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Cover Story

Minnesota Wheat's Charlie Vogel stepped out of his comfort zone during a nine-day trip to Ecuador in April as part of the Minnesota Agricultural Rural Leadership Program. Vogel built his leadership skills and made lasting connections with fellow agriculture movers and shakers. Just don't ask him to eat a guinea pig. Photo taken by Kaelyn Rahe.



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Against the Grain

Terms of Engagement

During my years of serving on the boards of Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers and Minnesota Farm Bureau, I've had my share of experience speaking with the media. Usually, though, the interviews were of the local nature with familiar farm broadcasters, trusted folks I've known on a first-name basis. Most times, the interviews were low stakes and aired on farm radio in Minnesota and North Dakota.

That's mostly been the extent of my engagements with the media – that is, until skyrocketing input costs and a war in Ukraine upended commodity markets. Wheat production is now a hot topic and a commodity not to be taken for granted (though, of course, we already knew that). Since the Russia-Ukraine conflict escalated in March, I fielded (and granted) interview requests from KARE 11 in Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and Fox Business. I won't lie, it was a little daunting: I've never had formal media training and was a little worried my words may be taken out of context. Still, I tried my best to articulate my position as both a farmer and the leader of an organization that represents the best interests of our state's wheat farmers. Thankfully, no one threw me under the bus or twisted my words too much.

All told, I enjoyed the experience and

the variety: the Star Tribune interview was held via telephone; I talked on Zoom with KARE 11; and hosted a Fox reporter and camera crew at my farm in Bejou. Much to my surprise, the clips from my and MAWG CEO Charlie Vogel's Fox interview later aired on Tucker Carlson Tonight, one of the most-watched programs in primetime television. Our appearance on Carlson's show – which averages more than 3 million viewers each night – likely resulted in the most high-profile coverage MAWG has received in the media in many years.

As an advocacy group, we don't play favorites when it comes to engaging with the media. Every interview is a unique chance to tell our story, to inform the public of the complex issues and challenges our industry faces. Sure, not every article or feature is going to present our side impartially, but to have our organization's name out there in state and national media is an opportunity that shouldn't be squandered. Going forward, we expect to be considered a reliable source on stories related to input costs and what Russia-Ukraine relations



Mike Gunderson

mean for producers in Minnesota.

We discussed these challenges as a group during the 2022 Commodity Classic, where I joined my colleague Tate Petry in advocating for Minnesota at the National Association of Wheat Growers' annual meeting. This was an

important step in the advocacy process. I also enjoyed getting to better know my colleagues on the Minnesota Wheat Promotion & Research Council, including future U.S. Wheat Associates Chair Rhonda K. Larson.

Despite all the turmoil, spring is here and I wish you all the best this planting season. With some rain and a little luck, we're well-positioned for a strong 2022.

I look forward to visiting with old and new friends later this summer at our golf events and shootout, where we'll have a few laughs and raise some funds for our legislative goals.

Until then, you can catch me in the funny papers.

Mike Gunderson
President, Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers 🌾

TAMING THE BULLS



BY BETSY JENSEN



& BEARS

A Tale of Two Markets

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." I don't think Charles Dickens was referring to farming, but his famous first sentence from a "Tale of Two Cities" certainly sounds like farming in 2022.

I look at wheat prices and feel like it's the best of times. Then I look at my expenses and it feels like the worst of times. We have the potential for record profits in 2022. Or record losses. We will find out this fall.

I cannot be the only one losing sleep about 2022. I have tried my best to manage the risks I can control. I prepaid fuel, fertilizer and chemical. I bought a little extra crop insurance. I have made sales for 2022 and my bins have never been so empty. I still need help from Mother Nature, but I have done everything I can to ensure I make money in 2022.

Every year in farm business management, we benchmark our students. Each farm is assigned an I.D. number, we load them into a database and we sort the data line by line. We examine enterprise data on a per acre basis such as chemical, yields, fertilizer and utilities. We sort whole farm data such as gross income, total interest expense and repairs. There are so many

numbers and each one is sorted from low to high.

We hand our farmers sheets of numbers with little yellow squares showing where they fall in our benchmarking data. Congratulations, your per acre fuel costs were low. Is there a reason your repairs were so high? Your net farm income ratio is right in the middle of the pack. Every line of income, expense or farm ratio is sorted.

It would be wonderful to be the best producer on every line of data. Highest income, lowest cost, best ratios, a farm that would make Jim Cramer yell "Buy, Buy, Buy!" and Warren Buffet would make me an offer I couldn't refuse. I picture this happening every year but I always have some yellow squares where I need to make improvements.

After receiving my benchmarking sheet, I set a few goals for the following year. This year I have one goal for 2022 and that is "Don't screw this up." There is no guarantee we can make money, but we can take action to minimize the chance of losing money. When I get my sheet of numbers and yellow squares next year, I do not need to be the best on each line. I just want to make sure I make money in 2022.

Your definition of "screw it up" and my

definition will be different. If I sell wheat for \$11 and it goes to \$12, I'll be OK because I don't expect to hit the top of the market. If I sell all my wheat for \$11 and it goes to \$16, I will struggle with my decision.

This may be a year to look at put and call options. Sell the cash and reown with call options. Take risk off the table. Some farmers have bought puts and sold calls, setting a floor and a ceiling. I think we need to be more aggressive with risk management in 2022.

There is one thing you must promise me not to do in 2022. Do not hedge 2022 crop in the 2021 crop year. For example, don't sell July soybeans and plan to roll ahead to November. This is never a good idea, and for 2022 it is the worst possible idea. Of course, it could work, but the odds of it exploding in your face are huge. You are adding risk to your farm if you try this. Keep the focus on reducing risk.

Tight commodity stocks, overall inflation, war – this is the perfect storm for commodity prices. I have no idea if the storm will end in 2022. All I can do is take cover.

Betsy Jensen is a Farm Business Management Instructor at Northland Community and Technical College. Follow her on Twitter at @jensenbetsy 🌾

MAKING MOVES IN MONTANA

Growers in Big Sky Country make advocacy push ahead of planting season

By Drew Lyon,
Ag Management Solutions

Ahead of planting season, the Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA) put boots on the ground in early March to advocate for the state's farmers during the National Association of Wheat Growers' (NAWG) annual meeting at Commodity Classic.

"There is nothing better than advocating for our Montana producers to help their operations succeed and move forward," MGGA President and NAWG Director Tryg Koch said.

Koch serves on NAWG's Domestic and Trade Policy Committee. During the resolutions meeting, members heard from guest speaker Administrator Zach Ducheneaux from Farm Service Agency and Administrator Marcia Bunger with Risk Management Agency. Koch invited both administrators to visit his operation in Montana's Flatland Valley.

"We have a really good officer slate," Executive Vice President Alison Vergeront said. "They're an easygoing group and really have a grasp of the policies that matter to our farmers."

Past President Mitch Konen sits on NAWG's Environment and Research

Committee. Konen promoted policies from MGGA's environmental, risk management and farm policy resolutions that members approved in December 2021.

"We are able to bring forward farm policies from Montana's members to NAWG, that then takes these policies to our congressional members that help form farm bill programs that ensure a safe, abundant, and affordable food supply for the nation and the world," Konen said. "It has been a great experience and very rewarding."

Following Commodity Classic, growers in Big Sky Country were getting ready to get back in the fields by early April to begin the 2022 growing season.

"April is planting the whole time," Vergeront said. "In the beginning of June, we'll have our annual golf tournament, which is a big fundraiser for us."

Later in the summer, Vergeront will donate her time to pitch in during the 2022 harvest as part of an auction held during last year's last year annual meeting. The auction helped raise funds

for the organization.

"We'll see how it goes – I grew up on a farm," said Vergeront, a native of Polson, Mt. "It's all for a good cause."

MGGA is hopeful its members will soon start receiving disaster relief payments. In the midst of a historic drought, Vergeront fears it could be another dry season.

"We're already starting to see streams at record lows," she said. "It'll be interesting to see how April goes. It'll take significant moisture to turn things around."

MGGA members and its foundation, along with Montana State University, recently helped raise \$4 million toward an endowed chair position that brought a world-renowned scientist – Dr. Venugopal Mendu – to assist Montana grain growers in remaining competitive and sustainable through research tailored specifically for Montana's current and future challenges in production agriculture.

"We're looking forward to seeing what research that will bring," Vergeront said. "We can't wait to see how that goes." 🌾



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A Critical Purpose

New NAWG president turning the page

By Drew Lyon
Ag Management Solutions

Two women will be leading both the policy and checkoff organizations that represent the nation's wheat farmers.

Two months after Minnesota farmer Rhonda K. Larson was named upcoming chair of U.S. Wheat Associates – which oversees the wheat checkoff – Nicole Berg was elected as the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) president during the organization's meeting at Commodity Classic in New Orleans.

Berg is a fourth-generation farmer from Paterson, Wash., where she farms alongside her dad and two brothers. They grow dry-land and irrigated wheat, blue grass seed, field corn, sweet corn, sweet peas, green beans and alfalfa. Berg also sits on the Board of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and previously served on the Board of the Conservation District where she received the NACD/NRCS Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award.

As Berg's first action as president, she sought out two new resolutions: to encourage collaboration with North Dakota wheat growers (North Dakota is the nation's largest wheat-producing state) and to seek involvement from diverse and underserved farming groups. Both resolutions passed during the board of directors meeting.

"I am excited for this opportunity to act as NAWG's second woman president. NAWG has a critical purpose when it comes to advocating for all wheat growers around the



NAWG President and Washington farmer Nicole Berg has been involved with her state association for more than 15 years.

nation. As we head into this next chapter, I hope to see more inclusion and engagement from farmers as we come together with a unified voice to decide what is best for the agriculture community," Berg said. "I also hope to see further investments in wheat research as we explore additional uses of wheat beyond food and feed."

During Berg's tenure, she will be instrumental in leading conversations about the upcoming Farm Bill and acting as the voice of the nation's wheat growers.

Along with Berg being elected as NAWG's president, the Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers. Michigan's Dave Milligan transitioned to the role of past president. Brent Cheyne, a wheat farmer from Klamath Falls, Ore., became NAWG's vice president.

Oklahoma grower Keff Fely will serve as treasurer, and Pat Clements of Springfield, Kentucky, was elected secretary. Tate Petry and Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers President Mike Gunderson represent Minnesota on NAWG.

"We greatly appreciate Dave Milligan's service to the National Association of Wheat Growers. Dave was able to lead our organization during a global pandemic and started several great conversations about climate and sustainability," said NAWG CEO Chandler Goule. "We are looking forward to this upcoming year with our new leadership as we continue to unite wheat farmers to promote policy efforts that create an environment that is conducive to the success of wheat farming in the United States." 🌾



By *Prairie Grains Magazine* staff

The state of agriculture in Minnesota is... a little complicated.

Part of the folklore of agriculture is dirty, physical work: farm and tractors, pitchforks and hammers, cows and pigs, all of which fail to create a story that appeals to the next generation. This overwhelming theme emerged in all the focus group discussions and the survey. Telling the real and exciting story of agriculture to include automation, computers, drones, good salaries and lifestyles, and ample opportunities needs to be shared. This will help attract, develop, and retain the next generation of workers and leaders throughout the food and ag value chain.

"At the end of the day, our agriculture and food supply chain, as well as those who touched it, achieved our mission of being sure wholesome food was stocked on the shelves, abundant fuels ready to propel our supply chain, quality feed nourishing our animals," GreenSeam Director Sam Ziegler said. "Overall, the ag ecosystem never stopped."

Conducted by GreenSeam, the 2022 State of Ag Survey and nine focus groups were conducted in the first 50 days of the year, prior to the Russia/Ukraine conflict. The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers provided input. This year, survey respondents reported that labor shortages and supply chain problems were primary challenges

and top concerns. This is likely the reason why more participants stated they believe agriculture is headed in the wrong direction. In 2021, 93% of respondents believed agriculture was headed in the right direction, versus 83% of respondents in the 2022 survey. But there were positives to report. Sixty percent of businesses predict growth in 2022 and the drought of 2021

"At the end of the day, our agriculture and food supply chain, as well as those who touched it, achieved our mission of being sure wholesome food was stocked on the shelves, abundant fuels ready to propel our supply chain, quality feed nourishing our animals."

had less of an impact on the industry than anticipated. In addition, 33% of respondents planned to start or launch a new business, division or product line this year. The most identified needs to help start these initiatives included funding, marketing and legal assistance.

The survey and focus groups dug deeper into the issues negatively impacting agribusinesses in the region. As expected, respondents reported a dearth of available talent, which was exasperated by retirees, fewer of the younger generation entering the industry and relocating to rural Minnesota, and "The Great Resignation" during the pandemic.

When asked about ways to address

the shortage, 62% of survey respondents are using technology to alleviate worker shortage.

Of that number, 67% are using technology to increase production efficiencies, while 27% are replacing open job positions with technology due to their inability to find workers.

During the pandemic, people resigned, left the workforce or changed their approaches. As a result, 29% of respondents said their business is offering "work from home" and other flexible options to retain employees. Out of all surveyed businesses, nearly a quarter now have 15% or more of their employees working remotely.

Policy and regulations continued to have a negative impact on businesses. Challenges and concerns that are affecting the industry include: Proposition 12, CDL/trucking, immigration, and water and environmental regulations. Shipping and logistics saw the sharpest increase in negative impact to businesses.

The 2022 State of Ag Survey nearly doubled its participation and response rate over the previous two years. Increasing these numbers helps GreenSeam, business and educational leaders, communities, and other stakeholders, including MAWG, to develop programming and initiatives to overcome the challenges highlighted in this report.

To view the full State of Ag Survey, visit greenseam.org.



STAMP OF APPROVAL

Council approves 12 projects for checkoff support

By Prairie Grains and Minnesota Wheat staff

During its March board meeting, the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council formally approved 12 research projects for 2022. Of the dozen projects, three are new.

“These projects are super important,” Council Treasurer Mikayla Tabert said. “All of our growers are investing these resources, so it needs to be used for things that can help the wheat industry.” Each of these projects is aimed toward improving growers’ bottom line and addressing the myriad production and agronomic issues facing Minnesota wheat farmers.

Minnesota Small Grains Pest Survey

Researcher: Dr. Anthony Hanson, Extension Educator, U of M WCROC Morris

The expected outcomes of this pest survey are timely alerts for small grain producers throughout the growing season so that sound economic control options can be implemented. The proposal will integrate this survey with the ongoing efforts in North Dakota to improve efficiency and impact of this program.

This project will continue the successful University of Minnesota (U of M) scouting program that has been conducted in previous years in coordination with the NDSU Integrated Pest Management survey. Given the current economic climate for Minnesota wheat producers, scouting and proper pest management is more critical than ever before. Proper pest management can have substantial impacts on farm profitability. Scouting information during the field season is key to allow producers to make informed management decisions. The small grains pest survey in combination with the weather-based disease risk models provide important pest-management information in a timely manner, giving producers a heads-up on arising pest issues along with sound management recommendations.

Research on Bacterial Leaf Streak of Wheat

Researcher: Dr. Ruth Dill-Macky, Small Grains Pathologist, U of M

This project continues efforts to address the control of bacterial leaf streak (BLS) of wheat. The goal of the project is to deliver economic disease control measures to growers. The proposed work will further examine the biology of the BLS pathogen with the aim of uncovering avenues of disease control that complement host resistance.

BLS of wheat is presently the most important foliar disease of wheat in Minnesota. Managing BLS is difficult, as fungicides

are largely ineffective against bacterial pathogens. Previous work, funded by MWRPC, has enabled researchers to establish a regional screening nursery for BLS providing data for growers of the relative resistances in commercial wheat varieties. Although host resistance is critical to disease control, there is no immunity to BLS and additional control options would be advantageous to growers.

Bacterial Seed Inoculation to Improve Nitrogen Uptake and Use Efficiency in Wheat

Researcher: Dr. Paulo Pagliari, Associate Professor, U of M Extension

Nitrogen (N) fertilization is one of the highest costs in the production process of non-leguminous crops such as wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). Developing management practices that minimize the reliance on chemical N inputs are critical for global food security and environmental sustainability. Recent research has shown the potential for utilization of plant growth promoting bacteria (PGPB) to enhance nutrient use efficiency in non-leguminous cropping systems. This has the potential to reduce both costs associated with fertilizer purchases and N loss to the environment.

Replicated field studies will be conducted at the U of M research and outreach centers at Lamberton (SWROC) and Crookston (NWROC). To test the effects of seed inoculation on wheat grain yield, wheat will be planted after soybean and corn, at Lamberton, and soybean and sugarbeets, in Crookston. Wheat will be harvested using plot combine and wheat grain samples will be saved for N uptake analysis.

A Novel High-Throughput Phenotyping Pipeline to Deliver More Productive and Stress Resilient Minnesota Wheat Varieties

Research: Dr. M. Walid Sadok, Associate Professor, U of M

Sadok is developing a new technology, based on remote-sensing of canopy thermal signatures, that could make it possible for wheat breeders to rapidly and cheaply identify superior breeding lines that are equipped with high-performing, high-yielding canopies. In their first year, Sadok’s team deployed this technology on a preliminary yield trial comprising over 500 breeding lines. While data analysis is still ongoing, preliminary results point to a promising potential of this technology, by enabling them to identify superior lines that ended up exhibiting better yields under the droughty conditions of last summer. The goal for this proposal is to confirm these findings in a second year and finalize the pipeline. The development of this new technology will directly support the U of M’s wheat breeding program and, as a result, help farmers benefit from more productive and stress-resilient Minnesota-adapted wheat.

This research builds directly on a successful project previously funded by MWR&PC. The goal of that project was to identify the genetic basis of canopy conductance on wheat.



Bacterial leaf streak (BLS) is more prevalent with warm, humid weather.
Photo credit: Mary Burrows, Montana State University, Bugwood.org

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Wheat Stem Sawfly Resistance Screening

Researcher: Dr. Jochum Wiersma, U of M Small Grains Extension Specialist

Wheat Stem Sawfly (*Cephus cinctus* Norton) is not new to the region, but rather a species that is endemic to the northern plains of the United States and Canada, including the Red River Valley. It is unclear why WSS is becoming an economic pest. Over the past six years, the area affected by WSS in Minnesota has steadily grown larger and now reaches from Wilkin to Kittson counties. Evaluation of current, adapted hard red spring wheat (HRSW) in the past three seasons has shown differences among the varieties in the number of infected stems. The objective of this proposal is to continue evaluation of current, adapted HRSW varieties for resistance to stem cutting by WSS by seeding a duplicate of the HRSW variety performance evaluation trial and counting the number of infected stems at the harvest ripe stage.

The trial will be seeded as early as possible at NWROC as previous years trials has shown that this ensures synchronization of the crop development and emergence of WSS adults. Weather permitting, the trial will be harvested for grain yield and quality in late July or the first half of August.



Jim Anderson has developed 19 spring wheat varieties and is the co-developer of eight others in four different markets of wheat.

to assess their performance in yield nurseries, end-use quality, and reactions to important diseases. This information is critical for growers to make informed choices regarding varieties. Assuming that exceptional germplasm is available, and the best crosses are made, the more lines that are tested, the better chance of identifying improved varieties.

Accelerated Breeding for Fusarium Head Blight Resistance in Spring Wheat

Researcher: Dr. Karl Glover, SDSU Spring Wheat Breeder

Complete resistance to Fusarium head blight (FHB) is currently not attainable. Host plant resistance is therefore the most economical and environmentally benign means of disease control. This proposed work aims to increase FHB resistance levels in regionally adapted hard red spring wheat cultivars and breeding lines through traditional plant breeding methods. For the foreseeable future, this will be the most practical and beneficial means to help alleviate large potential losses when growing conditions are optimal for FHB development.



Dr. Karl Glover expects that new regionally adapted cultivar releases will continually become more resistant to FHB. Photo credit: Mary Burrows, Montana State University, Bugwood.org

This proposed research continues an agreement originally developed about 26 years ago between MWRPC and groups from South Dakota. Over the years, this shared investment has been combined with other funding sources and has allowed for much program focus on the creation, identification, and

selection of breeding lines and cultivars with enhanced FHB resistance. Higher levels of FHB resistance should enhance the profitability of spring wheat growers in Minnesota and throughout the region.

Southern Minnesota Small Grains Research & Outreach Project

Researcher: Jared Goplen, Extension Crops Educator, U of M WCROC Morris

In recent decades, small grains have often been grown in central and southern Minnesota for reasons other than an enterprise's direct profitability. The combination of weed and insect resistance issues and interest in diversifying crop rotations to improve soil health has inspired more farmers in these regions to consider growing small grains.

Much of the production in southern and central Minnesota could be improved by incorporating more intensive management strategies and improved variety selection.



With expanded virtual small grain workshops, nearly 70 new farmers and crop consultants who had not previously participated in a UMN Extension small grain event did so in 2021. Photo courtesy of the University of Minnesota.

This checkoff-supported research and demonstration plots have documented the ability to grow small grains in central and southern Minnesota with high yield and quality. By assisting farmers in managing crop inputs and developing best management practices to maximize yield and quality, it is Goplen's goal to improve and expand production in these agricultural regions and make small grains more productive for southern Minnesota farmers.

Summer field days will be planned to take place at variety trial locations at Becker, Benson, Le Center, New Ulm and Rochester during June 2022. Winter small grain meetings will be held in central and southern Minnesota. In addition to the in-person workshops, a virtual small grain workshop option will be included as part of the Strategic Farming: Field Notes program in late-February.

2022 Hard Red Spring Wheat Regional Quality Survey

Dr. Richard Horsley, Department Head, NDSU Plant Sciences

This survey encompasses sample collection, analysis and reporting important wheat quality attributes useful for marketing the crop. The range of environmental diversity, cultivars and agronomic practices results in a range of quality attributes and assessment of important marketing attributes of

wheat entering into the commercial market channels.

NDSU's Department of Plant Sciences has conducted annual surveys of North Dakota grown hard red spring (HRS) and durum wheats since the early 1960s. Surveys encompassed collection, analysis and reporting important wheat quality attributes useful for marketing the crop. In recognition that other northern Great Plains states produce approximately 40% of the HRS grown in the region, the 1980 and successive surveys have included the four northern plains states that produce 90% of the HRS and durum wheats grown in the U.S. Expanding the survey to encompass the entire northern Great Plains HRS and durum wheat growing regions allows assessment of important marketing attributes of wheat entering into the commercial market channels.

New in 2022

Evaluating the Impact of Drain Spacing and Fungicide Seed Treatment on Common Root Rot and Fusarium Crown Rot in Wheat

Researcher: Dr. Ashok Chanda, Assistant Professor, U of M NWROC

Despite the connection between soil moisture, soil temperature and root diseases, the interaction between subsurface drainage spacing and fungicide seed treatment has not been adequately studied in the Red River Valley (RRV). Without this information, growers cannot fully evaluate the costs of subsurface drainage systems against its potential benefits for wheat production. This checkoff-funded project, which will be conducted at the NWROC in Crookston, is aimed at evaluating artificial drainage, specifically drain spacing on stand establishment, incidence and severity of Fusarium crown rot (FCR) and common root rot (CRR) of wheat, and their impacts on grain yield.

Breeding Winter Wheat Varieties with FHB Resistance and Straw Strength

Researcher: Dr. Sunish Sehgal, Associate Professor/Winter Wheat Breeder SDSU

South Dakota's winter wheat breeding program routinely develops winter wheat varieties under a 100%-regenerative management system working closely with producers through on-farm trials for the last 55 years. Winter wheat (soft wheat and hard wheat) offers several advantages over spring wheat, including a 20% yield increase and fits well with cover crop rotation, conserves soil moisture, improves water quality, reduces soil erosion, and builds soil structure and soil health. With the establishment of CJ foods in the region (Sioux Falls) and the presence of Schwan's and Grain Millers Inc., there is an opportunity for increased local demand for soft and hard wheat in southern and western Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and South Dakota's I-29 corridor. Therefore, there is a need to develop varieties with good Fusarium head blight resistance and straw strength adapted to this region.

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Wheat Multi-Trait Predictions: A Quantitative, Genotype x Environment (GxE) Approach to Supporting Minnesota Wheat Breeding and Farmer Varietal Selections
Researcher: Dr. Kevin A. T. Silverstein, Scientific Lead for Research Informatics Solutions at the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute and Operations Manager for CFANS GEMS Informatics Center

A perennial challenge faced by wheat breeders and producers is identifying and selecting the best performing varieties for each location. A high-yielding variety at one location during one season may not perform well at another location and/or another season, exemplifying the strong effects of Variety (Genotype) by Environment (GxE) interactions on crop performance. In this project, researchers at the U of M CFANS GEMS Informatics Center, in collaboration with breeder Dr. Jim Anderson, will develop a wheat trait prediction tool to intelligently combine genomic information, environmental conditions, and their GxE interactions to accurately predict the performance of different varieties under different environments. This project will utilize the rich genotypic and phenotypic data collected through Anderson's field trials and the comprehensive weather and soil data provided by the GEMS Informatics Center to build a spatially explicit, Minnesota-focused wheat trait prediction tool to accelerate wheat breeding programs and assist varietal selections for wheat breeders and farmers across the state. 🌾



Sunish Sehgal oversees SDSU's winter wheat breeding program.

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'A smooth process': Minnesota farmers tell their soil health stories at Capitol event

Above all else, Minnesota farmers are leaders in their field when it comes to protecting our state's resources.

"We lead the nation in our commitment to water quality," Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen said, "and that's especially true for our farmers."

During the 2022 Legislative Session, directors from Minnesota's corn and soybean advocacy groups, along with Rep. Paul Anderson, headed to the Capitol to visit with MDA officials and promote the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).

"The program is excellent. What I like as a legislator and a farmer is that it's a volunteer program," said Rep. Anderson, who grows corn, soybeans and wheat in Starbuck. "I really endorse (the MAWQCP)."

During the roundtable discussion, Darin Johnson, treasurer of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, received his farm sign for becoming MAWQCP certified. Johnson Farms enrolled five years after starting strip-tilling on a trial basis. He noticed a few neighbors had become certified and realized he was already employing similar management practices.

"It isn't a one-size-fits-all program," said Johnson, who worked with a local co-op to enroll. "You do have options. For us, it was a good fit, we scored really high. I'm a fourth-generation farmer and I want to make sure we're keeping our land in better shape for the fifth and sixth generations."

Murray County farmer Bryan Biegler, who serves as president of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, worked with his local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to become certified. Both MCGA and MSGA have advocated for legislative support for the MAWQCP.

"It was a really smooth process," Biegler said. "They were great to work with."

Farmers can contact their local SWCD to apply for MAWQCP certification and then complete a series of steps with local certifiers using a 100% site-specific risk



Minnesota farmer Darin Johnson (left) smiles alongside MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen after receiving his MAWQCP sign to display on his operation.

assessment process. By law all data is kept private, and only by signing a formal release can a farmer's name be released publicly. After becoming certified, farmers receive a 10-year contract ensuring them they will be deemed in compliance with any new water quality laws, an official MAWQCP sign to display on their farm, and other benefits developed by local MAWQCP providers.

"The concept is excellent," Rep. Anderson said. "There's a lot of support for conservation... This helps us lower expense costs and keep yields high. It's really a win-win situation."

The nearly 1,200 producers currently certified in the program – which is now in its seventh year of implementation – cover more than 835,000 certified acres and implementing more than 2,300 new conservation practices. These practices are reducing over 40,000 tons of sediment each year, 120,000 tons of soil and cutting nitrogen loss by nearly 50%. Later this year, Gov. Tim Walz and the MDA have set a goal to certify one-million acres of farmland in Minnesota.

"This program is really continuing to grow," Commissioner Petersen said.

The Water Quality event was held in partnership with We Are Water MN, a traveling exhibit that celebrates Minnesotans' relationship with water. The discussion is archived on the MDA's YouTube page.

"The data helps provide us answers and puts the trust behind the practices that we use," Johnson said.

Brought to you by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.



EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION

Charlie Vogel broadened his horizons on leadership adventure

By Kaelyn Rahe
Ag Management Solutions

After growing up in Idaho and then spending 10 years in Colorado, Minnesota Wheat CEO Charlie Vogel looked for ways to become more acclimated to Minnesota agriculture after joining the organization in 2019.

This is what pushed him to apply – and be accepted – to the Minnesota Agriculture Rural Leadership (MARL) program.

“I joined MARL because I am not from Minnesota. I don’t know the geography, and I don’t know the people,” Vogel said. “I wanted to expand my network and to get to know the state, so I can better

serve Minnesota wheat growers.”

Vogel checked off all of his boxes. During the program, Vogel got the opportunity to travel around the state networking and learning about Minnesota agriculture. Vogel then traveled to Washington D.C., and returned back from Ecuador in April as part of his international experience.

“Along with our colleagues at MAWG, the Council was proud to sponsor Charlie’s participation in MARL,” Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council Chair Scott Swenson said. “The program helped further his growth and

knowledge of Minnesota agriculture, which in turn will help strengthen our organization.”

MARL is a dynamic leadership development program for engaged adult agricultural and rural leaders in Minnesota. With more than 300 past participants, MARL has created a footprint across Minnesota and the nation. MARL ignites growth and success by practicing real world scenarios in and out of the classroom, challenging participants to get out of their comfort zone.

The trip begins

Ecuador was an eye-opening experience. Prior to visiting the South American country, Vogel’s only other international visits took place in Canada and Mexico.

“I couldn’t believe the terrain changes with elevation,” Vogel said of Ecuador, a country that borders Colombia and Peru. “Within three hours, we went through four different microclimates.”

During visits to numerous farming operations, Vogel also witnessed Ecuador’s diverse landscape, ranging from rainforests to mountaintops. At the start of the nine-day trip, Vogel and the MARL group visited a rose farm.

“It really set the tone for the trip of the different mechanisms versus labor between the U.S. and Ecuadorian farming practices,” he said. “Labor is much more plentiful here, but it is also changing.”

Moving toward the Colombian border, Vogel toured an avocado farm.

“This farm was looking for value-added products that they didn’t have to compete in the commodity market,” Vogel said.

“Just like we see some wheat farmers going directly to mills to get those value-added products, this farm was looking into those niche markets.”

Other tours on the trip included visiting sugar cane, coffee, pineapple, plantain and vanilla farms, and a dairy operation.

In addition to the tours, the class immersed themselves in some cultural endeavors, which included attending an open-air market where they learned how to barter. They also visited a guinea pig farm and ate guinea pig for lunch.

“The guinea pig was not for me,” Vogel said.

Another important meeting Vogel had was with the Foreign Ag Service, the U.S. Soybean Export Council and the US Grains Council.

“They did a great presentation for us and really showcased the same struggles we are having with the supply chain,” Vogel said, “and it really showed that there are opportunities for our growers to fulfill those markets.”

Agriculture is amazing all over the world! Farmers are resourceful, inventive, good natured and focused on providing for their families and the world.

Networks are vital, professionally and personally. The farms and ag businesses we toured weren’t doing it alone. They relied on a network of family, friends, colleges, industry partners, just as we do in the U.S.

Gratitude & perspective. If more citizens traveled abroad, we would truly see how blessed we are to live and work here. It was also a great reminder to know what true priorities are and not to get caught in the trap of materialism.

US wheat potential

Vogel kept finding potential for U.S. wheat growers during his time in Ecuador. Last year, U.S. wheat industry exported 376,194 metric tons to Ecuador. The U.S. exports more than \$5 billion worth of goods to Ecuador each year.

“I don’t think Ecuador is a third world country, they are a developing market. As their economy grows, they will want U.S. products,” Vogel said. “All the commodities that thrive in Ecuador, will enable the purchasing power to buy U.S. wheat, corn and soybeans — the crops we produce very well.”

Another component Vogel noticed was the availability and quality of bread.

“You could definitely tell that some of the bread was top quality and some of it you could tell was good, but the quality wasn’t there in the flour,” he said. “It tasted good but there was a difference in the quality. There’s definitely room for export potential.”

Continued on Page 18

Growing together

One theme that Vogel noticed throughout the days was the importance of networking.

“The farms that were thriving were either networked with other farmers in a cooperative or a private system to form a cohort of farmers to find the best practices to be able to talk amongst themselves.”

Vogel said. “It illustrated for me how important associations are that network farmers, and how important our university system is – the advantage we have in breeding programs both public and private and the communication back to growers. Through associations, university systems and these different avenues, we have a much better say in solving their problems because of those relationships in those systems.”

Vogel’s MARL experience allowed him to see the importance of international travel and continual self-improvement on the individual and professional level in agriculture business or on the farm itself.

“You are either improving or you are getting passed up,” he said. “You need to keep pouring the coals to it, and to continue to be a lifelong learner.”

Vogel appreciated the time he invested in MARL and looks forward to furthering his leadership skills in his role at Minnesota Wheat.

“I want to give a special thanks to Sarah, my wife, for holding the fort down, and the Minnesota Wheat Council for investing in this opportunity,” he said. 🌾



During an afternoon of free time in the tourist town of Minto, Vogel enjoys some whitewater tubing and canyoning.

The 2022 SPRING WHEAT SURVEY will be out in May!



This survey is conducted for the benefit of the University of Minnesota Spring Wheat Breeding Program.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

Each year the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council conducts a **SPRING WHEAT SURVEY**. The information gathered from the survey will help Dr. Jim Anderson, U of M Spring Wheat Breeder, with his selection of new varieties that meet the needs of you, the grower.

In late May, after planting is complete, the Spring Wheat Survey will be emailed and mailed out to wheat growers in Minnesota. Please take the time to complete the survey. It will only take a few minutes.

Whether you received a survey in the mail, email, or received the information from another source, if you live in Minnesota and planted spring wheat, we welcome you to complete a survey.

The link to the survey will be available on mnwheat.org in May.

The combined results of the surveys will be put into a report that shows each variety as a percent of all wheat acres in the state and regions of the state. Results will be published in the Prairie Grains magazine in the fall.

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Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council

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Thursday, June 23, 2022
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Moorhead, MN

Thursday, July 14, 2022
Sandhill River Gold Course
Fertile, MN



**More details to follow at mnwheat.org.
Sponsorship opportunities available.**

UNDER COVER



Checkoff-funded research making cover crops more enticing

By Sydney Harris
Ag Management Solutions

Walk around a farm and every direction you turn you'll see assets: machinery, implements, outbuildings, crop inputs – the list goes on. But the most valuable asset? A farmer's land, specifically, their soil.

"We have some of the best soil in the whole world in Minnesota," said Jodi DeJong-Hughes, a regional extension educator with the University of Minnesota. "Once we lose it, we can't

replace it."

It's only natural that farmers seek ways to take care of their soil, the same way they maintain their equipment. Cover crops serve many purposes and are just one technique that farmers can implement to protect their irreplaceable soil.

"Cover crops add more carbon to the soil, help form soil structures, increase water infiltration, maintain the soil's

biology and reduce erosion," DeJong-Hughes said.

The benefits don't end there. Melissa Carlson, vice president of research at Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council, added to the list.

"They take up excess nitrogen to prevent leaching," she said "The idea is to always keep a living root in the soil!"

Anna Cates, soil health specialist at the Minnesota Office for Soil Health



University of Minnesota researchers recommend growers use one or two species of cover crops and plant them in early-harvested fields to set up the fields for long-term success.

(MOSH), highlighted that not all advantages of growing cover crops are invisible to the farmer.

"There can be real logistical benefits when cover crops are incorporated," Cates said. "If you plant cover crops instead of having a fall tillage, that's faster and cheaper on diesel. So, you actually need less labor to manage that cover crop and then you're not doing anything in that field until you plant your crop the next year."

With these benefits, it's hard to believe that there are any disadvantages that could keep producers from running to their seed salespersons and loading up on cover crop seed. Of course, all farms aren't created equal, and Minnesota farmers are well aware of the fickle growing seasons in our corner of the world. They aren't strangers to harvesting their fall crop with a couple inches of snow on the ground or pushing planting back because of an April blizzard. This doesn't leave them with a lot of wiggle room to get a cover crop planted.

"The amount of growth you get is really based on the weather," DeJong-Hughes said. "You can put them in at the end of the season, but if you get an early freeze – you're out of luck. And, if it doesn't rain and it's really dry, they won't grow."

Mother Nature's unpredictable whims are one reason for the lack

of cover crops grown in Minnesota, but cost is another factor that causes hesitation.

"Cover crops cost money and it costs money to apply them to the field," DeJong-Hughes said. "We want farmers to make sure that they get a return, and we can't always guarantee that."

Because of our late fall harvests, researchers and farmers are getting creative with wheat and cover crops given there is more time to plant after the harvest.

"Wheat has been where we dip our toes in the water with cover crops," said Carlson.

Action needed

The University of Minnesota and Minnesota Wheat's On-Farm Research Network have a rye cover crop termination timing trial underway, with two wheat/soybean sites and four corn/soybean sites, set to last two years. The rye was sown in August and September of 2021 and soil Nitrogen and rye biomass will be collected this spring, soybean stand and weed evaluation this summer and yield at harvest.

"Rye can be a very aggressive cover crop," Carlson said, "so timing when you terminate that rye is what we're trying to get some data on to prevent damaging the yield."

Cates, who is also an assistant

extension professor for the University of Minnesota, spotlighted the work this termination trial is doing on planting green.

"Planting green means you're planting through a living green plant that is upright and flexible," Cates said. "Planters can cut right through those living plants; a mat of dead residue just doesn't behave the same way."

Starting a new endeavor can be daunting. So, how do experts suggest implementing cover crops into an operation?

"Try to stick your toe in the water. Try it on some of your worst fields, your problem fields," said DeJong-Hughes. "Those are the ones that need health and cover crops can do that. If you're worried about what it might look like, put it in the fields that aren't on main roads."

Carlson's main message is to just start – there is never going to be a perfect time. The sooner you begin, the sooner you will start reaping the benefits.

"Start out small," Carlson said. "We tell everyone to start with five acres and figure out how to manage those five acres before scaling up."

For the farmers who are on the fence, DeJong-Hughes has an important message.

"If we don't want to watch our soil blow or wash away, we need to act," she said. 🌱



Fall 2019 cover crop emergence by county, major watershed and sub-watershed. Courtesy of the University of Minnesota.

THREE'S COMPANY

Trio of Council candidates earn reelection

By Drew Lyon

Ag Management Solutions

The Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council (MWRPC) will remain stable for 2022, following the reelection of three farmer leaders to help oversee the state's wheat checkoff resources.

"I'm very blessed to have a very good board of directors," MWRPC Executive Director Charlie Vogel said. "They know where they come from and what's important, and they're very progressive and forward-looking."

Vice Chair Tim Dufault (Area 1), Director Tony Brateng (Area 1) and Kevin Leiser (Area 2) were all reelected by their peers in March. The election was held via mail ballot and conducted by the

Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Board members serve three-year terms.

"The group we have on the Council makes it very enjoyable to serve," said Leiser, who farms in Fertile and has served on the Council since 2012. "We all get along, have good discussions as a group and reach a conclusion together."

The Council is tasked with directing the state's wheat checkoff program, which includes investing in research projects from the University of Minnesota.

"The research projects from the U of M that we fund are always critical," Dufault said, "especially the breeding and the scab nursery – it's very important."

Brateng has served on the Council for nearly a decade and said he's committed to participating in the organization's

research initiatives.

"I've always had interest in wheat research and our on-farm trials and other trials," said Brateng, who grows wheat, grass seed, corn and soybeans in Roseau. "It's exciting to have a voice in all of that."

The Council's thriving On-Farm Research Network program, which numerous Council directors participate in, is another checkoff endeavor that brings tangible value to Minnesota wheat farmers without overcomplicating matters, Dufault said.

"We're looking to help with the continued success of the (OFRN) – it's very popular with growers," Dufault said. "Innovation is something farmers love to do but breaking it down and

analyzing can be a guess by golly, so having (Vice President of Research) Missy Carlson there to quantify what they're finding and getting a better understanding of what they're finding is really helpful to growers."

'The leading edge'

According to the USDA, the nation's 2021 wheat crop was the lowest since 2002 and 10% lower than 2020.

"We need to make wheat more profitable and not just a rotational crop," said Leiser, who grows wheat, soybeans and corn. "We've got to try, and that's the reason I continue serving (on the Council)."

Times certainly have changed for lifelong farmers like Dufault. This year figures to be unlike any other.

"It used to be you'd get up and check the weather and you'd have an idea of what the markets would do," he said.

These days, with supply chain issues, rising commodity prices, increasing input costs and the ongoing war in Ukraine all swirling together, it can be a fool's errand to predict where the markets are headed.

"Now, you wake up in the morning and check what's going on in Ukraine, and that will tell you," Dufault said. "It's a different time for marketing – it's not just based on supply and demand anymore, there are so many other factors."

In a global marketplace, Dufault, who also vice chairs the Northern Crops Institute, said it's important to remember how connected America is to its trading partners.

"It really drives home the fact that the world is a small community and every part of it affects every other part," he said.



MWRPC Vice Chair Tim Dufault has represented Minnesota Wheat both as a policy advocate and a checkoff leader.

The Council is currently chaired by Elbow Lake farmer Scott Swenson. Mark Jossund of Moorhead and Red Lake Falls grower Mikayla Tabert serve as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Rhonda K. Larson represents the Council on the U.S. Wheat Associates board and will become chair later this year.

"We have a really good group," Brateng said, "It's always a good thing for farmers to come together and exchange ideas and concerns."

Vogel, who joined MWRPC in 2019, said he hopes the Council continues promoting new ideas – all aimed at boosting farmer profitability.

"Let's try new things," he said. "The world's not staying the same, so we need to be on that leading edge." 🌾



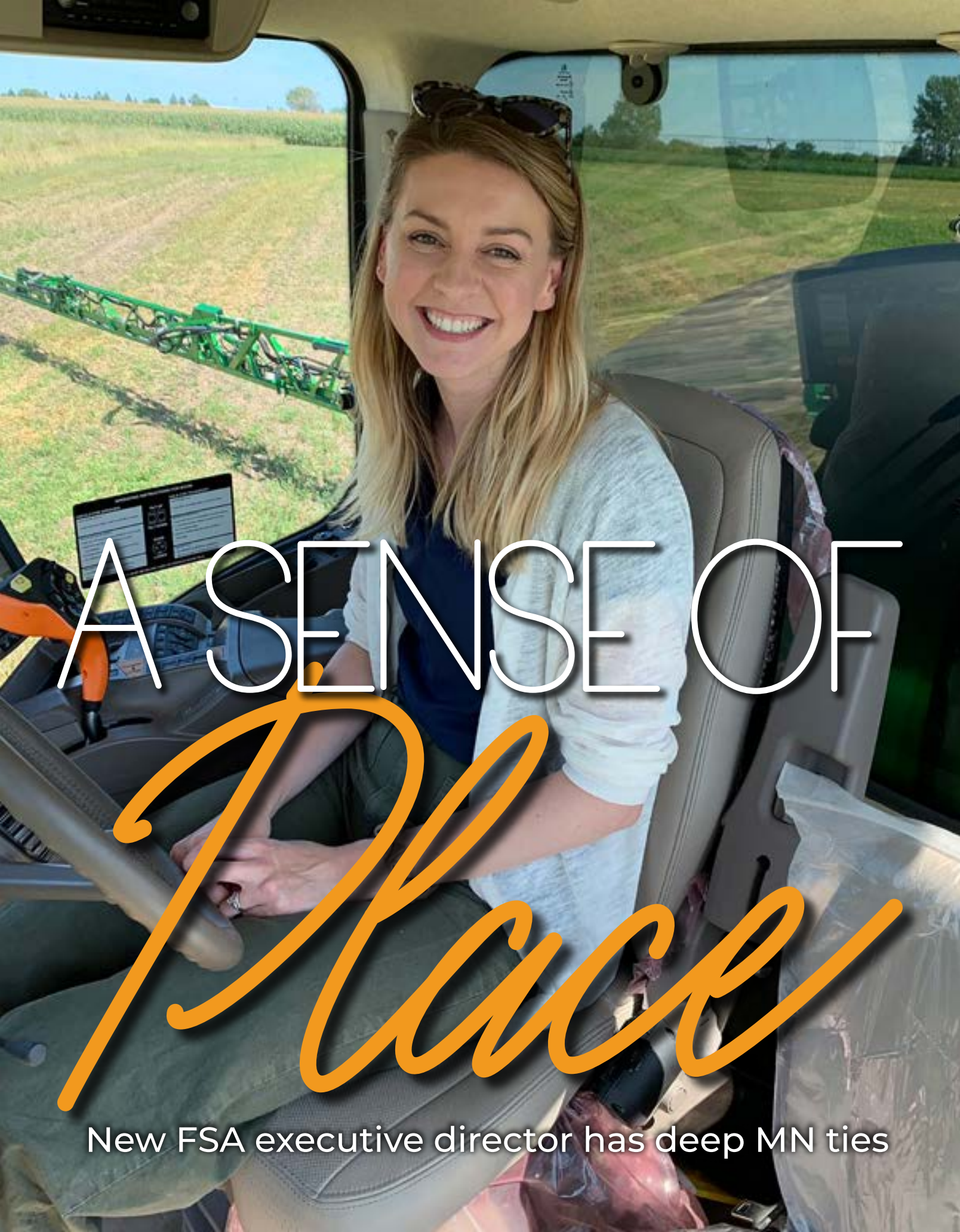
Tony Brateng (left), Kevin Leiser (middle) and Tim Dufault will each serve three-year terms on the Council.

CHECKOFF SUCCESSES

Investments from the nation's wheat checkoff program pay off for farmers. According to the latest study, the checkoff provides a return on investment of \$24 in export gains for every additional dollar spent on foreign market development. It also has increased annual farm income across the country by \$2.1 billion and created nearly a quarter-million U.S. jobs.

For every dollar U.S. wheat farmers invested in export promotion, \$45 came back to them in net revenue. The study also showed that for each dollar spent by U.S. wheat farmers, the government returned about \$149 in gross revenue to the U.S. economy.

Source: U.S. Wheat Associates



A SENSE OF *Place*

New FSA executive director has deep MN ties

By Kaelyn Rahe

Ag Management Solutions

Whitney Place has promoted and studied Minnesota agriculture from every angle.

Originally from Okabena in southwest Minnesota, Place was raised in town, not on the farm. However, she was surrounded by corn fields in her backyard and found herself always on her grandparents' farm, where her father still grows corn and soybeans.

During high school, Place was involved in FFA and cultivated an interest in plants, leading her to attend the University of Minnesota to study plant science.

"I was going to be a plant breeder just like Norman Borlaug," Place said. "Then I got there, and I worked on an oat breeding project for a while as a student worker, and I decided that research wasn't going to be my path for everyday life."

After deciding she didn't want to pursue plant research, Place found an

interest in her issue-based coursework, specifically environmental issues. A career path began to take shape.

Her environmental pursuits led Place to an internship with the National Farmers Union, where she decided agriculture policy was the direction to take. Place studied at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and earned a degree in environmental policy, which led her to start her decade-long career with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture across both the Dayton and Walz administrations.

"They really welcomed me in, and I just learned so much from all the different experts in the agency," Place said. "Our staff really care about the community and about the issues, and that is kind of how I got my foot in the door."

Place has built many relationships along her journey at MDA.

Continued on Page 26

The 'Place' to be

Place graduated in Class VIII of the Minnesota Agricultural Rural Leadership Program and credits the program for helping her to do some self-reflection to help improve and understand herself.



If you are thinking about a leadership role, even if it's your local county soybean board, your township board or your church board, there is a lot of value in this program.



Whitney Place shares a moment with former USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue at the 2019 Farmfest.

Charlie Vogel, CEO of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, said he's been impressed by Place's enthusiasm and willingness to visit northwest Minnesota farmers – including a trip to Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council Treasurer Mikayla Tabert's operation – multiple times.

"Whitney is incredibly accessible and shows a genuine interest in agriculture," Vogel said. "She put in the effort to come up here and learn when she didn't have to."

Place said she respects the advocacy efforts of groups like the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, which work closely with legislative leaders and MDA. Even though MAWG and MDA's priorities sometimes diverge, both groups work to find common ground.

"Sometimes we don't always agree," Place said, "but we can have good conversations to work through issues."

'The new challenge'

After 10 years with MDA, Place was ready for the next step. She took that leap forward when, earlier in 2022, President Biden's administration appointed her to serve as executive director of the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Minnesota office.

For Place, the new title was a bittersweet feeling.

"I was really sad to leave MDA and excited for the new challenge at FSA," Place said.

Place complimented the team at MDA, including Commissioner Thom Petersen and Deputy Commissioner Andrea Vaubel for always creating a great work environment, and for always being supportive.

"I want to thank Whitney for her decade of service here at the MDA and for her dedication to agriculture," said Petersen. "She has been a valuable member of our team and I look forward to continuing to work with her at the FSA on issues and policies affecting farmers in our state."

As executive director, Place wants to do her in part in ensuring FSA is more inclusive.

"I want to make sure that agriculture, specifically FSA programs, are accessible to everyone and, historically, USDA has had some challenges with underserved groups," she said. "I think our staff does an amazing job delivering programs, but sometimes we need to look at things in a little different way to make sure we are being accessible."

Coming from an environmental

background, Place has conservation on her mind. She wants to continue promoting conservation efforts and to maintain programs like the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) that are workable and beneficial for the farmers.

"Her heart is in the right place," Vogel said. "She's also very sharp and misses nothing."

Place's last goal involves growth and bringing agriculture into the next era while still maintaining stability. It's a juggling act, she said.

"In agriculture we are going to be facing this turnover in staff from retirements," she said. "It is going to be important to work through and retain the next generation of agricultural leaders at that county level, the regional level and at our state office level."

Place is excited to work on her goals and continue to grow and improve FSA efforts.

"It's where the rubber hits the road in our county offices when we are implementing these programs that we have these national conversations about," she said, "but it is really the work of the boots on the ground and connecting those farmers to those programs, and I am excited about that." 🌾

Whitney Place joins MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen (left) for a summer visit to Mikayla Tabert's farm in Red Lake Falls.



As a female leader in agriculture, Place encourages young women to stay self-assured.

"I remember when I was a legislative director, and I would have to testify at the legislature and it's super scary when you are first doing it," she said. "However, former MDA Commissioner Dave Frederickson would always tell me, 'You are the smartest person in the room on this topic. Have confidence in it. You know everything about this topic. No one else does.'"

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MyLandMyLegacy.com

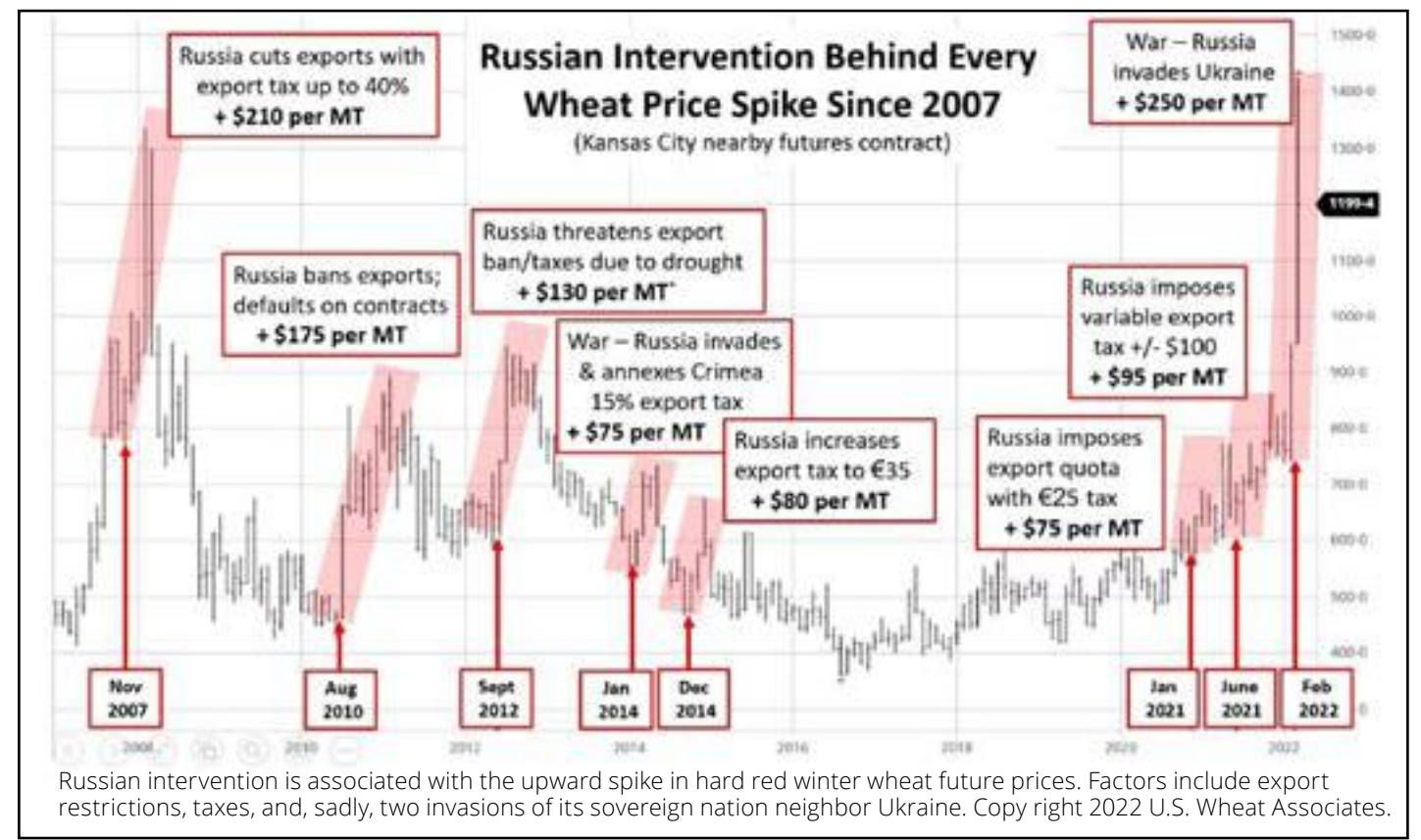


PAST IS PROLOGUE

Russian intervention has fueled every wheat price spike since 2007

By U.S. Wheat Associates President Vince Peterson

Once again – and tragically this time – Russian intervention is the underlying source of dramatic global wheat price volatility. “...We are closely monitoring prices for the most essential social goods such as food, including bread,” Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said in March about his country’s domestic wheat supply. “Russian grain is in good demand from abroad, and its price is increasing. That said, it is necessary to provide the necessary raw materials, first of all, to the domestic baking industry.”



Consistent protectionism

The Prime Minister issued a comment with specific reference to the hyper reaction of global wheat prices to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the immediate impacts of the widespread economic sanctions levied on Russia in response. Yet it spotlights the core tenants of Russia’s protectionist and heavy-handed wheat supply and price control policies. Russian intervention has been front and center since the country first entered the global wheat export trade.

Anyone who does not take the Prime Minister at his word on this sets themselves up for a very disappointing and expensive lesson. Defending Russian domestic supplies and keeping domestic prices low by withholding supplies from the world will always be their primary wheat policy weapon. And they deploy it without regard for the harm and expense it creates for anyone.

Underscoring this point, the Russian Ministry of Economy confirmed in March 2022 that they are banning wheat exports through Aug. 31, 2022, to their fellow Eurasian Economic Union member states, including its Ukraine invasion staging partner Belarus, along with Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Every spike reveals Russian intervention

In six documented situations since 2007, when the global wheat market showed any sign of stress, the government of Russia stepped in to impose an export ban, export tax or export quota to isolate their home market. These actions intentionally limited world wheat importers’ access to Russian wheat supplies. This Russian intervention further magnified any supply shortage and accelerated the rise in wheat prices.

Twice in this time frame, Russian military aggression against Ukraine directly caused world wheat prices to spike sharply higher. The world is reeling viscerally and economically from the shock of that situation right now.

Rampant Uncertainty

The COVID-19 pandemic lifted the tide of global inflation by disrupting global supply chains. Now, Russia’s war on Ukraine has blocked nearly 30% of the expected wheat export supply from governments and people that depend on it the most. Uncertainty runs rampant. And it is almost impossible to know how this war will be prosecuted. How long it will persist? What will the physical and economic situation of Ukraine and Russia be at the end?

Market analysts everywhere are trying to assess the many implications of this latest Russian intervention. Who will be most severely impacted? What will be the magnitude of the shortage created in the global wheat supply chain? And how will the world’s remaining supplies be apportioned, priced and relocated to the most severely affected countries?

Extreme volatility

The extreme wheat price volatility seen since the invasion sits witness to this uncertainty.

Such high prices and volatility create myriad challenges for the world’s wheat buyers and farmers and grain traders, who must also use the futures market to manage price risk. It is important to note that the U.S. wheat market remains fully open to importers and users everywhere. Dependable U.S. wheat producers and our reliable export system stand in the gap. They are ready and able to supply wheat as broadly to the world as our own supplies, and logistical capacity can accommodate.

Supplies available

In addition to the wheat price inflation attributed to Russian intervention, U.S. wheat prices reflect that last year’s drought in the Northern Plains and Pacific Northwest limited current U.S. supplies. However, this year’s original export expectations and calculations do not include all U.S. supplies available. And wheat farmers will harvest a new crop starting in June.

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) also creates additional value for U.S. wheat through the services it offers its customers. As we navigate this extreme market situation to secure the wheat necessary to feed people worldwide, USW remains ready to provide any information, tools and assistance within our means that may be helpful. 🌾



Vince Peterson has helped lead U.S. Wheat Associates since 1985.

ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

After a robust advocacy push from Minnesota's and the nation's soybean farmers, the U.S. EPA reviewed its proposed label amendment and has now approved the use of Enlist One and Enlist Duo in 134 additional counties, including six Minnesota counties, providing growers with additional weed management options for the 2022 growing season. The EPA said the announcement underscores its commitment to working with stakeholders when new information becomes available to make regulatory decisions that reflect the best available science and protect human health and the environment.

Now, farmers throughout Minnesota will have a chance to safely use this product in battling yield-damaging weeds. Clay, Marshall, Polk, Redwood, Renville and Stearns counties can all now apply Enlist Duo in 2022.

In March 2022, Corteva also submitted a label amendment to propose use of Enlist Duo in six Minnesota counties. EPA previously prohibited use in these counties because the Agency expected that the use of Enlist Duo would likely jeopardize the Eastern Massasauga rattle snake exposed on-field. However, EPA's prior analyses were based on FWS's 2020 species range maps. EPA subsequently learned that FWS updated their species range map in 2021, which shows that the Eastern Massasauga rattle snake is no longer present in Minnesota. Therefore, EPA has now determined that the prohibition of Enlist Duo in these counties is no longer necessary.

North Dakota Department of Agriculture: Avian Influenza demands increased vigilance

With avian influenza spreading throughout the country and confirmed cases in wild birds and domestic poultry in neighboring states, North Dakota residents should not attempt to assist, move, rehabilitate or dispatch wild birds and should avoid bringing wildlife home. Poultry owners should practice increased biosecurity to help protect their birds.

"To date, there have been nearly 450 detections in wild birds and 51 detections in commercial and backyard flocks throughout the country," Agriculture Commissioner Doug

Goehring said. "In 2015, North Dakota had two cases of H5 HPAI in Dickey and LaMoure counties, affecting well over 100,000 birds combined. Producers learned firsthand the hardship this virus can cause."

Poultry owners should immediately report unusual death loss, a drop in egg production or sick birds to their local veterinarian to decrease the impact HPAI may have on the region. Hunters who are also bird owners should dress game birds in the field whenever possible and use dedicated footwear and tools to clean game that are not used on their property or near the coop.

Centers for Disease Control considers the risk to people from HPAI infections to be low despite the disease often being fatal for birds. No human infections with the viruses have been detected in the U.S. and birds from infected flocks do not enter the food system.

The United States has the strongest avian influenza surveillance program in the world, and the USDA is working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations. More information about avian influenza is available at www.nd.gov/ndda/disease/avian-influenza and from the USDA-APHIS at www.aphis.usda.gov.

South Dakota holding 2022 Governor's Ag Summit

The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) has announced speakers and tour locations for the 2022 Governor's Agricultural Summit (Ag Summit). The two-day event will be June 22-23 in Brookings, S.D., at the Oscar Larson Performing Arts Center on South Dakota State University's campus.

Joining keynote speakers Chris Koch and Greg Ibach on the agenda is Dr. Brent Gloy and Amanda Radke.

Dr. Gloy, an agricultural economist, will discuss how supply constraints are shaping agricultural markets and provide an overview of the financial condition of the agriculture industry. Amanda Radke, a fifth-generation rancher from Mitchell, will be the Master of Ceremonies and present "How Agriculture Can Lead a Nation Through

Challenging Times." She will challenge the audience to look for new business opportunities and find innovative ways to add value to their operation.

Day two of the conference includes tours highlighting innovations in South Dakota's agriculture industry. Participants will visit the robotic milking facility at the Orland Ridge Dairy near Madison, SD. Other stops include South Dakota State research facilities, including the Swine Education and Research Facility and the Animal Disease and Research Diagnostic Laboratory.

The agenda for this year's Ag Summit includes an ag-economic market outlook, policy updates, industry tours and producer recognition. The updated agenda and registration information is available online at <https://danr.sd.gov/AgSummit/>. The event is free and open to all.

Buckwheat: A Hazard to Montana's export markets

As farmers prepare for spring planting, the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee is reminding producers to ensure that wheat shipments destined for export are buckwheat-free. Montana exports 60-80% of its wheat to countries located in the Pacific Rim. Since Asian countries are large importers of Montana wheat, it is important that producers and handlers understand the serious health risk and potential economic impact posed by buckwheat.

Tame buckwheat is a deadly allergen in Asian countries. It is often compared to peanut allergies, carrying different levels of reaction severity, ranging from mild to extreme. The

United States has taken precautionary measures to provide allergen safety in labeling, such as zero tolerance for unlabeled allergen exposure, which are the same efforts taken for exporting food ingredients.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) has provided guidelines on this issue: "Use of buckwheat must be excluded from cover crops planting in rotation or adjacent to fields with wheat production or abstain from growing wheat as a commodity for 2 calendar years after planting buckwheat."

There is zero tolerance for export elevator deliveries exposed to buckwheat. Following an exposure, grain elevators may extend their rejection to refuse future deliveries from certain producers, meaning it is crucial that producers do not expose their operation to buckwheat in any form. 🌾



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