

SPRING 2020

IDAHO

THE IDAHO GRAIN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

G R A I N



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VIEWS



BY JAMIE KRESS
PRESIDENT

Greetings from Rockland, Idaho! As your new IGPA President I'd like to introduce myself.

My husband, Cordell Kress, and I operate a dryland farm in the mountains of southern Power County. We have two children, Tyson (14) and Hailey (11).

Cory and I married in 2001 after graduating from college. Cory studied Ag Engineering and I studied Business Management and Accounting. We worked in our respective fields for a time before deciding to return to the farm. Our experience was much like that of many young people who return to the family farm - there simply wasn't the cash flow to support us on the existing operation. With the help of FSA Beginning Farmer Loans we were able to purchase an irrigated alfalfa farm and cow/calf operation in 2004. Cory continued to help his father with the dryland farm while simultaneously establishing our own farming business. I worked off the farm to provide day-to-day income and health insurance.

In 2006 my father-in-law passed away and Cory and I were provided the opportunity to assume ownership and management of the dryland farm. In 2008 we took a leap of faith and ended my off-farm employment. In 2010, with too many lines of business on our small plate, we decided to narrow our focus. We sold our alfalfa and cattle operations and increased quality dryland acres.

Today we continue to hone our operation. In recent years we've transitioned our farm to mostly no-till, with a few minimal-till acres remaining. While wheat and safflower remain our "bread and butter," we're continually integrating alternative crops like mustard, dry peas,

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Cover photo by
Kaitlin Calvert,
Pasco, WA

Published quarterly by
Idaho Grain Producers Association
821 W. State St. • Boise, Idaho 83702-5832
(208) 345-0706

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Address inquiries regarding editorial policy and writer guidelines to the editor.

For subscription corrections, please call Idaho Grain Producers Association at
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To subscribe or unsubscribe to Idaho Grain magazine at any time, visit the IGPA website at www.idahograin.org/idaho-grain-magazine, click on the appropriate button, and fill out the required information.

Printing Production Coordinated by
Northern Directory Publishing
25 Division Road, Great Falls, Mt. 59404

For Advertising information call:
Leah Anderson **Advertising Sales Representative** • Phone: (406) 475-1856

Printed in the USA



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VIEWS



chickpeas, canola, and flax. We look to maximize efficiency with good equipment and are constantly working towards healthy soils and increasing yield potential.

My day-to-day focus is accounting and office management. I spend a tremendous amount of time in the office and we believe it pays dividends. Outside the office I do whatever I can to assist Cory in being efficient with his time - my assistance allows him to cover more acres each day.

I value being a wife and mother - ultimately it is my most important task. Tyson is a freshman at Rockland HS where he participates in basketball, baseball and FFA. He's quickly learning equipment operation. Our four-day school week allowed him to plant and harvest about 500 acres of safflower on his own last year. He is also our main grain cart operator for roughly 3,000 acres of wheat. Tyson does a great job and I am proud of him. Hailey is in 6th grade. She plays Jr High volleyball and is a dedicated dancer. Hailey is my side-kick during harvests and helps keep the operation moving. She is also learning her way around the office and is becoming increasingly comfortable with QuickBooks. However, she often reminds me that she's headed for a career in engineering not accounting.

As many of you have likely experienced, our hobbies have shifted as the kids have grown. There simply isn't time to pursue a lot of additional things. So I find joy in our daily life and opportunities. As a family we value regular family dinners, lively debates, and adventure. Mountain biking is a family passion - especially downhill mountain bike parks.

Our life has certainly been an adventure - one that I wouldn't change and never regret. I often forget how rare it is to work alongside your spouse on a common goal and to be engaged daily with work you love. I won't say it's been easy. We've experienced the heartache, frustrations, setbacks, and exhaustion that only farmers know. That said, the sense of pride, accomplishment, and satisfaction that comes with farming as well as being grateful stewards of our operation keeps us marching ahead.

I appreciate the support and welcoming nature of IGPA and its members as I have embarked on the uncharted territory of being the first woman elected to IGPA's Executive Board. It's been a fantastic three years and I look forward to serving as your Idaho Grain Producers President in 2020! ■

EDITOR'S NOTE



BY STACEY KATSEANES SATTERLEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Your staff at IGPA are always working hard, but there are naturally busier and slower times. Fall is a particularly busy time, with our fall board meetings, district meetings, NAWG meetings, and Tri-State Convention. One of the other concentrated times of busyness is the first quarter of the year – it's the start of the legislative session, NAWG and NBGA have meetings in D.C. we participate in (read more about that on pages 14-19), and we have a February board meeting in Boise.

This year, IGPA was asked to coordinate a presentation on Idaho Agriculture and the Columbia-Snake River System to be given to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. There is a LOT of attention on the dams on the Snake and Columbia Rivers right now, from the work of the Columbia Basin Partnership, to the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement (due out any day), to Governor Little's Salmon Workgroup (on which I serve, representing you, Idaho's wheat and barley farmers who have a tremendous vested interest in the river system).

In our presentation to the Agriculture Committees, we talked about water, hydropower, wheat and navigation, and the broader economic impact of the river system. Presenters included Paul Arrington with the Idaho Water Users Association, Will Hart with the Idaho Consumer Owned Utilities Association, Dave Doeringsfeld with the Port of Lewiston, and me.

There's tremendous value in the system to public power consumers in Idaho and throughout the PNW – hydropower is renewable, flexible, reliable, and affordable. Also, ratepayers support fish and wildlife programs – to the tune of nearly \$17 billion since 1978; about 20% of Idaho's public power consumers' average utility bill goes toward fish and wildlife programs.

Wheat is the second largest crop in Idaho, with total cash receipts in 2019 at about \$500 million. In Idaho, 42 out of the state's 44 counties grow wheat – Idaho is sixth in the nation for wheat production. About half of the wheat in the state is grown in Southern and Eastern Idaho under irrigation with most of that wheat going to the domestic market.

The other half is grown in Northern Idaho, and virtually all that wheat goes to international customers, who pay a premium for the high-quality wheat grown in Idaho and throughout the PNW. That wheat moves from Idaho on barges that load at the Port of Lewiston and move through lock systems on the four dams on the lower Snake River, then through the four dams on the Columbia, to Portland – where the wheat is loaded on ocean-going vessels bound for countries around the world.

Barging wheat is the most environmentally friendly mode of transportation available. Over a period of just nine months in 2017, more than 3.5 million tons of cargo were barged on the Snake River. It would have taken more than 35,140 rail cars to carry this cargo, or more than 135,000 semi-trucks. Barging provides Idaho wheat growers cost-effective access to international markets.

Dave Doeringsfeld presented on a study recently commissioned by the PNW Waterways Association that found the removal of the lower Snake River dams will cost the nation \$4 billion over 30 years – and this doesn't include the cost of dam removal or power replacement costs. As part of the study, grain shippers indicated that breaching the lower Snake River dams will increase transportation and storage costs by 50 – 100%. The report also found that should the dams be breached, over 1,100 family farms would be at risk of bankruptcy. The study also found that over \$1 billion would need to be invested in transportation, grain storage, highways, and local infrastructure – and that alternative modes of transportation would increase CO2 and other harmful emissions by over 1.25 million tons per year.

This presentation was an excellent opportunity to educate the Members of the Agriculture Committees on the specifics of the importance of the Columbia-Snake River System to Idaho agriculture, and ensure we have their strong support.

IGPA is working on this and many other issues critical to Idaho's wheat and barley industries. With the beginning of 2020 came the time to renew your membership – if you haven't yet, join today at www.idahograin.org/membership. ■

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Overview of the Factors Affecting Salmon and Steelhead Populations in Idaho

BY JIM FREDERICKS, IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Authors Note: This is the second of two articles intended to provide a broad overview of anadromous (ocean-going) species in Idaho and factors affecting their abundance. The first article (Winter 2019) discussed the importance of salmon and steelhead to Idaho—culturally, ecologically, recreationally, and economically—and then summarized recent population trends. This article provides a high-level overview of factors affecting salmon and steelhead populations. Anadromous fishery management and recovery is a tremendously complex issue, and there are many areas of technical and philosophical disagreement regarding anadromous fisheries—both within and between stakeholder groups. For that reason, these articles do not delve into specific areas of technical debate or address questions related to policy.

Over the past 50-plus years, fishery scientists and policy makers have discussed several factors affecting salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia Basin and around the northwest. Collectively, the most important of those factors have been dubbed the 4 Hs—hydropower, hatcheries, harvest and habitat. In addition to the 4H's, populations in recent years have been greatly influenced by two other factors – ocean conditions and predation. Although those could be broadly lumped into the habitat category, they are significant enough that they warrant being discussed as additional factors. How significant these factors are varies widely, both over time and across the landscape. Some factors, such as overharvest, played a much larger role historically than today, affecting all species. Other factors, such as sea lions are a more recent influence, and primarily affect certain stocks.

Hydropower

Hydropower impacts vary widely depending on how the system is operated. Dams can (but don't always) alter flow regimes, increase water temperatures, and change flow velocity. Those environmental factors, along with the challenge of passing the physical structure all affect downstream migrating smolts and upstream migrating adults. How much these factors affect survival of juvenile salmon and steelhead partially determines how many adults return to Idaho.

A major factor affecting downstream juvenile survival is the change in water velocity associated with the slackwater



Fish screens on irrigation diversion in the upper Salmon River basin.

created by the dams. Contrary to what one might think, smolts don't actively swim to the ocean. They are, in fact pointed upstream for most of the trip and are carried by the current. This means the time it takes a smolt to get to the ocean is directly related to water speed – or water transit time. Before the hydrosystem was developed, water transit time from Lewiston to Bonneville Dam was about 2 days. In more recent years, the average is about ten-fold higher, at about 20 days. In years with poor snowpack and abnormally low flows, water transit time is as much as 30-40 days. The slower migration time affects survival on the trip downstream, as well as the ability to transition to the saltwater environment. For that reason, much of the focus of hydrosystem operation in recent years has been to improve smolt survival by decreasing water transit time. This has been accomplished primarily by putting more water over the spillway of the dam rather than through the turbines.

In addition to water transit time, there is the obstacle of the dams themselves. When a smolt encounters a dam, there are essentially three passage routes. First, they can go over the spillway, which can only happen if the dam is spilling water. The second route is to enter powerhouse intake and continue into the penstock and pass through the turbine. The third route is to enter the powerhouse, but then encounter a screen which diverts them into a collection channel (known as a bypass) where they are either put on a barge or back into the river. Entire careers have been spent evaluating which of these strategies works best, and it gets very complicated because river conditions



Figure 1. Currently occupied steelhead habitat in Idaho. Diamonds represent hatchery smolt release sites and spawner collection facilities. Red lines are streams open to steelhead fishing. Green lines represent streams reserved for wild steelhead. No hatchery fish are released in these streams, and they are closed steelhead fishing.

such as total flow, temperature and timing of runoff change annually. The success of passing smolts through a dam varies by species, hatchery vs. wild origin, time of year, flow conditions and method of passage.

Generally speaking, in terms of direct mortality (the immediate effects of the encounter) spill is better than bypass, and bypass is better than passing through a turbine. The picture gets fuzzier when we factor in the delayed mortality (mortality of smolts once they reach the ocean), but spill is still generally the best option.

Though the biggest migration problem is generally smolts going downstream, returning adults are faced with their own challenges associated with the dams. Elevated water temperatures combined with the delay in migration can be particularly problematic for summer run species—sockeye, steelhead, summer chinook. A high profile example of that occurred in 2015, when an exceptionally warm year and an abysmal snowpack were combined with a robust return of almost a half million sockeye destined for the upper Columbia. The warm water temperatures were devastating. In late July fishery and hydrosystem

managers were estimating that about half of the upstream migrating adults were dying, despite fishery closures and other protective measures. By the end of the migration, actual survival to place of origin was closer to 2%.

Anadromous Hatcheries

There are currently 15 salmon and/or steelhead hatcheries and several satellite and acclimation facilities in Idaho. They are operated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), the Nez Perce Tribe and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In total, at full production, Idaho hatcheries produce about 28 million smolts. Funding for Idaho hatcheries is provided by BPA, USFWS (through Lower Snake River Compensation Plan) and Idaho Power Company as mitigation for lost fish production due to construction and operation of hydroelectric dams in the Snake River. The primary purpose for most of the production is to maintain tribal and non-tribal harvest fisheries, and it's important to note that Idaho doesn't allow harvest of wild spring/summer Chinook salmon or steelhead.

Though hatcheries still have their critics, the notion that hatcheries in Idaho destroy wild salmon and steelhead populations is based on long-discontinued practices and misinformation about how and where hatcheries are operated. While hatchery operations have historically had some negative impacts, the science informing hatchery and genetic management has evolved immensely over the past 20 years—all with the purpose of minimizing the risk to wild populations. Most notably, hatchery fish are no longer stocked across the landscape as they were decades ago. Instead, they are strategically released in areas where they are 1) accessible to anglers, 2) available for collection by hatchery managers for spawning, and 3) have minimal interactions with wild fish (Figure 1). Additionally hatcheries are focused on using fish that originate from the watershed where they are intended to be released rather than transported from out of state or coastal populations.

Harvest

Hatcheries and Harvest are inseparably linked. Simply put, if we didn't have salmon and steelhead hatcheries in Idaho, we would have no salmon and steelhead fisheries. Most wild salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing streams in Idaho are closed to salmon and steelhead fishing. In fact, about 85% of Idaho steelhead habitat is reserved for wild steelhead (Figure 1).

Historically, unregulated harvest using industrial techniques such as gillnets, fishwheels, and pound nets had devastating impacts on Columbia basin salmon and steelhead populations. Commercial harvest peaked in 1911 at 49.5 million pounds landed, compared to less than a million pounds in the mid-1990s.

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Salmon and steelhead fisheries are now closely regulated by the federal laws, international treaties, and harvest agreements. With the exception of fall chinook, ocean harvest is a relatively small factor for Idaho salmon and steelhead. Harvest of Idaho stocks between the mouth of the Columbia and the Snake River is regulated by an agreement known as U.S. v. Oregon. This agreement followed the Supreme Court’s upholding of Columbia River tribes reserved rights under the 1855 treaties, and stipulated a 50/50 sharing of harvestable salmon between tribal and non-tribal fisheries in the mainstem Columbia. The agreement, which includes the treaty tribes, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and relevant federal agencies now allocates harvest on wild and hatchery fish in fisheries downstream of Lower Granite Dam.

Harvest in Idaho is focused on hatchery salmon and steelhead and it’s also shared equally between treaty tribes and non-tribal anglers. Collectively we manage the stocks with prioritized objectives. The first priority is to meet the brood stock needs so that hatcheries can operate at capacity and to produce the next generation of fish. Secondly, we operate our fisheries to minimize encounters and death of wild fish. While fisheries are conducted in areas dominated by hatchery fish some wild fish are incidentally encountered in our fisheries. (Remember, sport fisheries do not allow harvest of wild fish). Some of those fish encountered in the fishery but released will die from the encounter. The number of fish which die is determined by estimating the number of fish caught and released multiplied by an estimate of hooking mortality. For Idaho steelhead fisheries this number is around 3.5% annually.

Idaho Steelhead harvest was minimal in the 1960’s and 1970’s averaging around 20,000 fish, as wild steelhead populations were in decline. Construction of mitigation hatcheries and downstream harvest restrictions increased escapement of hatchery steelhead to Idaho and coincidentally harvest through the 1990s and 2000s. Through the 2000s Idaho harvest of hatchery steelhead averaged over 50,000 fish with harvest in 2010 approaching 100,000 fish. Recent poor returns, however, have resulted in harvest numbers approaching record lows, with less than 10,000 steelhead harvested (Figure 2).

Chinook fisheries in Idaho have been less consistent than steelhead fisheries. As with steelhead, the implementation of hatchery programs from the 1960’s through 1980’s resulted in a shift of harvest from wild to hatchery fish. In the more robust years, recreational harvest has been 10 to 15 thousand adult Chinook, but poor returns years, such as 2019 result in less than 1,000 harvested adults (Figure 3).

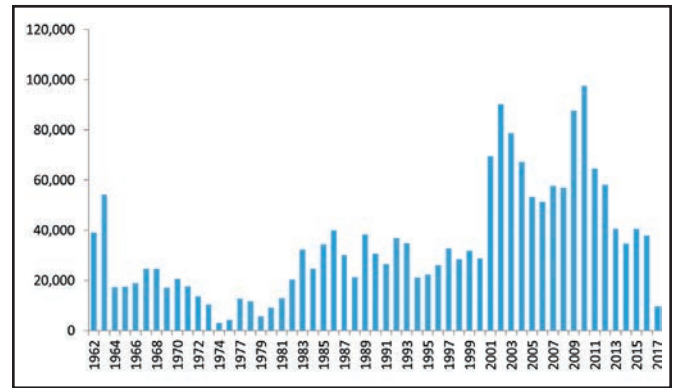


Figure 2. Steelhead harvest in Idaho non-tribal (recreational) fisheries. Harvest of wild steelhead was phased out in the late 1970’s, and harvest after 1980 is comprised entirely of hatchery fish.

Habitat

Idaho is part of a large-scale habitat effort designed to improve freshwater spawning and rearing conditions so the habitat can send more smolts to the ocean. Our two primary focus areas for the habitat programs are the Potlatch River, which is focused on steelhead, and the upper Salmon basin, focusing on both steelhead and Chinook salmon. Long-running research projects in both drainages that evaluate fish in-fish out (the number of adults spawning in a stream followed by the number of smolts coming out) show that in many places returning more spawners to the system doesn’t lead to a substantial increase in smolts going out. In those instances, the habitat for juvenile rearing is all taken, or as some people describe it, all the hotel rooms are full.

By improving rearing habitat (making more hotel rooms), we increase the capacity of spawners to produce smolts. Using the Potlatch River drainage as an example, fish in-fish out modelling shows that 600 spawning steelhead currently produce about 15,000 smolts with the existing habitat. However, upon completion of three major habitat projects, we estimate the same number of spawners will be able to produce 25-30 thousand smolts.

In the upper Salmon River basin, efforts to date have resulted in access to 75 miles of previously disconnected stream habitat along with the additional restoration of over 350 miles of spawning and rearing habitat through fencing, channel restoration and increasing flows.

The other component of our habitat program is fish screening. Irrigation with surface water is extremely important to the agricultural economy in the upper salmon basin. That irrigation system involves hundreds of diversions to draw water from the streams, but with that water can go juvenile salmon, steelhead and resident fish species. Through funding from the Mitchell act

and Bonneville Power Administration, the IDFG screen program has worked with landowners to install and maintain over 270 screens that cover 2,500 water rights over 4 million acres of land. The program is highly effective, and it's estimated that whereas fish loss to irrigation diversions was once close to 70% of the outmigrating smolt population, it's now less than 2%.

Ocean Conditions

Recent years have underscored the influence the ocean can have on Idaho salmon and steelhead. The ocean can be, unfortunately, a giant trump card that can nullify progress made on the other H's. Though very little about ocean conditions seems predictable, there is evidence of broad cycles. The pacific decadal oscillation (PDO) is roughly a 10-year cycle of the good upwelling and nutrient production followed by minimal upwelling. That cycle is confounded by El Nino and La Nina oscillations, which are much shorter duration, but have major impacts to ocean temperatures as well as inland precipitation and weather. The result of the complex oscillating patterns is a highly unpredictable system.

One thing is certain—periods of colder temperatures and good upwelling correspond to more abundant chinook populations, and warmer ocean temperatures caused by



Habitat restoration project in the Potlatch drainage designed to provide juvenile Steelhead rearing habitat.

currents from the south correspond to low populations. Unfortunately, recent years have dominated by the latter.

One thing that most everyone who studies the ocean agrees upon, is that we're seeing conditions that haven't been seen before, and it's increasingly difficult to predict with any certainty how conditions might change from year to year.

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Predation

Juvenile salmon and steelhead face a myriad of predators, both birds and fish, on their trip to the ocean. Several programs have been implemented and modified over the past 30 years in an effort to minimize unnaturally high levels of predation. These include the northern pikeminnow angler reward program, bird hazing, and managing nesting colonies of double-crested cormorants, Caspian terns, and ring-billed gulls. These are all elaborate and long-running programs that have achieved varying levels of success over the years and can best be characterized as works-in-progress.

Predation on adult salmon and steelhead is narrower in scope, and is primarily associated with pinnipeds, primarily sea lions. Under protection from the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the California Sea Lion population increased about 10 fold from 1980 to 2015. The population on the west coast of North America is now estimated at about 300,000. In that regard, sea lions are a tremendous management success story, but with the burgeoning population came feeding forays into the Columbia River, from the mouth upstream 145 miles to Bonneville Dam.

Considering that every salmon has to enter a very small ladder entrance, it's easy for sea lions to catch and eat their fill below the dam. Estimates of consumption are conducted annually, and of course it varies year to year, as does the percentage of the run, but they have consumed as many as 10,000 fish in the spring – mostly Chinook. Importantly, those estimates only include consumption in the area immediately below the dam. It's been estimated by federal fishery researchers that total sea lion consumption on some Chinook salmon stocks between the Columbia mouth and Bonneville Dam has been as high as 40%.

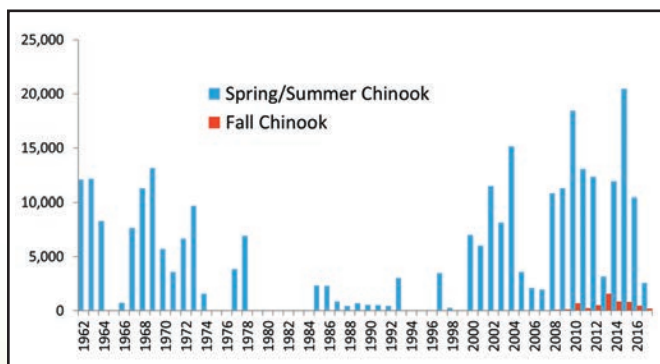


Figure 3. Spring/Summer Chinook harvest in Idaho. Harvest before 1980 is comprised primarily of wild fish, and those after 1984 are hatchery fish.



Sea lion capture effort on the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam (photo courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Fortunately, federal legislation was recently signed into law that will help manage adult predation by sea lions. The legislation allows for more efficient removal of the California Sea Lions but it will allow the removal of the larger Stellar Sea Lions as well, and it extends the area where animals can be removed from immediately below the dam downstream another 13 miles and in tributaries to the Columbia downstream of Bonneville.

Summary

Restoring salmon and steelhead populations that not only meets the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, but also achieve the levels needed to provide recreational and tribal harvest and support Idaho's rural economies is a complex, multi-faceted challenge. Effectively meeting the challenge requires cooperation across many disciplines and industries. The IDFG has been and will continue to be engaged in basin-wide efforts to develop science-based solutions implement programs in each of the four H's. Last summer, Governor Brad Little convened a diverse group of Idaho stakeholders (including the Idaho Grain Producers Association) to develop policy recommendations. For the last six months, the Salmon Work Group has been immersed in a crash course on salmon management issues. They're now in the process of seeking areas of consensus and developing recommendations. For more information on that process and a summary of information presented to the workgroup, visit the Office of Species Conservation website (<https://species.idaho.gov/>).

Advertorial

SPRING WHEAT TIPS FOR IDAHO GROWERS

Spring is right around the corner — and Idaho wheat growers are setting the stage for a profitable growing season.

No matter what class of spring wheat you grow, there are a few best practices to keep in mind:

- 1. Variety selection is key.** Minimize risk by choosing several varieties (and multiple classes), and pick those best suited for your geography, farm and management techniques.
- 2. Timing matters.** Be prepared to begin planting as early as your soil conditions, and Mother Nature, allow.
- 3. Know your end users.** Understand the market and strive for the quality your customers expect.

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Submitted by Diane Wangemann.



IGPA's Mentorship Program Participants Travel to D.C.

Grain growers and future IGPA leaders had a few whirlwind days of meetings in our nation's capital this winter through the IGPA Mentorship Program. The program, sponsored by the Idaho Wheat Commission, the National Barley Growers Association, and IGPA, gives growers the opportunity to see how their grower organizations work on the federal level, as well as giving them important leadership skill-building opportunities. It's also a chance to meet with the Idaho delegation and talk about issues affecting growers back in Idaho.

Two groups went to Washington D.C. over the course of three weeks for both National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and National Barley Growers Association (NBGA) meetings.

The wheat group included IGPA President Jamie Kress and Past President Potlatch Joe Anderson as mentors and Brogan Darrington, Jacob and Anna Vowels and Dave and Tracy Lakey as mentees. IGPA Association Manager Christie Prescott was also with the group.

For the National Barley Growers Association meetings just a week later, IGPA Executive Director Stacey Satterlee took Steve and Janna Herbst and Ryan Miller as mentorship program participants along with IGPA Past President Dwight Little, current Idaho Barley Commissioner Scott Brown, and IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder. Dwight is also the Past President of NBGA, and Scott holds Idaho's seat on the NBGA's board of directors.

"I was thrilled to be able to experience Washington D.C. as a staff member on this trip," said Christie Prescott. "In my eight years with IGPA, I have seen the mentorship program grow and blossom into the great tool it is today. I am excited for the future of this program and the quality growers we have engaged in it. We have some wonderful new members who represent Idaho well."

Former IGPA President Potlatch Joe Anderson was along on the trip and, having been on the D.C. trip several times, is an excellent mentor. "I feel honored to be able to share some experiences and acquaintances that have been mine over the years with younger grain growers. I am especially pleased that IGPA has involved families in its Mentorship Program. The



NBGA Participants (L-R): Ryan Miller, Dwight Little, Janna & Steve Herbst and Scott Brown.

current and former USDA folks and our Congressional offices look forward to interacting with young farmers. Farms and ranches continue to be family operations. Interaction with younger farmers is a privilege; it helps me stay younger."

Both the wheat and barley groups were able to meet with all of the members of Idaho's delegation and their staff. Idaho growers talked about the crisis facing many farms that are unable to find qualified ag labor, the need for infrastructure investment, and the importance of the Market Facilitation Program until trade relations normalize. They also thanked the delegation members for supporting the recently-signed U.S.-Canada-Mexico Agreement, and talked about the need for more trade agreements and opportunities to increase export markets.

IGPA Executive Director Stacey Satterlee was incredibly impressed with the group she traveled with.

"Each year we look forward to bringing a new group of young farmers to D.C. to see first-hand how Capitol Hill and the federal government work and see how much their voices matter. We had an extraordinary group of barley growers this year and hope they



enjoyed their experience. I really love this part of my job; taking young farmers from rural Idaho out to D.C. and watching as they see everything first-hand and realize how important this work is.”

In addition to going to Capitol Hill, the groups also participated in board meetings of each of our national affiliates headquartered in DC.

“Every time I’m in Washington DC and have the opportunity to meet with Idaho’s Congressional Delegation I’m reminded of two things,” said Scott Brown, former IGPA President and current Idaho Barley Commissioner. “First of all, how lucky we are as Idahoan’s to have Congressmen, and their staff, who understand Idaho agriculture, our challenges, our concerns, and our needs. We are truly blessed and should never take that for granted. Second, I’m reminded of how important it is to be engaged and out in front of the issues. It’s easier to help develop policy than it is to change policy. As Governor Little once told us in a board meeting, ‘It’s better to be at the table than it is to be on the table!’ It’s also rewarding to see the enthusiasm and vision of the new growers that accompany us thru the BILOT (Barley Industry Leaders of Tomorrow) program. The ability for them to have a hands-on experience with federal policy making really makes an impression and instills in them the need for advocacy,” said Brown.

The mentorship program participants all had great things to say about their experience, what they learned and what they can take away. They also shared their appreciation to IGPA for helping them on the trip and understanding what the organization does for growers in Idaho.

BROGAN DARRINGTON

Name of your farming operation? Brogan Darrington Farms is my personal farm. I am also a part of my dad’s farm, Big D farms. We farm in and around Minidoka County.

Tell us about your family. I have been married for 9 years to my wife Brittini. We have 3 kids: Korver (5), Quinn (3), and Mace (10 months).

What do you grow? I grow potatoes, wheat and alfalfa on my own farm. On the family farm with my dad and brother we also grow sugar beets, barley and corn.

What is the biggest challenge you face on your farm? My own personal challenge on the farm has been the transition from my dad running the show and making

all day-to-day decisions to him passing along a lot of that to the next generation. It is hard to make a smooth transition with the farm help who have been with us, working for as long or even longer than I have in some cases. It can be a challenge to gain their respect as a person and as their employer.

And the biggest challenges you see for the grain industry in Idaho and across the nation? A challenge that we face in southern Idaho is our basis. We don’t have many mills that are nearby and the cost to transport our wheat to the ports is high. Therefore, it causes our local basis to be lower giving us a lower cost. Also, in our area, several large dairies have come to town. With this it has brought more opportunity to grow other crops with the potential to make more money than wheat.

Nationally I feel our biggest struggle is in exports. We need to continue to find places that will take more U.S. wheat; we are very efficient in growing a high-quality product.

What issues are most important to you? A very important issue right now is the debate over glyphosate, not only in wheat but across all crops. This is a cost-effective, reliable tool for farmers to use to manage weeds. It would be detrimental financially if farmers were no longer able to use glyphosate as a tool.

In Idaho the conversation of breaching dams has returned. If we were to start taking dams down to save a few fish, it would be devastating to Idaho agriculture.

Why did you want to get involved in the IGPA mentorship program? I wanted to get involved in the mentorship program because of the opportunities it presented. This program has allowed me to travel to different parts of the state and across the country to learn more and better understand where my wheat goes and its uses. I have also met many new people and I am able to learn from their experiences as well.

What most surprised you about your experience in D.C.? This was my first trip to D.C. with IGPA. I was most surprised that several of the head guys in the USDA are farmers and were farming as recently as a few years ago. They were brought in by this administration to help write and govern the FSA programs such as PLC and ARC. It is comforting to me knowing that a fellow farmer is creating these programs and not somebody that has zero experience in agriculture.

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What are your hopes for the future of the grain industry? I hope that the grain industry will continue to flourish. I am hopeful that we can continue to open new export doors into the world market and continue to deliver a high-quality product.

Where are you located? Our main farm is in Declo Idaho but we are scattered from raft river to west of Burley.

What was your favorite part of your trip to D.C.? My favorite part of the trip was getting to meet with a director in the USDA. I was shocked to learn just 3 years prior he was a farmer as well. Now he is a vital part to the government programs PLC and ARC among others. Those programs have personally impacted me and my operation and I found it interesting to learn better how the program came about.

DAVID & TRACY LAKEY

Name of your farming operation? The name of our operation is Lakey Farms, LLC. We're located in Soda Springs, ID.

Tell us about your family. We farm with our parents, Dwight and Terre Lakey; our brother Dan and his family (his wife, Marie, and three kids – two boys and a girl). We have three grown children that are not on the farm: Colten, 27; Keaton, 23; and Shandilyn, 21 (husband - Daniel).

What do you grow? Wheat, feed barley, malt barley, organic barley, peas, flax, and mustard.

What challenges do you face on your farm? The greatest challenges we face on our farm are the high input costs compared to the low commodity prices. The equipment costs are a huge struggle for us, mostly our combines. We have a very small window for harvest where we operate at 6,000 feet altitude. We farm around 7,000 acres with three people and are spread across the county in a 40-mile span. We need to have dependable combines that will run when the conditions permit and the grain is ready. It has been our experience that a combine more than four years old has too much down time for repair. This has been a real challenge for us to try to pay for a newer combine with \$4.00 wheat, as well as the other low commodity prices.

What challenges you see for the grain industry in Idaho and across the nation? There are many challenges we see: low commodity prices, the ability



(L-R): Laura Wilder, Steve Herbst, Scott Brown, Senator Jim Risch, Ryan Miller, Janna Herbst, Stacey Satterlee and Dwight Little.

to ship our product to market at a fair price, dockage and storage costs, as well as quality issues that we have been incurring due to weather.

What issues are most important to you? The most important issues to our farm is the ability to be self-sustainable. That hasn't been the case for about the last 10 years due to low prices. Being a fourth-generation farmer on our land, it's disheartening to just be running on your equity in hopes that things will turn around and every year running the risk of losing your legacy. So, the most important issue to me would be to try to turn this commodity market around so that we can all be self-sustainable once again.

Why did you want to get involved in the IGPA mentorship program? Actually, we were not aware of the IGPA mentorship program until we were invited to go to Washington, D.C. We feel very honored and grateful to have had that opportunity.

What did you gain from your experience in D.C.? This experience of being able to talk with the people in D.C. that are working towards making farming more profitable really made us feel like we weren't alone in the agricultural world. We were very impressed that so many actual farmers were working in the USDA building. That gave us a feeling of confidence that they knew the actual workings of a farm operation.

What was your favorite part of your trip to D.C.? One of favorite parts of the trip was meeting Administrator



Fordyce of the FSA and being able to talk one-on-one with him and his staff. That was a great opportunity and we felt like he was very interested in what we had to say and would strive to help with the agricultural struggles that we face today.

We also enjoyed building relationships with the IGPA staff and fellow members. It greatly increased our feeling of community within this organization. We had a great time being with everybody involved!

What are your hopes for the future of the grain industry? We would like to see the grain industry in the future have more stability so the farmers can be more profitable and be able to plan their yearly operational budget with more confidence of being successful. We would like the family farm to continue being a family farm for all involved through many generations to come.

JACOB & ANNA VOWELS

Name of your farming operation? J. Vowels Farms, Inc.



Anna Vowels and Christie Prescott at Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.

Where are you located? Princeton, Idaho

Family? Jacob is a fourth-generation farmer and rancher. We have three children: Jaxon (13), Elena (11), and Jace (7).

What do you grow? Wheat, dry peas, garbanzo beans, export timothy hay, and alfalfa. We also raise cattle.

Biggest challenges you face on your farm? Living in a 20-inch rainfall area, seeding and harvesting the crop at the time required for ideal quality can be challenging. For example, in 2019, our late maturing spring wheat yielded well, but we had snow fall on it in September. In addition, steadily declining and fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices add additional layers of uncertainty. Lower farm income limits our ability to invest in more efficient equipment and necessitates diversification and the pursuit of other income streams for support. Finally, we realize the long-term sustainability of our operation rests on maintaining our farmland leases through ownership transitions and seeking opportunities for growth. Our understanding, knowledge and care for the land, and the people owning it, is everything to us.

Challenges you see for the grain industry in the Idaho and across the nation? Chief agricultural ambassador Gregg Doud spoke to the challenge the industry faces on the global level with the relatively strong U.S. dollar and the increased international production of competing products. There is need to continue to explore, open, and secure additional global export markets. In Idaho, as we rely primarily upon the export market and face break-even prices, the challenge will be to sharpen the pencil even more and find ways to reduce unnecessary expenses and maximize efficiency, while still maintaining the quality product Idaho is known for.

What issues are most important YOU? All our grain is shipped using the Snake River and Columbia barge system, so we care about its maintenance and longevity. In addition, USDA programming, such as the Beginning Farmer Program, have helped us rebuild our family farm. We care about ready-access to resources to sustain family farms. We also closely track the research of our neighboring land-grant universities, the University of Idaho and Washington State University, on issues directly impacting the millers and bakers using our wheat, such as falling numbers and developing attractive wheat varieties.

Why did you want to get involved in the IGPA mentorship program? Our farm neighbors the farm of

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Potlatch Joe Anderson. He has been very supportive of our return to the farm and encouraged us to become involved in the industry at large. His mentorship has allowed us to meet individuals with vast industry knowledge, gain leadership skills, and learn about the issues beyond the borders of our farm.

What did you hope to gain from this experience in D.C.? We hope to develop the connections we made with other growers and industry partners. It easy to become entrenched in the endless tasks of managing day-to-day life on the farm. Taking time to reach out and get to know others who also weather the storms and work just as hard is encouraging!

D.C. also taught us the importance of having Idaho growers represented on the national and international level. Our trip to D.C. convinced us that there is a place at the table for the voice of family farmers from small town Idaho.

What was your favorite part of your trip to D.C.? The trip was very well-organized by IGPA! The itinerary was packed and put us in all the right places at the right time, with constant opportunities for face-to-face interactions with industry leaders. It was exciting to be at the USDA and in the Capitol when major trade agreements were approved. But we must say, seeing the Lincoln Memorial at night with no one else in sight was amazing!

What are your hopes for the future of the grain industry? Our hope is that the grain industry will continue advocate strongly for protecting farmland, the survival of the small family farm, and the expansion of global markets.

RYAN MILLER

Name of your farming operation? Grant 4-D Farms

Where are you located? Rupert Idaho is the main location but also have farms in the Treasure Valley.

Tell us about your family: Yes, it's a family owned farm. I'm one of the three, third generation families working on the farm. My grandfather homesteaded near Minidoka in 1958, and my dad was a logger in Montana then moved here to farm when he and Mom were married in 1976. I have been married to Malia for 13 years and have two daughters, Kenzi age 8 and Kamea age 11.



NAWG Participants: (L-R) Wayne Hurst, Dave & Tracy Lakey, Christie Prescott, Representative Simpson, Jamie Kress, Anna & Jacob Vowels, Brogan Darrington, and Potlatch Joe Anderson.

What do you grow? Potatoes, sugar beets, onions, corn, wheat, malt barley, alfalfa.

What are the biggest challenges you face on your farm? Labor, weather and also the changing prices of equipment and land increasing and commodities staying relatively stagnant or declining.

And the biggest challenges you see for the grain industry in the Idaho and across the nation?

Transportation is a big factor for the industry. If there is a demand for a product, farmers will find a way to meet the ask, but we need to be able to get the products delivered in a safe and timely manner.

Pressures of crop protection chemistries being reduced or eliminated across the country and a long delay for new chemistries to be approved puts extra stress and cost into the equation while trying to deliver a quality crop.

What issues are most important to you? Labor is a major issue right now. We rely heavily on the H2A program to have enough of a workforce to plant, raise, and harvest our crops.

Why did you want to get involved in the IGPA mentorship program? I wanted to understand and experience being part of an advocacy group for agriculture and how that group can play a role in shaping our communities, counties, state and nation.

What was your favorite part of your trip to D.C.? I had never been to Washington DC before, so the whole



trip was an amazing experience. The history of our great nation that is represented in so many ways was amazing. Walking through Arlington National Cemetery was very sobering. We watched the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and a group of school kids presented a wreath and took part in hanging it with the soldiers. The Eternal Flame at President Kennedy’s grave, the Challenger Flight Crew Memorial, and rows upon rows of headstones many dating back to the 1800’s and before was a stark reminder that our freedom was and is not free. There were bagpipes and taps played for at least two funerals that took place while we walked through the cemetery.

We visited a few other memorials such as the Lincoln Memorial and the George Washington Memorial which are grander in scale when seen in person than photographs can show.

Meeting our Idaho Congressmen in person and engaging on topics that are important to Idaho agriculture was a highlight. Their interest and concern for the industry was very encouraging.

Another highlight was being in D.C. during the State of the Union Address and then also being at the Capital when President Trump was acquitted and watching all the protesters was an experience I will always remember.

What are your hopes for the future of the grain industry? My hope is that with the new China trade deal and other trade deals being worked on with countries like Japan bring a higher demand for Idaho wheat and barley to be exported.

STEVE & JANNA HERBST

Name of your farming operation? Nelson Angus Ranch

Where are you located? We’re located ¾ mile east of Salmon on the Lemhi Road.

Tell us about your family: We have one daughter, Rachel, and three sons, Darren, Brian, and Jared, and 10 grandchildren. Grandpa Rafe Nelson first grew potatoes on our property.

What do you grow? We have 350 registered angus cows and are in the seedstock business. We raise 320 acres of barley, 500 acres of alfalfa, and 60 acres of grain corn.

Biggest challenges you face on your farm? Labor issues. The cost of H2A is extremely high and burdensome on the employer, and the vocational

training that is not happening in our high school is making it impossible to find good local workers. The costs are getting difficult to balance to make farming profitable enough to provide necessary equipment to be efficient.

Challenges you see for the grain industry in the Idaho and across the nation? Chemicals needed are contested by a vocal bunch who want to restrict access; roads and transportation to markets; farm labor; and adequate vocational training.

What issues are most important to you? Grain prices.

Why did you want to get involved in the IGPA mentorship program? Our friend Dwight Little invited us to along on the trip. Word of mouth is a wonderful thing!

What was your favorite part of your trip to D.C.? Meeting with the congressman and senators to have a voice in government. Knowing that they listen to your concerns and take time to meet personally with the group was encouraging. Being in D.C. for the first time was a very exciting experience. We went to the Holocaust Museum, the Smithsonian Museums of National History and Air and Space, as well as Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Washington Memorials. We toured the Capitol building as well. The trip was educational and informative on so many levels. Seeing the governing counsel of NBGA working with our legislators and seeing the foundations of our nation’s history and government made it a wonderful trip.

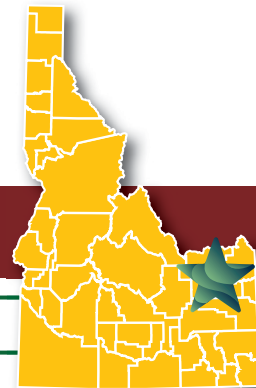
What are your hopes for the future of the grain industry? More demand from international trade agreements that will boost price and opportunity.

IGPA is proud to be able to introduce new growers to our government’s internal workings on the national level and we take great pride in the mentorship program. We are always looking for grain growers who want to be involved in the organization and learn more about what we do at the state and federal levels. We need strong voices and future leaders to continue to work for Idaho grain growers. If you’re interested in learning more, visit www.idahograin.org/igpa-mentorship. ■



SENATOR
Brent Hill

REXBURG, ID • DISTRICT 34



Senator Brent Hill has spent his life surrounded by and learning from the farm and ranch community in Idaho. “I understand the risks farmers take and have been inspired by their approach,” he says. He also notes that, “they are the epitome of community, though miles apart.” The Senator admires how farmers come together to help each other out and the optimism they show.

The respect Senator Hill has for members of the agriculture industry started with a love for rural America. Growing up in the small town of Sugar City, with a population of less than 600 people at the time, granted him an appreciation for small town communities which continues today. During his youth his mother worked as a 5th grade schoolteacher. He remembers visiting her classroom to see her at work and to this day still runs into his mothers’ former students and hears about the impact she had on them. His father owned his own pharmacy where Senator Hill started working at the age of four. His dad also sold veterinarian supplies to various farmers and ranchers directly from his store.

When Senator Hill turned 14, his family moved to Rexburg. At the time he didn’t want to move from Sugar City to the big city of Rexburg, but the move ended up working out.

Upon his return from a mission to Germany for his church, he was immediately smitten by Julie Slauch. Julie’s family had moved from Logan, Utah to Southeastern Idaho for her father’s job at Ricks College in Rexburg. The couple would go on to have four sons and 20 grandchildren. With those grandchildren now in Utah, Idaho and Montana, Senator Hill treasures the time he gets to spend with them.

A true Aggie at heart, Senator Hill graduated from Utah State University with a degree in accounting. He returned to Rexburg to work for an accounting firm and eventually became CEO. While working as an accountant, the majority of his customers ran ag-related businesses. Prior to serving in the legislature, the Senator became actively involved in county politics which started with an early interest and love for American history. The Senator has even authored a book entitled A Matter of Principle, which explores the fundamental ideals that

guided America’s Founders. With his contributions to his community and his established career, Senator Hill seemed to be preparing for further service without even knowing it. Even though it was a natural transition, his sudden leap into the legislature was unexpected. In 2000, the Senator was appointed to the Idaho Senate on Christmas Eve by then-Governor Dirk Kempthorne.

Following his appointment to the legislature, Senator Hill established good relationships with members of the executive and legislative branch, including Governor Kempthorne and future U.S. Senator Jim Risch. In working with a variety of people he has garnered several pearls of wisdom. “You must cooperate and work together, but that doesn’t mean you have to agree on everything,” he says. Adding to this counsel, Senator Hill suggests everyone should strive to “always respect each other.” That approach is one of the reasons he is held in such high regard by members of all facets of Idaho state government.

Senator Hill currently serves on the State Affairs and Local Government and Taxation committees. He also serves as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, which makes him the leader of the senate and the third person in the line of succession for Governor.

Senator Hill has spent his time in the Senate as a strong advocate for agriculture as it plays a big role in the Senator’s district in Rexburg. Not only has he spent his life interacting with members of the ag industry, he has fought alongside them. He believes the future of agriculture is positive because with a growing population there will always be a growing need for food. He also notes that “the future of farming is the fact that farmers care about each other.” The Senator explained that “relationships keep farming alive and well.”

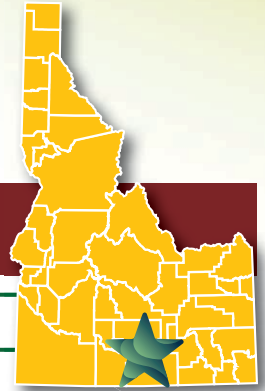
Senator Hill continued with the respect he has for the culture of farming, “Tell me about another career that passes from generation to generation.” Senator Hill recently announced he would be retiring at the end of his current term. There is no doubt that his impact has changed Idaho for the good and we know he will finish strong. We thank him for all that he has done for Idaho agriculture. ■



REPRESENTATIVE

Scott Bedke

OAKLEY, ID • DISTRICT 27



A fourth-generation rancher, Speaker of the House Scott Bedke, appreciates the value of hard work. “If you’re going to work with me, bring a lunch and a flashlight,” he says. The Speaker has spent his life tackling every challenge with the lessons he learned on the ranch-and his approach to the legislature is no different. He notes a striking similarity between the ranch and the legislature, stating “in both places a different challenge is presented every week.” Serving his 10th term in the House, he has loved it since the beginning. The Speaker’s willingness to serve others and his ability to lead did not start in the legislature, it started with his roots: a pioneer family with a history of sacrifice and determination.

After growing up on the family ranch in Oakley, the Speaker traveled to Italy where he served a mission for his church. Speaker Bedke came to appreciate the Italian approach to life and even still speaks a little of the language. Following his mission, the Speaker met his future wife, Sarah, through mutual friends in their Accounting 201 class at college. Sarah grew up on a farm in Eastern Washington where she drove tractor and set water. The two seemed to match perfectly. Sarah’s father had grown up on a farm near Blackfoot prior to moving to Eastern Washington. Inspired by generations of hard work and sacrifice, the two would cultivate a strong family and build a legacy of their own.

After graduating from BYU with a degree in finance, his career options were abundant, but he ultimately decided to return to the ranch. The freedom of working on the range and the ability to be his own boss attracted him to return to the business he loved. As the Speaker focused his work on the ranch, he became involved in various trade organizations connected to his line of work. He has served as President of the Idaho Cattle Association, as a board member of the Cassia County Farm Bureau and as a Board member of the West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District. These opportunities to serve allowed the Speaker to discuss policies that directly affected his occupation. To farmers and ranchers involved in similar boards he offers this crucial advice. “Be meaningful, your industry depends on you.” To those who are thinking about getting

involved he suggests that you “get involved in order to stay in business. The boards and service opportunities are what you make them so make the best of them.”

Prior to the Legislature, the Speaker also served as a member of the Oakley City Council. His involvement in his community and in his trade demonstrates the impact one can have on those around them. In 2001, the Speaker made the switch from local involvement to the legislature after being appointed by then Governor Dirk Kempthorne. His experience in the livestock industry and his focus on water adjudication helped prepare him to serve as an advocate for agriculture-related issues. He has utilized this experience while serving on the Revenue and Taxation, Appropriations, Education, Transportation, and Natural Resources committees.

When it comes to advocating for ag, he certainly has skin in the game. Not only is he a fourth-generation rancher, he also raises alfalfa, wheat, barley, and other crops. He’s optimistic that ag has a positive future because “everyone needs to eat.” He also believes agriculture leads the way in sustainability. “Agriculture’s future starts with a focus on water. There’s enough water to go around, there just needs to be an adaptive, organized plan.”

His experience in settling water disputes demonstrates his ability to lead in a variety of settings. Whether it’s been mediating water infringement in rural Idaho or addressing the fill/refill issue in Boise, his efforts have led to results.

This session the Speaker would like to focus on natural resources. He places emphasis on water quality and the idea of prioritizing the hierarchy of needs. He wants to “always be prepared with ideas and to always be solving problems.”

The Speaker is also lucky enough to have his four children and 13 grandchildren live close to the ranch. The couple’s appreciation for hard work and education has inspired their children as well. They each have accomplished various things in their own right, building on what their parents have taught them. ■



How Dam Breaching Would Hurt Ag, Economy

BY SEAN ELLIS, IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

A recently released study concludes that transportation impacts related to breaching dams on the Columbia-Snake River system would cost the nation at least \$2.3 billion.

It also found that removing the lower four dams on the Snake River to improve salmon runs, as some groups are proposing, would negatively impact the environment and threaten the existence of at least 1,100 farms in Idaho, Washington and Oregon.

Wheat is the number one crop in the Pacific Northwest – Idaho, Oregon and Washington – in terms of total acres and the Columbia-Snake River system is the top wheat export gateway in the United States.

About 58 percent of the nation’s wheat destined for export travels through the river system, which also produces about 60 percent of the electric power used in the region.

Some groups support breaching the four lower Snake River dams as a way to benefit endangered salmon and steelhead.

Removing the dams would make the river system unnavigable for barges that move wheat, barley and other products to port for export.

“As this study shows, the Snake River dam system is the most efficient option for transporting goods such as wheat, generating renewable energy via hydropower and preventing flooding in the Pacific Northwest,” said Idaho Wheat Commissioner “Genesee Joe” Anderson, who farms in the Lewiston area. “While removing or breaching the Snake River dams will not increase salmon numbers with any certainty, there would definitely be negative impacts on people, including growers.”

If the dams ever were removed, it would have a large negative impact on Idaho wheat growers, said IWC Executive Director Blaine Jacobson.

Wheat is Idaho’s number two crop in terms of total revenue and half of the wheat grown in Idaho is exported, almost all of it through the Columbia-Snake River system.



Wheat is grown in 42 of Idaho’s 44 counties and helps support the local economies in a large portion of the state’s rural areas, Jacobson said. Idaho is the number five wheat growing state in the nation and has led the nation in yields per acre four of the last five years.

“Wheat is a steady, consistent contributor to Idaho’s economy,” Jacobson said. “Barging is the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly way of getting our wheat to market.”

When other factors such as power generation, the efficiency and environmentally friendly benefit of moving goods by barge vs. rail or truck, and total jobs connected to the river system are considered, “It boggles my mind that breaching the dams is even a consideration,” he added. “There is no question the dams boost the PNW economy and the benefit of the river system vastly outweighs the cost of maintaining it.”

The Columbia-Snake system is the third-largest grain export gateway in the world.

The study was commissioned by the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association and conducted by FCS Group, a financial and economic consulting firm.

PNWA is a non-profit trade association with 135 members in Idaho, Oregon and Washington that advocates on behalf of the river system.

The study was released during the Idaho Wheat Commission’s annual PNW Export Tour, which brings Idaho wheat growers to Portland to educate them on the



region's wheat industry, including providing them an overview of the benefit of the river system.

Talk of breaching the dams is not new but the pressure from groups that support doing that goes in cycles and right now, the pressure is on an up cycle, PNWA Executive Director Kristin Meira told tour participants.

In response to a lawsuit brought by dam removal supporters, a federal judge has ordered federal agencies that operate the river's hydropower system to review all reasonable options for operating it in order to minimize the impact on endangered salmon.

A draft environmental impact statement on the system's operation is expected soon and its release will be followed by a public comment period.

Meira said it's important that growers and other wheat industry partners have their voices heard on the issue because the groups supporting dam removal are organized and vocal.

"These groups are incredibly active in D.C., so your voices are needed back there," she said. "This is a time when the folks in the different state capitals, in our federal agencies and our federal decision makers, all need to hear from growers, shippers and everyone who supports keeping these dams."

The study found that removing the dams would lead to higher rail rates, negatively impact air quality and cost the nation more than \$2.3 billion over the next 30 years.

Removing the dams, the study found, would increase diesel fuel consumption by almost five million gallons per year because barges would be replaced by less efficient truck-to-rail shipments.

The share of goods moved to export terminals on the West Coast by barge would decrease and the amount moved by trucks and rail cars would increase.

The increased reliance on truck-to-rail shipments would result in an additional 24 million miles of travel per year on county, state and federal roads.

The study also found that dam breaching would likely increase grain transportation and storage expenses by 50 to 100 percent and put more than 1,100 farms at risk of bankruptcy.

The Columbia-Snake River system is a 465-mile federal waterway that provides farmers as far away as the Midwest access to international markets.

Besides being the number one gateway for U.S. wheat exports, the system is the number two gateway for corn and soybean exports and the number one gateway for West Coast wood and auto exports.

According to PNWA, about 14 million metric tons of wheat destined for export move through the system each year, as well as eight million metric tons of soybeans, three million tons of wood products and nine million tons of corn.

According to the study, shifting transportation of commodities from barges to truck and rail would increase carbon and other harmful emissions by more than 1.3 million tons per year. That is equivalent to adding 181,889 passenger cars or 90,365 homes.

According to the PNWA, it would take about 35,000 rail cars or 135,000 semi-trucks to move all the cargo that is barged on the Snake River.

Meira said she believes a highlight of the study was its finding that removing the dams would create more emissions.

"Barging is the cleanest, most efficient way of moving all of that high-quality U.S. wheat overseas," she said.

If people say they are in favor of addressing climate change and having a healthy environment, Meira added, "You can't be in favor of breaching because that's headed in the wrong direction."

During the PNW Export Tour, participants visited Shaver Transportation, which moves wheat headed for export down the river on barges.

Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for Shaver, said the reason the Columbia-Snake River system is so successful is that the option of barging or shipping products by rail provides necessary competition that keeps prices competitive.

"We're successful out here and the reason we're successful is that shippers have two options to receive wheat," he said. "Where you have barging and rail, you have competition. Where there is less ways to ship, there's less ways to make a profit."

Besides impacting the PNW's important agricultural sector and affecting the environment, removing the four lower Snake River dams would also undoubtedly result in higher power costs in the region, Meira said.

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

Together, the four dams produce enough electricity to power 800,000 homes.

“Those dams are producing a tremendous amount of power and they are efficient,” Meira said. “If you breached the dams, electric rates would go up, not down.”

On Wednesday, February 12 and Thursday, February

13, Stacey Satterlee (Idaho Grain Producers Association), Paul Arrington (Idaho Water Users Association), Will Hart (Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association) and Dave Doeringsfeld (Port of Lewiston) spoke to members of the Idaho House and Senate Committees on Agricultural Affairs about the importance of the Columbia-Snake River System to growers, businesses, trade and residents of the Pacific Northwest including Idaho. ■

Idaho Wheat Commission Adds Two New Team Members with Marketing and Communication Backgrounds

In January, the Idaho Wheat Commission announced the hiring of two team members, Casey J. Chumrau and Jason P. Dumont, who will its bolster marketing, communications and grower education efforts.

“Casey and Jason bring unique and polished skillsets to our team, which have and will continue to benefit Idaho wheat growers,” said Blaine Jacobson, IWC’s executive director. “They know how to deliver value for growers’ dollars.”



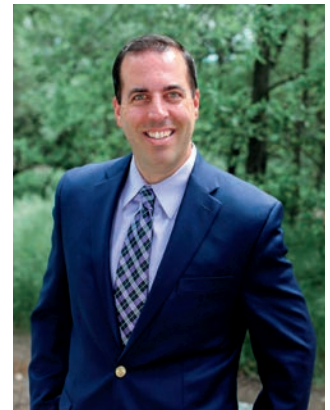
Chumrau, the associate administrator, started her role in early January and embarked on her first PNW Export Tour. Previously, she was marketing manager for South America for U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) in Santiago, Chile, where she helped develop and expand export markets for all classes of U.S. wheat. She was the USW market analyst in Washington, D.C., where she monitored

global wheat market trends, produced weekly price reports and provided contract, quality specification and price assistance to wheat exporters and importers.

Chumrau previously worked for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance in D.C. and as a market research assistant at the Montana World Trade Center. She has bachelor’s degrees in history and Spanish from the University of Oregon and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Montana. She

also studied abroad in Chile and spent a year working in Costa Rica.

Dumont, who is originally from New Hampshire, joined the commission staff as manager of communications and grower education in August, succeeding Britany Marchant who is now the marketing manager for the



Idaho Falls Arts Council. He previously served as a speechwriter and spokesperson for the California State Controller and a policy communications adviser to legislators in the California State Assembly. Jason built a political action committee and tracked legislation for a rare disease biotech firm, managed public affairs and political campaign initiatives for consulting firms and worked for two U.S. senators. Dumont has a bachelor’s degree in journalism with a minor in Spanish from The George Washington University. He studied abroad in Spain.

“Casey has gained tremendous experience in foreign market development and understanding of the relationships between state commissions and international trade partners,” said Jacobson. “Jason has quickly executed on our communications priorities by working with international trade teams, growers, industry partners and news and social media. Our commissioners and staff will continue to develop markets, incorporate research and tell stories about how Idaho wheat is quality wheat simply grown.” ■

Idaho Wheat Commission Celebrates 60 Years

Current and former Idaho Wheat commissioners, administrators and industry partners were among the attendees who celebrated the commission's 60th anniversary at the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention in Spokane, WA in November. 🇺🇸





Using Beyond Herbicide with Clearfield Plus Wheat Varieties

BY DON W. MORISHITA, PH.D., PROFESSOR EMERITUS,
WEED SCIENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO



The first commercially available Clearfield wheat variety that was developed with resistance to imazamox, or Beyond herbicide, was first marketed in 2001. Clearfield wheat provided a way to selectively control winter annual grass weeds like downy brome (cheatgrass), jointed goatgrass and feral rye effectively. Since then, Clearfield Plus varieties have been developed that are less prone to crop injury and provide the opportunity to apply Beyond over wider stages of growth. The resistance to Beyond herbicide has been bred into soft white, hard white and hard red classes of winter and spring wheat and are all marketed as Clearfield Plus wheat varieties. This article will focus on using Beyond on winter wheat for controlling the winter annual grasses.

Even though the Clearfield Plus wheat varieties provide greater crop tolerance to Beyond and the ability to use crop oil concentrate (COC), methylated seed oil (MSO), or high surfactant oil concentrate (HSOC) adjuvants in addition to nitrogen fertilizer, some growers experience challenges consistently controlling these winter annual grasses. With several years of experience by growers, weed scientists and BASF Corporation representatives, several key pointers listed below will hopefully help increase the weed control consistency and reduce the incidence of rotational problems sometimes associated with using Beyond.

Rockland, Idaho grower (and Idaho Wheat Commissioner) Cordell Kress and central Oregon grower Darren Padget (and chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates) recently shared their experiences with Beyond. Both have experienced best control on downy brome and most inconsistent control with feral rye. Kress has grown spring wheat, safflower, mustard, canola and field peas in rotation with winter wheat and uses the six fluid ounces per-acre rate. His most common crop rotations are winter wheat-safflower-fallow or spring wheat-mustard-peas. This creates some rotation challenges when using Beyond on Clearfield Plus wheat and thus requires him to carefully choose where he uses Beyond.



Photo by Jeremy Searle

In the Rockland area, average annual precipitation ranges from about 15 to 18 inches, whereas in Padget's area, it's about 10 to 12 inches annually. His operation is a wheat-fallow rotation, with the occasional exception of spring barley. When he does plant barley, he has switched to the relatively new Survivor variety, which has very good tolerance to Beyond when planted following Clearfield Plus wheat. Padget uses Beyond at four to five fluid ounces per acre in almost every wheat crop and he targets his applications in the spring, although he has applied Beyond in the fall with good results. The Beyond label has thorough rotation restriction information, which is important to know when growing a crop other than wheat or another Clearfield crop. It is also important to know that rotation restrictions can depend on the amount of moisture received, soil pH and tillage used. Kress and Padget both direct seed much of their crop so this impacts the rotation restrictions for Kress.

Dr. Curtis Rainbolt and Trent Harrison, BASF representatives, shared their expertise working with Beyond in Clearfield Plus wheat. Rainbolt is a Technical Service Representative in Idaho and Harrison is a Marketing Representative in north central Oregon. Together, Rainbolt and Harrison address some important pointers when using Beyond on Clearfield or Clearfield Plus winter wheat.

1. Applying Beyond when the weeds are small is better than later, provided the crop growth stage is appropriate for the rate and adjuvants used. Only use a nonionic surfactant (NIS) with Beyond when wheat is in the two-leaf to tiller initiation stage.
2. They recommend using Clearfield Plus varieties over the Clearfield varieties because of reduced crop injury potential, the ability to use MSO, COC, and HSOC for better weed control, and can apply Beyond from the two-leaf to first node stage. However, these adjuvants can only be used if the wheat has started tillering, which starts after the four-leaf growth stage. None of the oils can be used with Clearfield varieties.
3. Be sure to add a nitrogen source such as UAN (Solution 28 or 32) or ammonium sulfate (AMS) because the addition of nitrogen helps increase the uptake of Beyond into the plant. One gallon of UAN per acre is the standard recommended rate and it generally provides better control of grasses than AMS. Higher rates of UAN or AMS are allowed with Clearfield Plus spring and winter wheat. If going after tough weeds like downy brome or feral rye they recommend using higher rates. This means using up to 30 percent v/v of UAN (or 30 gallons UAN/100 gallons spray solution) in these situations. They also feel it is easier to use than dry AMS and anecdotally seems to work better. The Beyond label actually allows up to 50 percent of the carrier volume to be liquid fertilizer.
4. With fall applications, UAN can increase crop injury potential so it's better to use AMS to avoid injury. When targeting feral rye, using a higher rate is better, but the trade-off is that this increases crop injury potential.
5. One drawback to using MSO, COC, or HSOC, there are limitations to using broadleaf herbicide tank mix partners compared to using NIS. The Beyond label does not allow tank mixing dicamba (such as Banvel or Clarity) or 2,4-D when using these adjuvants.
6. Using split applications of Beyond offer the best results when trying to control downy brome and feral rye. This would entail using four fluid ounces per acre in the fall with NIS and AMS followed by four fluid ounces per acre in the spring with 30 percent UAN and MSO at one percent v/v in 15 to 20 gallons per acre for the Clearfield Plus varieties.
7. Apply when air temperatures are warmer than 40 degrees F for Beyond to be taken up and translocated by the weeds. At temperatures below 40 F, studies have shown less uptake and translocation of Beyond in weeds like feral rye.

Tips for applying Beyond on Clearfield wheat

- Apply Beyond when weeds are small
- Clearfield Plus (CLP) varieties for reduced potential crop injury
- Crop oil concentrate (COC), methylated seed oil (MSO) or high surfactant oil concentrate (HSOC) adjuvants (boosters) can be used with CLP varieties
- Only nonionic surfactant (NIS) with CLP wheat from two-leaf to tiller initiation stage
- Add nitrogen source with Beyond herbicide application
- Downy Brome and Feral Rye are best controlled with split application
- Spray Beyond when the air temperature is above 40-degrees Fahrenheit
- Use spray volume of 15 gallons per-acre
- Herbicide resistant weeds may require spring tillage

8. Spray volume and spray coverage are very important for optimum control. Using a spray volume of 15 gallons per acre, especially with an oil adjuvant increases the effectiveness of Beyond. This is particularly true when spraying higher weed populations or the crop canopy is bigger or there are higher levels of standing crop stubble like you would see in a direct-seeding operation.
9. Although many growers have switched to no-till or direct-seeding, tillage may be a consideration to use as a means of reducing the selection pressure for herbicide resistant weeds. Without the use of different herbicide modes of action, spring tillage is a control options worth considering.

All of these pointers from the growers and BASF are important to keep in mind when using Beyond. It goes without saying that reading the label thoroughly is a must and can mean the difference between good weed control and mediocre or poor weed control. ■



Selling High-Quality Soft White to South American Users Requires Technical Expertise

BY CASEY CHUMRAU

About half of all wheat grown in Idaho is consumed in the domestic market and the other half is shipped overseas to meet global demand. One of the three pillars of the Idaho Wheat Commission's (IWC) mission is to help develop these markets, in order to increase grower profitability.

The international marketplace has become increasingly competitive in the last 15 years, with improved wheat quality from other origins and the Black Sea region moving from a net importer to the world's largest exporter. While continuing to invest grower dollars into research to improve quality – another pillar of IWC's mission – it is critical to find ways that Idaho and U.S. wheat growers can differentiate themselves from the competition.

Through the collective financial support of 17 state wheat commissions, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is working to be that differentiating factor by providing pre- and post-sale support to overseas buyers. In the past few years, USW has increased its focus on technical support, providing valuable milling and baking expertise to those processing and utilizing U.S. wheat abroad.

In addition to its annual financial commitment to USW, IWC periodically contributes funds to support special projects that could directly benefit Idaho producers. One of the ongoing efforts is the promotion of soft white (SW) wheat in Latin America, a high-potential market due to increases in the middle class population and sophistication of buyers who are focused on quality. While traditional SW markets in Asia pay a premium for low-protein wheat, Latin America can provide a home for the higher protein SW. In Latin America, SW is used for cookie and cracker production and in flour blends for bread, but its milling and baking characteristics are unique and require adjustments to milling processes and baking formulas.

That is where USW's technical support comes into play. Starting about a decade ago, IWC, the Washington Grain Commission and the Oregon Wheat Commission started funding SW blending projects in which an expert milling consultant visits customers throughout



Latin America to promote the use of SW, works to introduce a percentage of SW into existing product formulas and teaches buyers how to maximize profits using the new wheat class. SW is often more expensive than other wheat classes, so it is critical to demonstrate that with SW millers can increase flour extraction yields and bakers can take advantage of higher water absorption and volume, as compared with other soft wheat classes. These advantages result in higher profits and offset initial grain costs.

In 2018, the three Pacific Northwest commissions decided to take the effort one big step farther. They agreed to fund the operating capital for a full-time USW technical specialist in South America over a five-year period. USW has multiple technical specialists throughout the world, who are experts in milling and baking, but South America had always relied on outside



consultants. This new position, based in Santiago, Chile, allows USW to respond more rapidly to technical questions and provide more flexibility for in-plant assistance for users of U.S. wheat.

While the technical specialist, Andres Saturno, splits his time promoting and maximizing the value of all classes of U.S. wheat, the number of SW projects in South America has increased significantly. Colombia has been one of the main targets because it has large cracker and cookie production and it is the largest importer of U.S. wheat in the region, on average. The milling advantages are undisputed, and SW works perfectly for cookies in Colombia. The main challenge has been getting the crackers to the right texture and color, which so far has prevented widespread adoption of SW as a true alternative to other soft wheats.

To overcome this challenge, USW has multiple strategies. First, USW partners with the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, Oregon, to send the major cracker manufacturers to work with food scientists and SW experts on the experimental cracker line, testing multiple flour blends with varying SW percentages. USW can also donate samples of the

“Possibly the most important factor is the committed effort by USW, relying on its long-term working relationship with these companies, to convince the cracker producers to keep trying if the first activity doesn’t result in an ideal formula.”

grain directly to companies so the cracker producers, with the help of Mr. Saturno and other consultants, can experiment with their own equipment and personnel to find the right formula. Possibly the most important factor is the committed effort by USW, relying on its long-term working relationship with these companies, to convince the cracker producers to keep trying if the first activity doesn’t result in an ideal formula.

There has been substantial progress in the understanding of SW use in Colombia and USW expects the efforts will result in a commercial purchase in the first half of 2020. If Colombian cracker producers can find a satisfactory formula using SW, that could lead to increased use in cookies, bread and other wheat-based products that benefit from the end-use qualities of SW.

Considering the changing international wheat market and the uncertainty in the global trade environment, targeted and individualized technical assistance provided by U.S. wheat growers, through their check-off dollars, can make a big impact. Increased U.S. exports benefit all Idaho wheat producers by raising domestic wheat prices and contributing to a healthy and sustainable industry. ■

Introducing a Simple and Easy Way to Provide Input: the Idaho Ag Pulse

The Idaho Wheat Commission, in conjunction with the Agribusiness Management Society at Brigham Young University – Idaho, is looking for growers to participate in the newly-created Idaho Ag Pulse. This is an index that measures the economic health of Idaho agriculture based on the outlook of growers and is focused on the state’s top five commodities: potatoes, wheat, dairy, cow calf operations and hay.

On a quarterly basis, growers will be sent a short, three-to five-minute, electronic survey regarding their outlook on current economic conditions and future expectations.

All survey responses will remain anonymous, confidential and only used in the computation of the index. The Idaho Ag Pulse will be a resource for agricultural producers, policymakers and stakeholders throughout the state.

To sign up as a participant, please go to https://byui.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_57NckKOGqLlerAN or use the QR code. ■





Columbia River System Operations Draft Environmental Impact Statement update



River Advocates Urge Involvement as Federal Agencies Release Environmental Review of Columbia River System Operations

BY SCOTT CLEMANS, PNWA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The Pacific Northwest’s progressive balance of economy and environment hangs in the balance with today’s release of the Columbia River System Operations draft environmental impact statement. The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association encourages people to share their views on clean energy, freight efficiencies, salmon recovery and climate change during the public comment period, which ends April 13.

The draft EIS documents the evaluation of the long-term effects of the operation, maintenance, and configuration of the 14 federal dam and reservoir projects that comprise the federal Columbia River System. It is the culmination of nearly four years of analysis by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration. Their operation of the dams and locks on the Columbia and Snake rivers enable the Northwest’s supply of clean hydroelectric power and ability to barge goods from



the nation’s most inland port in Lewiston, Idaho, to locations throughout the Northwest and abroad.

“The Columbia River System is the lifblood of our region,” said PNWA Executive Director Kristin Meira. “It supports tens of thousands of families, moves our



food, raw materials, fuels and more, provides us with 90 percent of our renewable energy, prevents flooding, and represents innumerable cultural and recreational opportunities.”

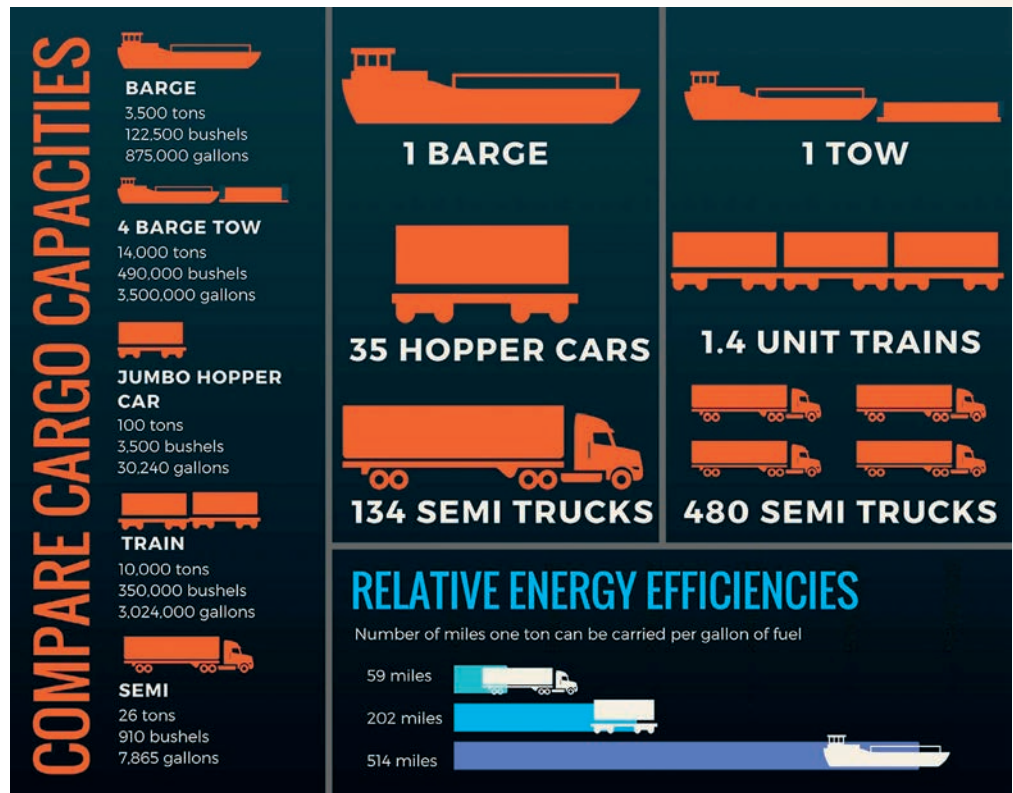
The federal agencies identify their preferred alternative in the draft EIS. The preferred alternative focuses on benefiting fish recovery using water management measures while balancing the need for hydropower production and water supply. The preferred alternative does not include dam breaching measures.

“PNWA appreciates the federal agencies’ approach to developing a preferred alternative that balances the many uses and resources of our river system,” said Meira. “We also appreciate that dam breaching is avoided as an extreme measure that would have very negative consequences to our Northwest communities and little benefit to fish recovery.”

Loss of barging would impact climate, fragile economies

PNWA commissioned an independent evaluation in December 2019 that found that removal of barging by breaching the Lower Snake River dams would cost the U.S. \$4 billion over the next 30 years. Removal of barging as a highly efficient mode of transportation would also lead to a significant increase in carbon emissions that would contribute to climate change and jeopardize health, safety and livelihoods in already economically fragile local and regional economies.

Some advocacy groups have called for breaching the Lower Snake River dams as a way to increase salmon recovery. PNWA highlights federal data showing that dams in the system have world-class fish passage facilities that see over 95 percent of salmon pass each of the dams on their journeys up- and downriver. Although salmon populations face other challenges, removing the Lower Snake River dams would have marginal salmon recovery benefits at significant cost to the region.



“Breaching the Lower Snake River dams is not an option for maintaining balance in a system that powers our homes and businesses and feeds our communities in so many ways,” said Meira. “We urge everyone who believes we can have both healthy rivers and healthy communities to share their perspectives during the draft EIS process.”

Today’s release of the draft EIS kicks off a 45-day comment period, during which anyone interested in the evaluation, its findings, and the preferred alternative can submit their input for consideration and inclusion in the final EIS. The comment period ends April 13.

“We need all voices to be heard, as the outcome of this EIS impacts us all,” said Meira. “If you want to keep jobs, reduce the risk of climate change, keep growing our economy, and protect our environment, this is your chance to get involved. It’s critical to our region’s future.”

To review the draft EIS and provide your comments, visit the Columbia River System Operations Web page at <https://www.nwd.usace.army.mil/CRSO/>.

For more information on the clean energy, efficient transportation, farm irrigation, fish passage and other benefits of the Columbia-Snake River System, visit www.pnwa.net/rivervalues.



Making the Case for Food Barley

BY LAURA WILDER

There's a growing body of evidence that barley is a super food in improving human health. At the forefront of this effort is Dr. Corrie Whisner, an Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Health Promotion at Arizona State University (ASU). Dr. Whisner spoke at the 2019 Tri-State Convention in Spokane last November about her findings, and about making the case for food barley.



Dr. Corrie Whisner

Dr. Whisner is an accomplished scientist who has studied the human biome - the ecological community of commensal, symbiotic, and pathogenic microorganisms that literally share our body space. She has evaluated microbiota in the intestine, how gut microbes differ by health status and how microbiota functions to protect, nourish and strengthen cells in the body. According to Dr. Whisner, dietary intake is a major factor in gut health – with a grain-based diet offering superior gut health compared to a Western diet.

During her tenure at ASU, Dr. Whisner has become a faculty affiliate with the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center, a national Exploratory Center of Excellence on minority health and health disparities, as well as a Core Faculty Member of the Fundamental and Applied Microbiomics Research Center. In June 2015, Dr. Whisner was one of 20 early career professional inductees into the Dannon Institute's Nutrition Leadership Institute and a recipient of a "Diamond of the Department" award from her alma mater, Purdue University, in May 2016.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF BARLEY

- Low in fat
- Low glycemic index
- Moderately high in protein (~10%)
- Packed with vitamins and minerals
 - B-vitamins
 - Vitamin E
 - Minerals
- High in fiber
 - beta-glucan
- Phytochemicals

“Digestive health should definitely be on every American’s mind,” according to Dr. Whisner. “Because the gut is the centralized organ that signals to every other organ in our body – what happens in the gut greatly impacts our disease risk.” “Barley is a carbohydrate-rich food loaded with fiber and polyphenols that feed our gut and get transformed into amazing molecules that can lower blood pressure, improve our cholesterol levels and reduce inflammation, said Whisner.”

“Barley is the most fascinating grain because it is unique in so many ways,” said Whisner. “Barley has more fiber than any other grain, and barley has more polyphenols than oats, wheat and rye. Furthermore, when you think about barley as a whole grain, a lot of whole grains are refined down to the endosperm which causes the loss of a lot of fiber and polyphenol content but barley is unique in that all outer and inner layers have about an equal composition of fiber and polyphenols so you can refine barley and still get all of the benefits of a whole grain.”

Whisner added, “Barley is really special in terms of beta glucans – it has exponentially more beta glucan than oats but has been greatly underappreciated in the American diet. There is a big opportunity for barley to be better placed due to these really amazing types of fiber.”

“Beta glucans are dietary fibers that are functional and have wonderful health benefits beyond just being dietary fiber,” explained Whisner. “Barley’s beta glucan fiber is helpful for lowering blood cholesterol levels and improving glucose metabolism which can lower the peak in blood glucose spikes after a meal where barley is consumed.”





For barley recipes and inspiration - go to www.eatbarley.com.

Whisner went on to explain that polyphenols are unique compounds found in plant-based foods including fruits, vegetables and grains with these diverse molecules including phenolic acids, flavonoids, lignins, folate, vitamin E and others, and collectively have anti-inflammatory properties in the

body. The polyphenols found in barley have these anti-inflammatory properties.

“Barley and grains are very important to the diet,” stressed Whisner. “Our bodies prefer carbohydrates as their fuel source, and when it comes to carbs, barley especially will provide us with a substantial fuel source that is preferred by our cells and provides them with a number of important functional food ingredients like polyphenols and fiber that feed the microorganisms in the gut doing more to help combat the inflammatory conditions plaguing the Western world. Adding more barley to the diet would see a decrease in these inflammatory conditions and better sustained health whether it’s weight loss and maintenance, managing blood glucose levels, or reducing the risk of colon cancer and cardiovascular disease.”

Now we know - besides being hearty and delicious, barley fits with the current food trends of ancient grains, transparent, high-quality ingredients, GMO-free, plant-based foods, sustainable foods, health and wellness with functional food ingredients, more dietary fiber and being good for the gut. Eat more barley! ■

CURRENT FOOD TRENDS SUPPORT BARLEY

Ancient grains		
Transparent, high-quality ingredients		
GMO-free		
Plant-based foods		
Sustainable foods		
Health and wellness (e.g. functional food ingredients)		
More dietary fiber		

Good for the gut microbiome!



FREE Financial Management Tools for Idaho Farmers and Ranchers Through University of Idaho Programs

BY SIDNEE HILL AND LAURA WILDER



Sidnee Hill-UI Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Program Coordinator

A new program recently unveiled by the Agricultural Economics Department of the University of Idaho Extension aims to improve the confidence of Idaho’s farmers and ranchers through developing financial management skills. Sidnee Hill, a rancher from the Carey area, will coordinate the new Farm Business Management and Benchmarking programs that are funded by a large grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

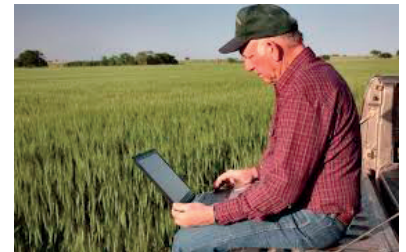
“One of University of Idaho Extension’s main goals is to

help Idaho producers succeed,” according to Hill. “This program focuses on financial success in two major ways. First, we are increasing the confidence of producers in creating and understanding their farm financial statements – not just to hand off to your lender each year, but to use them to really see your financial position and then make decisions that have major impacts on profitability.”

A recent study conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation in cooperation with the National Farmers Union, found 91% of farmers credit financial issues to be the main stressor, even to the point of affecting mental health (https://www.fb.org/files/AFBF_Rural_Stress_Polling_Presentation_04.16.19.pdf). Seeking additional education and training in financial management is an excellent way to feel more in control of the decisions and outcomes that surround you. Understanding your exact financial position can also clarify other opportunities on the production side of your business. “Making decisions without knowing where you are financially is like taking a walk in the dark: you are either missing opportunities or heading in the wrong direction,” said Hill.

The second portion is a benchmarking program that seeks to increase the representation of Idaho in some key, nation-wide tools. Financial benchmarks are often used by lenders, investment companies, and proactive businesspeople to judge the financial health and well-being of an operation. “In essence, we use benchmarks

to compare apples to apples. We can compare your operation to one of similar size and commodity to see if you are being both competitive and productive in your management practices,” explains Hill. “However, most of the benchmarking data used to compare Idaho’s farms is being collected from as far away as the east coast. If you have ever traveled to ag country outside Idaho, you quickly realize we all do things differently. We have our own unique challenges and blessings, even if we are growing the same crop. Gathering Idaho specific benchmark data is essential to see how Idaho is doing.”



To accomplish this benchmarking goal, extension agents are asking producers of all crops, and all farm sizes, to work with their program coordinator to submit their whole farm financial analysis into FINPACK’s data bank, FINBIN. “You provide your financial statements, and we will do the rest,” said Hill. “The financial statements will be anonymously submitted without any participant identifiers. From there they will be averaged with other producers to create the benchmark data. Producer financial information is strictly confidential.”

Both programs are FREE producers and come with an additional perk – FINPACK, agriculture’s premier financial analysis software, will be offered to any producer involved in these programs at no cost. Training and assistance on how to use the program can also be included.

“We are in desperate need of producers to help us in our benchmark program and want to connect those who want financial management assistance with this great opportunity while it is here,” said Hill. “We only have the grant funding for three years, so don’t wait or hesitate!” Those wanting to participate in either program should contact Sidnee Hill at sidneeh@uidaho.edu, 208-852-6160, or Ashlee Westerhold at Asheew@uidaho.edu. You can also visit their website <http://www.uidaho.edu/idaho-agbiz>. ■

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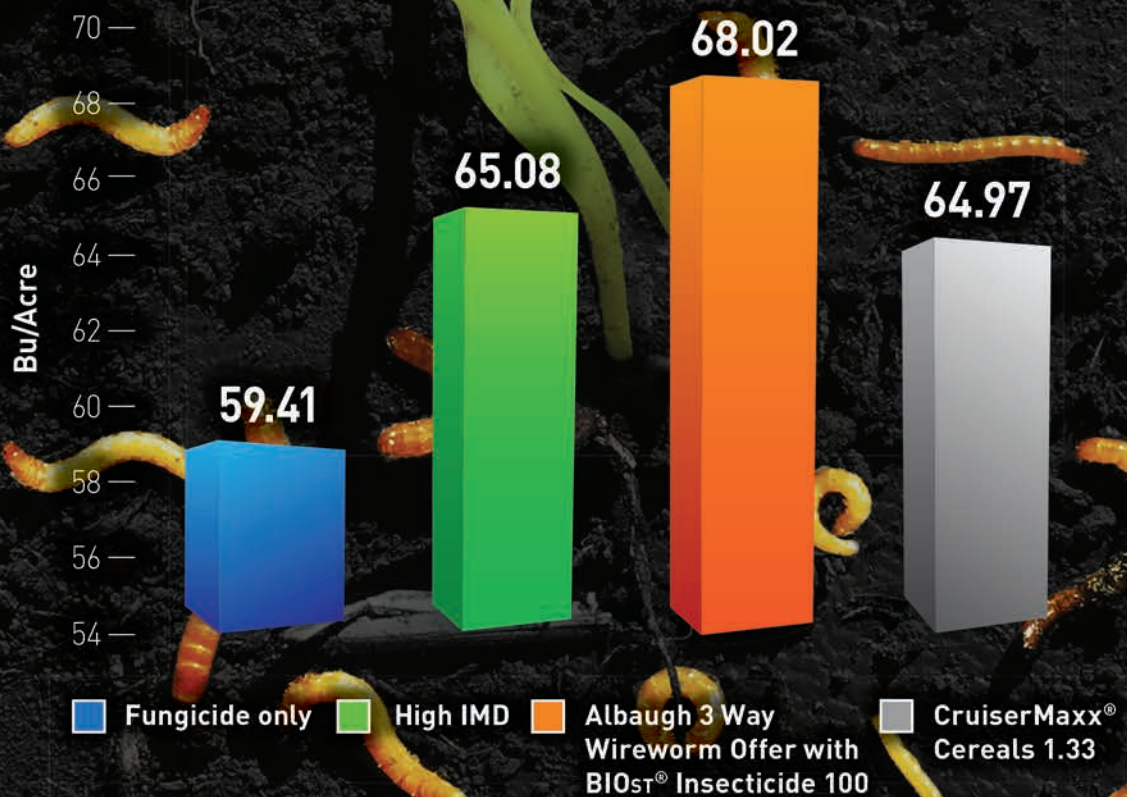
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3. Growers have had success over the past 3 years using Albaugh's 3 Way Wireworm offer with BIOst® Insecticide 100.

Contact your local seed retailer for more information on the 3 Way Wireworm offer with BIOst® Insecticide 100

Refer to each product label for complete use directions and restrictions. BIOst® and Resonate® are trademarks of Albaugh, LLC. NipsIt Inside® Insecticide is a trademark of Valent USA, LLC. *Dead wireworms have been observed in Albaugh's 3 Way wireworm seed treatment offer both in replicated trials and commercial seed treatment applications. CruiserMaxx® is a registered trademark of Syngenta Participations AG. Always read and follow label directions. EPA Reg. No. 84059-14-42750 AD No. 100616, EPA Reg. No. 42750-133 AD No. 110316, EPA Reg. No. 59639-151