



NEWS RELEASE

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PNW GRAIN GROWERS REBUFF PRESIDENT'S AG BUDGET

Grain leaders from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho have voiced united opposition to President Barack Obama's fiscal year 2010 agriculture budget proposal. The grain industry leaders have written an open letter to the President articulating their concerns.

The presidential budget seeks a graduated phase out of direct payments to farmers exceeding \$500,000 in annual gross sales. In addition, the plan would impose a \$250,000 cap on federal payments while reducing the ability for producers to participate in the federal crop insurance program.

"Idaho wheat and barley farmers strongly oppose President Obama's budget plan," Idaho Grain Producers Association president Eric Hasselstrom said. ***"Farmers are dealing with unprecedented market volatility and ongoing high input costs. This budget plan would essentially open up the Farm Bill signed into law just months ago. We will work with our congressional delegations to ensure farmers are not unfairly treated in the 2010 budget process."***

"The President's budget proposal bites the hands that feed the country," said Brit Ausman, president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. ***"The administration's priorities are all wrong,"*** Ausman continued. ***"Not everyone needs mortgage assistance and better health insurance. But every man, woman and child needs to eat. Attacking the Farm Bill and our family farms would only raise food prices, making it harder for people to feed their families."***

Jeff Newton, 2009 Oregon Wheat Growers League President stated, ***"The OWGL feels the Obama Administration should reconsider recent policy statements concerning the proposed budget. Budget priorities that fail to acknowledge the economic and environmental sustainability provided by a profitable U.S. farm sector may serve to unintentionally perpetuate the lack of public awareness about where crops are grown, how food is processed and ultimately ends up on the grocery store shelves."***

The Pacific Northwest grain industry represents over \$2 billion in economic activity to the tri-state region while providing an affordable, abundant, and safe food supply to the nation and the world. Over 75 percent of grain produced in the Pacific Northwest is exported overseas providing thousands of jobs and effectively decreasing the U.S. trade deficit.

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