

FALL 2020

# IDAHO

THE IDAHO GRAIN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

G R A I N

A large, cylindrical grain elevator stands in the foreground, painted in a dark blue color. On its side, the University of Idaho logo (a stylized 'I' in a gold square) is visible, followed by the text 'University of Idaho' in white. Below that, the words 'MADE FOR IDAHO' are written in large, bold, gold letters. To the left of this elevator is another, smaller, weathered grain elevator. In the background, a tall metal structure, possibly a grain processing tower, rises against a clear blue sky. The ground is a mix of gravel and grass.

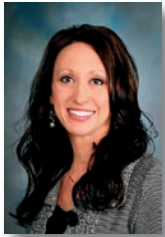
**MADE FOR IDAHO**

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# VIEWS



BY JAMIE KRESS  
PRESIDENT

My last Idaho Grain article ended with this sentence, “As we wait for the world to look more like it did three months ago, we’ll keep measuring our social distance in miles, not feet and looking for the good things in life.”

Well, I have to say the good in life has been easy to find, but I’m starting to wonder if the world will ever be the same. This summer we’ve seen family reunions and community celebrations all canceled along with grain industry meetings and grower appreciation events. We’ve had to learn new social protocols at equipment dealerships and grain elevators. Sunday church services have resumed but we try to keep our distance from fellow churchgoers. Now, in an unpredictable environment, we worry and wait- hoping that our two children will be able to return to the classroom for full instruction this coming fall.

As I’ve longed for life to be “normal” this summer, I’ve found harvest to be a familiar gift. Aside from family and faith, harvest is the one thing in life that looks and feels the same as it did this time last year—and the years before. For farm families and folks that love agriculture, there is nothing quite like harvest—it’s the culmination of the year’s blood, sweat, and tears.

Harvest is long days and short nights. It’s that feeling of firing up the combine and getting started. It’s the sight of moving sickles and reels. It’s the sound of grain moving through augers. It’s the smell of grain, chaff, and dust. It’s cutting just a few more acres before calling it a night. At the end of the day it’s shutting the cab door and hearing silence- no engine roaring or monitors beeping—just silence. It’s the sound of stubble crunching under each foot step and the sight of mountains glowing in the sunset. It’s family dinner at 10:00 pm and appreciation for another safe and complete day. It’s the feeling of satisfaction as bushels add up—or some years the feeling of defeat when they don’t.

This afternoon as I waited for the grain cart to make it’s way down to the bin, I sat and watched the combine cutting methodically. In a world that changes rapidly, and certainly looks much different as of late, there was my husband Cory cutting wheat among rolling hills and mountains in a scene that has been more or less untouched over time.

While modern day farm equipment is massive, allowing us to efficiently and comfortably cover more acres each day of harvest, I’m certain we share the same worries and joys as the families who have farmed here over the last 100+ years. Worries about prices, yield, weather, and breakdowns coupled with feelings of satisfaction, gratitude, and especially relief when harvest is complete and crops are safely stored. In farming, the more things change, the more things stay the same. Today, I’m feeling grateful for that. ■

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Cover photo by  
Debra Purdy

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  
(208) 345-0706

To subscribe or unsubscribe to Idaho Grain magazine at any time, visit the IGPA website at [www.idahograin.org/idaho-grain-magazine](http://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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BY STACEY KATSEANES SATTERLEE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We all continue to make our way through 2020, a year that has proven to be full of uncertainty and change – as a result, some things are incredibly different this year.

I usually spend my summers out and about with IGPA members, at county events and field days and grower events hosted by some of our partners. Most of those events were not held this summer, so I've missed seeing many of you in person.

One thing that has been different for me is that I tore my Achilles tendon this summer, resulting in surgery to reattach it and a long recovery ahead. What a pain it's been, both literally and figuratively – but also an opportunity to remember how much I have to be thankful for. While I cannot walk (yet) – I have tremendously supportive family and friends who have helped me get through this, and I'm looking forward to being totally recovered with an Achilles that is stronger than ever.

One thing that is the same is that harvest is underway. Spring and summer work on the farm is a constant, and now all of you are busy harvesting your crops. We all know agriculture and feeding the world is essential, and so for many of you, not much is different – your work continues.

Another thing that remains the same – IGPA's work continues. We are looking at the potential of a special session and laying the groundwork for the 2021 legislative session. The Idaho Wheat Commission has been working on a project to update the building they own that houses IGPA and several other ag groups – read more about that on page 4. And as you've probably heard, there is a new Executive Director of the Idaho Wheat Commission – her name is Casey Chumrau, and we're really excited to have her on board. You can get to know her a little bit more on page 18.

Also, per Idaho statute, commissioners on the Idaho Barley Commission and Idaho Wheat Commission are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The statute identifies IGPA as the grower organization responsible for providing at least three nominees to the Governor for consideration for any commissioner openings. We worked hard this spring to identify qualified growers interested in serving as commissioners and have two exciting pieces of news – first, Clark Hamilton was appointed to serve a second term on the Idaho Wheat Commission. Second, the Idaho Barley Commission had an open seat left vacant by retiring Commissioner Scott Brown – Allen Young from Bingham County was just appointed to serve as the next District 3 Barley Commissioner. You can read more about Allen on page 26.

We were tremendously disappointed to have to cancel Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, originally scheduled for the first week in December. But with so much financial uncertainty – we knew we couldn't put together a quality meeting for you without sponsors, speakers, or vendors. Read more on page 8, but we're looking forward to seeing everyone in Spokane for 2021 Convention.

I hope you all have had a safe and abundant harvest and that you and your families are well as we navigate these uncertain times! ■



# Building for the Future

BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, IDAHO WHEAT COMMISSIONER



In 2003 the Idaho Wheat Commission bought the building at 821 W State Street and today it's known as the Idaho Wheat & Ag Center. Located just one block away from the Capital building, it's an ideal spot – especially for those working with the Governor's office, the Legislature, those in state government, and others who call downtown Boise home.

Built in 1945, the building is home to a number of agriculture groups – in addition to housing the Idaho Wheat Commission, it is also home to the Idaho Barley Commission, Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA), Milk Producers of Idaho, the Idaho Bean Commission, the Idaho Wine Commission, and the University of Idaho College of Agriculture and Life Science staff. The building also hosts Food Producers of Idaho weekly meetings during the legislative session. It is a natural gathering place for those in ag and serves as the agricultural hub of downtown Boise.

Over the years, updates have consistently been made to the building but we've reached a point where significant investments are needed in upkeep and maintenance to keep our aging and inefficient building at a functional level. I know my fellow farmers understand maintenance costs and the need to replace things, whether farm equipment or buildings, when costs get too high.

The original building purchase was a sound investment of wheat growers' dollars – and over the years has proven to have been a strong return on investment. But like with structural investment, time and age have stressed the building to where it's simply not a functional office situation for the ag groups who reside there. That being said, the IWC has begun the process of preparing to build a new office space on the site of the current building. Although things have slowed somewhat due to the state of the world we're currently living in, plans continue to move ahead with the goal of demolition and breaking ground on the rebuild in the summer of 2021, pending approval from the Idaho Legislature this next session.

This building project has been in the works for a long time and it has been well planned. Wheat



A rendering of the proposed Idaho Wheat Commission building courtesy of Larson Architects.

Commissioners have been intentionally building a substantial cash reserve for years with the purpose of updating the building at some point down the road. Well, that time has come. Now is the time to knock down the old building and build an Idaho Wheat and Ag Center for the future.

Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Casey Chumrau says the investment today will pay for itself in the future. "While the current Wheat Commission building has served the grain industry well for more than 17 years, we want to ensure it remains a sound investment for growers before it becomes a financial burden. We know there are a lot of things going on with the global economy right now that no one would have predicted a year ago, but we've carefully considered the situation and feel this is the right time to continue on with our original plans for the new building."

The project is well thought out – parking and rooftop patios are in short supply in downtown Boise and the proposed building includes both of those things. The goal is to have the same ag groups remain in the new, three-story, 27,336 square-foot space, which will be more than four times the 7,500 square feet of the current building and feature a unique parking structure with stackable parking with room for both building tenants' cars and public parking. The ground floor is set for retail space with office space on floors two and three and outdoor space as well.



Blaine Jacobson, who served for almost 20 years as IWC Executive Director, is planning to come back on board and donate his time and talent as project manager on the new building. We have architectural design and blueprints in place, and now Blaine is working to gather solid estimates for a building that will meet the needs of current tenants, attract new tenants, deal with the current shortage of parking, offer a possible cash flow with roof-top outdoor space to rent and continue to serve Idaho's wheat growers long into the future.

Several of my colleagues in the grain industry in Idaho have voiced support for the project as a solid investment aimed at bringing the grain industry into the future. IGPA President Jamie Kress noted that, "The building brings ag groups together in solidarity. Idaho is known for a strong foundation within the agricultural community and we value our relationships with other ag groups. To have a place to gather together, share ideas, and create a sense of community and unity is something we need to continue nourishing... maybe now more than ever."

The Wheat Commission is working with the State Building Authority and the Division of Public Works on the new building project, with the intention of using the state's bonding authority in addition to cash reserves to finance the building. Current estimates for



Current Idaho Wheat Commission Building

The IWC has always done an outstanding job to see that grower dollars are spent wisely at every turn. Proof of this good stewardship includes the current building, which has been a sound return on investment over the years and I believe the new building is set to be as well.

the project are around \$5.5 million. Originally, the building was set to be just one or two stories high. However, after additional review, city officials advised another path of ensuring our return on investment by adding additional office, retail and parking space as rental options. This helps solidify the building as a strong revenue generator that will pay for itself in the medium and long term, thus freeing up additional funds to continue to invest in research, market development and grower education, all of the main goals of the Commission.

The IWC has always done an outstanding job to see that grower dollars are spent wisely at every turn.

Proof of this good stewardship includes the current building, which has been a sound return on investment over the years and I believe the new building is set to be as well. Updating the building now is part of the overall financial health of the Commission.

Stacey Satterlee, IGPA Executive Director, says the building's location is a tremendous asset for the policy work her group does. "We are so fortunate to have office space adjacent

to the Capitol Building. If you haven't been to our offices downtown, you might not realize how central our location is - all of downtown is walkable from the office, and it is located on the block adjacent to the Statehouse. Much of the critical work IGPA does is during the legislative session - we spend a good amount of time at the Capitol, meeting with the Governor's office staff and legislators, so having our office space close by is imperative. Also, Food Producers of Idaho meets at the Idaho Wheat and Ag Center every week during session, and we host a myriad of other meetings - the space really is an agricultural hub in downtown Boise."

The bottom line is this, friends: in order to compete and move our industry ahead we need to continually look to the future and where we can invest for the long-term benefit of the industry as a whole. A new building IS an investment in our future. We don't want to be left in the dust. Our location is invaluable - we are sitting on a gold mine, folks, and we simply can't go wrong with a new building. It signals a bright future for Idaho's wheat industry. ■



## Raft River Flood Protection and Groundwater Recharge Project

What started as a group of farmers concerned over lack of water resources in the Raft River area has turned into quite the project. The group, named the Raft River Recharge Group LLC, has been working in cooperation with several conservation groups including the Raft River Flood District and Raft River Electric (RRE) to join forces on the **Raft River Flood Protection and Groundwater Recharge Project**.

The project is a Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Watershed Operations Program funded project whose objective is to recharge the Raft River aquifer by pulling water from the Snake River, as well as minimize flooding impacts in the area.

The project overview:

*The Raft River aquifer in southern Idaho is a prolific groundwater source, used for irrigation of approximately 80,000 acres of highly productive agricultural land. Designated a Critical Groundwater Area in 1963 due to ongoing groundwater level declines, the basin was closed to new development. In 2016, the Idaho Department of Water Resource (IDWR) curtailed 7,800 acres, or 10 percent of the irrigated acreage, in the Raft River Basin. The Raft River basin is the only basin in Idaho subject to such curtailment. The current curtailment represents nearly \$32.5 million in lost economic value. The impact of curtailment eliminates the beneficial use of water to the farmers for irrigation within the basin, directly affecting annual operations. Ongoing declines in groundwater levels have changed the Raft River into an intermittent river. The river is also channelized and diverted around agriculture lands, resulting in a dry and mobile alluvial streambed that easily transports sediment and debris downstream during floods.*

*The Flood District, RAFT RIVER RECHARGE GROUP LLC (RRRG), and Raft River Electric (RRE) have partnered on the Raft River Watershed Project. Previous work by the RRRG included preparing a feasibility study for groundwater recharge that incorporates flood control through detention/recharge ponds. The design and development of the recharge basin infrastructure will enable diversion of flood flows into the off-channel recharge basins. Flood flows from recharge are intermittent; therefore, additional water from outside of the Raft River Basin will be necessary to bring the aquifer withdrawals into balance and help*



Raft River flooding in 2017 shut down I-86 between Burley and Pocatello. Photo courtesy of Hattie Zobott, JUB Engineers.

*to reduce the threat of additional administrative action by the IDWR. Consequently, 13 miles of pipe and a pump station will be built to bring water to the recharge basins during non-flooding years.*

**Information courtesy of HATTIE ZOBOTT, P.E., Professional Engineer, Project Engineer, J-U-B ENGINEERS, Inc.**

Other points of the project include:

- Flood protection for communities, infrastructure, and to stabilize the aquifer.
- The dry, channelized riverbed has resulted in high flow, high sediment load flooding during the spring freshet that has damaged crops, highways, animals, and housing.
- The flood prevention and restoration work within the Raft River will recharge the aquifer to raise groundwater levels and reconnect the river with the flood plain to reduce flood flows and remove sediment.
- Stabilizing and restoring flood channels and building detention/recharge basins will provide flood protection and allow for areas to recharge groundwater.
- The project will also help provide supplementary water volume to prevent additional administrative action that may be triggered if groundwater levels are not stabilized.

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IGPA Vice President Lucas Spratling, who farms in Raft River, says he's excited to be a part of the project and about the progress the group has made so far. "Our goal is to have a sustainable, re-chargeable aquifer here in the Raft River area. Our bigger goal is looking at the whole state—this would be biggest natural recharge project in Idaho. It's going to take many different phases--water savings, recharge, and the state working together as a whole," he says. "The state has never applied for this particular grant so it's a big deal for sure."

The group did a lot of up-front work, including speaking with legislators, looking for funding sources and building support for the project.

As mentioned, the group received funding through the NRCS, an agency within the USDA. They hired JUB Engineering to help write the proposal and do the engineering on the project.

Hattie Zobott, lead engineer on the project, says the group has been great to work with and she is amazed at

the tenacity of the folks involved. "These are some of the most amazing people. They worked hard to build consensus among their peers to sustain agriculture in the Raft River Valley and have volunteered countless hours dedicated to the project," she says. "The people are so humble and willing to work through the issues, ask for help, spend their own money, and do whatever they can to capture and recharge waters that otherwise would be flowing to the ocean. We simply couldn't do it with one person—it takes the whole community to come together to work through differences and find path forward to make it happen."

Another farmer and IGPA member, Todd Gerratt, is also leading the way on the project and has been involved since the beginning.

"We started this project more than five years ago, so I've been through all the processes. The Raft River area is unique in its ability for the ground and soil here to 'drink water' or take it in. We have three of the ponds already built and have been doing recharge with the natural flow. We are permitted for 10,000-acre feet out of the Snake River when the flow (recharge water) is

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## \*\*\* ANNOUNCEMENT \*\*\*

# TO OUR VALUED MEMBERS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS



Due to the uncertain timeframes of current group restrictions and financial implications of delaying a decision, the small grain grower associations of Idaho, Oregon and Washington regret to announce the cancellation of the 2020 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention.





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available. This is water that spills over Milner Dam--water that would otherwise go down the Snake River and into the ocean. That's where our water rights come from--these same ponds can be used for excess runoff from the mountains and flow down the Raft River for recharge and when we get into flood situations, we can use the ponds to prevent floods and actually run it into the river. It's great we can actually take the water here, and not just send it to the ocean," he says.

Reestablishing wetland areas for wildlife habitat is another plus for the project. "People are excited about this," says Gerratt. "Idaho Department of Fish and Game, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, as well as other groups, have been great to work with and are happy to see we will be rebuilding a lot of the habitat in the area. The water hasn't flowed as well as it should so the project will bring this additional benefit as well."

He adds "One other things unique to the Raft River project is that the ground water out there actually flows from south to north, from the Utah line into Idaho, and the water doesn't flow into the river but rather it flows under the river—it ties us into the eastern Snake Plain Aquifer and goes into the whole basin that goes east to west and flows into the Snake River down at Thousand Springs. This benefits the whole Snake River Plain Aquifer. We can put water in that benefits Raft River and then keeps natural flowing and goes into water users down toward Boise. It's pretty amazing!"

The Watershed Operations project entails several phases. This first one, the Planning Phase, is expected to take 18 to 24 months, followed by the Design Phase, which will be six to nine months, and finally the Construction Phase (both of which will seek NRCS funding and approval). All in, it's approximately a six-year long process but will be well worth the wait for the folks in Raft River. ■



GROWER PROFILE:

## Andy Baldus



**Tell us about your farm.** I farm about 3,300 acres south of Nez Perce together with my dad, Dave Baldus, and grow a wide variety of dry land crops. Our main crops are soft white winter wheat, soft white spring wheat, and blue grass. We also grow lentils, peas, garbanzo beans, and spring canola for rotation. On occasion we also grow fall canola, barley, and DNS.

**How and when did you get into farming?** Farming was always something I wanted to do, and my wife Terra and I spent a lot of time talking about it, trying to

decide if and when it would make sense. I spent a lot of time crunching numbers and talking with my wife. We finally made the decision and talked to my folks about returning to farm. I started with my first crop in 2015. I was still working in Nevada at the time and would come up during spring planting, harvest and fall work. Even though 2015 didn't produce bumper crops, I was still hooked! I loved the challenge of planning and caring for the crops and the land and putting pencil to paper to make it work. We moved back in June of 2016 and I love it!



**When was the operation established?** I am a fourth-generation farmer but during World War II the farm was sold after my great grandfather died and my grandpa was at war. My Grandpa started all over again when he got back. He found some ground to rent and started raising wheat, pigs, chickens, and dairy cows for cream. Then my dad took the operation over in the early 80s, and when I came home, we started an LLC to help facilitate our transition.

**Tell us about your family; who is on the farm?** My wife Terra runs the Nezperce City Library and takes care of our three beautiful girls – Audree is eight, Natalee is six and Haylee is very four. We all love being outside and I enjoy watching my kids play outside and go on the same kinds of adventures that my brothers and I did growing up. My mom and dad, Janice and Dave, live on the home place just two and a half miles up the road. While dad and I do the lion’s share of the farm work, Terra and my mom help out a lot. They both enjoy driving combine during Blue Grass harvest, and Terra also has learned how to drive swather. They also both flag equipment and help us get all our equipment moved from field to field. It is really amazing how much time you can spend just shuffling rigs around.



**What is your upbringing/childhood?** I had a good childhood. I got to do all the fun things most farm kids do like picking rock and rogueing and changing cultivator points. When we had pigs, we would help feed and vaccinate and all of the other tedious things like weighing, sorting and moving. When I got older, I drove truck, swather and combine and occasionally sprayed. I had a great childhood. I got to experience what responsibility looked like at a younger age than most.

**How did you meet your spouse?** I met my wife at a Super Bowl party on February 3rd 2008. I was living in Boise at the time and was planning to move back to the farm in two weeks. We talked and laughed through the whole



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game. I got her number before she left and as she walked out the door I knew she was the one. I called her the very next day and asked her out. We went on several dates and after about a week and a half I decided that I had to stay and see where it went. Ten years and three kids later, I still made it back to the farm and I couldn't ask for a better partner in life.

**How do you market your grain?** We spend a lot of time and effort finding out where our break even is. Knowing where that is makes it a lot easier to market and make money. We try to sell less than half of our crop using futures contracts, some Hedge to Arrive contracts if they make sense, and some cash sales after harvest. We try to sell in 5-10% increments to try to get a more average price. Planning to sell everything at the top of the market isn't very realistic, but if we can sell at some at the top and some above our break even, we feel pretty good.

**Is there anything unique about your operation?** As exciting as it sounds, we spend a lot of time building spreadsheets during the winter and really pouring over our expenses to try to produce an accurate picture of what it costs us to farm. It is a lot of work, but it makes us more prepared come spring and allows us to make better split-second decisions. We are dry land farmers and when you pair that with volatile markets there isn't a lot we have control over. So, we worry about the things we can control and try not to sweat the things we can't.

**What conservation practices do you employ?** We are a predominantly no-till operation. We have a no-till drill – we do our best to prevent erosion. We also put in a lot of gully plugs which help prevent ditching and soil loss. We also raise blue grass which really helps hold the soil.

**What are the biggest challenges in your operation?** Not knowing what the future will bring. We do a lot of planning to try to control our costs and remain a viable farm for years to come. However, there are always bumps in the road, and you never know how bad it is going to get or in what way. We spend a lot of time and

The crops we grow provide food for everyone – doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, everyone has to eat. The crops I grow get to be a part of the cake at birthday parties, they help feed the poor, and they get served in in a fancy restaurant where someone might be proposing to the one they love. Good, bad, or indifferent, I am there.



money trying to do a good job and you never know whether all your hard work and investment are going to pay off or not till sometimes years down the road. Especially when it comes to a new piece of equipment or trying a new cropping system. What I wouldn't give for a crystal ball!

**What are the guiding principles of your operation?** We do things in a timely manner and we take care of the land. Being timely takes a lot of hard work and makes for a lot of hours away from our families. You can't always plan for when the right time is so you just have to do it when it's ready, not necessarily when it is convenient. My dad has always said, 'if you take care of the land, the land will take care of you.' We try to plan our rotations out for about three years but we monitor our fields and take all factors into consideration when planning our crops. Everything from weed pressure to excess moisture or stubble affect our field work and crop plans.

**Why do you farm?** I farm because I like being part of an industry that produces a lot of good. We grow food for all kinds of people. The crops we grow provide food for everyone – doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, everyone has to eat. The crops I grow get to be a part of the cake at birthday parties, they help feed the poor, and they get served in in a fancy restaurant where someone might be proposing to the one they love. Good, bad, or indifferent, I am there.

**What brings you satisfaction?**

Watching my kids grow up, taking my wife on a date, seeing a crop come up in the spring, and rain. I never sleep as good as I do when it rains!

**What do you do for fun?** When all the work is done, I really enjoy taking my family camping with friends and other family members. I like to travel with my wife, and take my kids places they have never seen to see the wonder in their eyes. Seeing kids marvel over things they never imagined is probably one of the most gratifying experiences.

**What challenges face the U.S grain industry and the grain industry in Idaho?** Trade. We grow really high-quality crops In the U.S. and Idaho. While a lot of our commodities are used here in the United States, there are a lot of other countries that use them too. Not everywhere is as suited to grow soft white wheat as Idaho and the Pacific North West. Sure, you can grow it, but not as easily and not as consistently as we get our quality. I take pride in not just being a part of each household in America but being a part of a system that brings food to households all over the world! Without strong trade relations, that doesn't happen.

**How do you see the future of the U.S. grain industry and the grain industry in Idaho?** We have a lot of great farmers here in the U.S. and especially here in Idaho. We all work really hard to produce high quality grains. Not all grain is created equal and when you raise tip-top quality stuff, there will always be a market for it. We will always experience bumps in the road from time to time, some of them big ones, but the American farmer will still be here. I think the future looks pretty good! ■



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## Hillside Grain—From the Hills of Blaine County

BY KELLIE KLUKSDAL

For most growers, farming is a way of life. It's what you've always done, always known. Sometimes, however, the earth and all it offers calls to you to do something more than just the farming, more than you've done before.

This was the case for Brett Stevenson of Hillside Grain in Bellevue, Idaho. The family farm where Brett grew up included her parents and her brother, Justin. Her dad is a long-time grain grower and heavily involved in the brewing industry in Idaho. Growing up, life on the farm was fun and busy.

After graduate school with a M.S. in environmental studies, Brett came back to the area to work as a county planner, then in conservation. During that time, she would do a little farming on the side; help on the combine and with harvest. Wanting to be more involved, and perhaps take the farm in a new direction, she tried to devise a plan. How to create the next chapter for the farm, so to speak. "We grow great grain here which was all going out of state to commodity markets, so I wanted to figure out how to retain and even maximize the quality through a more direct supply chain for local products and for our regional community, at least at some level."

To get her Dad on board, she started to make bread for him. And it was a game changer. "Dad had been growing grain for a long time. He's had a great

relationship with the brewing industry, a good career, a good business plan. However, he hadn't actually eaten his own product (besides beer). So, I started baking bread and making barley berry salads for him. And he loved it. He was hooked. It was the spark I needed to get him on-board and it was fun to see him breaking out of his routine through food."

So, she started a mill over a year ago on the family farm, Hillside Ranch. It's definitely a family business, with her Dad and her brother running the farming side of things (and making sure they are doing the right things for soil health and water conservation), while Brett runs the mill. It is a state-of-the-art mill that blends current technology with old-world—a custom-made stone mill—allowing them to produce high-extraction flours with high nutritional content. "The key to our flour is freshness and purity," Stevenson says. "And great taste!" Their mill incorporates the bran and germ into the flour so it is a flavorful and nutritional product. Stevenson says the desire for a long shelf life and a white product has resulted in flours that have all the good stuff sifted off and are often bleached and bromated. "With white flour the minerals and vitamins are sifted out. Additives are used to try to compensate in what is known as "enriched" flour. Rather than lasting years, ours flour lasts about 6 months because of the natural bran and germ retained in it."

Marketing their product has been another learning experience for the family. “Our business model focused on larger volume, so pre-COVID we had been working with regional accounts and bakeries, then lockdown hit and the demand for smaller amounts went up and we tried to focus on those. I was getting a lot phone calls from home bakers for flour!”

That made it urgent to get four-pound bags into retail. At her scale she can make it happen, but big suppliers can’t switch that quickly. “The flour shortage we saw early on wasn’t really a shortage—it was more a matter of the big producers not being able to redirect the product to stores. At my scale, I can switch over fairly easy while large mill may not be able to.”

Online ordering wasn’t initially a priority, but because of COVID, it is. With all of that happening, Stevenson says the current state of the world and the demand for flour by consumers has been an eye-opening experience.

“I am so glad to see the influx in home baking; it’s fun, delicious, and even cathartic which is always nice, but especially while we all try to navigate life during a pandemic. The pandemic certainly has made me more introspective and acutely aware of strengths and vulnerabilities within our food system.”

There is also a growing trend among consumers to have a connection with their growers, and the Stevenson family recognizes this. “The growing desire on behalf of consumers to know how their food was grown and who grew it is an opportunity for farmers to showcase and take pride in what they do. Consumers are paying more attention and they care about their food; they increasingly want traceability and identity, which can be really empowering for growers. We want to build that connection between farmers and their consumers and community. To know who is growing your food I think is a great thing that brings people together,” she says.

The Stevenson family embraces this concept with their milling operation. “I’d love for there to be greater familiarity with grain as it is one of the foundations of our diet. I enjoy showing folks the wheat fields, harvested grain, how it’s milled, and the resulting flour. Each step has its own complexities. For example, there is so much going on in the soil and farming practices, all the way to the air temp and humidity while milling that all influence the flour” she says. “I want consumers to have some understanding of this process and what goes into producing food.”

Working towards sustainable farming practices are also a key component of the family’s business. Specifically, improving soil health and increasing organic material



in the soil which increases water retention and thus reduces water needs, all of which have become important elements to the family business.

“Growers in Idaho get one shot a year. Every new planting season is opportunity to utilize what we have learn from previous seasons and to account for changes beyond our control like weather, water and the market, because we all know, those are perpetually shifting. We embrace farming like a “practice”—that is constant attention, reflection, and evolution. I believe we have a responsibility as a farmer to work toward regenerative practices. We want to be responsible stewards of the land as well as responsible food producers,” Stevenson says.

Harvest time is busy for the group but the milling isn’t necessarily directly related to when harvest is, though it’s generally around the August time frame. The team goes fast and furious during August. The rest of the year the grain stores well on site for milling.

Concerns Stevenson has for the wheat industry in Idaho and nationally fall within the gluten-free and low-carb diet phenomenon we see so much of. In her mind, these anti-gluten and anti-carb trends are big concepts the industry must deal with. “I seek out as much science as I can on this topic to try to understand it. Celiac disease is a very serious condition and also affects a very, very small percentage of our population. Gluten sensitivities are much more complex, spanning from diet fads to reactions to non-digestible inputs in the field, flour, and or baked products, to impaired gut health. In other words, I think it is often not actually the gluten. We have been eating gluten for thousands of years. Grain is delicious and should be healthy.”

Currently, Stevenson is working hard out in the mill and gaining knowledge every day. “I’m doing what I love,” she says.

Check out the family’s operation at [www.hillsidegrain.com](http://www.hillsidegrain.com). 



# Harvest Photos



Submitted by Mariah Hofmeister.



Submitted by Jamie Kress.



Submitted by Ryan Miller.



Submitted by Cory & Jamie Kress.



Submitted by Ryan Miller.



Submitted by Cory & Jamie Kress.





Submitted by Mariah Hofmeister.



Submitted by Ryan Miller.



Submitted by Mariah Hofmeister.



Submitted by Jamie Kress.



Submitted by Ryan Miller.



Submitted by Mariah Hofmeister.



# Get to Know Casey Chumrau, the New Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director



**Where did you grow up?** I was born and raised in Missoula, MT

**Where did you go to school and what did you study?** I have a Bachelor of Arts from University of Oregon in history and Spanish and a Masters of Business Administration from University of Montana.

**Tell us about your family.** My fiancé, Valentin, is from Mexico, but has been living in Chile for about 10 years, which is where we met. COVID has interrupted the visa process because the Embassy has been closed since March, but hopefully he will move here before the end of the year. He is an entrepreneur and will keep his businesses in Chile and look to start something in Boise. My parents and brother are still in Missoula. Valentin’s side of the family is in Mexico City. We are very close to our families and spend a lot of time visiting them.

**What do you do in your free time?** My main hobbies revolve around food, physical activity and travel. I love to be active and outdoors, a good fit in Idaho. I do a lot of running, walking, hiking and just bought a bike to commute to work occasionally. I like to cook and bake, mainly because I love to eat! In normal times, I pride myself on knowing the best restaurants and trying all different types of food. Travel has really defined my personal and professional life. I think it is the best education and helps us understand that we have a lot more in common with people from other backgrounds than what separates us. My goal in life is for my number of countries visited to always equal or exceed the number of years old I am. Right now I’m winning!

**Tell us about your time in Chile.** I spent four years as the Marketing Manager for South America in the U.S. Wheat office in Santiago. We covered Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Brazil, doing market development activities for all six classes of U.S. wheat. I traveled all over the region, working with wheat buyers, millers and end product manufacturers to improve their understanding, handling and processing of U.S. wheat. Activities range from helping buyers write good contracts to ensure they receive the quality

they need, to sending containers of wheat so a mill can try a new class of wheat for the first time, to organizing large seminars to deliver crop quality data.

It was a huge challenge to learn a new job with such technical details and do it all in a second language. By the end I was very comfortable working in Spanish but creating such good professional relationships with customers throughout the region was probably my biggest professional feat to date.

South America is an incredible continent, full of beautiful natural wonders and such warm people. I had a wonderful group of friends in Santiago from all over the world. It was normal to go to dinner and have six or seven countries represented in our group, we celebrated everyone’s holidays and enjoyed everyone’s traditional food. It was a wonderful life.

**What brought you back to the US?** The Idaho Wheat Commission! I was very happy with my job and life in Chile, but Blaine Jacobson called me out of the blue one day and said he was getting ready to retire and was looking for his successor. I initially told him I wasn’t interested but after speaking more with him and the commissioners, I knew it was an incredible opportunity. During my nine years with U.S. Wheat Associates, I was able to meet many of the past and current commissioners and always had a great impression of the commission. During the interview process, I really admired the style and philosophy of the commissioners. They are all very forward thinking, active, and passionate about the industry. I knew they would be great to work with and I just couldn’t pass up the opportunity.

**Why Idaho?** My best friend and her family live just 2 hours from Boise in Baker City, Oregon and my family is just an 8 hour drive away. That was a huge



Important market research of the wheat products offered in Brazil.



pro when considering the job and I've already been able to visit them several times.

**Do you have a favorite wheat flour recipe?** I'm not sure I've ever found one I didn't like! I define myself as a "carbavore," so now my natural habits also support the industry I represent! When I lived in Chile, I was known for my chocolate chip cookies. It was very funny to me because it is just a traditional recipe, but for my American friends it was a taste of home and for my non-American friends it was a delicious, unique treat. Anytime I was invited anywhere, I was expected to bring cookies. I'd offer to bring other things, but everyone always wanted cookies. Until they tried my mom's Red Velvet Cake recipe.... I went through a lot of flour in my four and a half years in Chile and always tried to buy brands that I knew were made with U.S. wheat!

**Favorite quote you live by?** I have two. In my 7th grade health class there was a poster on the wall that read: "What is popular isn't always right, and what is right isn't always popular." That sums up what my parents always taught me; you will never regret doing the right thing, even if some people do not agree. I think in today's world it can be hard to filter the endless information and constant feedback, but it is important to stay true to your values.

The other one is just as important: "There is always room for ice cream." I invented that one based on a very scientific philosophy that, since ice cream enters your stomach already melted, it doesn't fill you up, it just fills in the cracks between the other food in there. You can't argue with science.

**If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why (in non-pandemic times)?** This is the easiest and hardest question for me. My list is very long and narrowing it down is very tough. Right now I'm excited to get to know more of Idaho. Although I grew up right next door I didn't spend much time here, so there are so many state parks and hiking spots to check out. I think my next destination inside the U.S. will be to visit New Orleans. I can't wait to feel the vibe of the city and eat all the cajun food. My fiancé and I are talking about going to Japan for our honeymoon, but we also really want to see Morocco and Thailand.

**If you could have dinner with one famous person from history, who and why?** Queen Elizabeth I. I have read extensively about her, she was incredibly intelligent, strategic and was able to remain independent and powerful throughout her reign. For a woman to achieve what she did in that era is impressive.



With a 2017 Chilean trade team that visited the PNW, including Lewiston, ID.

**What are your thoughts on the wheat industry in Idaho and nationally?** I think the U.S. wheat industry is in an adjustment period that has been slowly building over the last decade or so, and Idaho is in an excellent position to lead the country into the next stage. Wheat is fighting for planted acres across the country and Idaho is one of the only states that has maintained its acres over the long term. More importantly, Idaho wheat growers have a long history of investing in new varieties with desirable end quality. For decades, the U.S. was one of the only quality suppliers in the world. However, other countries have started to catch up and it is critical that the U.S. continue to improve quality to be able to maintain a competitive advantage in the global market. Additionally, Idaho producers are in a great position because half of the state's wheat is consumed domestically, and half is exported. I was surprised to find out how far Idaho wheat is shipped across the country, which speaks to the unique quality, logistics, and infrastructure.

**Your goals for the IWC?** The IWC was handed to me in excellent condition thanks to great leadership by current and former commissioners and Blaine. My ultimate goal is for the IWC to continuously challenge the definition of success in fulfilling our mission. I want to be sure that our activities progress with the times and serve the evolving needs of our growers. Our international market development and research programs are very strong and robust. I'd like to find ways to supplement our domestic market development and grower education efforts. I really want to have a transparent and open dialogue with growers, and I hope they will provide feedback on our work and suggest ideas and topics that would benefit them. In the end, we are investing their money and I want as much input as possible. ■



# Wireworm Update: Any Good News?

When wireworms are mentioned at a field day or cereal school, growers wonder if there will be any good news. From their perspective good news is progress toward sustainable solutions. A new chemical control would be welcomed, too. Dr. Arash Rashed, an entomologist at University of Idaho's Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology, has become an expert on the wireworm species that damage Idaho cereal crops. When contacted for this article, Dr. Rashed remarked, "There is quite a bit of fundamental science being done to build a platform for an Integrated Pest Management approach to provide a sustainable solution. There are also some new advances on chemical control against wireworms, but chemicals are just one tool in the toolbox of integrated pest management (IPM)".



Dr. Arash Rashed, University of Idaho entomologist and expert on wireworm integrated pest management strategies

Wireworms are one of the most difficult production problems facing Idaho producers. A wide range of crops, including wheat, barley, sugar beet, and potato, are affected by wireworms. When Dr. Rashed began working on wireworms, little was known about them except their basic life cycle as larvae of click beetles. Idaho wheat producers have partnered with Dr. Rashed to develop an IPM approach to wireworm control, providing partial financial support for wireworm research.

Wireworms are not unique to Idaho: they live in the soil of croplands throughout the United States and Canada. The larva feed on seedlings and roots of emerging crops, causing damage to the crop plants during the first few weeks of stand establishment and to a lesser extent, throughout the growing season. Fields with enough wireworm damage to reduce profitability have patches of missing and/or stunted plants throughout a field of relatively healthy plants. Wireworms migrate up and down in the soil profile in response to temperature, plant volatiles (chemicals that become gases in the air), CO<sub>2</sub> and/or soil moisture content. But they do not move very far laterally. The patches indicate a concentration of wireworms feeding heavily in that area. Adult click beetles lay their eggs in the soil in certain spots within

fields, resulting in patches of wireworms rather than a uniform infestation. If thorough scouting is not in place, a wireworm-infested field may look deceptively healthy and productive. An estimate of wireworm numbers can only be obtained using solar bait traps or a shovel to dig and look for them in their underground habitat. It is difficult to develop a measure of the level of infestation that has negative economic impact justifying control measures.

## Aerial Survey to Estimate Wireworm Damage

Verifiable economic loss is a key data point in motivating agencies, industry, and regulators to facilitate research on and implementation of wireworm control measures. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) requires verifiable estimates of economic impact when applying for a Section 18 permit requesting emergency use of insecticides that are currently not registered for application on cereals. ISDA rejected the economic impact data presented by Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA) when they requested a section 18 permit for Fipronil in 2016.

Drs. Sanaz Shafiani and Patrick Hatzenbuehler are new UI-CALS researchers who have joined with Dr. Rashed to use aerial survey and bioinformatics as estimation tools to accurately determine economic losses to wireworms based on surface area exhibiting typical wireworm damage. Accurate estimates can be calculated from trapped wireworm numbers compared with aerial measurements of affected field area. "Economic loss estimated from aerial survey data validated by trap data should overcome this barrier next time Idaho grain producers need a section 18 for wireworm control," explained Stacey Satterlee, Executive Director of the Idaho Grain Producers Association. "This research will also provide more accurate information on threshold populations to determine when to initiate control measures in a particular field," added Dr. Rashad.

## Annual Wireworm Survey Results

Trapping wireworms across Idaho crop fields began in 2014. The goal was to identify predominant pest species in rainfed and irrigated fields and determine factors that affect fluctuations in populations. The most prevalent wireworm species in field traps has consistently been *Limonius californicas*, also known as sugar beet wireworm.



In the crop 2020 survey, sugar beet wireworm was collected in 95% of the traps in southcentral and southeastern Idaho and 70% of those in northern Idaho counties. *L. infuscatus*, common name western field wireworm, and *Aeolus mellillus* were collected frequently as well. Average numbers of wireworms collected per trap in infested fields remained relatively unchanged between 2019 and 2020, with a few exceptions. Numbers in Bonner, Kootenai, and Boundary counties decreased from 11 to 5 wireworms per trap. Latah County, where fewer wireworms are generally collected, saw its counts increase from 0.2 to 2 wireworms/trap. Wireworm numbers in Twin Falls county increased from 3.5 to 6.4 wireworms/trap in 2020. Across the state the number of *Aeolus mellillus* in traps was reduced compared to 2019. Dr. Rashed suggested this might be related to the increased rainfall in spring 2020 compared to 2019.

### Reports of New Chemical Controls

The UI wireworm research team has also been running blind tests on new chemicals and new combinations of chemicals in wireworm-infested plots for agricultural chemical companies. Dr. Rashad confirmed through a company representative that BASF has a new chemistry named Teraxxa, effective in reducing wireworm populations. It is currently under review by EPA, with an expected release in late 2020. The company and growers are hopeful it will be available for use on spring 2021 plantings. Dr. Rashed notes, “New effective chemistries would offer relief, but it will take an IPM program to sustainably control wireworms.”

### Wireworm Choose What They Eat

Understanding how wireworms choose what they eat is essential to an IPM control program. Belowground insects such as wireworms use CO<sub>2</sub> and root volatile chemicals to orient themselves toward the food source. Thus, planting a trap crop and/or intercropping with plants that direct wireworms away from the main wheat crop can be used as components of an IPM protocol. Through a series of experiments, Rashed and his team evaluated sugar beet wireworm preference for wheat versus pea and bean plants, which are common rotational crops with wheat in the Pacific Northwest. Wireworms were consistently more attracted to these legumes than to wheat, corroborating a field study by Montana State University that showed, in small plots, planting legumes can divert wireworms away from nearby wheat.

Measuring volatile chemicals and CO<sub>2</sub> concentration emitted from plant roots suggested that wireworms use both CO<sub>2</sub> and various root volatiles to identify and select its host plant. Interestingly, however, it is not just



Pheromone traps filled with Adult Click beetles.

the presence of volatiles that helps with host selection; the concentration of volatiles plays an important role as well. UI researchers found that if certain volatiles used by wireworms to select their host are present in higher-than-normal concentrations, it caused the wireworms to leave those plants alone. Identifying volatile chemicals and the concentrations that trigger pest response toward or away from the host plant is critical in developing plant genotypes that can be planted in wireworm infested fields. “Understanding how wireworms use chemical receptors to navigate their environment has many uses in building IPM control measures for wireworms,” noted Dr. Rashed.

### Pheromones and Trapping of Adult Click Beetles

Pheromones are chemicals secreted by animals as alarm signals, to attract them to food trails, or to attract a mate. In a collaborative effort with colleagues in the USA and Canada, Dr. Rashad’s team used synthetic compounds based on pheromones to attract adult click beetles into traps. Pheromone traps can be used for monitoring click beetle populations and species. Trapping adult beetles reduces egg-laying by females, thus lowering infestations of larva, and reducing next generation adults. “Successful removal of adults will reduce egg-laying, which combined with controlling wireworms in the soil can result in more sustainable management of the problem,” explained Dr. Rashad.

Continued on next page



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### Building a Foundation

In 2015, Dr. Rashad and a team of collaborators from University of Idaho’s Institute for Bioinformatics and Evolutionary Studies (IBEST) received an IBEST Technology Access Grant to sequence the mitochondrial genome of sugar beet wireworm. As a result of this collaboration, IBEST hosted a summit with researchers around the world to discuss what was currently known about this pest. As questions were posed the most frequent answer from participants was “good question, we don’t know”. Participants agreed that understanding how species are genetically and demographically related to each other would provide a foundation for interpreting all the applied work focused on wireworm management in crops. UI researchers took the lead in this effort. After 5 years of challenging work, results detailed in the paper “Wireworm (Coleoptera: Elateridae) genomic analysis reveals putative cryptic

species, population structure, and adaptation to pest control” was accepted for publication in the scientific journal *Communications Biology*. This is a milestone for wireworm research benefiting all those working on wireworms around the globe. UI research teams are recognized as leaders in paving the way toward sustainable wireworm control.

### Conclusion

Controlling wireworms is one of the most difficult problems facing cereal producers. New chemistry is an exciting possibility but how long will we be able to use chemical controls, considering environmental concerns, consumer-driven demands for sustainable farming practices, and the global rise in organic farming? Dr. Rashed’s integrated research, answering both applied and more fundamental questions about wireworms has moved us toward a more sustainable approach to controlling this persistent pest. ■

## Flour in the Time of COVID-19

BY BRITANY HURST MARCHANT

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed so much of the world since the start of 2020. Some of those changes have been good and some have been challenging, and if you’re like me, the categorization of what is ‘good’ and what is ‘challenging’ fluctuates.

In February or March, even before schools closed and Governor Brad Little issued the stay-at-home order and phased reopening of businesses across the state, Idahoans started seeing a shortage of standard amenities. In a short amount of time the ability of retail stores to keep items on the shelves reached beyond toilet paper and disinfectants to kitchen staples; most notably flour and sugar.

Like many of us who found ourselves working from home, overseeing our children’s education with a new level of responsibility, facing the uncertainties of a receding global economy, and worrying if the scratchy throat and runny nose came from allergies or COVID, a good friend of mine turned to baking as a form of stress relief and escapism. There was only one problem: she couldn’t find flour.

The store shelves had been cleared out and the bags would disappear as quickly as they were replaced by the stockers. Local restaurants, which had been closed due to the pandemic, were selling stored flour to the public

at, or just above, wholesale prices. Bread-baking enthusiasts even resorted to buying flour from the specialty e-commerce website Etsy.

After a flurry of text messages and appeals for help across social media, my friend finally found a 25-pound bag of all-purpose flour and a baking pastime became a daily quest for excellence. And dinner.



“My husband, two toddlers, and I ate a loaf of bread or batch of rolls or pretzels every day, which only fed my obsession for the perfect rise or the ideal crumb or an even and Instagram-worthy crack across the top of the loaf,” she explained. Because her job transitioned her to work from home with only 50% of her workload, she had the time to devote to improving what was previously an occasional hobby. And that seemed to be the trend across the country.

People started baking. A lot. Occasional bakers were baking frequently, monthly bakers were baking weekly, weekly bakers daily. With non-essential travel and

shopping discouraged and restaurants closed, baking overtook the old habits of pantry-loading.

As producers, you know there was plenty of wheat, despite the layman’s belief that a wheat shortage was to blame for the difficulty in finding flour. So, how has the influx in home baking impacted the wheat industry and demand for flour domestically?

Lee Andersen, Manager of Ririe Grain & Feed Cooperative, Ririe, weighed in, “The big story here, I think, is the shift in demand from food service to retail. As restaurants shuttered, demand shifted to consumer retail products and we didn’t have the supply chain ready to handle the volume of that shift.”

The King Arthur Flour company reported that the demand for flour in the home baking sector during the lockdown months of the COVID-19 pandemic was double what the company experiences during the holiday baking months of November and December. But as is true with any product, packaging is the key to the markets where the products are sold or used. Over the past several generations, our society has changed from cooking most of our meals at home to eating out much of the time. Even if we cook at home, many products are marketed in a ready-to-bake or cook form. For any of these products, it was difficult for plants to retool production lines quickly to meet such a drastic and rapid change in COVID demand.

Andersen went on to explain, “There’s no shortage of flour, just in the wrong bag size in the wrong supply chain channel.” As a result, both Ririe Coop and Thresher Artisan Wheat have seen demand slow over the past several months. Thresher Artisan Wheat Manager Ken Morgan reflected, “It’s been interesting to learn how important sporting events, conventions, school programs, and cruises are to the wheat industry. People are still eating wheat but not in the way they do/would have at those events. Tailgating is important to wheat demand!”

Even though professional sporting events have returned to stadiums across the country, the stadiums, arenas, and ballparks remain empty. The season-opening game of Major League Baseball saw the World Series-defending champions, the Washington Nationals, face off against the New York Yankees at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C. Nationals Park, a 41,313 seat stadium that would have normally had a near-sellout crowd for this game, sat devoid of fans. During the 2,430 games of a typical MLB season, ballparks report selling approximately 20 million hot dogs, which means 20 million hot dog buns, and that doesn’t include the thou-

sands of games of minor league, farm club teams. Add basketball, football, soccer, hockey, NASCAR, and all the cancelled high school and college sporting events to the mix, and the reduction in demand for concessions alone is mind-boggling.

Hard White Wheat was a big part of the school lunch program for whole grain products. When schools throughout the state and all across the country shut down in-person instruction and turned to a virtual format for more than 1/3 of the 2019/2020 school year, the demand in that sector of the market dropped significantly. Now, with many schools opting for delayed opening, hybrid instruction plans, virtual education formats, and many parents opting to homeschool their kids, the future demand of Hard White Wheat is bleak at worst and uncertain at best. Even schools that have announced a return to full capacity, in-person classes face questions of their ability to stay open in the face of virus spread. Every end user has pushed back their deliveries and, therefore, purchases, leaving suppliers with old crop supplies at harvest time that would have normally cleared the market by now.



Besides marketing strategies and packaging, elevators, millers, and food production facilities have had to alter some practices in response to the pandemic. While safe from total shut down as essential businesses, operations have still changed to be compliant with local district health departments guidelines and state and federal regulations, including regular health checks and physical distancing protocols for employees.

The coming months will shed more light on flour supply and demand as things begin to return to new levels of normalcy. Suppliers are catching up with pandemic trends and demands, and have shifted to smaller packages for most products, including flour. There are very few quantity restrictions at grocery stores and fewer and fewer products are unavailable for the culinary hobbyists experimenting with or perfecting home baking skills. In the end, there may be a lot of consumers who, in panic mode, bought far more flour than they can reasonably use. Suppliers, like all of us, are a mixed bag of concern and optimism. Certainly, consumers will eventually return to pre-pandemic practices to some extent — eating meals out or grabbing take-out, and the slump in demand will swing the opposite direction. The only concern is how long it takes that pendulum to reverse. Currently, experts believe that the U.S. domestic food supply chains are secure, and while short-term disruptions may happen, they are not likely to be critical. ■



## The Scoular Company selects Jerome as location to manufacture innovative barley protein concentrate; will add new barley production acres in Idaho

The Scoular Company announced on August 11 that it has selected Jerome, Idaho as the location to manufacture a new sustainable, plant-based alternative protein made from barley.



Scoular will build a 15,000-square-foot facility to manufacture the product, called barley protein concentrate (BPC), for use in aquaculture feed and pet food. The building will be constructed on 4 acres south of Scoular's existing livestock feed ingredients facility in Jerome. The operation is expected to create 13 jobs and begin manufacturing in May 2021.

Over the next three years this new endeavor will add 10,000 to 12,000 new barley production acres in Idaho according to JC Olson, Product Group Manager for Scoular. He emphasized the new production will be complimentary to Idaho's existing malt barley industry and not take away from current malt barley acres. In addition, Olson said Scoular has also expanded new barley production acres in Idaho recently through new export, food and feed barley initiatives.

"We're very excited that The Scoular Company chose Jerome as the site for this new investment," said Jerome Mayor Dave Davis. "The city is grateful that Scoular continues to demonstrate its long-term commitment to our community."





Scoular, based in Omaha, Nebraska, selected Jerome in south-central Idaho because of its proximity to its valued grain producer customers and end markets for the manufactured products, said Olson. He added that the project has been many years in the works. Idaho is the leading state for barley production in the United States growing nearly a third of the nation's barley crop. Scoular's presence in Idaho includes several grain handling facilities and the state-of-the-art livestock ingredients facility in Jerome.

Initially, the new manufacturing plant is projected to process 1.9 million bushels of barley annually, with capacity projected to expand over the next several years. Olson indicated this new facility is "an initial" investment in manufacturing barley protein concentrate and the company is committed to expanding production and markets for this product. A high-energy liquid feed supplement for cattle feeders will be co-produced.

"We look forward to making this investment in both Jerome and the state of Idaho," Olson said. "This

facility and innovative barley product will create a new market and greater stability for farmers in the Magic Valley region and throughout Idaho."

In June, Scoular and Montana Microbial Products announced that they had entered into an exclusive licensing agreement to produce and sell the barley protein concentrate (BPC), in North America and Asia. BPC is made from non-GMO barley in a process that does not use harsh chemicals or solvents. BPC will provide a non-GMO, clean-label solution for aquaculture and pet food manufacturers seeking high-protein nutrition for their formulas.

Also of note according to Olson, an overlooked value proposition for BPC in aqua is the relative zero discharge of phosphorus into the waterways, to the extent that it replaces other indigestible sources of phosphorous compounds that do find their way into our water resources.

For more information on BPC, email Olson at [JCOlson@Scoular.com](mailto:JCOlson@Scoular.com). ■

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# Jared Spackman Hired as NEW University of Idaho & Idaho Barley Commission Endowed Barley Research Agronomist

BY LAURA WILDER, IDAHO BARLEY COMMISSION

Dr. Jared Spackman has been hired by the University of Idaho as the new UI Idaho Barley Commission Endowed Barley Research Agronomist. He started work at the Aberdeen Research and Extension Center on August 30.



Spackman is originally from Burley where he said he had great experiences learning from and working for local farming operations and agricultural industries. He earned his bachelor's degree in agribusiness from BYU-Idaho, and recently completed his graduate studies at the University of Minnesota where he earned master's and Ph.D. degrees in nutrient management.

Spackman's research has specifically focused on identifying nitrogen best management practices for corn production and improving our understanding of nitrogen cycling processes. He is excited to be able to come home and conduct research to improve Idaho barley management practices.

"I look forward to meeting with Idaho's barley producers, agronomists and crop consultants, county extension educators, and barley industry stakeholders," said Spackman. "Your feedback and insights will help

me to shape my research and extension program to address the current needs in barley production. As we attend extension and industry meetings, I hope you'll take the opportunity to introduce yourselves and to learn about my future research plans."

Idaho Barley Commission Chairman Mike Wilkins echoed Spackman's sentiments about getting him back to Idaho. "Dr. Spackman is a great hire for the University of Idaho in this important position endowed by the Idaho Barley Commission," said Wilkins. "It's great to have the top candidate being from Idaho and wanting to come back and help Idaho growers and the Idaho barley industry."



"Spackman is an outstanding early career scientist said Wilkins, and we're so

fortunate to be able to get him hired under the tough circumstances we've been under this year. We applaud the leadership of UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean Michael Parrella in working with the commission to get the hire made and get Spackman on board."

Spackman will fill the vacancy left by Dr. Chris Rogers as he moved to a USDA-ARS position in 2019. ■

# Allen Young of Blackfoot Appointed as New Idaho Barley Commissioner

Allen Young of Blackfoot has been appointed by Governor Brad Little for a three-year term as the as the new Idaho Barley Commissioner representing District 3. Young succeeds Scott Brown of Soda Springs who completed two terms on June 30.



Young has farmed in the Blackfoot area since 1982, first with his wife Jackie, and then in partnership with his sons as Young Family Farms since 2016, currently growing barley, wheat, and alfalfa on 3,000 irrigated acres.

In addition, Young earned a degree in Agricultural Economics from Brigham Young University in 1981. He has served as a board member of the CHS Bingham cooperative for 21 years and has been involved with the Idaho Grain Producers Association for many years, besides local church and volunteer activities.

Upon being appointed for this important role, Young said, "I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Idaho Barley Commission. I recognize and appreciate the work the commission has done to help develop markets, and their efforts in support of research and education. I look forward to working with the barley growers of Idaho, to continue to improve our industry." ■

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