEW

BY KYLE WANGEMANN | PRESIDENT

As president of the Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA), I've witnessed firsthand the resilience and grit that define us as farmers. This year will present a mix of challenges and opportunities for Idaho agriculture. Low commodity markets and rising input costs certainly makes it challenging. Weather patterns that make it look like winter hardly came. I read that the groundhog saw his shadow so maybe we will see it come! Grain producers across the state have had to adapt quickly to these conditions. Water being our most needed resource could be a major challenge. Whatever the challenges might be, it could provide some alternative opportunities. I watch farmers all around me innovate and come up with new ideas to improve their operations or implement different farming practices to do and be better.

During times of adversity, the strength of our community is our greatest asset. Idaho growers are leaning into new practices that improve soil health and water efficiency, exploring precision agriculture tools to make every input dollar go further. Participating in local and regional risk-management programs to protect their operations. At IGPA, we're advocating for policies that support fair market

access, enhanced infrastructure, and investment in agricultural policy which is vital to building long-term stability. We're also increasing our outreach and education efforts so producers have access to the latest information on policy and legislation happening on the state and national level.

I am confident in the future of Idaho agriculture. Farmers have faced adversity before and have emerged stronger because of it. By continuing to embrace innovation and advocating for policies that help our farms remain competitive, we can turn challenges into opportunities. As I look to this upcoming year and the obstacles we face, I hope we come out stronger and better on the other side.

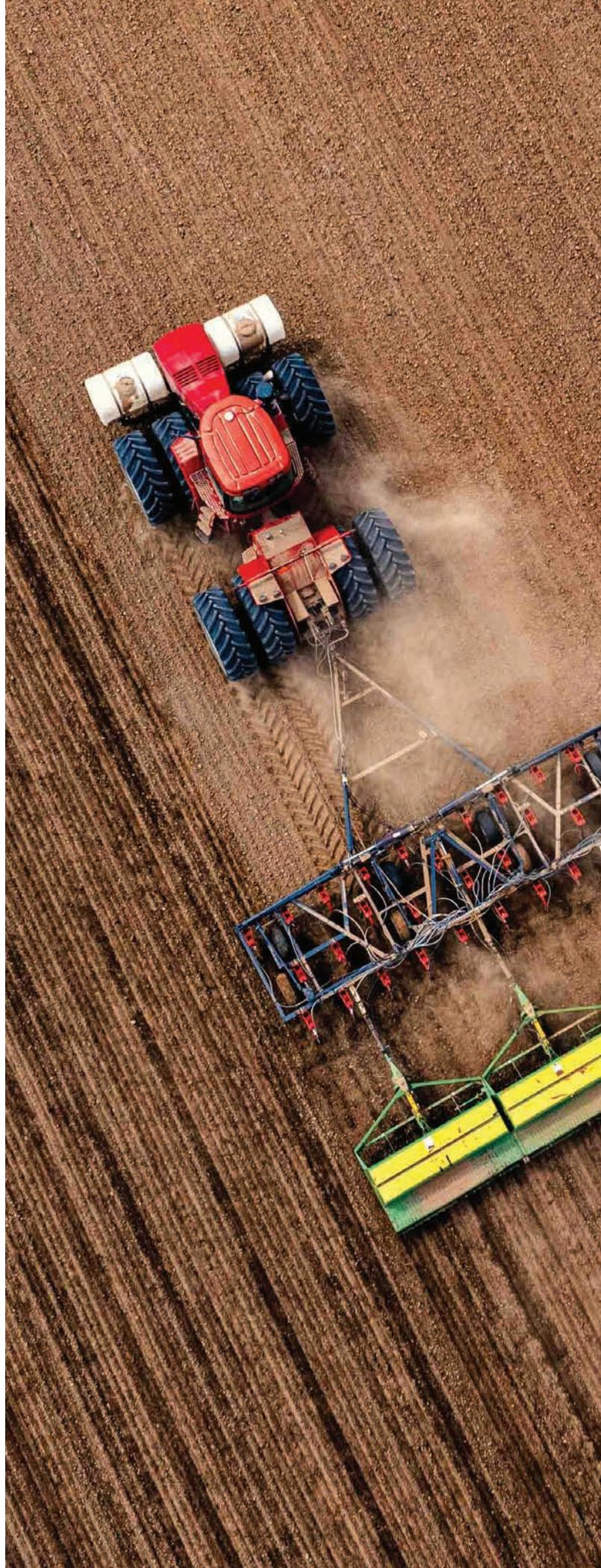


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IGPA ISSUES

IGPA is the only organization solely dedicated to protecting Idaho's wheat and barley growers by representing their interests at the state and national level.

Idaho's grain farmers have helped keep grocery store shelves stocked and families fed for generations. Whether it's a bowl of cereal or a loaf of warm bread, the fruits of our growers' labor are essential ingredients in the meals we share and in the lives we live. Idaho's agriculture community deserves the certainty they rely on to thrive.





REPRESENTATIVE
JULIE VANORDEN
PINGREE, ID | DISTRICT 30



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

I grew up on a farm in Bingham County, that is still in my family. My husband is Garth VanOrden. I currently live in Pingree with my sons living “across the street” and “on the other side of the pasture”.

Who had the greatest influence on you during your childhood?

My dad, Masa Tsukamoto, was the biggest influence in my life. His patience with me was my most memorable part of my life, he taught me life’s lessons without demeaning me. My parents also were examples of community members, they socialized with many people and there never seemed to be any bias.

How about a happy memory from your childhood?

One of the best memories of my childhood was being a cheerleader in junior high school. The cheerleader advisor was Mrs. Rodonna Katseanes (Stacey’s Grandma!). She was also my home economics teacher, that was one of my favorite classes. I guess you could say she was one of my favorite teachers.

Education?

I graduated from Blackfoot High School and continued my education at College of Southern Idaho. I received a certificate



from Idaho State University’s Vocational Technical College in data entry.

Tell us about your family.

Garth and I have four children: Shaun, Dillon, Jason (deceased), and Lisa. Shaun and Dillon are partners with us on the farm. Shaun’s wife, Mishell, does much of the farm audit bookwork and compliance work. Dillon’s wife, Cassaundra, is a nurse administrator at a dialysis center. My daughter, Lisa, works at a university in Kyoto, Japan and is pursuing a masters in IT informatics. I have three grandchildren and a great granddaughter.

How did you meet your spouse?

My husband and I met through mutual friends, our first official date was to the LDS church Pingree 1st ward family bazaar. He wanted me to meet his mother who was helping with the event. Evidently, I must have been impressed.

What do you do in your free time?

I train for and participate in competitive horse reining. I try to be a full-time participant but my political job is somewhat full time too. My husband and I have also taken up horse breeding and foaling.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Independent.





I ran for office to be involved in state decision making as I feel I have life experiences that will help me bring a unique perspective.

Why did you decide to run for office?

I ran for office to be involved in state decision making as I feel I have life experiences that will help me bring a unique perspective. When I was in the House of Representatives I had just finished being on my local school board so I naturally went on the education committee. It has been a steep learning curve to be on the Health and Welfare committee but I appreciate the challenge.

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

I have served on the following committees: Joint Finance and Appropriations, Health and Welfare and Natural Resources. I currently serve on Health and Welfare (Chairman), Agricultural Affairs, and Natural Resources. My path to leadership involves being a good example of an intentional listener. I purposely don't take my cell phone into a committee that I am chairing. I hope never to let a problem become more important than a person.

What challenges do you think the state faces in the next few years?

I believe the challenge Idaho will face is a looming recession. Idaho's constitution calls for a annual balanced budget, to make



that happen the legislature will face the prospect of using rainy day funds and making hard decisions.

What do you love most about Idaho?

I love the cleanliness of Idaho and the independence of its people.

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

I would like to see more student literacy accomplishment happen. Working on updating our state budget to address wasteful spending. Put in place a subsidy system that addresses real needs, in real time and rewards self-reliance.

U of I CALS Dean Credits Idaho Ag Upbringing for Shaping Work Ethic

Throughout Leslie Edgar's childhood, her father often repeated a favorite saying: "If you need a helping hand, look at the end of your arm."

Heeding his advice has taken Edgar far in life. On June 23, University of Idaho welcomed Edgar as the J.R. Simplot Endowed Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. She attributes her ascension through academia to parents who taught her the value of education and self-reliance, and her upbringing with a large family on a small farm.

They had a diversified operation and raised hay, cattle and sheep on a small farm located in southwest Idaho between Meridian and Kuna – her parents still live on the farm, but the once rural property is now surrounded by homes. She remembers fondly the time she spent at the U of I Parma Research and Extension Center learning about cutting-edge innovations and production practices in fruit trees and row crops.

Throughout her childhood, she completed daily farm chores and helped cover her own living expenses by doing jobs for neighbors such as detasseling corn and milking cows.

"I thought everyone had to start making enough money to buy their own school clothes at the age of 12 because that is what we had to do," Edgar recalled.

The farm made it possible for Edgar to participate in FFA animal projects, which helped her grow in responsibility and leadership.

She further developed her soft skills by holding Kuna FFA chapter leadership positions, including secretary and reporter, which she credits as the beginning of her love for communications, and eventually as the Snake River District FFA vice president. In high school, Edgar also served as a junior 4-H leader to assist youth



with livestock projects, thereby solidifying her passion for UI Extension 4-H Youth Development.

"The blessing I had being raised in rural Idaho in a large family with parents who taught us a work ethic was to understand that there are a lot of things we can do on our own," Edgar said. "Learning to do hard things at an early age taught me quickly that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to."

Edgar started her pursuit of higher education at Ricks College in Rexburg – now Brigham Young University-Idaho. She finished her bachelor's degree in animal science with a pre-veterinary option at Utah State University in Logan, Utah, where she also earned a master's degree in agricultural systems, technology and education.

She then went to work for a nonprofit organization based in Elko, Nevada, known for hosting the national cowboy poetry gathering, called the Western Folklife Center. As the educational coordinator, Edgar managed a grant focused on the production of a series of videos called Ranch Communications from the late 1990s through the early 2000s, documenting ranchers' stories and selling episodes on VHS tapes from the center's storefront.

Next, she took a job as development director of the American West Heritage Center in Wellsville, Utah, fundraising and writing grants.

She later returned to school and earned a doctorate in agricultural leadership, education and communications from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. While in Texas, she married Don Edgar, who is now the head of U of I's Department of Agricultural Education, Leadership and Communications. She had three young children from a prior marriage, and he had two young children.



Edgar feels blessed to be back in Idaho and contributing in a meaningful way to Gem State agriculture – an industry that was instrumental in her personal development.

In 2007, Edgar began her career in academia at University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, working as an agricultural communications faculty member, and later as director of international programs for the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Science. She also became director of the honors program and was ultimately promoted to assistant dean of student programs.

She joined University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, in 2018, serving as a professor and head of the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication.

In 2020, she joined New Mexico's land-grant university, New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, as associate dean of research and director of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

"I built that next part of my career on the philosophy that it's not our science that's flawed at land-grant universities. It's our inability to communicate the science that's flawed," Edgar said. "How do we work directly with producers and consumers and make sure we're telling effective stories? With more than 98% of our population not associated with agriculture, we must better tell our stories with a defined focus on impacts."

Prior to her current appointment with CALS at U of I, she served as associate dean of research and director of the Agricultural Research Center in the College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resources Sciences at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, managing a more than \$125 million annual research portfolio.

Edgar feels blessed to be back in Idaho and contributing in a meaningful way to Gem State agriculture – an industry that was instrumental in her personal development. She's also honored that her current position pays homage to J.R. Simplot, a legendary figure in Idaho agriculture who built a multi-billion-dollar company that now spans multiple continents.

More than six months into the job, she's on pace to meet a personal goal to visit each of the college's 45 Extension offices, which represent all of Idaho's 44 counties and three federally recognized tribal programs, in a year's time. She's also overseeing the college's efforts to update a comprehensive strategic plan establishing priorities through 2030. Faculty and staff are participating in working groups to refine pillars associated with



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major goals of the plan, and an external group will make final recommendations before a plan is submitted in early July.

"We can't do everything for everyone, so what are the most critical areas?" Edgar said of the plan's importance.

CALS will celebrate several milestones and anniversaries in 2026. The college will unveil major new facilities including the Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (Idaho CAFE), which will include the nation's largest research dairy; the Deep Soil Ecotron, where scientists will be able to study soils at the greatest depths of any facility in the world; and the Meat Science Innovation Center Honoring Ron Richard, which will house a state-of-the-art, USDA-inspected abattoir.

Celebrations are also planned in 2026 for the 125th anniversary of CALS, the centennial anniversary of the Parma Research and Extension Center and the 25th anniversary of the Nancy M. Cummings Research and Extension Center in Salmon.

"This is also a time to reconnect with our alumni," Edgar said. "If you're a Vandal, friend of a Vandal or an honorary Vandal, find us and come back and celebrate all we have accomplished while supporting this great state."



GROWER PROFILE **SHEILA HASSELSTROM**

What is your upbringing/childhood?

I was raised in Touchet, Washington, on the edge of the Walla Walla Valley. My family owned and operated a 300-acre irrigated farm where we raised alfalfa seed and wheat. I grew up doing the real hands-on work—moving hand line, pulling weeds out of seed crops, and tending leafcutter and alkali bees for pollination.

Over the years, our operation evolved and expanded to include alfalfa hay, wheat, barley, beans, and more recently, contracted Walla Walla onions.

Our farm was purchased by my grandparents, Frank and Marjorie Saranto, and my father, Charles Saranto, helped lead the operation. It was a true family-run corporation, and I was raised in the middle of it—learning early that farming isn't just a job, it's a lifestyle built on responsibility, teamwork, and showing up every day no matter what.

Hometown? Education?

Touchet, Washington — home of the Touchet Indians. I graduated from Touchet High School in 1991. The school has gone through a name change over the years, but I'll always be a Touchet Indian at heart.

I was interested in pursuing a degree in agronomy and completed a couple years of college focused toward that path.

How did you meet your spouse?

That story has a few different versions—depending on who's telling it. But the short answer is: I took a job as a trainee agronomist in Craigmont, Idaho with Harvest States the local Farm Co-op. Eric was a young (and available) grower and customer. Eric and I worked out... but the job didn't.

Thirty years later, here we are.

Tell us about your farm: size, what you grow? When was the operation established?

Our farm is located in Winchester, Idaho, and it has deep roots in both family and community history. Eric's great-grandparents, Warren and Mable Atkinson, purchased the first ground here when the timber industry was booming. They came for

opportunity, built a life, and the farm stayed in the family through the generations. Eric's family operated the farm until he could take the wheel just out of college—and we've been building on that foundation ever since.

Today, Hasselstrom Farms operates around 3,000 acres of owned and leased ground. We're a rotational dryland farm that grows wheat, barley, oats, hay, canola, and black peas. In recent years, we've also started growing heritage grains, with the goal of finding varieties that are better suited to our soils and align with our regenerative farming style.

Livestock has always been part of our operation. We raise cattle and sheep, and this year we added hogs—not just for production, but as a tool to help restore and improve some of our barn pastures. For us, farming is about working with the land, not against it, and building something that can last for the next generation.

Guiding principles of your operation and biggest challenges you face?

The guiding principles at Hasselstrom Farms were shaped long before "regenerative" became a buzzword. Eric's grandfather, Wayne Atkinson, saw the benefits of no-till farming more than 50 years ago. In the 1980s, there were seasons when purchasing commercial fertilizer simply wasn't an option financially, so Wayne got creative—finding natural ways to feed the crop and build the soil instead of depending on inputs that weren't affordable or sustainable.



That mindset is still at the heart of what we do today. We focus on minimum tillage, restoring and feeding the biology of the soil, and raising crops and livestock with intention. We believe the land responds when you manage it with purpose, and we're committed to leaving it better than we found it.

Our biggest challenge is making that intention pay. Our goal as a Idaho farmer is to become a price setter, not a price taker—but walking that path is hard. It takes constant education, real adaptation, and a willingness to change. Those words are easy to write, but not always easy to live out in the middle of a tough year.

At the end of the day, we still have bills to pay. Finding the balance between doing what's right for the land and building a business that works financially—that's the challenge we face every season.

Tell us about your family; who is on the farm?

Eric and I (Sheila) are the sole owner-operators of our farm.

Our oldest son, Kameron, and his wife Alyssa live in Hungary with their two boys, Bodhi and Atlas. Kameron is in the Air Force and is currently stationed in Pápa, Hungary with NATO.

Our son Hunter and his wife Taryn live in Winchester, and they have two kids, Brooklyn and Walker. Hunter works on the family farm and helps run our gravel business during the summers. In the winters, he's found that working for larger construction companies provides steady benefits and financial stability for his family—something that matters when you're raising kids and building a life.

Our daughter Koleen and her husband Chad now live in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Chad works for Western States Cat, and Koleen works with the University of Wyoming and the county extension office. They're also expecting their first child in July, which has been a joyful new chapter for all of us.

Even though our kids are spread out, they're still rooted in agriculture and hard work, and we're proud of the lives they're building.

How do you think women who work in agriculture are perceived? How would you change that if needed?

This is a question I honestly struggle with, because I'm a bit old school. Women have always worked in agriculture. It's not a new concept that suddenly needs a national "lift." Farm women have been working livestock, running equipment, keeping the books, raising families, and serving on local ag and county boards for generations.

Yes, we've seen more women step into national leadership roles over the last 20 years—but if you look back through history, women were already doing the work. They just didn't always get the recognition that comes with it today.

I was a fortunate girl. I was raised by two strong, intelligent, deeply God-fearing farm women as grandmothers, and they shaped how I view work, faith, and agriculture.

My paternal grandmother was raised on a dryland wheat farm in Starbuck, Washington. She planted, harvested, cooked, and

worked every area of the farm. Later in life, she used the grit and discipline farming gave her, to advance her position with Boeing Aircraft during WWII. Later in life, she and Frank chose the farm life in Touchet, Washington, and she was a partner in agriculture in every sense of the word. Her faith anchored her through every season of work and change.



My maternal grandmother was the granddaughter of a sheepherder. She lived and worked with the sheep, the farm, and the home. Education mattered deeply to her, and she attended Whitman College, earning a degree in English. During college she battled tuberculosis, and her grandfather believed fresh air was part of God's healing, so he sent her to the Blue Mountains to sheep camp to cook for the herders. When one of the men didn't return from a weekend out, my grandmother took over the flock. With just her horse—no dog—she tended that band of sheep all summer, finished her college thesis, and, as the story is told, had the fattest flock of sheep off the mountain that year. Her faith, knowledge and animal husbandry carried her.

I guess my point is this: women have always been in agriculture. Actively participating, making decisions. I would even say agriculture is what it is today because of good farm women—women who worked hard, trusted God, and carried their families through difficult seasons. Most of us have one in our backstory, whether we realize it or not.

I see myself as a mix of those women. In my lifetime, I've been a farm hand on our family's farm, I worked for a dryland wheat farmer in the foothills of the Walla Walla valley. I have been shaped by 5 generations of farm epigenetics. I have stood shoulder to shoulder with my husband of 30 years. I've run my own commercial breeding ewe operation, built a direct-to-consumer farm business, drove the equipment, nursed the farm babies, worked off farm for extra income and managed books, to name just a few accomplishments. Let's not forget the three incredible children we raised along the way.

How are women in agriculture perceived? Strong, Generational, Partners, If I could change anything in today's world, it would be this: I'd like to see us return to true partnerships—faith-centered family partnerships—where husbands and wives stay rooted on the farm, work side by side, make the choice together to farm and build something that lasts.

That is where the strength of agriculture has always lived.

Continued on next page

Hasselstrom, continued from previous page

How do you see the future of the U.S. grain industry and the grain industry in Idaho? Challenges we face?

U.S. grain is big business. We've built an industry that relies heavily on foreign markets to make the numbers work. Along the way, we've found ways to plant wheat on ground that was never meant to support a crop, invented systems to fertilize marginal land for higher production, and created countless end uses for U.S. wheat—some beneficial, and some with unintended consequences.

We've also bred wheat varieties to solve problems the global market is worried about at any given moment. Those solutions often make sense short-term, but they aren't always the best answer for the long game—either for the land or for the people farming it.

I don't say this lightly, but I don't see wheat as a consistently successful crop in the immediate future if we continue on the same path. When an Idaho farmer sits down to plan a year and decides to plant wheat primarily because crop insurance guarantees a payout, or because a disaster payment might make things "close to whole," that's not farming—that's risk management as survival.

So where do I see Idaho wheat going?

We have to create new markets. Idaho needs to become a state that grows what can be consumed or processed into consumable products closer to home. That means supporting in-state processing and industry to sustain our wheat-growing habit. It also means looking beyond traditional export partners and asking hard questions of non-traditional markets: What do you actually need? How can we grow wheat that serves you better?

I also believe we'll see more farm families pushed toward vertical integration—taking wheat from the field all the way to a finished product, right here in Idaho. That's not an easy shift, and it comes with real risk, learning curves, and uncomfortable conversations.

I'll be honest—saying these things out loud makes me cringe at the implications. Wheat is deeply woven into Idaho's identity, its economy, and its history. But if we want grain farming here to have a future, we have to be willing to question the systems we've relied on and imagine new ones that actually work—for the land, the farmer, and the next generation.

What do you do for fun?

Fishing—hands down. I love chasing Idaho salmon and steelhead. Whether we catch them out on the ocean before they make the trek home, or we hook into them right here in the Clearwater, it's one of the best ways for us to step away from the farm and reset. We try to escape a couple times a year just to fish, breathe, and remember there's a world beyond chores and deadlines.

And lately... we've also taken a liking to those pesky walleye. Fishing the Snake River for big fat, smolt hungry, momma walleye is another pretty perfect way to get off-farm and unwind.



But honestly, one of my newest "fun" things has been sharing my love of farm cooking with the area. In 2024, I bought a BBQ smoker so I could teach people how to eat lamb—and how good it can really be. Cooking has always been part of my family story, and now it's turned into something I get to share with the community.

I've started catering weddings, cooking for Farm Bureau meetings, and bringing "good food" to local events. I know that might sound like work to some people... but for me, it fits right in with what I love most: feeding people well and building community around real food.

What do you like most about being involved in IGPA?

The connections—with people who are truly involved in agriculture.

Eric and I have been part of IGPA for our entire time together, and through it I've met some incredible people across Idaho and surrounding states. Over the years, we've made a point to visit other members on their farms, and that has always been one of the most rewarding parts of our involvement.

IGPA families are some of the most hospitable people you'll ever meet. When you visit, you're welcomed into their homes, introduced to family members, shown their operations, and invited into honest conversations about both their wins and their struggles. That kind of openness is rare and valuable.

Farming looks very different from the Canadian border to the deserts of the south, and seeing those differences firsthand is a powerful learning experience. It stretches your thinking, builds perspective, and reminds you that there's more than one way to do things well.

I recommend IGPA to everyone—especially young farm families. It's a way to open Idaho up, build relationships beyond your immediate community, and learn from others who are walking a similar path.

What do you love most about Idaho?

I love Idaho because it is Idaho. But what I love even more is the life we've built here together—with our kids and our family.

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It's the roots we've planted in the soil. It's the connection to the land. And I'm not sure people who haven't lived it truly understand what that connection feels like.

Sure, we could sell the land and go buy a house in Cabo—retire and live the easy life. But that's not what feeds our souls. What keeps us happy, grounded, and honestly still in love with Idaho is the home place... the farm... the family history... and the deep sense of belonging that comes with staying committed to something bigger than yourself.

What do you think is the biggest challenge for women working in ag today?

I believe the biggest challenge for women in agriculture today is that we are spread too thin.

Most women in agriculture are here because of a family story—grandparents, parents, and now us. Whether a woman is working in the field, on the farm, in an extension office, a local county position, or even at the state level, I can almost guarantee she is carrying more than one role at a time.

Our arms are full with the visible work—jobs that pay the bills, chores that don't wait, animals that need tending, offices that need running, meals that need to be made. But beyond that, women in agriculture often carry the invisible responsibilities: the planning, the organizing, the remembering. We keep track of schedules,

seasons, people, finances, and futures. We bridge generations—honoring the way things were done while helping guide the way things must change. We are caretakers of land, livestock, records, relationships, and often the emotional health of the family operation itself.

Our shoulders carry the weight of our passion for agriculture and the responsibility we feel to protect it. We show up to meetings, serve on boards, volunteer for programs, mentor youth, and engage in conversations about the future of the industry—not because we have extra time, but because we care deeply about getting it right. We feel compelled to be part of the solution, even when we are tired.

And our hearts carry the heaviest load. They hold the stories of those who came before us, the realities of today, and the hopes we have for the next generation. We worry about whether our children will want—or be able—to continue the family farm. We grieve what has been lost, celebrate what remains, and quietly pray for what might still be possible. Women in agriculture love deeply: the land, the people, the work, and the legacy. That love is our strength—but it is also why we are often stretched thin, trying to faithfully carry all that has been entrusted to us.

Meeting Season Brings Time to Connect and to Build

BY JAMIE KRESS, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WHEAT GROWERS

While agriculture advocacy never ceases, there are certainly times of the year when our farmer leaders are truly putting in the hours.

In our home we refer to the months of November through March as “meeting season”. It’s the time of year where in between equipment maintenance, commodity delivery, and year-end accounting, the calendar is filled with industry meetings, grower schools, and various educational opportunities. For me, the annual National Association of Wheat Growers and US Wheat Associates (NAWG/USW) joint Winter Meeting in Washington D.C. is always one of the most valuable weeks of Meeting Season. It’s where we consistently move the needle on wheat advocacy, farm policy, and organization and relationship building.

Policy engagement is a continual process. As soon as we “finish” a farm bill, it seems like we are immediately setting priorities for the next one. Oftentimes, it is difficult to assign a clear beginning or true finality to the work we do. An excellent example is the 2018 Farm Bill that expired on September 30, 2023 and has been extended twice since expiration. In unique fashion, many of the critical safety net, conservation, trade, and crop insurance priorities that usually see improvements and/or updates in a farm bill were included in the One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) that passed on July 4, 2025. OBBBA was certainly not the vehicle we anticipated our farm bill priorities would be addressed in. However, literal years of consistent lawmaker and agriculture



committee engagement – like Hill visits that took place during our week in DC - directly resulted in significant wins for the American wheat farmer when legislation moved. While we celebrate the major milestone of seeing needed policy addressed in OBBBA, our work is not “done”. We remain engaged on OBBBA implementation and passage of a new farm bill that includes policy that could not be addressed in a reconciliation package.

In my opinion, one of the most powerful tools in NAWG is the ability to connect the everyday wheat farmer, like you and me, with Administration Officials who run our government agencies. During the Winter Conference this year, our Board of Directors was invited to a nearly two-hour wheat-specific meeting at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, adjacent to the West Wing. Top officials from EPA, USDA, USTR, and HHS addressed our group, sharing information about issues currently affecting the wheat industry. It was significant not only as an educational opportunity for our farmer leaders, but for the Officials as well as they took questions and thoughtfully engaged in conversation. Collectively, our farmers left better equipped to engage in policy at NAWG and their respective state organizations, and I’m hopeful that the Administration Officials left with a better understanding of the direct impact their work in D.C. has on wheat farms across the country.

Education is a critical piece of advocacy and there is no better place for farmers to be sharing their story than in Washington DC. In every Congressional office or government agency our goal is to connect the issues at hand to “real-life boots on the ground farming”. Wheat 101 is an annual reception hosted by our



National Wheat Foundation, in conjunction with the Winter Meeting, and provides a more casual place to interact with hill and committee staffers. It is easy in agriculture to forget how truly unique each farm is. I was reminded of this while visiting with a reception guest who works as Natural Resource Committee staff. She grew up in agriculture on a family farm and dairy in Pennsylvania. However, her eyes lit up as I showed her photos of my farm here in Idaho. She was taken back by the



field size, the rolling and steep topography, the sagebrush on the field edges. We talked about things like crop rotation, rainfall, and 4WD hillside combines. Although having grown up a farm kid, she realized how foreign my farming operation was to her. Naturally, and as we all do, she views her work through the lens of life experience and education. That is why sharing our story with those who make and influence policy is so critical.

I'm not sure a person ever gets over the feeling of awe inspired by our Nation's Capital. Even though it's always good to get home, I'm grateful every time I am in D.C. working on behalf of the wheat industry and farm families across the country. It's especially enriching to work alongside fellow farmers pulling for a common cause. The need for advocacy never ceases, and neither does the spirit of the American wheat farmer.

What does this 'drylander' know about water, anyway??

BY LESLIE DRUFFEL, MCGREGOR COMPANY

Ever feel like you should have listened to your younger self a little more intently?

Early in my career at The McGregor Company, I was asked to be part of the recruiting team to encourage high school and college students to aspire to a rewarding career in agriculture – “a most rewarding pathway in what is truly the only essential industry.”

As I visited with college students across the Pacific Northwest, I also found myself attending high school career fairs, judging at FFA events, speaking with teachers, counselors, and administrators about why agriculture is a valuable and wise career choice. I assured them that good, living wage jobs would always be available for anything focused on the production, processing, marketing, and delivering of food (of course favoring agronomic and service pathways for your local crop input supplier).

What was my backup advice if “agriculture” fell flat with my audience? Water. Anything, everything to do with water will provide lifelong career opportunities. Finding water, saving water, restoring it, protecting it, using, sharing, treating, or moving it will be forever critical to our time here on Planet Earth.

No one is as surprised as I am on how that “alternative to a career in agriculture” advice would infiltrate my own pathway. Thirty-



some years into my time at The McGregor Company, I find nearly every aspect of my daily work is about water. Lower Snake River Dams issues – all about water...using it for navigation, for power production, for irrigation, talking about it in Washington DC, at conferences, in the courtroom, studying those who are studying it, even working with content creators to make videos about the river system.

My time is spent with Columbia Basin Development League – working to get the Columbia Basin Project completed and supporting efforts on the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Plan. It doesn't end there...I've found myself a member of Water for Eastern Oregon, tasked with making sure growers and agbusinesses have a voice in rulemaking concerning nitrate levels in the Lower Umatilla Basin groundwater. Also, an advisory committee member of the Family Farm Alliance – advocating for family farms and ranches, irrigation districts, and industries across 17 western states. Of course, saving the best for last...Paul Arrington of Idaho Water Users Association has been a wealth of information and inspiration as I continue to interact with all things water.

Moral of the story: be flexible in your career (at any stage) and listen to your younger self. Yep, this drylander from Moscow, Idaho finally took her own advice and is now quite literally in the deep end of pool, talking, learning, debating, and working to safeguard water in the PNW. Best. Job. Ever.

Ladies of Agriculture

Across Idaho's grain fields and boardrooms alike, the ladies of grain play a vital role in strengthening the state's agricultural legacy.

Through organizations such as the Idaho Grain Producers Association, the Idaho Wheat Commission, and the Idaho Barley Commission, women bring relentless hard work, leadership, and dedication to every corner of the grain industry. Their efforts span marketing Idaho-grown grains to the world, advancing sound policy on behalf of producers, and educating communities, lawmakers, and future generations about the value of agriculture. Whether advocating for farmers, building market opportunities, or sharing the story of Idaho grain, these women are essential champions of the industry. Their impact reaches far beyond grain, reflecting the strength and commitment of women throughout Idaho agriculture.



Amaya Aguirre-Landa

Executive Director, Idaho Grain Producers Association

A proud third-generation Idahoan, Amaya grew up in the Treasure Valley. After graduating from high school, she earned a B.A. in Business Administration with a minor in Marketing from Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. Determined to build a career in agriculture, Amaya has spent more than 14 years working in agency and in-house marketing roles serving ag-centric clients. Throughout her career, she has served on several industry advisory boards and pursued every opportunity for on-farm education.

In 2024, Amaya made a career shift to more directly serve Idaho's farmers, stepping into the role of Executive Director of the Idaho Grain Producers Association.

Outside of her advocacy work for Idaho's grain growers, Amaya is an active member of the Basque community, where she volunteers her marketing expertise to a local Basque club. She and her husband enjoy traveling, spending time with friends and family, live music, and being in the mountains whenever possible.

Amaya and her husband, Matt, call Owyhee County home, where they are part of his family's multi-generational row crop operation.

Harmony Wright

Director of Finance, Idaho Grain Producers Association



Originally from Twin Falls, Harmony now lives in the Idaho mountains above Boise with her husband, Tracy. Surrounded by the beauty of the outdoors, she embraces mountain life alongside their two dogs, Bowie and Pilar, who happily join her on daily walks.

An avid walker and devoted dog lover, she finds joy in staying active and spending time outside. She is also a passionate wine enthusiast who attended wine school, deepening her knowledge and appreciation of the craft. Whether exploring trails with her dogs or enjoying a thoughtfully selected bottle of wine, she values simple pleasures and the lifestyle she's built in Idaho.



Kellie Kluksdal

Director of Communications and Events, Idaho Grain Producers Association

Kellie proudly serves Idaho's grain growers, putting her strong communication skills to work on their behalf. She is passionate about supporting the agricultural community and advocating for the industry across the state.

When she's not working, Kellie can be found cheering on her three daughters—ages 18, 15, and 13—at soccer and volleyball games. As her oldest prepares for college, she's coming to terms with the reality that her daughter may not choose to become an Idaho Vandal. Kellie and her husband Dave, a fellow Vandal, enjoy spending time watching their girls sporting events, spending time with family and visiting their cabin in Donnelly.



Elizabeth Criner

Legislative Advisor to Idaho Grain Producers Association

Elizabeth Criner joined Veritas Advisors in 2002 and serves as the firm's Managing Partner. With 30 years of state and federal lobbying experience, she brings extensive political expertise and strategic insight to her clients. She has led successful legislative efforts at both the state and federal levels across a wide range of issues, including appropriations, telecommunications, transportation, water, mining, environment, taxes, and health care.

Elizabeth began her public policy career in Washington, D.C., in 1989, serving as a legislative assistant in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. She returned to Idaho in 1996 to continue her lobbying career and remains active in several leadership roles, including the Idaho Liability Reform Coalition, Food Producers of Idaho, and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Idaho. Outside of work, she enjoys fly-fishing, traveling, and spending time outdoors with family, friends, and her dog, Olivia.

Liz Hatter

Legislative Advisor to Idaho Grain Producers Association



Liz Hatter joined Veritas Advisors as an intern during the 2016 legislative session after earning her degree from Boise State University. After a brief move to North Carolina with her Air Force pilot husband, she returned to Boise and rejoined Veritas in 2019.

Liz works with clients on issues including occupational licensure, health care, business, and agriculture, approaching every project with dedication, integrity, and thoughtfulness. She collaborates closely with clients and lawmakers to uphold a strong reputation across Idaho. Liz lives in Boise with her husband, son, and chocolate Labrador, Avery, and enjoys hiking, running, and fly-fishing.

Britany Hurst-Marchant

Executive Director, Idaho Wheat Commission



Raised in Heyburn in the Mini-Cassia area along the Snake River, Britany is the youngest of four girls and grew up within a mile of both sets of grandparents. Coming from a long line of public servants, she was encouraged from an early age to think independently, ask questions, and consider all sides of an issue—values that shaped both her education and career. She earned a degree in history and political science, with an emphasis in political philosophy, from Boise State University.

Determined to work in state government, she began her career with the Idaho Cattle Association shortly before graduating, focusing on communications, environmental policy, and lobbying for the feedlot sector. After seven years, she joined the Idaho Wheat Commission in a communications role and was named Executive Director in 2022.

She and her husband, Luke—who grew up on a ranch in Oakley and now practices water law in the Mini-Cassia area—have two sons, ages 21 and 18. A self-described sun worshiper, she enjoys traveling, reading, golfing, and spending time on or near the water. She treasures Idaho's geographic diversity and natural beauty—and, of course, the sight of wheat fields stretching across the state.



Jill Cloward

Office Manager, Idaho Wheat Commission

Jill has served as Office Manager for the Idaho Wheat Commission for nearly five years. In her role, she oversees daily office operations, manages financial administration, coordinates events, and assists in hosting trade teams—providing essential support to advance Idaho's wheat industry. A proud Idaho native, Jill enjoys spending her free time outdoors, taking in the natural beauty of the state she calls home.

Continued on next page

Ladies, continued from previous page



Laura Wilder

Executive Director, Idaho Barley Commission

Laura Wilder is in her eighth year as Executive Director of the Idaho Barley Commission, where she oversees research, market development, and education programs that support Idaho growers and strengthen the state's role in domestic and global barley markets. She is the fifth-generation owner of the family ranch near Caldwell on the Boise River, and brings lifelong experience in agriculture and a strong commitment to maximizing checkoff investments for producers.

Laura earned a B.S. in Agricultural Journalism from Texas A&M University and was a member of the university's National Champion Meat Judging Team. Before joining IBC, Laura served as Executive Director of the Idaho FFA Foundation and Executive Director of the Idaho Beef Council. A graduate of Leadership Idaho Agriculture, she currently serves as President of the Franklin Ditch Company and is on the University of Idaho CALS Dean's Advisory Board. She also volunteered for 20 years as a 4-H livestock leader. She enjoys traveling and watching the seventh generation grow up on the family ranch.



Wren Hernandez

Office Manager, Idaho Barley Commission



As Office Manager for the Idaho Barley Commission since 2018, Wren Hernandez oversees the administrative and operational functions that keep the organization running smoothly. She brings a diverse background in business management, construction administration, and community engagement.

Before joining IBC, Wren held high-volume office leadership roles and operated her own small business, laying the groundwork for her coordination of financial administration, industry programs, and supporter outreach. A graduate of Leadership Idaho Agriculture, Wren resides in Glenns Ferry, Idaho, where she and her husband, Johnny, raise cattle, chickens, and Bernese Mountain Dogs. She is also deeply involved in her community and brings valuable perspective to IBC's efforts to serve growers across the state.



Sydney Anderson

Communications and Program Manager, Idaho Barley Commission

Sydney Anderson serves as the Communications & Program Manager for the Idaho Barley Commission, where she leads statewide outreach, education, and grower-focused programming that support and promote Idaho's barley industry. A Nampa native, she has a strong agricultural background and remains actively involved through her service as a 4-H horse program leader and as an engaged FFA alumni member, including previous service as an Idaho FFA State Officer.

Sydney earned associate degrees in Agricultural Business and Equine Studies from the College of Southern Idaho and a B.S. in Agriculture Science, Communication and Leadership from the University of Idaho. In her role at IBC, she manages communications, produces educational and promotional content, and oversees programs such as the National Barley Yield Contest, which highlights agronomic excellence and innovation among growers. She is a recent graduate of Leadership Idaho Agriculture, Class 46. Outside of work, Sydney enjoys boxing, traveling, and hunting.

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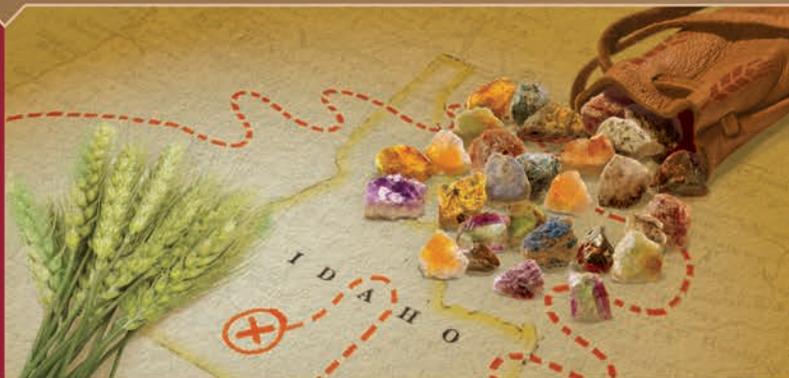
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Meet the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Idaho Soil Health Dream Team!

BY MINDI RAMBO, STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST, USDA-NRCS

Since its inception more than 90 years ago as the Soil Conservation Service, The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been a fierce advocate for soil health.

As the foundation of the nation's ability to feed clothe and house itself, healthy fertile soil is a must.

Over the last five years, NRCS Idaho has put together a team dedicated to helping producers learn about what healthy soils entail, look and act, as well as how to improve their operation's soil health where and when necessary.

These "dirt nerds" give presentations, provide technical assistance to conservation planners with on-site soil investigations and soils data, lead workshops for producers and provide knowledge about Idaho soils and soil surveys.

The Team

Each member of this team brings unique expertise and passion to the table. Here's a closer look at the people working to keep Idaho's soils thriving.

Name: Shanna Bernal-Fields

Title: Soil Scientist

Education/Experience: Crop & Soil Science, B.S. from Oregon State University, with a soil science option and a minor in biology

Years in the field of Soil Science

and/or Soil Health: I have been with the agency since 2005. Started as [an intern]. I came on full-time after college in 2007 on the soil survey side of the house. I mapped a half million initial acres in the first part of my career. I have been working on the state side of the agency since January 2020 providing technical soil services (including soil health related trainings and demonstrations) across the state of Idaho.

What drives your passion for soil health?: I am a big fan of working with natural systems instead of against them (in alignment with the regenerative ag movement). Soil health practices just seem logical and more efficient to me. It's cheaper



and easier in the long run to support soil health so that it functions relatively independently and at its full potential providing the full array of ecosystem services. A lot of effort and inputs are required and sometimes wasted in futile attempts to outdo nature at her own game. Why continue management styles that require repeated band-aid treatments (life support) to address symptoms rather than just cure the illness? When a soil is unhealthy (degraded), its microbial populations sterilized, it doesn't perform at full capacity which means producers have to make up for that shortfall with additional inputs, money, and labor to get the desired output.

What impact do you hope to make through your work?:

I hope to do my part in promoting the conservation of our most precious natural resource, the soil, for future generations. Soil is the literal foundation of life on this planet. It grows our food, filters our water, cycles nutrients, it's habitat to micro- and macro-organisms, and the physical plane on which we engineer our human infrastructure. I also 100% support the notion that food security = national security. The history books have several examples of nations falling that could no longer feed themselves. If we allow our soil to wash or blow away, we can't just replace it tomorrow.

What is your favorite soil order?: Mollisols, I love those chocolate cake-like epipedons. Learn about this soil order at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/mollisols>

What is your favorite soil health principle?: Keep it covered! As a soil scientist nothing makes me cringe more than seeing an artificially barren surface. Fallow fields leave the soil and the life in it naked, thirsty, and hungry. It is also more susceptible to wind and water erosion without armor.

Name: Lucille Rollins

Title: Soil Health Specialist

Education/Experience: Colorado State University | B.S. Soil and Crop Sciences, Soil Ecology concentration

Years in the field of Soil Science and/or Soil Health: 5

What drives your passion for soil health?: Delicious food! I'm passionate about sourcing quality



Soil is the literal foundation of life on this planet. It grows our food, filters our water, cycles nutrients, it's habitat to micro- and macro-organisms, and the physical plane on which we engineer our human infrastructure.

Shanna Bernal-Fields

ingredients to make nutritious food at home and see that quality as directly linked to how the food was grown and raised. Those choices both shape, and are shaped by, soil health.

What impact do you hope to make through your work?: In lieu of growing and raising food myself, I hope to support those who do by serving as a bridge between people, knowledge, and new ideas.

What is your favorite soil order?: My favorite order of soils is Aridisols, specifically those found at the southern tip of the San Rafael Swell in Utah: gypsum crystals, rippled sandstone, and vast desolation. Oh my! Learn about this soil order at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/aridisols>

What is your favorite soil health principle?: Maximize biodiversity — this is as true in my human life as it is for the microbes.

Name: Courtney Cosdon

Title: Soil Health Instructor for University of Idaho Extension/ USDA NRCS

Education/Experience: M.S. in Soil and Land Resources from University of Idaho

Years in the field of Soil Science and/or Soil Health: I have spent a little over four years in my current position. I have been working with soils for about eight or nine years.

What drives your passion for soil health?: I originally started working with soils out of a drive to learn more about how we can help growers create and implement more sustainable management practices and promote carbon storage. I love



that conservation management can go hand in hand with more money in grower's pockets. Really what I am passionate about is sustained ecosystem health and longevity; our agricultural lands are a huge part of this.

What impact do you hope to make through your work?:

Exactly what I said above, I hope that I can help growers understand how to farm with conservation in mind, so that their operations become more resilient to a changing climate, their soil stays in place, and the land stays in operable shape for as long as possible. Hopefully all while saving them money.

What is your favorite soil order?: My favorite soil order is Histosols. High in organic matter, they store lots of carbon. They are usually mucky, bog soils with varying rates of decomposition. Learn about this soil order at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/histosols>

What is your favorite soil health principle?: My favorite soil health principle is Maximize Biodiversity. It covers a lot of great practices like livestock integration, crop rotation, and planting diverse covers and crops with many different rooting types. These practices help create a thriving and diverse soil ecosystem.

Beyond the Dream Team: More Soils Expertise at NRCS

And if these soil professionals aren't enough, NRCS has the Major Land Resource Area teams, which are responsible for conducting soil survey operations, compiling and maintaining soil resource inventories and databases. These offices provide services in Idaho:

Moscow Soils Office

Brian Gardner
Major Land Resource Area Project Manager
Brian.Gardner@usda.gov
1848 S. Mountain View Rd., Suite 3
Moscow, ID 83843

Idaho Falls Soils Office

Carla Rebernak
Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Leader
Carla.Rebernak@usda.gov
1120 Lincoln Rd., Suite A
Idaho Falls, ID 83401-2122

You can learn more about Major Land Resource Areas by visiting <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/major-land-resource-area-mlra>.



SENATOR
**CAMILLE
BLAYLOCK**

CALDWELL, ID | DISTRICT 11



Tell us about your hometown.

I grew up in Nampa on what we called a “family farm” - farm might be generous. My parents had six kids and just wanted to keep us busy with work. My husband and I moved to Caldwell almost 15 years ago, and it’s been home ever since.

Who influenced you most growing up?

My siblings. They’ve always been my biggest cheerleaders and best sounding boards. As adults and moms, my three sisters are some of my closest and most cherished relationships.

Happy childhood memory?

Sleeping on the trampoline all summer and just being a free-range kid.

Education?

I completed my bachelor’s degree at Idaho State University.

A teacher who impacted you?

My mom. I was homeschooled on and off, and she was deeply committed to our education. Now that I have kids, I realize how much of a sacrifice that must have been.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I’ve always loved working, but I didn’t have some grand title in mind. I just wanted to do work I felt passionate about. Today, I’m fortunate to choose projects I genuinely enjoy - so in that sense, I’ve hit my goal.





Tell us about your family.

My husband Jacob and I have two kids - an 11-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son. They are wonderful busy kids - I enjoy being a mom so much!

How did you meet your spouse?

We met at church and played on a co-ed volleyball team together for years before dating. I'm not sure I remember our first official date - just lots of late night food places after playing volleyball.

What do you do in your free time?

I read a lot, paint, and spend as much time outside as I can. I volunteer weekly at church and focus most of my time on family.

One word to describe yourself?

Curious.

Dinner with one famous person?

Benjamin Franklin. He was a hustler - so open-minded, forward thinking and wise. I'd love to learn from him firsthand.

If you could do anything else?

I have always wanted to work in the White House - maybe be a head staffer for a president I really believed in.

Who would play you in a movie?

Gosh - I have no idea. People say I look like Selena Gomez so maybe her?

Why did you run for office?

I grew up watching my parents volunteer and give back. When I felt our community needed stronger representation, I stepped up.

Committees and leadership path?

I serve Agriculture, Health & Welfare. Agriculture fits my background and district. Health & Welfare aligns with my professional experience and interest in reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens while protecting core services. I don't have leadership ambitions - I just want to be a good civil servant that works hard and gives back to the state I love.

Challenges Idaho faces?

Managing growth while maintaining fiscal discipline. Water and energy will remain major priorities. We have to plan wisely without losing what makes Idaho strong.

What do you love most about Idaho?

The people. Independent and self-reliant, but also generous and community-minded. We value a simple, family focused way of life, and I love that.

What are you most passionate about?

Reducing unnecessary regulation and keeping government in its proper lane. I want Idaho to remain strong and free so my kids have opportunities here the way I have.

Future political ambitions?

None. I plan to serve a few terms and then return fully to private life.

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IDAHO WHEAT COMMISSION

Idaho wheat farm families care about the land. We take pride in growing the highest quality wheat in a sustainable way.

Established by wheat farmers in 1959 and funded by Idaho's wheat growers, the Idaho Wheat Commission is a self-governing state agency. It is the Commission's responsibility to increase wheat grower profits by investing funds in market development, wheat research, and wheat grower education.



Bread in a Bag: Over 40 years helping students develop a positive relationship with wheat

BY JILL CLOWARD, IDAHO WHEAT COMMISSION STAFF

Every year, thousands of Idaho's fourth grade students roll up their sleeves and get hands-on experience making bread.

This is thanks to the Idaho Wheat Commission's Bread in a Bag program, funded by Idaho's wheat farmers. For over 40 years, the Bread in a Bag program has provided students with an opportunity to learn how wheat is grown and harvested, how wheat products are made, and the nutritional benefits of wheat. Each student is then able to make and bake their own bread product.

The Wheat Commission partners with teachers and schools across the state. Any teacher that wants to participate simply needs to register in the fall. Registration runs through November, and supplies are shipped to the schools in January. The Idaho Wheat Commission provides teachers with an instructional guide and posters to help facilitate the program. Each student receives a pamphlet containing information about wheat as well as several wheat recipes.

As part of the materials, a link is provided to an "Amazing Wheat" educational video. This video contains footage of wheat fields and shows wheat being harvested and transported to market. It also includes discussion of the six classes of wheat and their different uses, flour milling, end products, and nutrition. Over the past decade, more than 81,000 Idaho students have participated in the Bread in a Bag program and developed healthier relationships with the nutrition and benefits of wheat foods.

Teachers decide how best to fit the program into their schedule and curriculum, as well as choose what wheat product they want

to bake. Mrs. Lynna Butler at Mill Creek Elementary in Middleton, Idaho has been participating with her students for ten years. She chooses to correlate this program alongside other activities that teach about pioneer life. Her students spend one day learning about travelling across the trail and the next day making and tasting their own bread and butter from scratch. They are also able to bring a loaf of bread home to their families. Mrs. Butler explains, "From learning about how wheat is in the packing peanuts to getting a booklet full of recipes to use, students love this day of learning and remember it for many years. As a teacher of 20 years, watching the student engagement with this program is why I will continue to do it in years to come!"

It's not too late to participate this year. Teachers can reach out to the Idaho Wheat Commission wheat@idahowheat.org for more information.

Jill Cloward grew up in Rupert, Idaho. She moved away after high school to attend college, where she earned a BA in math education and also met and married her husband. She and her family returned to Idaho and moved to the Treasure Valley in 2000. Jill is a nationally certified bookkeeper and is certified to teach middle school and high school math, which she has done. Coordinating and managing the Bread in a Bag program is one of the many things Jill does in the Wheat Commission office on behalf of Idaho wheat-growing families.



U.S. Crop Quality Reporting Builds Trust with Global Wheat Customers

BY JULIA DEBES, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH, U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES

Trust is at the heart of international wheat markets.

When wheat harvest is over, the grain delivered to the elevator and the combines blown out, U.S. farmers can breathe a quick sigh of relief for a job well done. But for U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), the work to promote that wheat internationally and continue building trust with global grain customers is just beginning.

From analyzing thousands of samples collected to harvest to conducting in-person seminars to discuss the results, USW's global staff take up the mantle to help move farmers' wheat from the bin to consumers around the world. With 50% of the U.S. wheat crop exported each year, including half of Idaho's wheat production, the transparency of each year's crop growing season and final performance are essential to maintain existing customer relationships and build new markets for U.S. wheat farmers.

Sampling, Testing and Quality Control

As farmers focus on the sprint of wheat harvest, USW staff and technical consultants help keep the pace to capture the data needed to publish the U.S. Crop Quality Report.

When wheat is delivered to a grain elevator, local operators pull samples from the trucks. This standardized process is designed to pull a sample that reflects the entire truckload. Operators use mechanical tools, such as pneumatic tubes, or hand methods, such as a pelican scoop. Samples are usually taken from the middle of the load, under continuous grain flow. Individual truck samples taken for a farmer's lot during a delivery timeframe are consolidated into a single composite sample. The composite sample is useful for assessing overall crop quality, with randomized, anonymous sample selection used to develop data for reports.

In 2025, more than 2,250 wheat samples were collected from coast to coast and analyzed. In Idaho, the Idaho Wheat Commission helps coordinate this process, monitoring harvest progress to continually adjust the appropriate number of samples from the region.

From the local elevators, sample composites are sent to third-party providers such as National Quality Services, Inc. (NQi), which provides sampling, weighing, and inspection services. The Commission works with NQi to identify how many samples to test for each region.

In the next step of the post-harvest process, samples are sent to laboratories for further testing and analysis. Samples of U.S.

soft white (SW) wheat are analyzed by the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Oregon. The partner labs conduct rigorous testing and analysis on milling and baking quality, including class-specific information.

Each sample is assigned a unique ID and undergoes a set protocol of preliminary predictive analytical tests before official grading by the USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). WMC conducted wheat, flour, solvent retention capacity (SRC), dough and finished product tests on composites based on production zones and protein levels.

All sample information is anonymized, without specific field or grower information. Throughout harvest, the Commission monitors lab progress to determine if adjustments are needed to protect the integrity of a randomized aggregate.

Overall, across all six classes of U.S. wheat, the report reaffirms to global buyers that U.S. wheat is a consistent and reliable foundational ingredient for wheat-based food products.

Preparing the U.S. Crop Quality Report

The final step in packaging all of this data and delivering it to customers in the form of the U.S. Crop Quality Report, published by USW. The 2025 U.S. Crop Quality Report, which was the 46th issued since 1979, provides essential objective information to help global wheat buyers purchase the wheat they need at the best value possible.

"The U.S. Crop Quality Report provides a detailed look at the high-quality wheat grown by U.S. wheat farmers and used by millers and bakers around the world," said Erica Oakley, USW vice president of planning, who leads crop quality efforts. "This USW report reflects not only the quality of the crop, but also the hard work and commitment of U.S. wheat farmers."

The report is supported by funding from state wheat commission members like the Idaho Wheat Commission, which is matched by federal funding from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) export market development programs. More than dollars, the report is a true testament to the collaboration within the U.S. wheat industry from the farmer to the grain inspector.

"A report like this would not be possible without the dedication of American wheat farmers," Oakley said. "It would also not

be possible without the months-long partnership between USW, state wheat commission members like the Idaho Wheat Commission and our partner laboratories. Everyone's contributions ensure the data we share with customers is accurate, timely and meaningful."

The U.S. Crop Quality Report, which provides grade, non-grade, flour and specific end-product data. For example, this report included an analysis of 411 samples of U.S. soft white (SW) wheat and 38 samples of white club wheat collected from state, private grain inspection agencies and commercial wheat handling operations in the three Pacific Northwest states.

As included in the report, the 2025 Pacific Northwest (PNW) SW and club wheat crop experienced adequate soil moisture at planting across most of the region, supporting strong emergence. Winter precipitation provided good conditions for crop development, though late spring and summer precipitation fell below normal. Milder temperatures through June compensated for the reduced moisture, allowing for healthy plant development for winter wheat. Hotter conditions arrived for crop maturity, enabling a timely harvest with low disease and pest pressure throughout the region.

The report included this year's total estimated production of 243.6 million bushels (6.63 million metric tons, MMT), which is slightly below last year's production but above the five-year average. The overall crop was graded as U.S. #1 with an average crop protein content of 10.0%, slightly below the five-year average and higher than in 2024. Average test weights were consistent with 2024, with thousand kernel weights inline with the five-year average. Farinograph, alveograph and Solvent Retention Capacity (SRC) values all indicated very weak to medium gluten strength appropriate to produce typical soft wheat flour products and those made with soft and hard wheat blends. End product tests showed acceptable to good performance consistent with typical soft wheat quality.

Overall, across all six classes of U.S. wheat, the report reaffirms to global buyers that U.S. wheat is a consistent and reliable foundational ingredient for wheat-based food products. The report is published in English and then translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. The full report is also broken down into more detailed, regional reports for all six wheat classes, as well as a new standalone document on collection and analysis methods.

Listening to customer feedback helps USW and partners improve reports every year. The report is used year-round by customers and USW technical staff, and their feedback helps USW better understand how to add additional value to the report through expanded methods, additional testing and other edits.

Delivering the Data During Crop Quality Seminars

The report itself is a massive undertaking, but its publication is followed by another all-in series of activities to promote the wheat crop to international customers. Next up is the annual series of Crop Quality Seminars, organized by USW to take the final data directly to customers.

From October to December, USW conducted 37 seminars with 1,580 participants from 45 countries joining the conversation about U.S. wheat quality. Joining these participants were 22 U.S. travelers, including state wheat commission leaders, university professors, cereal scientists, USW staff and farmers. These seminars are USW's largest annual touchpoint with customers, and feedback repeatedly indicates that the U.S. wheat industry provides more data and insights than any other competitor.

Each seminar provided attendees with a unique opportunity to ask questions about technical topics, milling performance and the nuances of each wheat class. If there are advantages or concerns with the crop, all are transparently discussed. The team of experts listens, explains and builds trust, turning technical data into practical solutions for local markets.

"In an era of global supply chains and digital communication, there's still no substitute for face-to-face interactions, said Brian Liedl, USW vice president of overseas operations. "By the end of the season, USW's Crop Quality Seminars have done more than share knowledge. These events continue to strengthen relationships and reinforce the reputation of U.S. wheat as the world's most reliable supply of high-quality wheat."

Transparency and Reliability in Every Kernel

As USW's work shifts from presenting crop quality results to providing trade servicing and technical assistance, the true success of these efforts is measured in the strength of relationships reaffirmed through the market development work of the U.S. wheat industry.

By choosing to be thorough and transparent with the analysis of each year's crop and showing up to discuss those results in person, international grain buyers, millers and bakers continue to have confidence that when they think about quality and reliability, the American wheat farmers are at the front of their mind.

Stakeholders can learn more about the 2025 Crop Quality Report through regional summary videos and find the full suite of report materials and technical data at uswheat.org/cropquality.

Julia Debes serves as the Director of Communications and Stakeholder Outreach for U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). In this role, she oversees the production of USW's internal and external newsletters and other communications efforts. Debes earned a master's degree in media studies from Florida State University and a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications and journalism from Kansas State University.



Wheat Producers Feeding the World: From Idaho to Kenya

BY AMANDA HOEY, OREGON WHEAT CEO AND CHAIR OF THE U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES FOOD AID WORKING GROUP

'Farmers Feed the World.' At the heart of why we farm is growing nutritious, healthy food to feed people: both domestically and abroad. As part of our commitment to feeding people, the wheat industry has been engaged in decades-long efforts to combat global hunger. Through international food aid programs, wheat producers play a vital role in addressing food insecurity, building a base for future market opportunities and supporting national security.

International Food Aid: Three Core Programs

Overall, more than four billion people have benefited directly from U.S. food assistance. There are three core programs that involve U.S. commodity donations:

- **Food for Peace.** An emergency feeding program under Title II of the Food for Peace Act, this is the most significant program for shipping large volumes of U.S. commodities to starving people around the world. Food for Peace has provided aid for decades, with the Food for Peace Act (PL 480) signed into law in 1954 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. It plays an integral role in alleviating hunger while also strengthening the United States' diplomatic efforts.
- **McGovern-Dole Food for Education.** Administered by USDA to provide education, child development and food security in low income and food insecure countries,

the McGovern-Dole Food for Education is a smaller but important program. It purchases U.S. commodities to provide school meals, teacher training and nutrition projects, with the intent of reducing hunger and improving literacy.

- **Food for Progress.** Administered by USDA to support countries in modernizing and strengthening their agricultural industry, Food for Progress uses a monetization system. Under the program, purchased donations of U.S. wheat and other commodities are sold in the recipient countries via a cooperating entity, with the proceeds used for development projects.

Historically, wheat has played a large part in food aid, with wheat being one of the first commodities sent overseas as a part of food aid programs. Specifically, in the Food for Peace funding, wheat has consistently represented the top three commodities. Provisions are in place for these programs that require avoidance of competing with domestic or commercial channels through food aid programs such that they are designed to provide direct assistance in addressing hunger and transitioning countries from crisis to stability.

A Model Program: Learning Journey to Kenya

The passion for food aid work accelerated for me during a learning journey to better understand the process and capacities of programs utilizing U.S. investments and commodities. In April 2025 I traveled with other wheat producers to Kenya, where I witnessed first-hand the exponential growth and need for food aid in a quickly evolving situation that faced severe resource constraints.

Kenya is a stable partner in Africa and an entry point to serve regional food aid needs: from refugee camps within the country to the last mile delivery for surrounding countries in crisis. The country's strategic location with multimodal connections to several countries makes it a primary distribution point to offer quick response for emergency situations. Through the learning journey, we met with implementing partners and agencies in Nairobi and out in the field.

Most impactful was a day in Kakuma, a refugee camp established in 1992 with arrival of 'Lost Boys of Sudan' that now incorporates four camps with more than 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers. From young children to families to individuals, we saw the importance of consistent and stable donations. Facing a looming reduction in resources, it was a challenging visit and underscored the opportunity to ensure all available food aid dollars could bring commodities into areas of need. Kakuma provides a model for



Food Advisory Council at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya discussing the role of wheat and U.S. donations.

PRINCIPLES OF THE FOOD AID WORKING GROUP:

- Promote wheat as a nutritious component of international food aid.
- Support a strong U.S. food aid program that prioritizes in kind donations and monetization.
- Support funding and implementation of Local and Regional Procurement programs only through programs not currently purchasing U.S. commodities.
- Encourage an increase to the Food for Progress Transportation Cap and efforts to mitigate the effect of Cargo Preference rules on cost recovery calculations.
- Oppose U.S. government funding, directly and indirectly, of food aid commodity procurement from foreign agriculture export competitors.
- Oppose food aid program proposals that permanently erode US in-kind donations.
- Encourage food aid commodity procurement specifications that match relevant commercial market specifications wherever practicable.

food distribution, with established infrastructure, including use of biometrics for security. Yet, they were still facing shortages in donated resources, causing reductions in food allocations that lead to malnutrition and death. Meeting with the Food Advisory Council members at the camp, they implored us to seek pathways for additional aid.

Following the visit to Kakuma, we assessed system capacities at the Port of Mombasa where Port facilities are expanding, and local millers are available for processing. We also visited the World Food Programme warehouse, including their global commodity management facility which allows them to purchase U.S. products and adapt their use for recipient countries. The need was clear: support efforts to sustain U.S. investments with wheat at the center of that work.

Maintaining a Focus on Wheat Assistance: Food Aid Working Group

As part of the wheat industry's efforts to serve that function, we have a focused Food Aid Working Group. It is a joint collective of U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers which adheres to a set of established principles, essentially keeping food at the center of food aid programs.

Within those principles, our advocacy has been to ensure responsible utilization of available funds to ensure food gets to the places it is needed most urgently. In the past year, a component within that work is addressing the administration of the Food for Peace program, which was previously overseen by USAID and



Wheat Industry leaders celebrate the loading of a vessel for Food Aid in 2023 in Kalama, WA. 28,000 metric tons of U.S. soft white wheat sourced from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho was loaded onto the ship, Liberty Glory. Photo Credit: American Maritime Congress.

was subsequently wrapped into the U.S. Department of State. Given USDA's successful administration of other aid programs and their understanding of agricultural markets, the Food Aid Working Group have supported a permanent transfer of the Food for Peace program to USDA. Encouragingly, in January, the U.S. Department of State, USDA, and the Office of Management and Budget signed an interagency agreement for USDA to assume administration of the Food for Peace program. The agreement covers the administration of remaining FY 2025 funds and 2026 funds. We are currently advocating to codify that transfer in the Farm Bill for the long-term preservation of the program.

Transitioning to Markets: Long Term Stability

The Food for Peace program, in particular, provides a substantial distribution channel for U.S. commodities and builds a critical foundation for future commercial markets, while also fulfilling a global humanitarian mission. If food aid represented an export market, historically total wheat donations for international food aid from the United States would rank in the top 10 export markets.

However, the goal is to move countries from aid to independence, and these programs have shown effectiveness on that front. On the market side, a couple of the countries which are now regularly top five markets for PNW soft white wheat initially benefited from Food for Peace donations. With a subsequent change in their economic conditions and a preference for U.S. wheat, they reflect the success of this program.

Purchases in 2026: Food for Progress and Food for Peace

Moving into the current year, we are beginning to see the restart of allocations of funds through both the Food for Progress and Food for Peace programs. U.S. Wheat Associates reported that "Marking the first purchases of U.S. wheat under the 2025 fiscal year awards under the Food for Progress program, USDA

Continued on next page

Feeding the World, continued from previous page

purchased approximately 6.75 million bushels of U.S. hard red winter wheat in January. Wheat will be loaded in Houston, Texas and Kalama, Washington for destinations in Ethiopia and Kenya.” Then, in February, USDA made its first award allocation under its administration from Food for Peace to the World Food Programme. The award includes a range of commodity purchases, including wheat.

The Future of U.S. Food Assistance: Continuing Support

Given that the food security situation has grown ever more dire with the accumulation of impacts from natural disasters, conflict, and economic factors, these programs continue to offer a vital link. Overall, international food aid programs represent a natural demonstration of the generosity of U.S. farmers and our ability to produce an abundance of commodities that can be shared around the world. Thank you, sincerely, to all of our PNW wheat producers who are working to feed the world.

Amanda Hoey is the Chief Executive Officer for the Oregon Wheat Commission (state commodity commission) and the Oregon Wheat Growers League (private growers association). She represents Oregon's wheat industry in local, state, national and international arenas to strengthen the wheat industry in the state. From enhancing resources for ag research to addressing policy challenges that would otherwise hinder farm profitability/viability, the work of Oregon Wheat is critical to ensuring vibrant rural communities. Amanda previously served as the Executive Director for a bi-state regional economic development entity. She graduated with a Degree in Economics from Whitman College. She is an alumnus of the American Leadership Forum and was a Marshall Memorial Fellow through the German Marshall Fund. She lives on a wheat farm in north central Oregon.



Breadbasket Competition Kicks Off 2026 World Markets

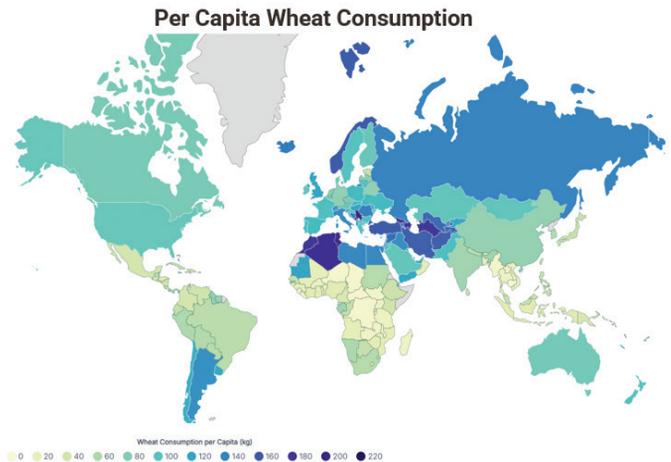
BY TYLLOR LEDFORD, MARKET ANALYST, U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES

As 2026 kicks off, wheat prices have recovered slightly from autumn lows, yet they remain under pressure from an abundant global supply that seems to expand with every monthly update.

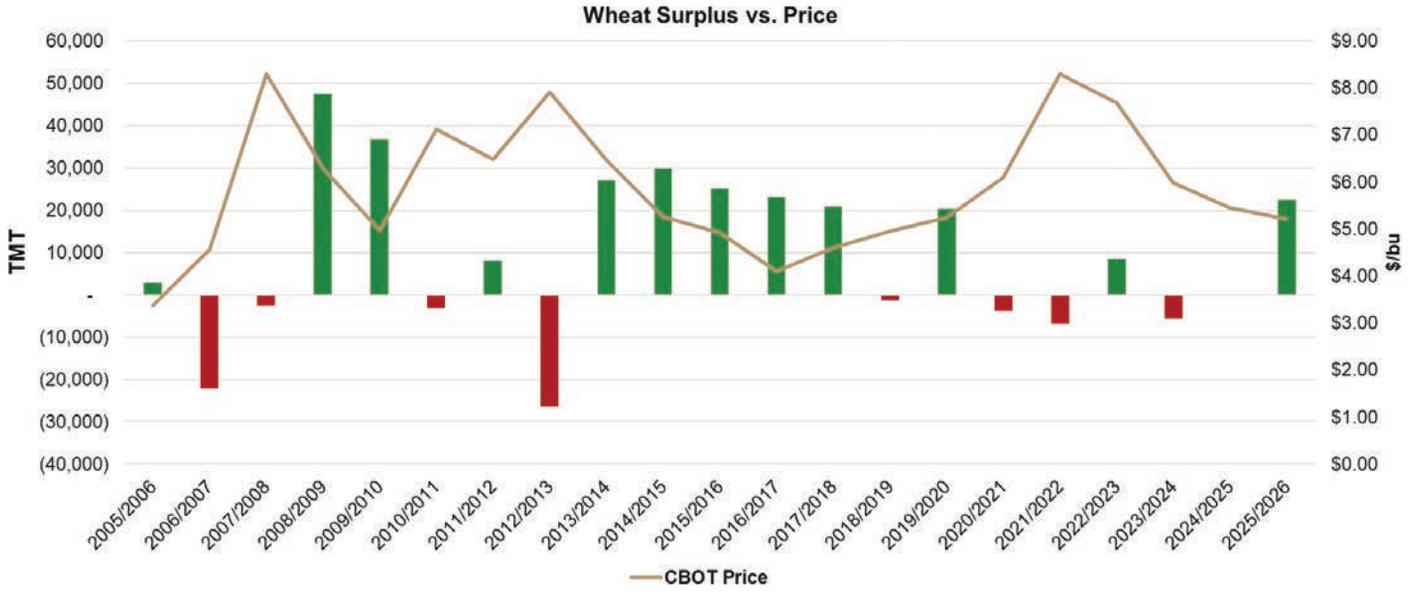
The world is currently navigating the largest wheat surplus in more than a decade—a market environment defined by a rare alignment of favorable conditions across the world's primary breadbaskets.

In the 2025/26 marketing year, exceptional weather turned the global market into a production powerhouse, with current WASDE (World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates) estimates placing total global production at a staggering 842.2 million metric tons (MMT) (30.94 billion bushels).

This volume is 41.4 MMT (1.52 billion bushels) larger than the previous record set only last year. For the first time in five years, world production has significantly outpaced consumption, boosting global ending stocks by 7% to 278.3 MMT (10.22 billion bushels) and driving the global stock-to-use ratio, excluding China, to 23%—its highest level since 2020/21.



The scale of this harvest is truly global in scope. In 2025/26, Argentina and Canada harvested record crops, while Australia reaped its second-largest harvest in history. Russia maintained its dominant market presence with its third-highest production on record, and the European Union registered a significant recovery following a poor previous harvest. Even amidst ongoing conflict,



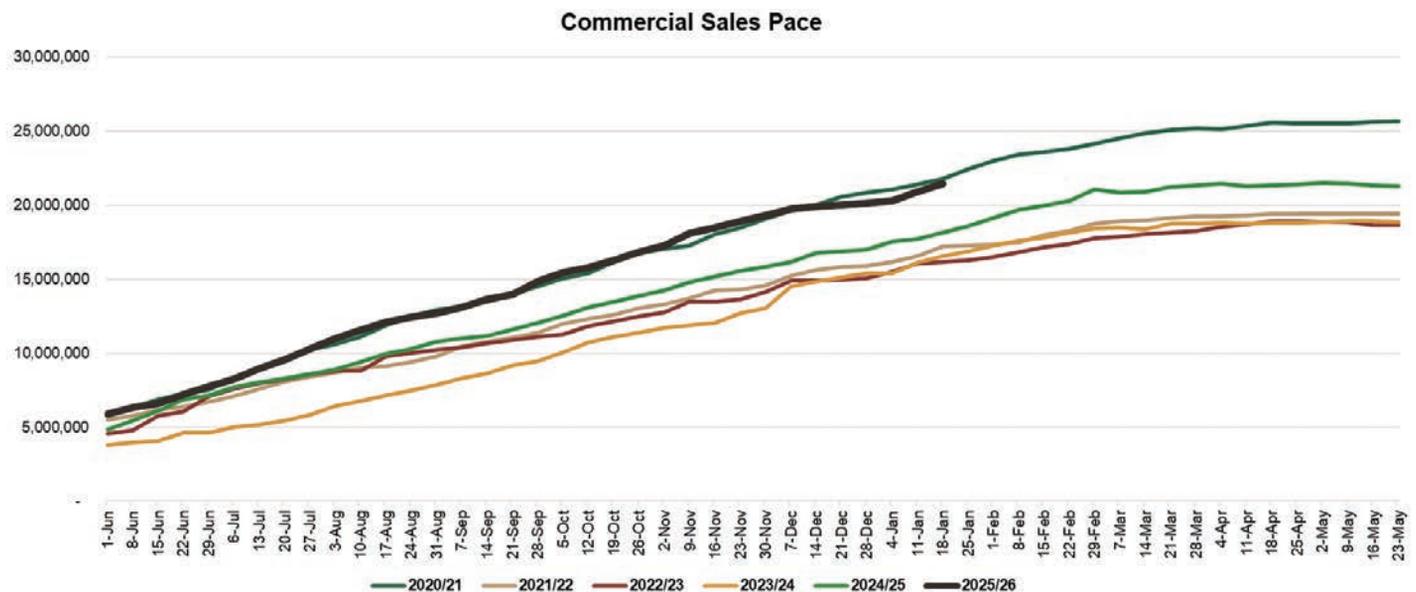
production in Ukraine has remained remarkably steady. The United States also contributed to this abundance, harvesting its largest crop in 10 years at 53.9 MMT (1.98 billion bushels). This robust domestic production has allowed U.S. stocks to rebuild, providing a solid foundation for export availability even as global competition intensifies.

Despite this massive global crop and the prevalence of low-cost origins, U.S. exports are rebounding with notable strength. USDA projections expect export volume to top 24.5 MMT (900.20 million bushels), which would mark the highest level since 2020/21. As of late January 2026, the United States has already booked 21.4 MMT (786.30 million bushels) in sales, 18% ahead of last year's pace. This growth is driven by a combination of

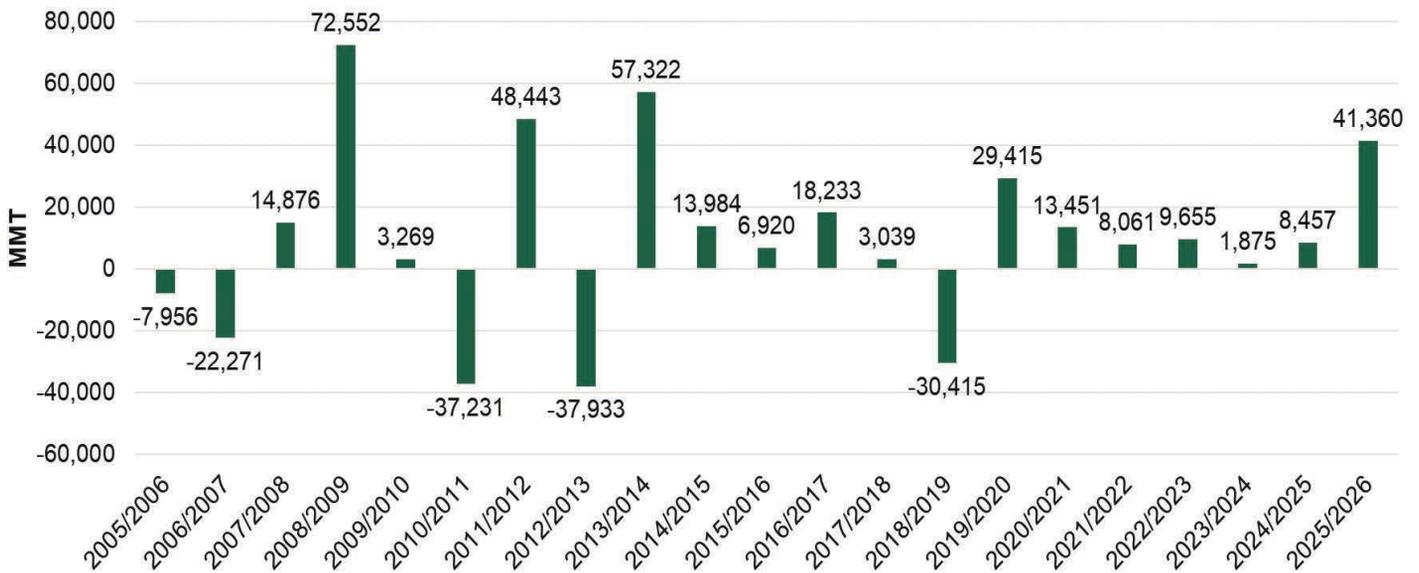
improved market competitiveness and the long-standing global relationships maintained by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). We are seeing increased imports in traditional strongholds like Mexico and the Philippines, while significant growth is also occurring in "swing markets" like Nigeria and Indonesia. Furthermore, non-traditional destinations such as Bangladesh have climbed into the top 10 U.S. destinations, supported by recent trade deals and memorandums of understanding.

This rebound is supported by a crucial, underlying point of hope: as global production hits new heights, world wheat use is also projected to reach a record 823 MMT (30.24 billion bushels). This record-breaking demand signals an ongoing, fundamental

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Year by Year Production Changes



Breadbasket, continued from previous page

need for wheat that transcends seasonal surpluses. With the global population expected to surpass 9 billion by 2045, the demand for wheat-based foods and high-quality food products is guaranteed to increase. Significant opportunity remains to expand consumption in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, where per capita consumption is still less than 40 kilograms—well below the global average of 98.6 kilograms.

By placing USW staff strategically across the globe—including added capacity in Manila—the wheat industry is ensuring that

U.S. producers are positioned to capture this long-term growth. In a global market currently saturated with “low-cost” supplies, the proven functional reliability and milling performance of U.S. wheat classes provide the critical advantage these developing markets require. While the world has plenty of wheat, the quality of U.S. wheat classes and USW’s unmatched service remain the gold standard for those looking to ensure consistent value and quality in their flour and end products.

CMY top 20 markets		For delivery in		Change from last year	Change from last week
	2025/26	2024/25			
All Wheat	3,606,445	3,305,135		9%	96,759
Mexico	2,430,786	2,331,372		4%	59,945
Philippines	1,873,287	1,749,250		7%	141,279
Japan	1,831,474	2,035,174		-10%	69,004
South Korea	1,322,796	430,052		208%	90,528
Nigeria	995,077	641,235		55%	0
Indonesia	783,942	848,480		-8%	0
Taiwan	674,940	-		-	0
Bangladesh	655,795	772,284		-15%	62,000
Thailand	631,555	348,777		81%	300
Colombia	585,939	197,400		197%	0
Venezuela	524,835	405,197		30%	12,230
Vietnam	410,423	337,847		21%	0
Ecuador	335,142	268,930		25%	23,800
Dominican Republic	322,276	287,032		12%	26,500
Honduras	315,518	553,651		-43%	0
European Union	288,096	172,310		67%	2,000
Peru	243,439	220,602		10%	0
Guatemala	226,924	149,399		52%	7,000
Haiti	198,560	139,119		43%	0
China	1,233,546	732,195		68%	-36,500
Total Unknown	21,448,385	18,150,513		18%	558,201
All Wheat Total Sales					

Tyllor Ledford serves as Market Analyst for U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), where she specializes in transforming raw data and news into actionable market commentary. Since joining the USW West Coast office in 2021, Tyllor has dedicated the last five years to analyzing complex wheat trends and bridging information gaps. Through her work on the weekly USW Price Report, she provides the reliable, timely insights necessary to foster mutual understanding between domestic producers and international buyers.



Tyllor earned both a B.S. and M.S. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Texas Tech University. Her research on the nexus of food security and conflict received the Outstanding Master’s Thesis award from the Southern Association for Agricultural Economics.

A Strategic Blueprint for International Wheat Promotion

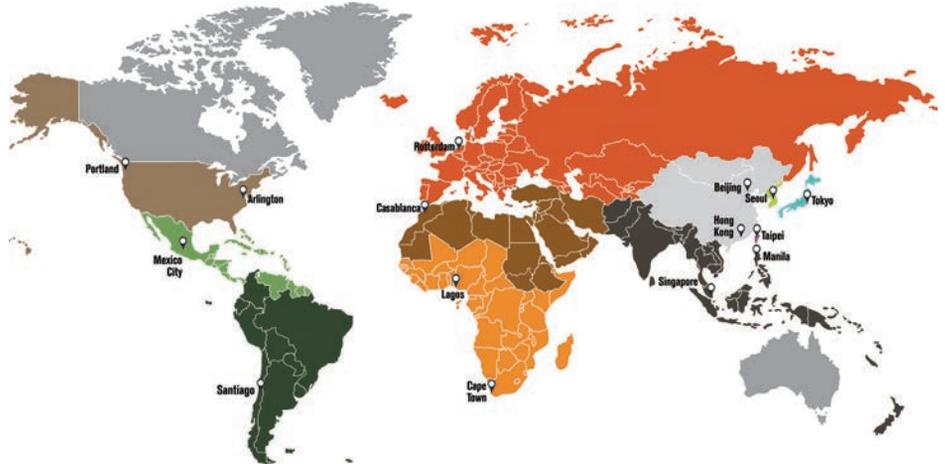
BY BRITANY HURST MARCHANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IDAHO WHEAT COMMISSION

Throughout the year, the Idaho Wheat Commission (IWC) reports to producers about trade team visits from other countries to farms in Idaho, Idaho wheat growers who participate in reciprocal trade missions overseas, and marketing and purchasing conferences that connect Idaho wheat farmers and Idaho Wheat Commission staff with customers around the world. During fiscal year 2025 – July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025 – buyers, millers, and end users from more than 30 countries were connected to Idaho wheat through farm tours, trade missions, and conferences.

The Commission's partner organization, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry. Through collaboration, IWC and USW promote the reliability, quality, and value of the U.S. wheat classes grown in Idaho to wheat buyers, millers, bakers, food processors, and government officials in more than 100 countries around the world. Seventeen states invest in USW programs, providing 30% of USW's total annual funding. Those producer funds are matched by the remaining 70% of funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) market development programs.

USW has 13 overseas offices, located in China, South Africa, Morocco, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Mexico, South Korea, Chile, the Philippines, Nigeria, and the Netherlands. Early in the year, USW holds strategic planning meetings to develop the Unified Export Strategy (UES) marketing plan for each region represented by a USW foreign office. The UES is a comprehensive evaluation of past efforts within each region and serves as a blueprint for activities that will expand international markets for U.S. wheat farmers in specific countries and regions around the globe.

The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) requires the UES from all cooperator organizations to be a guiding document. The UES is also required for USW to obtain those federal funding dollars for use in overseas markets. USDA-FAS reviews the strategies laid out in the UES, analyzes past efforts and results, and evaluates USW's stewardship of assessment dollars invested by each of the state wheat commissions that support USW. Producer dollars from state wheat commission members of USW are essential to the funding formula FAS uses to distribute federal monies to USW. Without the investment from states, USW would not qualify for any federal funding to promote U.S. wheat in international markets.



USDA-FAS's analysis of the efficiency and productivity of current and previous plans allows USW to leverage grower dollars to receive greater federal funding. The funds are available through several FAS programs, including the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program, and other ad hoc programs like the Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATPP), the America First Trade Promotion Program (AFTPP), and others. In the 2022/2023 marketing year, federal funding through these programs returned \$2.20 for every \$1.00 invested by Idaho farmers through the Idaho Wheat Commission.

"USW and USDA have a long history of partnering together with our state wheat commission members to pursue activities that have a solid return on investment," said Jennifer Sydney, USW vice president of planning and human resources. "We are excited to continue identifying and proposing innovative approaches to develop and expand markets for our U.S. wheat farmers."

Last year, I had the rare opportunity to sit in on the UES planning sessions for each of the USW overseas offices in Mexico City, Mexico; Santiago, Chile; and Cape Town, South Africa. Each office met with key USW leadership to review the prior year's UES and determine programming for the upcoming year. The amount of detail included in the UES is staggering, awe inspiring, and fascinating. The overseas offices inject a tremendous amount of thought and effort to create a productive and worthwhile strategy.

Many of the overseas offices are staffed by ex-patriates or local natives who have worked in that respective country or region for USW for decades. The expertise from USW staff on the ground results in every dollar being strategically leveraged and invested into real action that connects customers around the world with the high-quality U.S. wheat that best suits each market.

IDAHO BARLEY COMMISSION

The Idaho Barley Commission is a grower driven, grower funded, and grower governed agency of the State of Idaho that invests in the future of the Idaho barley industry on behalf of Idaho barley growers through research, market development, promotion, information and education programs.

Idaho's altitude, high desert climate and agronomic conditions, including abundant irrigation water, make it an ideal location to grow a consistent, reliable supply of premium-quality barley, highly sought after by the malting industry, as well as for livestock feed and food barley products.



National Barley Yield Contest Debuts with Record Results and Expanded Opportunities

Idaho Falls — The results of the 2025 National Barley Yield Contest (NBYC) were announced on February 4 at the University of Idaho Eastern Idaho Cereal School Conference, held at the Mountain America Center. This marked the first year the contest was conducted on a national scale, with all entries submitted by Idaho growers.



Highlighting the results, Joey Wallace, farming with Driscoll Brothers Partnership, produced a U.S.-record irrigated winter barley yield of 256 bushels per acre in Jerome County. The variety Memento yielded 175 percent above the county average, establishing a new global benchmark for barley production. The Irrigated Spring Barley Division was won by Dustin Miller of Mix Miller Farms, who harvested 239 bushels per acre of Molson Coors variety, M-179, achieving 182 percent above the county average, also in Jerome County.

Since Idaho growers were the only entrants in the inaugural national contest, Wallace and Miller earned both state and national titles. Both winners received a paid trip for two to attend the Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas, in late February 2026.

Wallace credited his success to focusing on details within a grower's control and learning from high-performing areas of the field.

"Sometimes we spend a lot of time trying to fix the poorest parts of our fields," Wallace said. "I think we should pay more attention to improving the best parts. I never dreamed a yield like that would come out of some areas of that field."

Miller emphasized both community pride and innovation.

"We were excited and proud to bring a yield like that back to our community," Miller said. "Having access to our state-of-the-art LEMKEN planter, played an important role in our success."



(L to R) Joey Wallace and Dustin Miller at the University of Idaho Eastern Idaho Cereal School in Idaho Falls. Pictured with their award plaques, they were recognized for their outstanding barley yield achievement.

To encourage broader participation, the Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) urges growers interested in future contests to contact their local field representatives, who can assist with the simple entry process.

"LEMKEN is committed to the growers in the USA and we are grateful to be a founding sponsor and we will continue to sponsor the National Barley Yield Contest. LEMKEN will provide a trip to Germany in November of 2027 to Agritechnica - the world's largest ag show for the 2026 national winners in the irrigated winter barley and irrigated spring barley yield winners. This is an all-expense paid trip for each winner in the two categories. We hope to see records broke in 2026 and continue to raise the bar in achieving these record-breaking yields!" said Richard Johnson, LEMKEN area sales manager for Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

IBC encourages growers nationwide to participate as opportunities within the National Barley Yield Contest continues to grow.

The NBYC thanks all sponsors for investing in growers and the future of the U.S. barley industry.

The full 2025 NBYC results are now available on the IBC website. 2026 entry forms will soon be available on the IBC website at idahobarleycommission.org/barley-yield-contest/.

If you have any questions regarding entries or sponsorships, please contact Sydney Anderson; Sydney.anderson@barley.idaho.gov or Brett Wilken; bwilken@scoular.com.



A Legacy of Innovation – Mike Wilkins Receives the Governor’s Award for Marketing Innovation

Boise — The Idaho agriculture community honored one of its most influential leaders at this year’s Larry Branen Idaho Ag Summit, presented by Leadership Idaho Agriculture. Mike Wilkins, a past commissioner of the Idaho Barley Commission (IBC), gratefully accepted the Governor’s Award for Marketing Innovation. The Governor’s Award for Marketing Innovation recognizes individuals whose creative leadership and strategic vision have significantly advanced Idaho agriculture.

Wilkins, a fourth-generation barley producer from Minidoka County, has dedicated decades to advancing Idaho agriculture through both innovative marketing and leadership. In addition to producing barley, sugar beets, and alfalfa with his son, he has served in key leadership roles across the industry, including multiple terms as an IBC commissioner representing District 2 and on the National Barley Improvement Committee where he advocated to increase federal funding for barley-related research efforts in Washington D.C.

Throughout his service on the commission, Wilkins led initiatives to strengthen Idaho barley’s presence in domestic and international markets, created educational relationships with trade teams, and assisted with programs like the American Heart Association events and the Idaho Academy of Nutrition and

Dietetics programming. His efforts have left a lasting impact on how Idaho agriculture tells its story: directly from the perspective of a grower.

Wilkins has served as a long-time leader on Magic Valley water issues, including 18 years on the Minidoka Irrigation District Board, 10 years with the Surface Water Coalition, and 18 years on the Committee of Nine—including when the historic water agreement was crafted between surface and groundwater users on the Snake River Plains Aquifer—contributing to the sustainability of irrigation and agricultural production in the region. In addition, he is also a graduate of Leadership Idaho Agriculture Class 40.

In 2024, Wilkins received the Idaho Barley Service Award from the IBC, recognizing his long-standing commitment to the barley industry. The Governor’s Award at the Idaho Ag Summit further acknowledges his innovative work in marketing Idaho agriculture.

“I’ve been fortunate to serve alongside people who are passionate about Idaho agriculture,” Wilkins said. “Whether it’s the Idaho Barley Commission, water boards, or trade groups, the real work is done by the teams who care about the long-term success of our farmers.”

He has been an outstanding servant leader and is always pushing for the long-term best interests of Idaho barley growers.



(L to R) Governor Brad Little presenting Mike Wilkins with the Governor’s Award for Marketing Innovation.



Mike Wilkins, recipient of the Governor’s Award for Marketing Innovation, joined with family.



IDAHO BARLEY: Economic Contributions to the State of Idaho now Exceed a Quarter of a Billion Dollars Annually

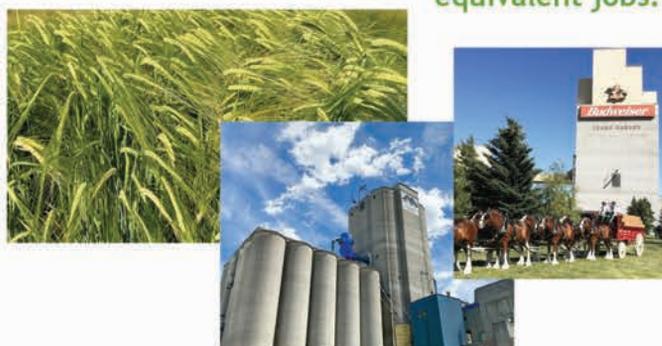
Idaho has become the single largest barley producing state in the nation, growing **39% of all U.S. barley in 2025**. Most of that barley is sold locally within the state to large malting facilities. Barley production nationally has been in decline for the last two decades, however Idaho's barley production has remained stable, with a slight upward trajectory. Production volume in 2025 was 54.9 million bushels, slightly below the decade average of 55 million bushels. However, due to price fluctuations **2025 production value was \$335.9 million**, slightly above the \$323.4 million decade-average value.

Idaho's 2025 barley production was 10 million bushels higher than the decade low 44.5 million bushels in 2021. Harvested acres were slightly lower than average, but yields continue to grow, with a long run trend of increasing by 1.4 bushels per year. This all culminated in total production value being slightly above the decade average (see Table 1.)

Table 1 production value is used as direct production contributions. All or nearly all barley production goes through some value-added processing in-state before exiting the economy and bringing new dollars into the state. For FY 2025 barley generated \$335.9 million in direct sales, which translates into **\$159.9 million in direct gross state product** (see Table 2).

Those added dollars then circulate in the economy, traveling through the barley and household supply chains, supporting nearly another \$116.0

million in indirect, business-to-business, value-added transactions. Employee income is also spent in the state's economy, generating activity in those industries that support household purchases such as food retailers, automotive maintenance, electricity, etc. Those household-to-business expenditures and their associated ripple effects generate approximately \$72.2 million in additional value-added. **The entire 2025 barley sector in Idaho is responsible for just under \$348.1 million dollars in economic activity, supporting nearly 2,500 full time equivalent jobs.**



Total 2025 Barley Contributions to Idaho

Table 2

	Sales	GSP	Income	Jobs
Direct	\$335,865,600	\$159,890,379	\$53,179,455	456
Indirect	\$211,121,332	\$116,007,709	\$71,873,731	1,342
Induced	\$119,875,556	\$72,189,416	\$37,789,945	685
Total	\$666,862,488	\$348,087,505	\$162,843,131	2,483

2025 Idaho Economic Data

	Sales	GSP	Income	Jobs
State Totals	\$236,325,018,152	\$123,306,396,201	\$75,378,291,308	1,214,635

Table 1

Idaho Barley

Year	Harvested Acres	Yield (BU/AC)	Production (BU)	Price (\$/BU)	Value of Production
2011	500,000	93	46,500,000	\$5.63	\$261,795,000
2012	600,000	90	54,000,000	\$6.53	\$352,620,000
2013	620,000	93	57,660,000	\$6.42	\$370,177,200
2014	550,000	94	51,700,000	\$5.11	\$264,187,000
2015	580,000	97	56,260,000	\$5.86	\$329,683,600
2016	580,000	107	62,060,000	\$5.19	\$322,091,400
2017	510,000	95	48,450,000	\$4.75	\$230,137,500
2018	530,000	101	53,530,000	\$5.03	\$269,255,900
2019	530,000	104	55,120,000	\$5.02	\$276,702,400
2020	500,000	110	55,000,000	\$4.92	\$270,600,000
2021	500,000	89	44,500,000	\$5.38	\$239,410,000
2022	540,000	111	59,940,000	\$7.61	\$456,143,400
2023	540,000	112	60,480,000	\$7.76	\$469,324,800
2024	510,000	109	55,590,000	\$6.44	\$357,999,600
2025	490,000	112	54,880,000	\$6.12	\$335,865,600

This information is from a 2025 Idaho Barley Economic Impact Study conducted by Recon Insight Group LLC and sponsored by the Idaho Barley Commission. To receive a copy of the full report, contact Laura Wilder at lwilder@barley.idaho.gov.



Juliet Marshall: Advancing Barley Research Through Science, Service and Collaboration

In Idaho agriculture, progress often comes from quiet consistency, long hours in the field, rigorous research, and strong partnerships built over time.

There are few individuals embody that approach better than Juliet Marshall, Associate Director of the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station in Idaho Falls and Endowed Research Professor for cereals pathology and agronomy at the University of Idaho, whose work is integral to barley research across the state.

Marshall's career has been shaped by a lifelong connection to agriculture and being rooted in a strong background in academics. Raised in 4-H and FFA in Delaware, she pursued plant sciences at the University of Delaware, where early exposure to plant pathology and genetics sparked a fascination with plant-pathogen interactions. She went on to earn her master's degree in plant sciences and a Ph.D. in plant pathology/phytopathology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, driven by a desire to apply science directly to real-world agricultural challenges.

Her applied focus continues to define her work in Idaho. Marshall's research addresses some of the most pressing disease challenges facing barley growers, including Fusarium head blight (FHB), associated mycotoxins, and cereal cyst nematode (CCN). Through integrated pest management strategies, variety evaluation, and long-term disease monitoring, her work helps protect yield, grain quality, and grower profitability while supporting sustainable production systems.

"Being trained in plant pathology helps you recognize problems early, before they become widespread," Marshall explains. "That early recognition is critical to protecting both production and market value."

In eastern Idaho's high-elevation desert environment—widely regarded as one of the best regions in the world for producing high-quality malting barley—Marshall's research supports Idaho's leadership in barley by helping growers adapt to disease pressure, evolving crop rotations, and efficiency challenges related to water and nutrient use.

Within the past year, Marshall stepped into her role as associate director of the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station, where she helps guide research priorities, facilities, and staffing across research centers in Idaho Falls and Aberdeen. In this leadership position, she works closely with faculty, staff, and partners to ensure researchers have the tools and support needed to deliver meaningful results to producers.



Juliet Marshall, Associate Director of the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station and Endowed Research Professor for cereals pathology and agronomy at the University of Idaho

"I want the experiment stations to have the resources needed to attract the best researchers, perform the best research and deliver the advanced needed to keep Idaho agriculture sustainable," Marshall said. "If we can give people the right resources, they can focus on research that truly improves the lives of Idaho producers. Our aging infrastructure is hampering our capability to provide that leadership"

Education and mentorship are a cornerstone to Marshall's work. As a professor, she integrates graduate students into applied research, giving them hands-on experience with real production challenges. Many of those students go on to careers in agriculture, research, and industry which extends the impact of her work.

Strong collaboration underscores everything Marshall does. She credits partnerships with organizations like the Idaho Barley Commission and Idaho Grain Producers Association as essential to advancing research and maintaining Idaho's competitive edge in cereal production.

"Grower success facilitates industry success," she noted. "We are interdependent, and research has to support the health of the entire system."

Known for her approachability, practical communication style, and deep respect for producers, Marshall has earned the trust of Idaho's agricultural community by listening first and translating complex science into feasible, tangible information.

As Idaho agriculture continues to evolve, leaders like Juliet Marshall ensure the industry remains innovative, resilient, and grounded in research. Her career reflects the power of steady leadership, collaboration, and a long-term commitment to serving growers and strengthening Idaho agriculture.

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