

# IDAHO **GRAIN**

SUMMER 2026

THE IDAHO GRAIN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

**ADVOCATING  
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SINCE 1957**

**IDAHO WHEAT  
COMMISSION 2025**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



**IDAHO 2026**

**SESSION  
OVERVIEW**

The 2nd Regular Session of the 68th Idaho Legislature officially adjourned Sine Die on April 2nd. We break down the key piece of legislation for grain producers.



**IDAHO DIETITIANS  
TO HELP GROW  
DEMAND FOR BARLEY**

The Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics annual meeting brought together nutrition professionals from across the state. The Idaho Barley Commission was there to make sure barley had a seat at the table.



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

BY AMAYA AGUIRRE-LANDA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This spring has felt hectic, but in an invigorating way (if that's a thing).

The legislative session adjourned sine die on April 6, just in time for us to shift gears into Idaho's May primary elections. Since then, we've been launching a reimagined leadership development program for growers, planning legislator educational tours, mapping out membership meetings across the state, looking ahead to summer national meetings, tracking ongoing Farm Bill and USMCA developments, and prioritizing annual convention planning.

The pace feels familiar when I think about the kind of spring Idaho gave us this year, record high April precipitation on the heels of a record dry winter. Warm, almost summer-like days followed by freezing (literally) nights. Planting, then stopping for snow, mud... and starting again.

And yet, we persevere. Because that's what farmers do, isn't it?

In this issue, we'll dive into many of these topics. You'll find a recap of the key issues we engaged on during the legislative session on pages 12-13. You'll also get to know two growers making an impact in IGPA—Executive Member Sedar Beckman and Committee Chair Erik Olson. As well as many other issues impacting the wheat and barley industry.

**I look forward to seeing many of your faces as I make my way around the state this summer!**



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# PRESIDENT'S VIEW

BY KYLE WANGEMANN | PRESIDENT

Agriculture has always been the backbone of Idaho's economy and rural communities. As president of the Idaho Grain Producers Association, I am proud to represent the hardworking farmers who rise before dawn, battle unpredictable weather, and continue producing some of the highest-quality grain in the nation.

Our grain producers are more than farmers — they are innovators, conservationists, and stewards of the land. Idaho's wheat, barley, and other grain crops play a vital role not only in feeding families here at home, but also in supporting markets across the country and around the world. Every harvest represents months of planning, investment, and dedication.

Today, our industry faces significant challenges. Rising input costs, volatile markets, labor shortages, and increasing regulations continue to place pressure on producers. Weather extremes and water concerns also remind us that agriculture depends heavily on responsible resource management and long-term sustainability.

Despite these challenges, Idaho grain producers remain resilient. Farmers are adopting precision agriculture technologies, improving soil health practices, and investing in more efficient equipment to remain competitive while protecting our natural resources. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to future generations and to maintaining Idaho's reputation for agricultural excellence.

Advocacy is another critical part of our mission. The Idaho Grain Producers Association works closely with policymakers, researchers, and industry partners to ensure that the voice of agriculture is heard. We support policies that strengthen rural communities, expand market opportunities, and encourage innovation while preserving the family farm way of life.

Education also remains a top priority. Many consumers are generations removed from the farm, and it is important that we continue sharing the story of modern agriculture. Idaho farmers care deeply about food safety, environmental stewardship, and producing a reliable food supply. By building stronger connections between producers and consumers, we can foster greater understanding and trust.

Looking ahead, I remain optimistic about the future of Idaho agriculture. Our producers have always adapted to change, and their determination continues to drive this industry forward. With strong leadership, sound policy, and continued innovation, Idaho grain farming will remain an essential part of our state's economy and heritage for generations to come.

To every producer across our state, thank you for your dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence. Your work matters, and the Idaho Grain Producers Association will continue standing beside you every step of the way.



# 05

# IGPA ISSUES

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

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- What Is the Purpose of Your Crop Rotation?
- The Columbia-Snake River is a lifeline for Idaho's farmers, now it needs their help



# February Meeting and Legislative Reception 2026



The annual IGPA Winter Board Meeting is held each February.

This year, more than 25 growers from across the state gathered in Boise for several days of meetings and events.

The agenda included a dedicated day for the executive board, followed by a full board session to discuss policy resolutions, hear from industry experts on recent trends, and receive updates from the Idaho Wheat Commission and Idaho Barley Commission.

Later in the week, IGPA was honored to host its first legislative reception at Beside Bardenay. The event drew more than 100 legislators, growers, commissioners, and agricultural partners, providing valuable opportunities to discuss key issues facing Idaho agriculture.

“Our goal each year at the winter meeting is to come together, share ideas, review policy decisions, and discuss what the year ahead may hold,” said IGPA Executive Director Amaya Aguirre-Landa. “It also gives us the opportunity to connect with legislators and key decision makers. And we of course try to throw a little fun in while we are together.”

A group also attended the annual Leadership Idaho Agriculture (LIA) Gala, celebrating in true “boots and bling” style.

The next board meeting will be held November 17 at the Sun Valley Resort in Sun Valley, Idaho during the Idaho Grain & Oilseed Convention.



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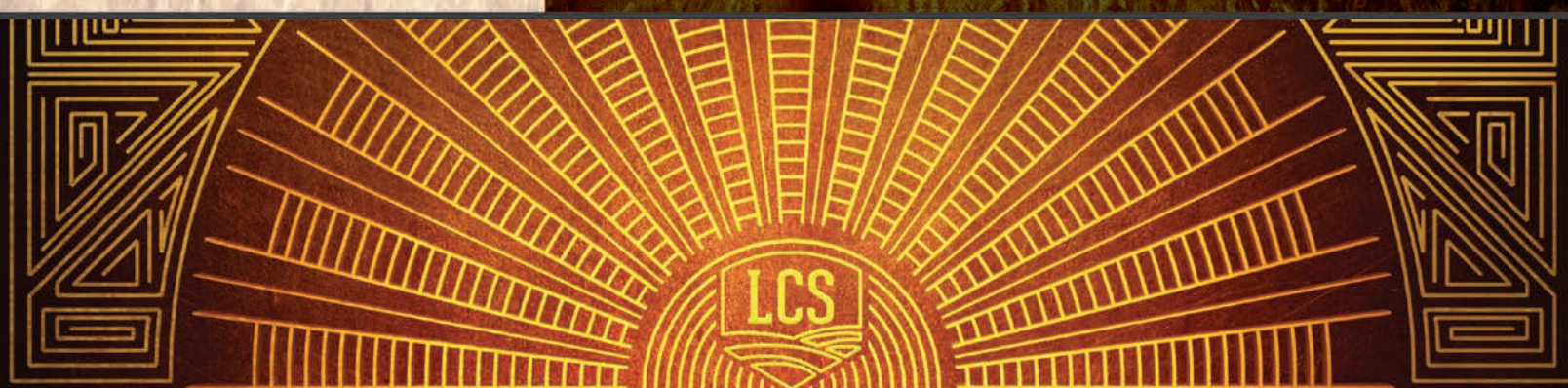
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## Meet the Newest IGPA Executive Committee Member—Sedar Beckman, Executive Member

### What was your upbringing/childhood like?

I grew up on a small, irrigated farm in eastern Idaho, where we rotated wheat, barley, and alfalfa, and raised purebred cattle for seedstock. I was active in 4-H and FFA, showing livestock and competing in mechanics and welding events. I have one sister who is five years older than me; she lives in Malcolm, Nebraska, with her husband and their eight-year-old son.

During the summers, my main job was moving irrigation pipe—what we liked to call being an “aluminum line technician.” I also traveled throughout the western U.S. showing cattle, and whenever I had spare time, I enjoyed playing sports.

### What is your hometown and educational background?

I grew up in Roberts, Idaho, and attended high school in Rigby. I then went to junior college in Casper, Wyoming, on a livestock judging scholarship, where I earned an Associate of Science in Crop Production. After that, I transferred to the University of Wyoming and earned a bachelor's degree in Plant Science (Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture) with a minor in Economics.



### How did you meet your spouse?

My wife and I met during a field studies trip required for our degree. We were in the same major and followed the Colorado River agricultural ecosystem from Rifle, Colorado, down to the U.S.–Mexico border.

### Tell us about your farm—size, crops, and history.

We farm about 1,200 acres and also do some custom farming. Our primary crops are malt barley and alfalfa, with wheat rotated in as well. We've also experimented with mustard and grow forage grasses for our cattle.

My parents purchased our first acreage in 1994. When my wife and I returned home after college, we began expanding the operation. In 2012, we had the opportunity to purchase my grandparents' farm, and in 2021 we officially formed Beckman Livestock and Farming.

### What are your guiding principles and biggest challenges?

Our guiding principles are straightforward: operate as efficiently as possible while prioritizing soil health and animal care, and staying informed on markets, geopolitical issues, and policy changes.

Our biggest challenges are similar to what many producers face—labor shortages, water availability, input cost volatility, and suppressed markets. In our area, rapid urban growth has also driven up land values, making expansion more difficult.

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**Tell us about your family— who is involved on the farm?**

My wife, Danna, and I have been married nearly 18 years, and we have two daughters, Winston (7) and Collins (3).

Danna grew up in Pinedale, Wyoming, and attended high school in Sheridan. She is currently the Rigby Branch Manager for D.L. Evans Bank, but she's also heavily involved on the farm—whether that means running errands, helping move equipment, or jumping into a truck or grain cart when needed.

My parents are still very involved in the daily operation. My mom especially enjoys working with the cattle, while my dad helps with all aspects of the farm and enjoys operating equipment and checking crops and livestock.

**How do you see the future of the U.S. and Idaho grain industry? What challenges lie ahead?**

I'm optimistic about the future of grain production in both the U.S. and Idaho. We're one of the most capable countries



when it comes to consistently producing high-quality crops that compete well in the global market. We also have knowledgeable and dedicated people advocating for our industry at every level.

The challenges we face aren't new, but they're becoming more intense and fast-moving. Market shifts, policy changes, and

Continued on next page

Beckman, continued from previous page

external pressures are happening more quickly and aggressively, and I expect that trend to continue.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

We enjoy camping, fishing, and spending time outdoors as a family. Our kids are getting involved in sports, so we enjoy supporting them in that as well. One of our favorite simple traditions is taking a summer evening drive to check the farm and stopping by the local ice cream shop.

### What do you enjoy most about being involved in IGPA?



## GROWER PROFILE

# ERIK OLSON

*Chair—Marketing, Grain Quality, and Energy Committee*

### What is your upbringing/childhood?

I grew up on the farm, and my earliest memories are being out here with my dad at Olson Valley Ranch. Farming has always been a part of my life from the very beginning. I spent a couple years of high school in Post Falls living with my mom and stepdad, but ultimately made my way back to Boundary County. This is home. It's where I came back to build my life, marry my high school sweetheart, and start my family.

### Hometown? Education?

Bonnors Ferry is my hometown. I moved away for a couple years during high school to live in Post Falls, but I came back and graduated from Bonnors Ferry High School in 1996. I attended North Idaho College for a semester, but realized college wasn't the path for me. I returned to the family farm, and that's where I've been ever since.

### How did you meet your spouse?

My first wife Hallie was my high school sweetheart, and together we had two daughters, Kylee and Makenna. She passed away in 2014 at the age of 36 after complications from surgery.

I met my current wife Cassie the following year through mutual friends. She brought two boys, Nolan and Dylan, into my life, and together we've built a strong family here in Boundary County.

I value being part of the conversation and having a seat at the table on issues that impact our industry. It's an opportunity to connect with others and contribute to shaping the future of agriculture. I'm involved with the Marketing, Grain Quality, and Energy Committee.

### What do you love most about Idaho?

The scenery and diversity of the state are hard to beat. Idaho offers the ability to produce a wide variety of crops, and no matter where you are, you're surrounded by incredible views.



Today, our youngest son Dylan has returned to the farm, and I'm hopeful he'll continue the legacy and follow in my footsteps.

### Tell us about your farm: size, what you grow, and when the operation was established.

I farm alongside my dad and uncle on a 3,000-acre operation, and I'm proud to be a fourth-generation farmer. Our family farm dates back to the late 1920s, when my grandfather came to the area and stayed after harvest—and never left.

Today, we grow wheat, canola, beans, and barley. Over the years, the operation has grown significantly, but it's still rooted in the same values and commitment to the land that it was built on.



**How do you see the future of the U.S. grain industry and the grain industry in Idaho? What challenges do you see?**

I believe the industry needs to do a better job of telling our story. There are a lot of misconceptions about how food is grown, especially when it comes to things like pesticides and modern farming practices. Education is key.

We also need to do a better job promoting wheat and grains as an essential part of a healthy diet and pushing back on some of the negative narratives out there.

I'm proud of the work our commissions are doing to build new markets and strengthen long-standing ones. While there are definitely challenges ahead, I'm hopeful that the value of what we produce will continue to be recognized.

**What do you do for fun?**

I enjoy traveling with my wife, taking mountain drives, and keeping up with politics- something I've always had an interest in.

**What do you like most about being involved in IGPA? Committees you sit on?**

I really value being part of IGPA because it gives me the opportunity to connect with other producers and be involved in shaping the future of agriculture in Idaho. I currently serve as Chair of the Marketing, Grain Quality, and Energy Committee, and I appreciate being able to contribute and advocate for our industry.

**What do you love most about Idaho?**

What I love most about Idaho is its diversity. No two parts of the state are the same—you can go from high desert in the south and east to lush green valleys and rolling hills in the north. I also appreciate the conservative values and the way of life here. It's a beautiful place, and it will always be home.



**Guiding principles of your operation and biggest challenges you face?**

We focus on producing the best we can with what we have and doing what's right for our ground. Taking care of the land and making decisions that will sustain it for future generations is always at the forefront.

Like most in agriculture, one of our biggest challenges is balancing rising input costs with lower commodity prices. Finding that balance and staying sustainable through tough economic conditions is something we're constantly working through.

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

My dad and uncle are still actively involved in the farm, though I hope to see them retire in the coming years and enjoy retirement, if there is such a thing as a farmer. We also have two hired men who are a big part of our operation.

Behind the scenes, my stepmother Lynda and my wife Cassie play a huge role, especially during harvest. The wife of a farmer wears many hats and keeps everything running- it's a big job with a lot of responsibility.



# Idaho 2026 Session Overview

BY VERITAS ADVISORS, IGPA LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS

## The 2nd Regular Session of the 68th Idaho Legislature officially adjourned Sine Die on Thursday, April 2nd, 2026.

The session lasted 81 days. A total of 1,033 pieces of legislation were drafted, 724 were introduced, and 349 bills passed both chambers. Legislators also introduced 93 resolutions and memorials, with 66 being adopted. Four bills were vetoed by Governor Little (HB 975, HB 758, HB 674, and S1359), with two more having certain line-item provisions cut (HB 968 and HB 978). The Legislature would have to issue a special legislative session in order to reverse these vetoes.

When the 2026 Legislative Session convened on January 12th, 2026, Governor Little outlined his “Enduring Idaho” budget plan. This session marked a notable shift in Idaho’s fiscal landscape as the state faced a budget deficit after several years of significant surpluses. In response, the Governor recommended a permanent 3% reduction for most agency budgets, and the Legislature later passed S1331, implementing a one-time largely across-the-board reduction described as a 4% holdback for most agencies.

The following is an overview of the major issues IGPA either monitored or worked on during this past session.

**Tax Conformity:** Lawmakers considered how Idaho should respond to federal tax changes included in the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (H.R.1), particularly as they relate to research and experimentation (R&E) expenses. HB 559 was signed into law and adopts a version of the “Delaware Model,” requiring Idaho businesses to continue amortizing 2022–2024 R&E costs rather than allowing the federal catch-up expensing available in 2025 and 2026. The bill also includes a new permanent non-conformity provision that effectively eliminates the R&E tax credit and maintains Idaho’s historical non-conformity to bonus depreciation. As a result, some Idaho businesses may face state tax liability on timing-related phantom income and may not fully recover previously paid taxes on those expenses until 2029.

**Administrative Rules:** HB 941, introduced by legislative leadership, would have shifted administrative rule coordination from the executive branch to the legislative branch. The bill moved the Administrative Rules Coordinator from the Division of Financial Management (DFM) to Legislative Services (LSO) and would have granted authority to edit or amend proposed rule language. It also removed the requirement that the Legislature review all existing administrative rules once every eight years. The proposal raised significant concerns regarding the rulemaking process and did not advance out of committee.



**Interstate Fuel Policy:** Early in the session, Idaho policymakers raised concerns regarding a proposal under consideration in Utah that would have imposed a tax on fuel refined in Utah but exported to other states. Because Idaho relies on Utah for a significant portion of its fuel supply, stakeholders warned the policy could significantly increase fuel costs for Idaho consumers and businesses. IGPA joined an agriculture industry letter expressing opposition to this effort. Legislative leadership introduced HJM 12 urging Utah legislators to reconsider the proposal, and lawmakers in both states engaged in discussions on the issue. Shortly thereafter, Utah leadership announced an alternative approach to address fuel pricing concerns and did not move forward with the export tax proposal. As a result, HJM 12 was returned to committee, and no further action was necessary.

**Big Game Depredation Claims and Wildlife Relocation:** HB 651 was introduced to clarify that unused funds in the existing Big Game Depredation Fund may be used to pay approved claims for crop damage caused by elk, including unpaid balances from prior years. IGPA supported the proposal as a practical step to improve access to available depredation funds for impacted producers. The bill did not move forward this session after the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) requested additional time to provide information regarding fund availability and timing. The proposal successfully started the policy discussion, and IGPA will continue working with stakeholders during the interim.

Similarly, HB 653 was introduced but did not advance this session. The bill would require advance notice to county commissioners,

█ All 105 seats in the Idaho Legislature, all constitutional offices, both congressional seats, and one of Idaho's two U.S. Senate seats are up for election this year. There are relatively few retirements this year, but we have an active primary election coming together.

affected landowners, and grazing permittees before planned wildlife relocations and would allow county commissioners to hold a hearing and approve or reject certain movements upon written objection. IGPA supports this proposal and expects to remain involved in interim discussions.

**Bear River Compact:** HCR 34 was adopted this session and requests two studies related to Idaho's allocation under the Bear River Compact. The first study will evaluate the amount of water available to Idaho under the original ratified compact, and the second will examine potential uses for that water if Idaho were to fully utilize its allocated acre-feet. Idaho is entitled to the first 125,000 acre-feet of water flowing down the Bear River into Utah. The resolution has evolved into a broader effort to evaluate additional water security options for the region amid ongoing drought concerns.

**Energy and Natural Resources Coordination:** HB 737 consolidates the Office of Energy and Mineral Resources (OEMR) and the Office of Species Conservation (OSC) into a new Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination (SMEC) within the Governor's Office. The legislation is intended to improve coordination among state permitting, energy development, and resource management programs. A related measure, HB 898, transfers the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) into the newly created SMEC office to better align historic preservation review with major infrastructure and development projects affecting energy and natural resource industries. IGPA supports this effort to improve coordination. Both bills were signed into law.

**Private Property Protections:** S1326aa was signed into law and strengthens statutory protections against government employees entering privately owned land without proper authority. The legislation codifies constitutional protections under the 4th Amendment related to property access while clarifying the limited circumstances under which government officials may enter private land. The bill was amended during the process to remove a private right of action provision that raised concerns among stakeholders. A companion trailer bill, S1391, was later signed into law to restore the ability of publicly employed land surveyors to access private property for survey purposes while

maintaining notice requirements for landowners. IGPA supported this successful effort to strengthen the private property rights of our members.

**Transportation and Farm Equipment:** Two transportation-related measures of interest to agriculture and supported by IGPA were signed into law this session. S1224aa clarifies when operators of farm equipment must allow other vehicles to pass, allowing operators to remain on the roadway until they reach a location that is safe and appropriate to pull aside. HB 664 modifies Idaho law to allow heavy vehicles with five or more axles and operating above 26,000 pounds to travel at the same posted speed limits as other vehicles. This change reflects modern highway design and improves transportation efficiency for agricultural and commercial operations.

**Immigration:** Several immigration-related proposals were introduced this session focusing on employer verification requirements and enforcement provisions. HB 704 proposed requiring all Idaho employers to participate in the federal E-Verify program, while the Senate advanced a narrower alternative in S1247 that would apply to public employers and larger employers with business contracts with the state. HB 704 passed the House and S1247 passed the Senate; however, each bill stalled in the opposite chamber as leadership continued discussions regarding the preferred policy approach. Late in the session, S1247 was sent to the House amending order and amended with language similar to HB659, requiring Idaho law enforcement to enter into 287(g) agreements with ICE. The Senate ultimately did not concur with the House amendments, and the bill failed. We anticipate E-Verify and related immigration discussions will continue through the interim and into future sessions.

**Energy:** Efforts continued this session to address concerns regarding the impact of new large electric loads. HB 911 was signed into law and represented the final iteration of the legislation following extensive negotiations among utilities and industry stakeholders. The bill codifies existing Idaho Public Utility Commission (IPUC) special contract processes to ensure that new large-load energy users of 50 megawatts or more do not create stranded costs or shift costs to other ratepayer classes. The legislation also establishes timelines for the PUC to review and approve these contracts and does not add unnecessary regulatory costs to the process for ratepayers.

**Looking Ahead:** With the 2026 Legislative Session behind us, we now turn our attention to the election process. All 105 seats in the Idaho Legislature, all constitutional offices, both congressional seats, and one of Idaho's two U.S. Senate seats are up for election this year. There are relatively few retirements this year, but we have an active primary election coming together. We'll look forward to sharing more on election results in our next update.



# IDAHO GRAIN & OILSEED CONVENTION

# 20 26

Join us November 17–19, 2026, in Sun Valley for the Idaho Grain & Oilseed Convention — the premier event for growers and ag professionals in the Northwest. Gain valuable insights, connect with industry leaders, and gear up for the future growing season.



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# Water Legislation

BY PAUL ARRINGTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & GENERAL COUNSEL, IDAHO WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

The 2026 Legislative session has ended and with it, some new water-related legislation.

This year, the IWUA legislative committee was very active, taking positions on 27 pieces of legislation. Let's take a look at some of the water-related results:



**1. Water-related funding continues:** Water is the lifeblood of Idaho's communities and economies. Thankfully, Idaho's legislature gets it. This year, they once again recognized water's importance and took steps to ensure that water infrastructure is maintained and water-research remains strong. Specifically, the legislature continued a \$30 million annual appropriation to the Idaho Water Resource Board for water infrastructure. These funds are being used to help address some of the most complex water-supply challenges Idaho is facing – in every corner of the state. Additionally, the legislature provided continued funding to the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRRI), which connects the research power of Idaho's universities to the on-the-ground management of Idaho's water. Our state is fortunate to have strong universities with a keen interest in water research. The state will be better equipped to address the water-related challenges and opportunities in our future because of IWRRRI.

**2. Water at Top of Mind:** In total, IWUA supported 7 concurrent resolutions and memorials, each providing an opportunity for the legislature to express support for efforts to protect Idaho's water resources. For example, Senate Concurrent Resolutions (SCR) 116 to 119 each address water challenges throughout Idaho – including the hard work that communities and stakeholders are engaging in to overcome those challenges. From north to south and east to west, there are very real challenges facing our state. Importantly, there are also very smart and engaged communities working to overcome those challenges. Similar, House Joint Memorial (HJM) 15 expresses support for efforts to understand water supplies and challenges in the Bear River Basin and requests a report from the Idaho Water Resources Board identifying opportunities to ensure a sustainable water supply.

**3. Irrigation District Boards (S1337):** It is becoming increasingly difficult for irrigation districts to find individuals who are qualified and interested to serve on a board of directors. S1337 provides that individuals may serve on an irrigation district board if that individual (1) owns property in the division to be represented; and (2) lives within the county or adjoining county of the irrigation district.

**4. Ditch easement protection (S1304):** Ditches are a critical part of water management. The easements for these ditches must be protected. S1304 recognizes the easement for a ditch under Idaho law also applies to the structures on that ditch (i.e. headgates, diversion boxes, check boards, etc.).

**5. Cloud Seeding:** There were at least 5 bills addressing cloud seeding this year. Four of them sought to terminate or significantly constrict the state's cloud seeding program. IWUA opposed each of these bills and each failed. Senate bill 1269, however, was supported by IWUA and passed into law. This legislation provides transparency and public engagement opportunities for Idaho's cloud seeding program. Cloud seeding is a critical tool in the state's toolbox. We rely on cloud seeding to enhance winter snowpack and it provides approx. 1.2 million acre feet of additional water supply across seeded basins. For example, eastern Idaho, which has been facing significant water supply challenges and disputes, receives, on average, over 600,000 acre feet of additional water supply because of cloud seeding efforts. Importantly, after nearly 50-years of cloud seeding in Idaho, there are no known environmental or health impacts.

Overall, IWUA had another successful year in the Idaho Legislature. Check out our webpage for further updates and to see all the bills IWUA tracked this session ([www.iwua.org](http://www.iwua.org)).

# “From Challenge to Opportunity: Advancing Wheat Growers’ Priorities in 2026”

BY SAM KIEFFER, NAWG CEO

There is never a dull moment when advocating for our nation’s wheat growers.

2026 has been a busy year for the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), but amid the activity, it’s worth remembering why this work matters.

Ask any wheat grower and they’ll tell you: farming isn’t just a job, it’s a way of life. It’s a commitment rooted in stewardship, resilience, and a deep pride in helping feed the world. But that commitment is being tested. Wheat growers are enduring one of the most challenging farm economies in recent memory.

For the past three years, the average U.S. wheat farmer has operated at a net loss, even as global demand for wheat remains strong. The reasons are clear: historically high input costs, volatile commodity prices, and tighter credit conditions that make it harder for farm families to stay afloat.

If there’s one constant in agriculture, it’s that no one succeeds alone. The challenges facing wheat growers today — input costs driven by inflation and tariffs, uncertainty in the domestic and global markets, mounting policy and regulatory pressures, and a fragile farm economy are complex and, at times, contentious. That’s exactly why collaboration is at the core of NAWG’s work.

In recent months, NAWG has partnered with a broad coalition to advance priorities that matter to wheat growers. On trade, we joined fellow grower organizations in urging the International Trade Commission (ITC) to revoke countervailing duties on phosphate fertilizers from Russia and Morocco. At the same time, we conducted and submitted our own wheat-specific

economic analysis. Fertilizer costs remain a major pressure point, and ensuring access to affordable inputs is essential to restoring profitability and maintaining global competitiveness.

We’ve also engaged at the highest levels of government. NAWG recently met in the West Wing of the White House alongside partners including the National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, and PepsiCo. These discussions focused squarely on the state of the farm economy and the policies needed to support American agriculture.

Collaboration has been equally critical in our advocacy for international food assistance programs. Working with the North American Millers’ Association, USA Rice, the domestic maritime industry, and international food assistance programs, NAWG successfully urged the Trump administration to reach an agreement with the U.S. State Department to transfer the Food for Peace program to USDA. Now, Congress must act to make that move permanent. For decades, Food for Peace has represented the best of American leadership, delivering life-saving assistance abroad while supporting farmers at home. At its core, Food for Peace is an agricultural program, born from the ideas of Kansas farmers. It relies on U.S.-grown commodities, American supply chains, and the expertise of producers who grow the highest-quality food in the world.

USDA’s deep understanding of agriculture, markets, logistics, and rural economies makes it the right home for the program. Aligning Food for Peace within USDA would improve efficiency, enhance accountability, and help farmers feed those in need around the world. These partnerships reflect a shared understanding: moving U.S.-grown commodities into global markets supports farmers, strengthens supply chains, and advances global food security. Food security is national security.

This year, the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement has raised new concerns across the agricultural community. Wheat is America’s leading food crop and has long been a trusted, nutritious staple. Yet the latest HHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans risk creating confusion for consumers and policymakers by sending mixed signals about the role of grain foods in a healthy diet. Wheat, wheat flour, and wheat-based foods have provided affordable, nutrient-rich sustenance for thousands of years and deserve clear, consistent recognition as a cornerstone of our nation’s diet.

As I have said before, clarity matters. Grain foods, including wheat, have long been an important part of balanced, affordable diets. NAWG will continue to engage with the administration and





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Congress as these are implemented. I have also cautioned officials inside the White House, USDA and HHS, including Secretary Kennedy himself, against advancing inaccurate portrayals of how farmers grow and harvest wheat. Our goal is not politics; it's accuracy, transparency, and fairness for growers and consumers.

Encouragingly, April has brought meaningful progress. The House of Representatives has passed a new farm bill that includes many of NAWG's priorities.

The legislation expands and modernizes the Farm Credit Title, helping ensure farmers have access to affordable, reliable financing in today's high-cost environment. It also transfers Food for Peace to USDA, making permanent a change that will strengthen the program's long-term effectiveness. Beyond its humanitarian impact, the program also supports demand for U.S. agriculture. Historically, about one-third of all U.S. wheat exports are used for food aid.

The bill also integrates the Supplemental Agricultural Trade Promotion Program into the well-established Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program, reinforcing efforts to keep U.S. wheat competitive globally. It reauthorizes the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), preserving vital conservation tools that protect soil and water resources while supporting farm income stability, and extending the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

Not every challenge, however, needs to be addressed with legislation or Executive Order. Recently, tech start-up Kalshi Predictive Markets launched an option to make trades, or bets, on farm commodity markets. NAWG, along with other commodity groups in DC, immediately engaged Kalshi executives to discuss concerns about increased volatility, lack of market transparency, perpetual futures and the harm farmers could experience without appropriate regulatory oversight. Kalshi quickly announced it would change its platform to adopt existing trading hours for predictive markets dealing with farm commodities.

Taken together, these efforts show what's possible when stakeholders come together around shared goals. For wheat growers facing real economic strain, that kind of progress isn't just welcome, it is essential.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a consequential year for wheat advocacy. From farm policy and trade to research funding, nutrition, and regulatory certainty, NAWG remains focused on strengthening the farm economy. Our approach will remain collaborative and bipartisan — clear-eyed about the challenges ahead and steadfast in advancing the interests of America's wheat growers.

# What Is the Purpose of Your Crop Rotation?

BY TRAVIS YOUNGBERG, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE STATE AGRONOMIST FOR IDAHO

Crop rotations have been around almost as long as farming has, but we don't always realize the possible benefits that come from a well-planned and executed rotation.

With focus on soil health, many people immediately reach for practices like cover crops and compost applications to address their soil health needs. While these practices are effective given the appropriate situation and application, we often forget about venerable practices like a solid conservation crop rotation. Sometimes a few adjustments to your crop rotation can provide similar benefits without a lot of additional cost.

There are many reasons why rotating your crops is a good idea. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recommends crop rotations for the following:

- Reduce wind erosion by growing crops that produce vegetative cover and/or crop residues that can be left on the soil surface and provide armor at critically erosive times of the year.
- Improve soil quality through increased organic matter left behind after growing high residue producing crops.
- Manage the balance of plant nutrients by using scavenger crops to go after leftover fertilizer and recapture it to keep it plant available and in the root zone.
- Supply nitrogen using legume crops.
- Conserve water by rotating with lower water use crops.
- Manage plant pests by using crops with different life cycles, rotating to different crop types that do not harbor pests, or use resistant crop varieties that are less susceptible to identified pests or diseases.
- Some additional crop rotation benefits include:
  - Being able to use different herbicide groups or modes of action because of differing crop lifecycles that can help reduce weed and pest resistance to chemicals.
  - Using crops with different root structures (e.g. tap roots for breaking deep compaction or fibrous roots to build soil structure and tilth).
  - Rotating to different crops can also diversify your farm income streams so when prices might be down for one crop it could be up for another.
  - Rotating to different crops — including cover crops — provides soil microorganisms with diverse and well-timed sources of food, allowing their populations to thrive.



These are just a few examples of the benefits of crop rotation. So why don't we always realize the full potential of a well-executed rotation? There are many reasons, but the two that I probably hear the most as an agronomist working with producers are "Market" and "Cost of the equipment to get into growing a totally different crop." These are totally valid and understandable concerns, and these factors should always be considered when determining what changes to consider in your current rotation. But what if I were to tell you that you don't always have

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to completely change the crops you are growing to improve the crop rotation you are using?

A good example of this is growers who are trying to address their wind erosion problems. A fairly common crop rotation in southern Idaho is two years of cereal grain followed by a year of potatoes and one year of sugar beets. After evaluating these rotations with the NRCS erosion models over time, I have noticed that the largest portion of that erosion takes place in the potato and sugar beet years. This is due mostly to the fact that these two crops provide very little residue to cover the soil surface in the winter and spring months when winds are higher. However, if we simply reorder the rotation a little and put one of the years of winter cereal grain in between the potatoes and sugar beets, we can drastically reduce the amount of soil erosion from wind. The winter cereal grains establish quickly in the fall and then provide post-harvest residues that could then be preserved and used to protect the soil surface going into the potatoes or sugar beets. Sometimes all it takes is readjusting the order of your crops.

Another advantage of moving one of the cereal grain crops between the potatoes and sugar beets is that it breaks up the rotation. By not having two cereal grains grown back-to-back, there are opportunities to rotate to different modes of action and break up life cycles for weeds that may have the same growth cycle as the crop you are growing.

This is just one of many ways in which crop rotation can be used to enhance your operation without having to completely change crops. If you would like any assistance in looking at ways to improve your current crop rotation, please contact your local NRCS office. We would love to help you find solutions to your conservation needs!



# The Columbia-Snake River is a lifeline for Idaho's farmers, now it needs their help

BY NORTHWEST RIVERPARTNERS

Our hydropower system provides multiple essential benefits to the millions of people who live in the Northwest and to the United States as a whole.

There has never been a more important time to activate and advocate for the future of our



hydropower system. Spanning 465 miles from Lewiston, Idaho, to the Pacific Ocean, the navigation route known as Marine Highway (M-84) is essential to agriculture and our economy in the Northwest. In fact, it's the top export gateway for all wheat in the United States and the third-largest grain export gateway in the world.

Allowing these massive barges to navigate the Columbia-Snake River system safely are eight federally-owned hydroelectric dams equipped with navigation locks. These form a giant, gradual staircase for ships as they pass through some of the most rugged, scenic, and wild places the country has to offer. All the while, these dams produce affordable, clean, reliable power for millions of people in the region and help to irrigate tens of thousands of acres of farmland.

Even for Idaho's farmers further inland, the downstream benefits provided by these dams are essential for everyday life.

## Economic Powerhouse

While other modes of transportation play a role, barging is arguably the most cost-effective, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe method in the Northwest.

One barge alone can move the freight equivalent of roughly 134 semi-truck trailers, and the 650-foot-long, 86-foot-wide locks allow four of these barges to be rafted together and moved at once. This means each boat can push the equivalent of 538 semi-trucks, or 140 rail cars, in a single trip.

From an environmental standpoint, a barge can move 1 ton of cargo 675 miles on a single gallon of fuel. Comparatively, they're 30% more fuel-efficient than rail and 78% more efficient than semi-trucks.

These impressive stats—provided by the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association—mean that fuel costs for farms and businesses are lower and that congestion and maintenance on our roads and railways are significantly reduced. At the same time, barges have a track record of consistently arriving on time,

with few disruptions. In contrast, other methods often experience delays due to accidents, construction, weather, or capacity issues.

Whether they're moving crops, grains, and other goods downriver or bringing fertilizer and fuel upriver, these advantages are a critical part of the agricultural ecosystem of the region. In a competitive global marketplace, these factors can make all the difference to Northwest businesses that must provide reliable service to domestic and international buyers.

"Barging is an absolute necessity for the farmers of our region," said Scott Corbitt, Executive Director for the Port of Lewiston, Idaho's only seaport and the eastern terminus of Marine Highway M-84. "It is cost-effective, efficient, reliable, and for many of our family farms, the difference between livelihood and insolvency."

## Multitude of Benefits

Navigation is one of several federally "authorized uses" of the hydropower system, alongside energy generation, flood control, and irrigation. For many rural communities in Idaho and across the Northwest, the energy provided by consumer-owned utilities is largely generated from hydropower.

Every few seconds, energy generation and demand need to be in perfect balance. Our rivers provide an abundance of affordable, carbon-free energy that is available to meet the Northwest's needs at a moment's notice. It's an essential service for keeping the lights on and irrigation pumps running during extreme summer heat.

The dams also play a key role in keeping that water available, whether directly from the river or nearby aquifers that rely on it. Crops that rely on irrigation could be severely affected by even a relatively brief power outage.

At the same time, the significantly lower energy costs from hydropower are central to farm profitability.

Based in Heyburn, Idaho, United Electric Co-op Inc. (UEC) provides critical energy services to agricultural producers in their service territory. Roughly one quarter of their energy is used for irrigation, and like many of their fellow rural Idaho utilities, nearly all that energy comes directly from the federal hydropower system.

"The electricity generation capability of the northwest's hydro system is unmatched anywhere in the nation," said Michael Darrington, UEC's General Manager. "This quintessential resource has abundantly provided safe, clean, and affordable electricity for generations, and its preservation as the original renewable energy resource is absolutely necessary."



## Threats to the System

Despite the multitude of benefits that the hydro system provides to Northwest communities and farms, those benefits are at risk. Efforts to remove dams or significantly reduce their capacity continue to grow, driven by decades of costly litigation and public policy pressure.

Concerns about the future of salmon and steelhead are central, with blame often assigned primarily to dam construction and operations. Yet, according to real-time counts conducted at the fish ladders and compiled by the University of Washington, average salmon and steelhead returns have nearly tripled since the first federal dam, Bonneville, began operating in 1938.

While we have more work to do, the Northwest is showing that dams and salmon can share healthy rivers.

Salmon hatch in freshwater rivers and streams, spend a brief period growing stronger and bigger, and then most salmon migrate out to the ocean, where they live the majority of their lives before returning to the freshwater to spawn (reproduce) and die—completing their lifecycle.

Much work has been done to improve this freshwater habitat and to enhance migration for juvenile and adult fish alike as they navigate hydroelectric dams. More recently, some groups have argued that spilling water over the top of the dams is necessary for moving juvenile fish faster downstream.

The problem with spilling more water is that it reduces hydropower output, sometimes by hundreds of megawatts, raising energy costs and lowering reliability—and making navigation less safe for tug operators trying to move barges in and out of the locks. Spill increases in recent years have not yet shown a notable improvement in salmon returns, and there is some

evidence that spill may be harming salmon returns compared to other options.

In February, a federal judge in the District of Oregon sided with plaintiffs, including the states of Oregon and Washington, ordering additional spill and other operational changes. The result is a more expensive, less reliable power system for the millions of people and thousands of family farms that depend on it.

The operational changes are already underway, with water being spilled over the lower Columbia and lower Snake River dams while reservoir elevations have been significantly reduced. While the impacts of these operations won't be fully realized for weeks or even months, the region's leaders have already identified significant challenges.

"With increased sedimentation due in part to erosion resulting from wildfires in our region, we've had barges getting stuck, creating safety issues for tugboat operators and an inability to fully load barges before they are stuck in the silt," said Corbitt. "You can't implement a one-size-fits-all approach on a living river system like ours."

"Nearly a third of our customers' bills are used to mitigate the impacts of hydro generation on fish and wildlife," said Darrington. "This adds up to hundreds of millions of dollars each year in the region. While we are witnessing positive results from those investments, others seek to chip away at the value and benefits of the system through costly litigation to obtain unproven outcomes that will cause electric prices to skyrocket. Judge Simon's decision alone will increase wholesale power costs by approximately 6%, which will be passed onto our customers, without having any justifiable results."

## Why it Matters

For farmers in Idaho and across the Northwest, the hydropower system is essential to the affordable, reliable growth and transportation of crops. In the ongoing fight over the future operation and continued use of our dams, there is an urgent need for Idaho's farmers and grain producers to help policymakers understand what's at stake.

Lower costs, dependable transportation, and a consistent supply of energy all play an important role in something larger—a way of life for the communities and families that grow food for people in the United States and around the world.

If you're interested in joining a growing coalition supporting Northwest hydropower, we encourage you to visit [nrivernpartners.org](http://nrivernpartners.org) to learn more and join the conversation. Likewise, both the Port of Lewiston and UEC welcome members of their communities to reach out if they'd like to get involved. To maintain the affordable, reliable, and responsible benefits of the hydropower system, we need your advocacy.

# IDAHO WHEAT COMMISSION

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.

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

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Grower Governed. Grower Funded. Grower Led.

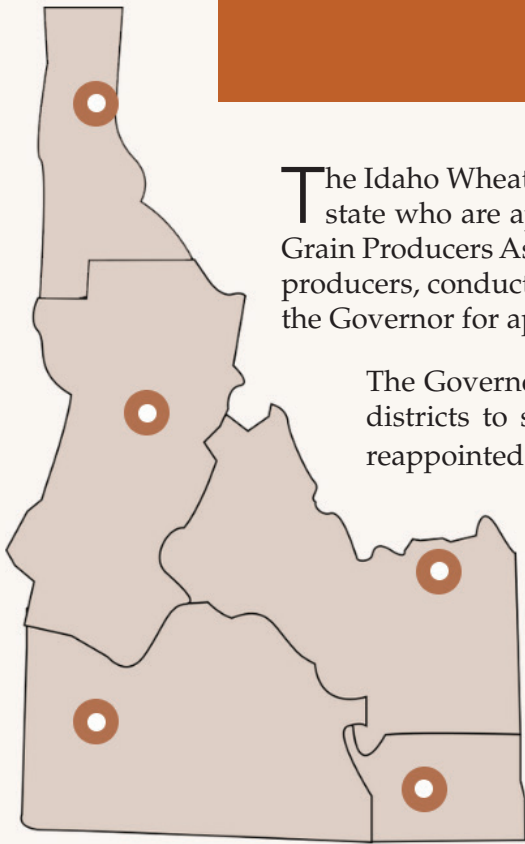
I D A H O W H E A T C O M M I S S I O N

# 2025 annual report

In 1959, Idaho wheat growers presented a request to the Idaho State Legislature to establish the Idaho Wheat Commission. The Wheat Commission was intended to be a vehicle by which Idaho's wheat producers could self-fund grower-driven programs and initiatives to benefit farmers by increasing profitability, production, and market reach. The Idaho Legislature granted statutory authority to the Idaho Wheat Commission as a self-governing agency in Title 22, Chapter 33 of Idaho Code that same year.

The mission of the Idaho Wheat Commission is to increase profitability for Idaho's wheat growers through investments in wheat research, market development and wheat promotion, and farmer education and outreach.

# Grower Governed



The Idaho Wheat Commission is governed by five grower leaders from around the state who are appointed by the Governor to serve as commissioners. The Idaho Grain Producers Association collects resumes and applications from interested wheat producers, conducts interviews, and submits three names per district to the Office of the Governor for appointment.

The Governor appoints one wheat grower from each of the five Idaho Wheat districts to serve as a commissioner for five years. Commissioners can be reappointed for an additional five-year term through the same process.

An *ex officio*, non-voting member represents the University of Idaho J.R. Simplot Endowed Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs). Rachael Bickerton, Senior Director of Government and External Relations at CALs holds this *ex officio* seat. Current commissioners are District 1: Tim Freeburg, Worley; District 2: Cliff Tacke, Cottonwood; District 3: Wayne Hurst, Declo; District 4: Justin Place, Hamer; and District 5: Cordell Kress, Rockland.

# Grower Funded

The Commission is funded exclusively by Idaho's wheat-growing families. Idaho statute – proposed by farmers and approved by the Legislature – enables the Commission to collect an assessment on each bushel of wheat grown in Idaho at the first point of sale. The original assessment rate was \$0.01 per bushel in 1959. The Commission has used the referendum process to increase the assessment rate over time. The current assessment rate in 2025 is \$0.045 per bushel.

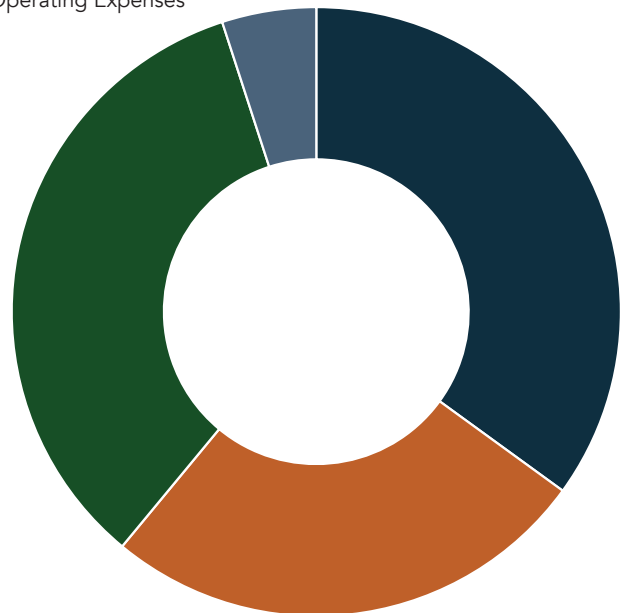
Grower assessment dollars are invested into programs that further the mission of the Commission. With the Commission as a clearinghouse, grower dollars are leveraged to provide a greater return directly to the farm in areas of research, wheat promotion, and grower education.

Commissioners set the annual budget of the Idaho Wheat Commission and direct Commission staff to execute programs and initiatives that fulfill the mission of the Commission. Identifying, leveraging, and fully utilizing available resources and partner organizations increases efficacy and efficiency in promoting and further developing Idaho's wheat industry.

## FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET

**TOTAL: \$3,600,052**

- Research
- Market Development
- Communications & Grower Programs
- Operating Expenses



# Grower Led

To ensure Idaho Wheat Commission programs and initiatives remain relevant to growers and return the highest value for grower investment, the Idaho Wheat Commission is governed by farmer leaders from around the state. Being directed by a board of commissioners who are actively farming provides a 'boots on the ground' perspective to Commission programming and strategy. Commissioners seek out, receive, and evaluate grower feedback to determine effectiveness of the Commission and to re-prioritize the goals and focus of the Commission based upon current opportunities and challenges for individual farmers and the industry as a whole. The strategic plan is reviewed annually during the Commission budget meeting to ensure investments are aligned with priorities.

Grower leaders create opportunities for engagement and dialogue with the farmers they represent, ensuring the Commission remains focused on fulfilling its mission, and allowing the Commission to be proactive in the best interests of Idaho's wheat growers when new challenges or opportunities arise. The Idaho Wheat Commission Strategic Plan remains a working document of the Commission and is continually updated to best serve the needs of Idaho wheat growers.

## *Vision:*

Enhance the long-term success of Idaho wheat farmers and provide a viable future for the next generation through responsible allocation of assessment dollars.

## *Key Objectives:*

**Market Development:** Strengthen existing markets and develop new markets for both domestic and export sales of Idaho wheat

**Research:** Support research that provides maximum benefit to wheat growers and end-users

**Education, Outreach, Programs:** Provide dependable information that supports the progress and success of the industry

**Administration:** Be responsible, transparent stewards of grower dollars and support the professional development and well-being of employees and commissioners



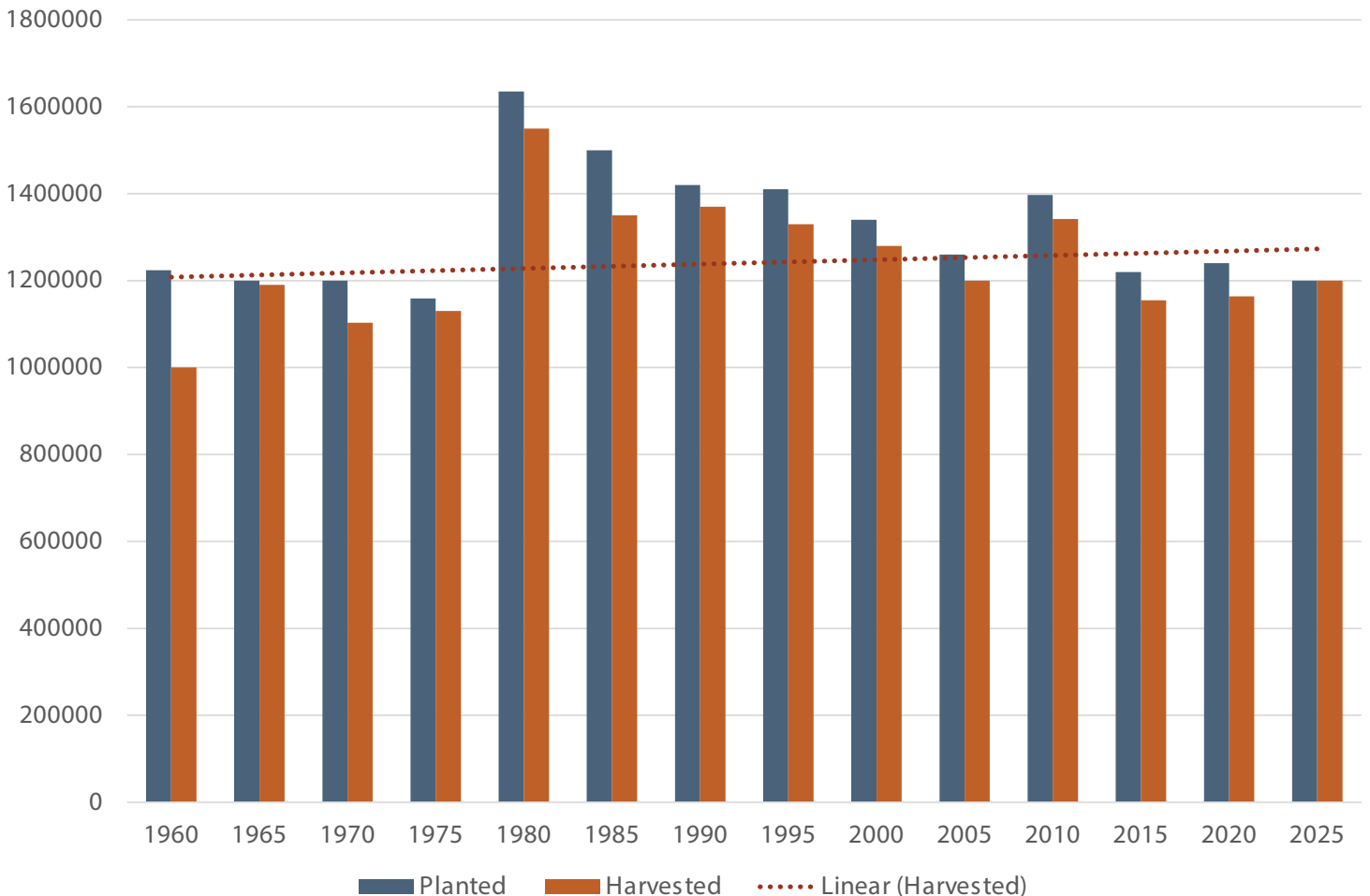
# INDUSTRY GROWTH 1960-2025

While wheat acres across the United States have been steadily giving way to other crops like corn and soybeans, wheat acres in Idaho have held relatively steady for the past 65 years. Idaho farmers continue to plant, on average, 1.2 million acres each year to wheat. Meanwhile, total production values increased from 38.6 million bushels in 1960 to 106 million bushels in 2025.

Investments in research have allowed farmers to maximize wheat production on their farms. In 1960, the average yield was 32.2 bushels per acre. In 2025, average yield had jumped to 83 bushels per acre with irrigated acres exceeding 90 bushels per acre. Idaho farmers consistently harvest among the highest wheat yields in the United States.

*Since 2002, Idaho wheat producers have invested \$27,544,420.00 into research and development programs. Idaho wheat growers have invested more dollars in research and development through the University of Idaho than any other commodity in the state.*

## 1960-2025 IDAHO WHEAT PLANTED & HARVESTED ACRES

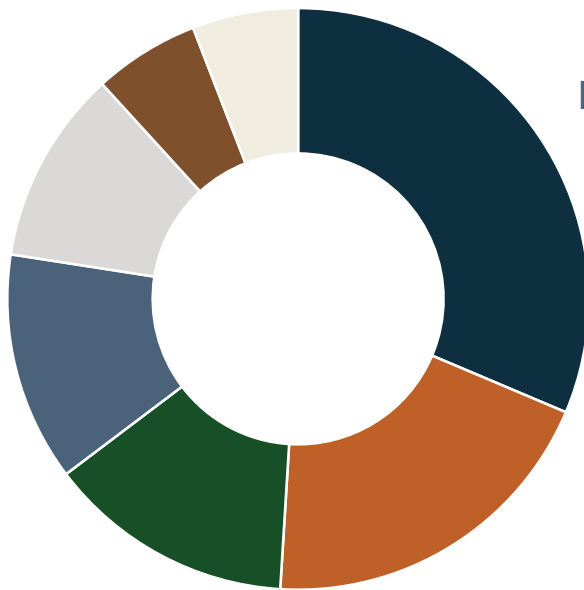


# Research and Breeding

Through the Idaho Wheat Commission, Idaho growers provide critical direction and long-term funding to public sector research, which has led to improved agronomic practices, new wheat varieties, and high-quality grain. Idaho is renowned worldwide for producing exceptional, consistent quality and quantities of wheat.

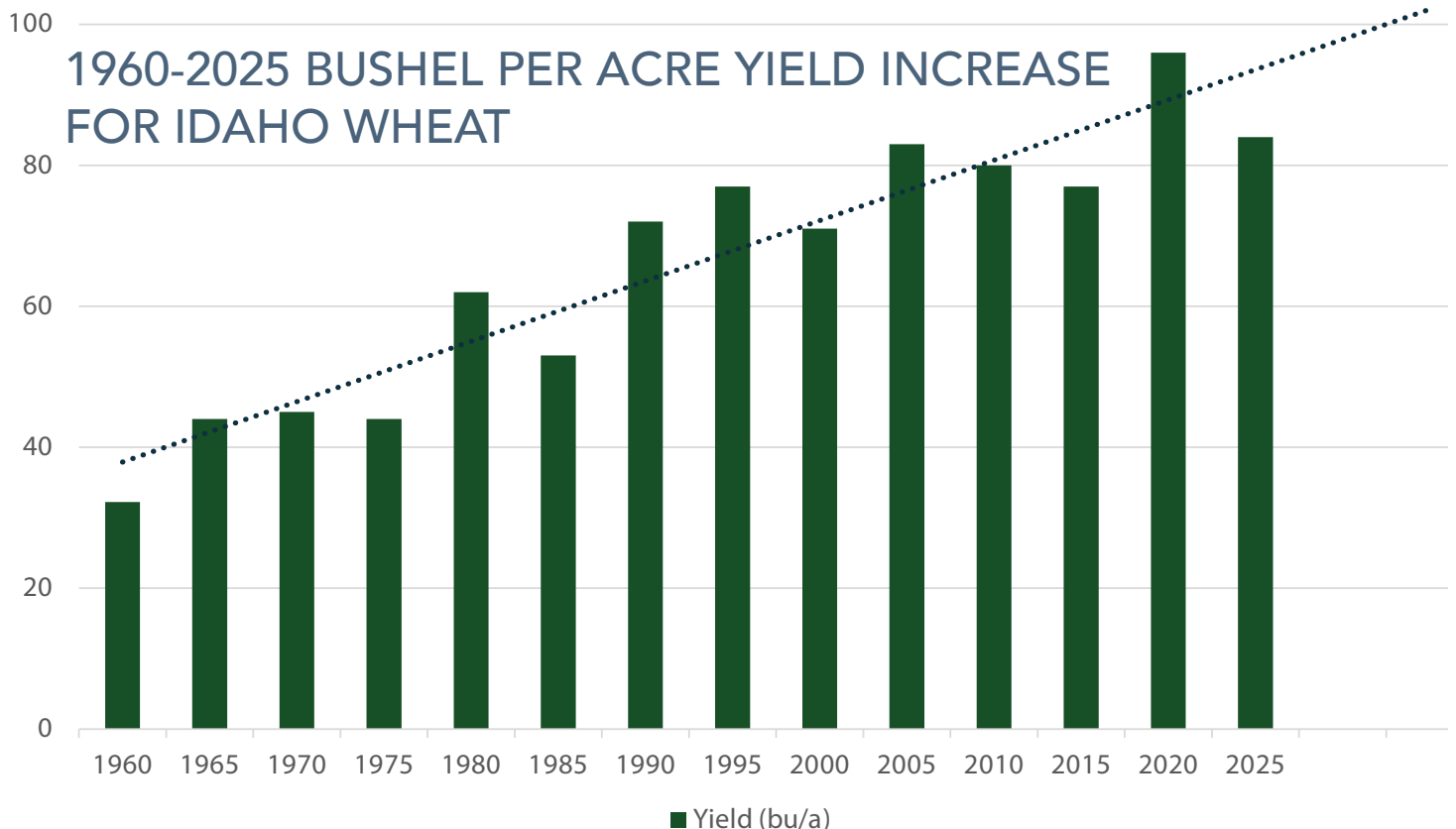
Research investments have contributed to a nearly 3-fold increase in wheat yields since 1960.

Grower assessment dollars invested in research provide wheat farmers across the state equal access to unbiased research results. Where other commodities focus on private and proprietary research, Idaho wheat producers rely on a collective investment essential for the public good. Investments in research have benefited Idaho wheat growers through wheat breeding and genetics, end-use quality testing, Extension and variety testing, disease and insect management, weed control, agronomy and plant nutrition, and capitol equipment.



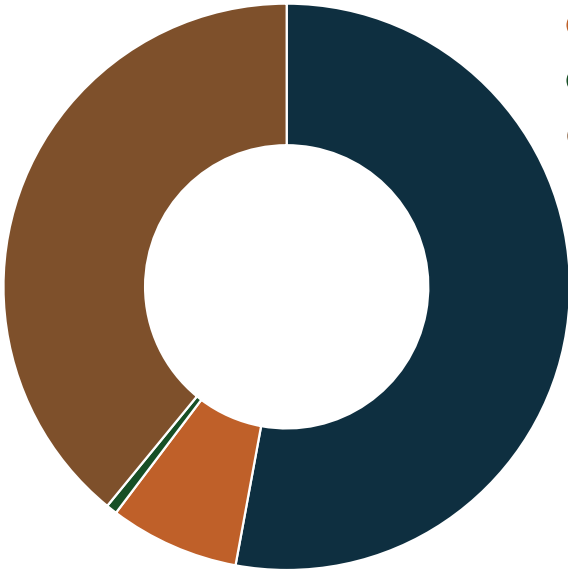
## RESEARCH & BREEDING GROWER INVESTMENT \$1,264,926.00

- Wheat Breeding & Genetics
- End-Use Quality Testing
- Extension & Variety Testing
- Disease & Insect Management
- Weed Control
- Agronomy & Plant Nutrition
- Capital Equipment



# Market Development

MARKET DEVELOPMENT GROWER INVESTMENT  
\$935,470.00



- Overseas Market Development
- Domestic Market Development
- Transportation
- Additional Projects

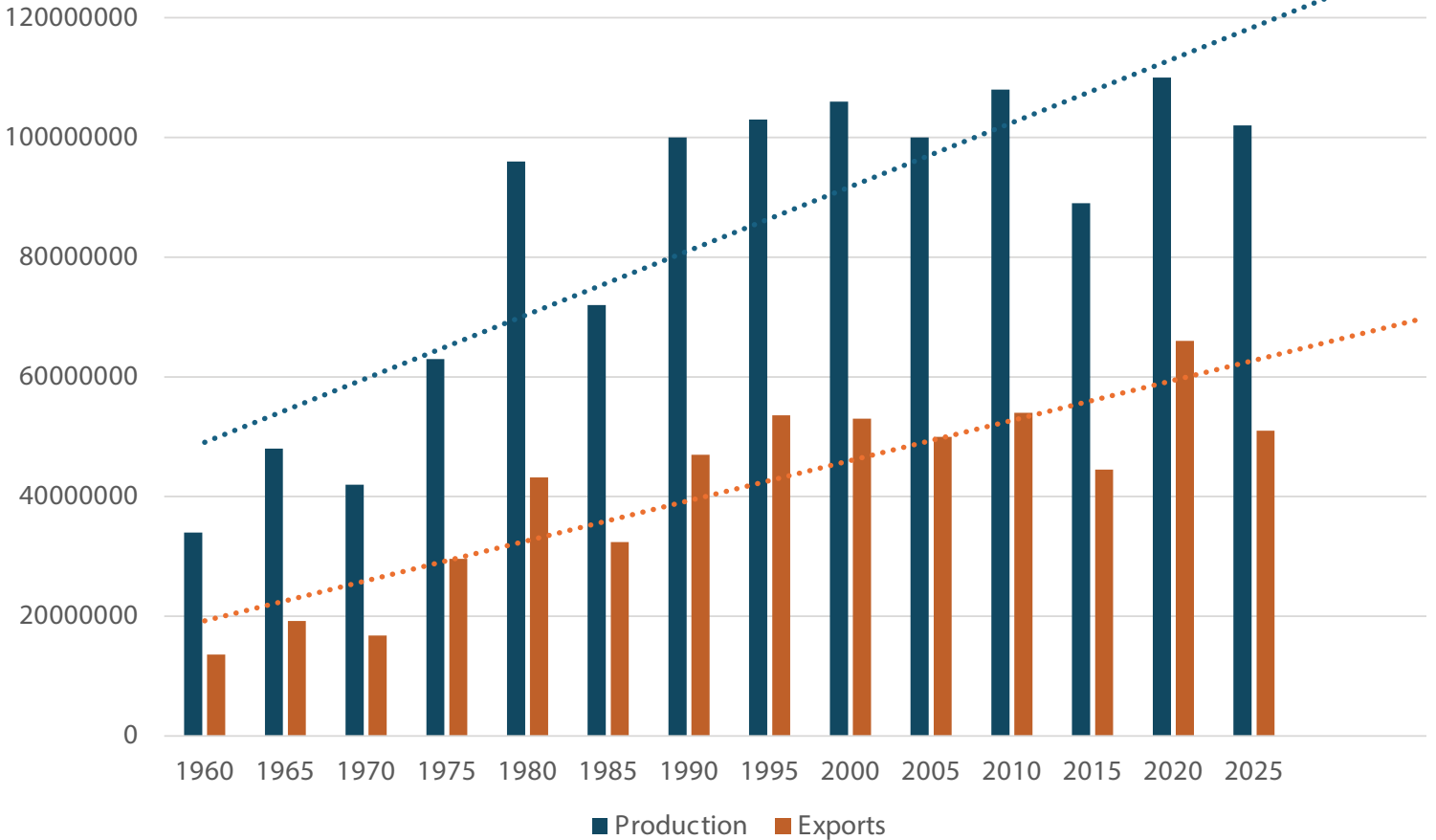


In 2025, Idaho wheat growers benefited from purchasing agreements signed with three countries:

- 132.3 million bushels to **Taiwan** over 4 years
- 25.7 million bushels each year for 5 years to **Bangladesh**
- 36.74 million bushels each year to **Indonesia** until 2030

In fiscal year 2025, the Idaho Wheat Commission coordinated farm tours and trade missions and attended marketing conferences connecting Idaho wheat with more than 30 countries around the globe.

## 1960-2025 EXPORT GROWTH OF IDAHO WHEAT



# Communications and Programs

The Idaho Wheat Commission provides useful and necessary information and educational programs for Idaho wheat growers on all topics that impact farm profitability. The Commission is a resource of information about Idaho's wheat industry to partners, customers, potential partners, government agencies, elected officials, and the public. Programming includes electronic newsletters, marketing tours, educational workshops, and grower experiences.

- Producer Communications & Programs
- Consumer Communications & Programs

COMMUNICATIONS & PROGRAMS  
GROWER INVESTMENT  
\$1,207,479.00



## BREAD

 in a bag



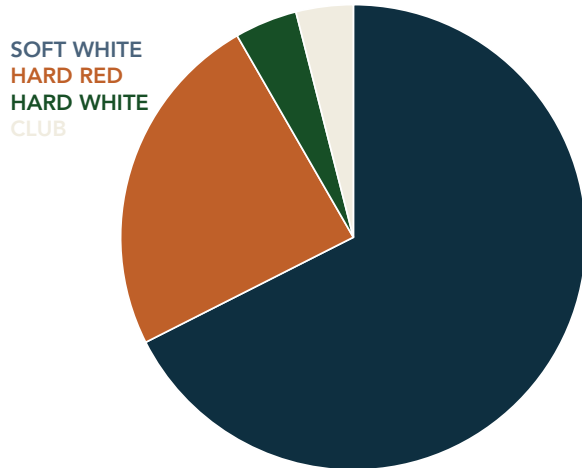
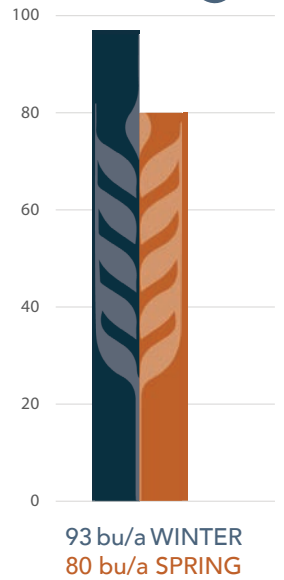
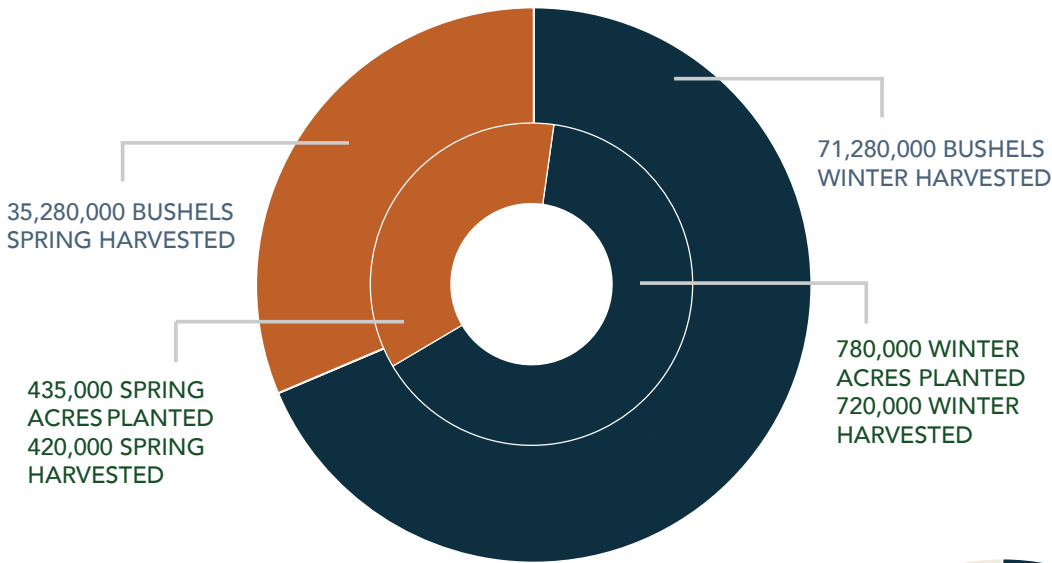
**B**read in a Bag is a hands-on experience teaching students about planting, growing, harvesting, milling, and baking wheat. The program culminates in the making, baking, and eating of a wheat food product. Students are sent home with a cookbook, baking tips, and nutritional benefits of wheat to share with their families. Over the past decade, more than 81,000 Idaho students have participated in Bread in a Bag and developed healthy relationships with wheat foods.

The Idaho Grain Leadership Initiative is a longstanding leadership development and mentoring program funded, in part, by Idaho wheat grower dollars. The program gives farmers a deeper industry knowledge, hands-on industry experiences, and helps fine tune confidence, leadership skills, and effective communication skills. The program is tailored to the individual based on strengths and interests, and participants go on to mentor other growers, creating a chain of commitment and accountability to and for Idaho's wheat industry. Participation and service may be in local, state, or national leaderships, and in research, market development, or policy organizations.

*"The mentor program is, in my opinion, the most important investment the Commission makes of grower dollars. I became more invested in the industry after participating in the program and I encourage anyone who is interested to take advantage."*

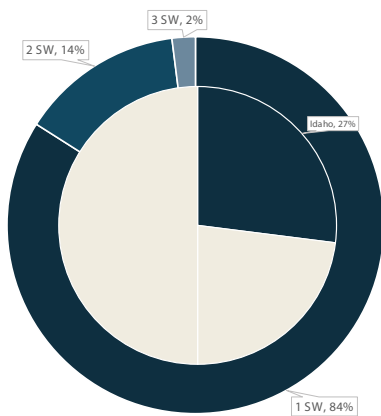
- Clark Hamilton, Ririe

# 2025 Production and Quality

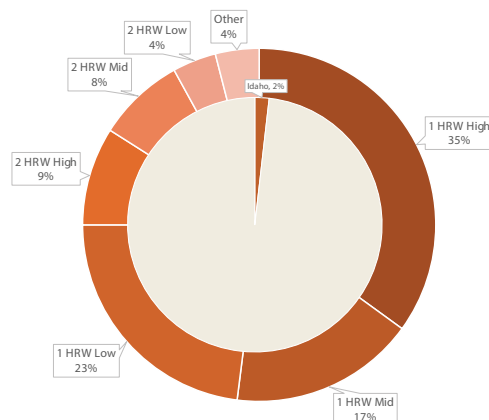


## Quality Report

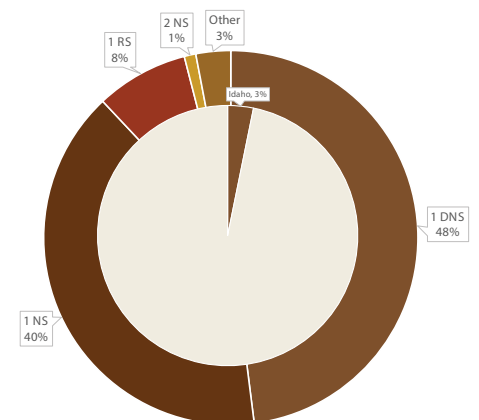
1,215,000 ACRES | 106,560,000 BUSHELS  
GRADE 1 OVERALL IN ALL CLASSES



SOFT WHITE



HARD RED WINTER



HARD RED SPRING

# An IWC Conversation with Dr. Kurt Schroeder - Professor and Extension Specialist in Cropping Systems Agronomy, University of Idaho

## Who and what experiences were important to cultivating your interests in wheat pathology and agronomy?

My interest in pursuing a career in agriculture goes back to my time growing up on a family farm in Buhl, Idaho. After completing a master's degree in plant science with an emphasis in plant pathology at the University of Idaho, I spent several years working with the USDA-ARS under the supervision of Dr. R. James Cook, a renowned expert on soilborne pathogens of wheat. It was during this time that my interest in wheat pathology blossomed and sparked my interest in pursuing a PhD in plant pathology. While I was trained to use basic molecular tools to better understand important soilborne pathogens, my work was always grounded in field-based research and observations, and how management practices such as tillage, crop rotation, variety and other factors influenced disease.

## Are pH levels of N. Idaho soils continuing to drop or have they stabilized? What are the key pH thresholds and how and when can growers best respond with lime treatments?

Soil pH has been steadily declining in northern Idaho for decades and they are continuing to decline to this day. The primary reason for the decrease in soil pH is our reliance on ammonium-based nitrogen fertilizers. This is not to say that nitrogen fertilizers are not useful or that the fertilizer industry has caused this, the reduction in soil pH is just a byproduct of our use of these materials in farming. Over half of the soil that we surveyed about 10 years ago had reached a soil pH of 5.3 or lower in the upper 6 inches of the profile. The issue with acidic soils is that once that pH declines below about 5.2, aluminum toxicity can become a concern. While the pH of many of our north Idaho soils are approaching this threshold, many have not seen a decline in crop yield as the acidity is mostly restricted to the upper 6 inches. However, as the soil pH continues to decline, yield reductions will become evident, particularly in more sensitive crops. A well-known solution is to use lime to increase soil pH, and this is a common practice in other parts of the country and world where soil acidity is a problem. However, growers have limited access to lime in north Idaho and transportation makes the practice of liming expensive. What is important to consider is that lime application will have a long-term impact on soil pH if enough lime is applied, so think about liming as a capital investment rather than a production cost. My group has been conducting some long-term liming studies in the region, and we still see significant increases in crop yield 9 years after the initiation of the study using rates of 1 to 3 tons per acre. If you see yield drag in your crops, particularly aluminum-sensitive wheat



varieties, you may want to pull some soil samples from the upper 6 inches and see where things are at. If the soil pH is below 5 and there is soluble aluminum (KCl extractable aluminum) over 20 ppm, it may indicate that soil acidity and aluminum toxicity are the problem, and a grower may want to start exploring options for lime applications.

## The Idaho State Variety Trials have long been an important research investment for IWC and U of I. How are the resulting data being used and by whom?

The Idaho State Variety Trials represent the most robust testing of commercially available varieties, newly released varieties, and elite breeding lines being examined for regional agronomic performance. These data are valuable to several entities within the region. First and foremost, this information is used by growers, crop consultants, and seed dealers to determine which varieties

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are best adapted to their region. The data is also an invaluable resource to public and private wheat breeding groups because it allows the breeding lines to be tested over a large geographic area to determine where the variety is best suited and what tolerance to diseases or plant stresses exist within the variety. A goal of the program is to predict how varieties will perform in a particular area before growers plant, reducing risk and allowing growers to select the variety that will provide consistent and stable yield and quality. These trials are featured in summer crop tours and the data is shared via email as soon as it is available after harvest, during winter cereal schools, and on the University of Idaho variety testing website ([www.uidaho.edu/extension/food/cereals](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/food/cereals)). In addition to the direct use of data from these trials, I have collaborated with researchers from different disciplines to gather additional data from these trials to answer research questions. Each year, samples are sent to the USDA-ARS Wheat Quality Laboratory in Pullman, WA to examine the end-use quality of soft white wheat varieties being co-developed by the University of Idaho and Limagrain Cereal Seeds (LCS). Other research has included understanding rate of straw breakdown, examining how different soils and varieties impact cadmium uptake, understanding how starch granules develop in wheat seeds, and working with the engineering department to evaluate robots to test straw strength.

#### **What alternative crops, cropping systems, rotations, or management practices should receive more attention from researchers and growers in N. Idaho?**

The evaluation of alternative crops and rotations has been an ongoing endeavor for several years. The challenge with many alternative crops, however, is that those that do grow well in northern Idaho either have limited marketing opportunities or we lack the ability to handle seeds with our existing infrastructure. My program has primarily focused on developing new tools to



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reduce the risks associated with growing crops already in our system, with a focus on winter peas and canola. Many growers have started incorporating canola into their rotations, providing a unique tool to manage problematic grassy weeds. In the future, I think there will be more opportunities to incorporate more remote satellite data and artificial intelligence to improve cropping systems. How exactly these tools might be used will require more research and collaboration with others who specialize in these technologies.

#### **How do public-private research exchanges and collaborations impact your research and research priorities?**

While public-private collaborations are important, the primary focus of my program remains grounded in providing solutions to growers in northern Idaho. I tend to engage in public-private collaborations when I see a potential value to north Idaho growers and the ability to advance my research priorities. Some of these activities have included testing novel seed treatments for management of soilborne plant pathogens. The longest-term collaboration has been with LCS to co-develop soft white winter wheat varieties, continuing to make use of superior University of Idaho germplasm with excellent end use quality and adaptation to north Idaho environments. My role in this collaboration has been to test elite breeding lines and new varieties in regional variety trials and collaborate in UI-LCS field days to showcase the varieties being marketed under the Varsity Idaho brand. I should also point out that it was a partnership between a private company and the University of Idaho that led to recognizing the presence of Soilborne Wheat Mosaic Virus (SBWMV) in Idaho.

#### **How have research funding and research priorities for your program changed over time? What factors are important to maintain and improve U of I research capacity and impact on-farm?**

Some projects, such as studying soil acidification, have remained consistent over time, but over the years I have explored multiple



aspects of managing acidic soils. This work has been funded mostly by the Idaho Wheat Commission, with some graduate student support from LCS, and funds from an LCS cropping systems endowment. Over time, my research dollars have shifted toward federal sources of funding. These grants tend to be larger, provide more resources for collaborative projects, and allow for training of graduate students and postdoctoral scientists who will be the next generation of researchers in the public and private sectors. With some of these larger grants, the focus has shifted to a cropping systems approach, examining the impact of other crops that are important to, or have the potential to be, important rotation crops in the north Idaho cropping system, primarily canola and winter peas. Unfortunately, with cuts to federal programs, the competition for remaining funding has increased tremendously. Thus, securing funding sources outside of commodity groups has become quite challenging. Cuts to state funds will further strain the ability of U of I to address existing problems and respond to new threats. It is crucial to preserve access to federal resources and maintain public support for the U of I.

**What do you see as the most critical threats to production – both current and future? How can research help to alleviate or reduce these threats?**

From my perspective, the most immediate threats to production in north Idaho include market access, commodity prices, and herbicide-resistant weeds. However, soil acidification, extreme variability in environment, and the emerging presence of SBWMV are growing problems in the region. While research may not be able to directly address every challenge, there are solutions to many of these issues, particularly having individuals with the proper expertise in place to address challenges. For example, collaborative research between agronomists, plant breeders, and variety testing programs can lead to the development of wheat varieties that have superior tolerance to aluminum toxicity and resistance to many diseases, including SBWMV. Communication with partners at peer-institutions can expand screening efforts for crop threats. The multi-state research initiative between the University of Idaho, Washington State University, Oregon

State University, and USDA-ARS to address herbicide resistant weeds is a great example of this in real-time. Outside of research, Extension events, such as crop tours and winter cereal schools, allow opportunities to educate growers, researchers, and the private sector about advancements in breeding, highlighting new varieties with unique traits. Over the past couple of years, I have made use of these events to educate stakeholders about the presence of SBWMV, what to look for, how it may impact their farm, and how to limit further spread of this virus.

**What research investments might bring the greatest return through increased grain yields, increased economic yields, improved yield stability, and long-term sustainability?**

This is a challenging question as there is no single answer. Continued investment in plant breeding and variety testing is critical to ensure the development of new varieties of wheat that can withstand disease and pest pressure and tolerate environmental stressors. In addition, systems that include novel methods of weed, disease, and insect management, and the exploration of new technologies will provide north Idaho wheat growers with tools to address the most critical threats to production as they emerge. Finally, a balanced approach will ensure that multiple aspects of the cropping system can be addressed. The University of Idaho is acting as a safety net to address new challenges as they arise and reduce the risk to growers and the wheat industry through research and innovation.





# University of Idaho



## UI Extension 2026 Cereals Field Days for Northern Idaho

DATE	TIME	EVENT/LOCATION	CONTACT
Tuesday June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9 AM – 12 PM	<b>Tammany Area Crop Tour</b> Farm Shop at 2810 Powers Ave. Lewiston, ID	Doug FinkeInburg <a href="mailto:dougf@uidaho.edu">dougf@uidaho.edu</a> (208)799-3096 Nez Perce County Extension Office
Wednesday June 24 <sup>th</sup>	8 AM	<b>Prairie Area Crop &amp; Conservation Tour</b> Nezperce – Location details to come Breakfast will be provided	Klae O'Brien <a href="mailto:kobrien@uidaho.edu">kobrien@uidaho.edu</a> Lewis County Extension Office
Friday June 26 <sup>th</sup>	9 AM – 2 PM	<b>UI &amp; McGregor Bonners Ferry Crop Tour</b> Houck Farm Shed on Farm to Market Rd. Porthill, ID 48°57'26.8"N 116°27'17.5"W Lunch will be provided	<b>*Call Boundary County Extension Office to Register</b> Samuel DeGrey <a href="mailto:sdegrey@uidaho.edu">sdegrey@uidaho.edu</a> (208)267-3235 Boundary County Extension Office

## UI Extension 2026 Cereals Field Days for Southern / Eastern Idaho

DATE	TIME	EVENT/LOCATION	CONTACT
Tuesday July 7 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 AM	<b>Rupert / Minidoka</b> Winter trials: 255 W 800 N, Rupert Spring trials: 42.817186, -113.683095; on N 100 W, Rupert	Jason Thomas <a href="mailto:jason@uidaho.edu">jason@uidaho.edu</a> 208-406-3571 or <a href="mailto:Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu">Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu</a>
Wednesday July 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 AM	<b>UI Seed Dealer Event</b> Aberdeen R&E Center 1693 S 2700 W, Aberdeen	Jianli Chen <a href="mailto:jchen@uidaho.edu">jchen@uidaho.edu</a> or Cathy Wilson <a href="mailto:drcmwilson@gmail.com">drcmwilson@gmail.com</a>
Thursday July 9 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 AM – 12PM	<b>Aberdeen / LCS Field Day</b> Aberdeen R&E Center 1693S 2700W, Aberdeen, ID Lunch provided	Juliet Marshall <a href="mailto:jmarshall@uidaho.edu">jmarshall@uidaho.edu</a> or Jianli Chen <a href="mailto:jchen@uidaho.edu">jchen@uidaho.edu</a>
Friday, July 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 AM	<b>Rockland Field Day</b> Winter Dryland: 42.385645, -112.879942; Kress Farm	Jianli Chen <a href="mailto:jchen@uidaho.edu">jchen@uidaho.edu</a> or <a href="mailto:Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu">Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu</a>
Wednesday, July 15 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 AM	<b>Idaho Falls</b> – west on 17th S: west of 45th West.	Sedar Beckman <a href="mailto:sedarbeckman@gmail.com">sedarbeckman@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu">Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu</a>
Wednesday July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10 AM – 12 PM	<b>Soda Springs</b> Winter trials: 42.691948, -111.595617 Spring trials: 42.808650, -111.562320	Justin Hatch <a href="mailto:jlhatch@uidaho.edu">jlhatch@uidaho.edu</a> or Kyle Wangemann <a href="mailto:kylekingkong@gmail.com">kylekingkong@gmail.com</a> 801-361-7139
Thursday July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10 AM – 12 PM	<b>Tetonia R&amp;E Center</b> 888 West Highway 33 Newdale, Idaho 83436 43.859597, -111.277126	Tom Jacobsen <a href="mailto:tjacobsen@uidaho.edu">tjacobsen@uidaho.edu</a> or <a href="mailto:Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu">Juliet.Marshall@uidaho.edu</a>

# 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.

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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.



## Idaho Barley Commission Connects with Idaho Dietitians to Grow Demand for Barley

The Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetic annual meeting brought together nutrition professionals from across the state in April and the Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) was there to make sure barley had a seat at the table.

As part of the event, IBC sponsored Dr. Chris Taylor, Professor of Medical Dietetics and Family Medicine in the College of Medicine at The Ohio State University for a keynote presentation entitled, "Translating Evidence into Practice and the Dietary Guidelines." His presentation explained the rigorous process undertaken during the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Scientific Report and highlighted the systematic evaluation of current research, stakeholder engagement, and consensus-building, culminating in evidence-based recommendations. Attendees gained insight into how the outcomes of this thorough review summarize the current evidence and directly inform dietetics practice on how nutrition professionals can apply research-based recommendations in real-world settings including the role whole grains like barley play in a healthy diet.

IBC also hosted a booth to directly connect with registered dietitians, nutrition experts and dietary students. Throughout the event, over 130 barley bags were distributed, each filled with barley recipes, nutritional information and barley soup mix. This gave attendees a practical way to take barley from education to application in their kitchens and their practice.

Dietitians are trusted voices when it comes to food choices and introducing them to barley's versatility and health benefits helps build long-term demand. When nutrition professionals recommend barley as a quality whole grain, demand for Idaho barley grows.



Dr. Chris Taylor, Professor of Medical Dietetics and Family Medicine in the College of Medicine at The Ohio State University gives a keynote presentation sponsored by the Idaho Barley Commission entitled, "Translating Evidence into Practice and the Dietary Guidelines" at the recent annual meeting of the Idaho Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics in Boise.



(L to R) Idaho Barley Commission staff Laura Wilder, Sydney Anderson and Wren Hernandez connect with registered dietitians at the Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics annual meeting, sharing barley nutrition information, recipes and barley bags at the Commission's booth.

## Idaho Growers Well Represented at USGBC International Marketing Conference

Idaho Barley Commissioners Allen Young and Dustin Camphouse, along with IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder, joined U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC) members from around the country for the organization's 23rd International Marketing Conference and 66th Annual Membership Meeting in Panama City, Panama in February.

The meeting focused on strengthening global trade and agricultural supply chains, developing new export markets, the Panama Canal and discussions of the Council's upcoming global trade strategy with focus on Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, Young and Camphouse both serve on the Western Hemisphere A-Team where they

participated in focused program discussions and developing plans for the expanding markets in the region.

The conference also provided an opportunity for US barley sector members to meet and speak directly with members of the Council's staff who are strategically placed around the world and working for them, and to work together on challenges and opportunities for US barley exports and developing new markets for US barley.

Attendees heard from the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama Kevin Marino Cabrera and the Panama Canal Authority Administrator Dr. Ricaurte Vasquez Morales. The group then had



(L to R) IBC Commissioners Allen Young and Dustin Camphouse learn about the lock system in the Panama Canal during the recent US Grains & BioProducts Council's International Marketing Conference and Membership Meeting in Panama City.



(L to R) IBC representatives Dustin Camphouse, Laura Wilder and Allen Young participated in the recent US Grains & BioProducts Council's International Marketing Conference and Membership Meeting in Panama City.

the opportunity to join a boat tour of the Panama Canal while participating in Council programming conversations on Latin America and Asia during the boat tour of the canal.

"Panama plays an important role both as a key trading partner for the United States and as a global logistics hub," Ambassador Cabrera said. "The U.S. embassy is committed to promoting U.S. exports and facilitating dialogue and engagement among stakeholders."

## National Barley Improvement Committee Advocates for Critical Research

The National Barley Improvement Committee, which represents the U.S. barley community of growers, researchers, processors, users, and allied industries, met in Washington, D.C. in March to advocate on behalf of federal research funding for the barley industry.

Twenty-eight stakeholders, including Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) Executive Director Laura Wilder and IBC Communications and Program Manager Sydney Anderson, along with University of Idaho Barley Agronomist Jared Spackman, visited over 90 congressional offices delivering a unified message on the importance of federal barley research programs, strained by ongoing vacancies in critical research roles.

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Dr. Jared Spackman, University of Idaho Endowed Barley Agronomist discusses the importance of agricultural research with congressional staff.

National Barley Improvement Committee, continued from previous page

NBIC's top priority focused on addressing the vacancies, including positions at the Aberdeen Research Station that are limiting capacity for research within the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Those roles directly support several research initiatives that round out the NBIC priorities, including the Resilient Barley Initiative (RBI), the Barley Pest Initiative (BPI), the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI), and the Small Grains Genomic Initiative (SGGI). Each leverages federal funds to support work across multiple states within ARS research units and Land Grant universities. Additionally, researchers leverage investments from private industry made by the American Malting Barley Association and state check-off dollars including funds from the Idaho Barley Commission to support these programs.

NBIC participants stressed the importance of agricultural research and the incredible return on investment realized, especially as so many of our global competitors are outpacing our investments. Given the new Administration's priority to support domestic self-reliance and reversal of the agricultural trade deficit, initiatives like the RBI are critical to bolster resilience in the supply chain and to lessen the reliance on imported barley.



(L to R) Sydney Anderson, Idaho Barley Commission; Laura Wilder, Idaho Barley Commission; and Jared Spackman, University of Idaho joined National Barley Improvement Committee efforts in Washington D.C. in March.

## IBC Commissioner Josh Jones Attends RMI Analytics Global Conference

Idaho Barley Commissioner Josh Jones of Troy represented Idaho growers at the 2026 RMI Conference in Lisbon, Portugal in March, where the global malt supply chain comes together under one roof. The conference is designed to foster industry knowledge sharing and networking.

He joined nearly 300 attendees to discover fresh, innovative ideas with speaker presentations from global players, start-ups and academic leaders to bring new insight to Commission work in Idaho. He had the opportunity to engage in idea sharing learning more about the current industry landscape. This is the first time IBC has participated in this global conference.

"This was a unique opportunity to gather with folks involved in the malting supply chain including maltsters, brewers/distillers, shippers, and yes, also farmers," Jones said. "The benefits of attendance included gaining a more complete understanding of the global nature of malting and the headwinds we are currently encountering as well as the opportunity to make connections with leaders in the industry that we typically do not have access to. Letting the world know that Idaho is where beer is made is a good thing!"

"I was unsure of whether or not attendance was worthwhile given the distance and associated cost," added Jones. After attending,



Idaho Barley Commissioner Josh Jones networks with other attendees at the RMI Conference in Lisbon, Portugal in March.

I believe that we need to be there and have a greater presence. Decisions are being made at the corporate level every day that affect growers and our ability to access barley markets, our presence is vital to protecting our interests."

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SY Gunsight

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