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BIOFUELS: CLEAN ENERGY FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

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Cover Story

For nearly 30 years, the North Dakota Grains Association has welcomed the EPA on the annual E-Tour, giving agency officials an in depth look at the complexities and geographical diversities of North Dakota agriculture. See page 16. Photo courtesy of NDGGA.



Against the Grain

In the summertime

A lot can change between issues of Prairie Grains Magazine. Our production schedule is a bit frontloaded: We publish each month from January through the April-May issue before pausing for several months during the growing season. My last column led off bemoaning a blizzard that blanketed our region; today, as I pen this column on a balmy July morning with harvest just around the corner, we're mired in a drought and the "real feel" temperature is due to exceed 90 degrees.

As the kids say: Life comes at you fast.

Wheat acres are declining, geopolitical factors in Russia and Ukraine have thrown markets into the flux and many Great Plains farmers are enduring a third straight year of drought conditions. Nonetheless, the Minnesota Wheat team and our industry partners from across the region and country keep on keeping on by accentuating the positive – with an eye on the future.

As you'll read in these pages, our industry has kept busy this summer. In June, our friends at the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA) continued their annual "E-Tour" with the EPA, which helps regulatory officials better understand

the practices farmers apply to be good stewards of the land. NDGGA also said goodbye to its longtime Executive Director, Dan Wogslund. We appreciated working with Dan throughout the years and will miss engaging with him at events like the Prairie Grains Conference. We also look forward to working with his successor, Kayla Pulvermacher. In this issue, we also visit with Kent Kupfner, the newest executive vice president of the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee and check in with our colleagues in South Dakota.

On the Minnesota front, we made up for lost time this spring and summer after a prolonged winter. Our summer was spent advocating for a new Farm Bill, which expires at the end of September. We focused on checkoff-supported research projects at the On-Farm Research Network, hosted international trade teams and attended U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) board meetings in Minneapolis, where we toasted Rhonda K. Larson for a job



Mike Gunderson

well done as USW chair.

In my final months as president of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, we'll convene as a board and meet with our lobbying team to plot our policy priorities for 2024 after a legislative session that, quite frankly, fared better than expected

– thanks to policy champions like Senate Ag Chair Aric Putnam. But with a lack of rural legislators returning to St. Paul, we can't let our guard down. That's why CEO Charlie Vogel attended events at this year's Farmfest and visited with state and federal legislators to make sure Minnesota Wheat is involved in important policy discussions.

From my operation to yours, I wish you all a safe and profitable harvest. Before you know it, we'll bundle up, scrape the ice off our windshields and find ourselves swapping stories at the Prairie Grains Conference Dec. 13-14 in Grand Forks. Until then, keep your eyes on the prize.

Mike Gunderson farms in Bejou and is president of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers 🌾



TAMING THE BULLS



BY BETSY JENSEN

& BEARS

T.I.N.A.

Does everyone know about T.I.N.A.? It is a highly technical term for There Is No Alternative. Maybe not highly technical but easy to understand. What can we do when backed into a corner and there are no good alternatives?

T.I.N.A. was brought up during a discussion about land investors. For several years, land was a good investment because T.I.N.A. Now that interest rates have risen, there may be better investment alternatives. Low risk investments like CDs or money market funds are offering respectable returns. Farmland may no longer be the best investment because there are alternatives.

Farmers buy land even though there are many different places to invest our money, such as machinery, bins, storage or drain tile. We are not looking for quick returns, so I would not classify land as T.I.N.A. for active farmers.

In farming we have different kinds of T.I.N.A. When planning for harvest, some farmers have no alternatives but to deliver their crop at harvest. That is typically the worst time to deliver but when storage is limited, T.I.N.A. If you need to deliver at harvest, advance planning ahead is essential.

Sometimes we need to be creative

with crop marketing. When it seems like T.I.N.A., there may be several alternatives. When we must deliver at harvest, we can lock in futures a year in advance and set a basis target. If we build a bin or end up with a short crop, we can roll the futures ahead. Having to deliver at harvest doesn't mean we have to price at harvest.

I also hear farmer frustration with the amount of time it takes to stay up to date on crop marketing. Checking local bids, reading market commentary, listening to closing markets - there is no time especially during the busy season. Too many farmers ignore crop marketing during busy season because T.I.N.A. There aren't enough hours in a day to get everything done.

There are plenty of marketing specialists you can hire to watch the markets when you are busy or utilize a Good Till Canceled order. Always have an order placed so you don't have to watch the markets. If you are happy with a price on the day you place the order, be thankful if it gets filled. There is no need to watch the markets every day, especially when you are dusty, hot and crabby from unplugging the combine.

There is one T.I.N.A. for which I don't have a viable alternative. There are years when prices will not exceed your cost of production. There are years when expenses will exceed revenue. The best you can do is save cash during

the profitable years, diversify your crops and hope something is profitable and market to minimize losses. According to our farm management data, wheat has lost money two out of the past ten years. If I look back 20 years, it has lost money three times and made less than \$20 per acre eight times. And that's before a labor and management charge. Forty percent of the time you worked hard to make less than \$20 an acre. It's hard to make principal payments and family living on \$20 an acre.

We have many alternatives if we plan ahead. We run into T.I.N.A. when we fail to plan. There are so many marketing tools, many months and sometimes years to make decisions and people who are willing to help you develop a plan. If you are ever forced to sell because of storage or cash flow, it likely means you did not have a plan.

There is one T.I.N.A. phone call I love, and those are the harvest calls when a farmer has a bumper crop and runs out of storage. You can sign a deferred price contract and let it ride, but contract and storage fees can add up quickly. If they are bonus bushels, cash out and be grateful.

I hope your biggest T.I.N.A. for 2023 is a bumper crop and not enough storage. What a wonderful problem to have.

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



Betsy Jensen

SUPPLYING VALUE

Minnesota Wheat increases trade team activity

By Sydney Harris

Quality relationships are the foundation of solid partnerships.

Hosting trade teams is one way that relationships are cultivated, building stronger alliances for U.S. wheat exports. When members of a trade team return to their home countries, they share stories of visiting farms and getting to meet the farmers who grow wheat. They value putting a face – and a farm and field – with the quality wheat that comes from the U.S., along with the educational materials and technical information they receive.

This summer, the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council (MWRPC) hosted three trade teams – more than double their usual total – from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

“These are 100% for relationship building,” said MWRPC Executive Director Charlie Vogel. “When you don’t have the luxury of being the cheapest wheat in the world – when you’re the most expensive wheat in the world – you have to upsell on the relationships, technical services and quality. That’s what these trade teams are all about.”

In coordination with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), trade teams come to the U.S. and are given a thorough look at the supply chain – from the farm to the local elevator to grain transportation hubs to port facilities and everything in between. With a long history of being a dependable supplier of wheat, trade teams allow its members to explore regional and national efforts to ensure a stable and reliable U.S. wheat crop.

The first delegation in 2023 to visit the “Land of 10,000 Lakes” was from the Caribbean. Traveling to multiple corners of the state, the team began its visit in Duluth where they toured the Port of Duluth-Superior and learned about the St. Lawrence Seaway’s potential.

“Being able to go to the Port of Duluth and see its facilities was an integral part of this trade team,” Vogel said. “The St. Lawrence Seaway has great export opportunities and they saw just how underutilized it is.”

After their visit to the North Shore, the group headed to Elbow Lake, where they met with Minnesota wheat grower and MWRPC Area 2 Director Scott Swenson on his farm.

“It was fun to see how excited they were to climb up in the machinery and see an actual wheat field,” Swenson said. “Every market is important. We have the opportunity to get more business out of South America so it’s essential that we nurture our relationship with them.”

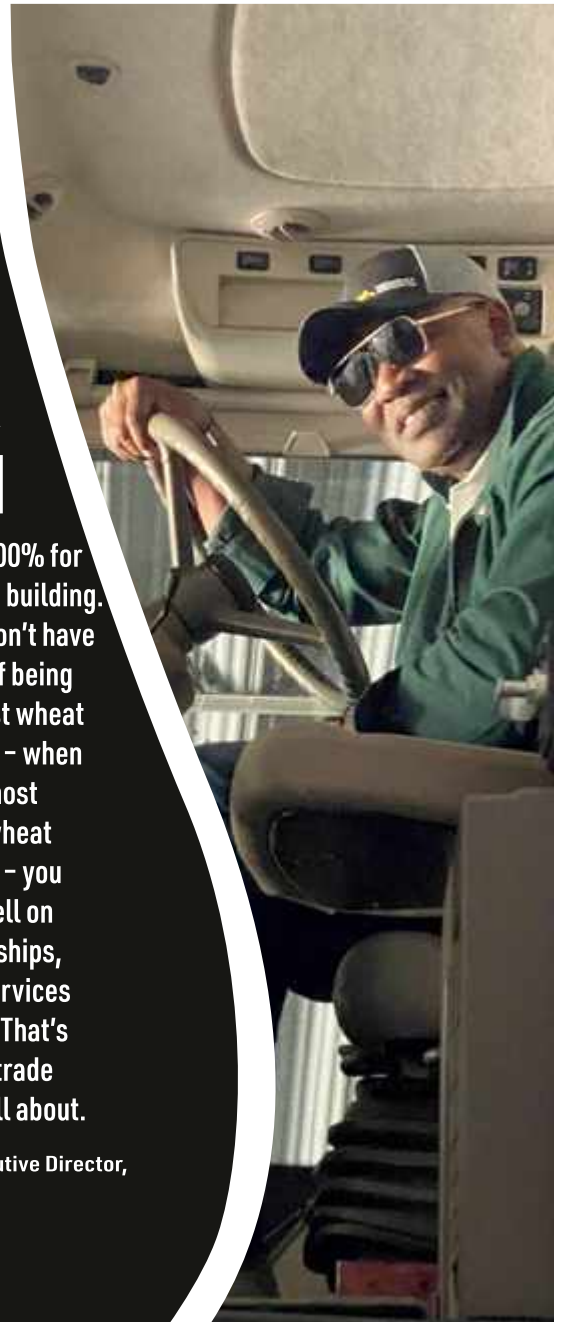
To commemorate their time spent on the farm, the trade team was gifted John Deere hats from the local dealership and enjoyed fresh baked cookies from Scott’s wife, Michelle.



“

These are 100% for relationship building. When you don’t have the luxury of being the cheapest wheat in the world – when you’re the most expensive wheat in the world – you have to upsell on the relationships, technical services and quality. That’s what these trade teams are all about.

–MWRPC Executive Director, Charlie Vogel





Minnesota Wheat's Charlie Vogel (far left) joins the Caribbean delegation on a tour of the Port of Duluth-Superior.

In summer 2023, the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council highlighted the quality of U.S. wheat and toured various facilities and ports while hosting three international trade teams from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.



Vice President of Operations Coreen Berdahl (far right) welcomes sub-Saharan Africa officials to Minnesota.

Walking the line

The sub-Saharan Africa team kicked off its visit to Minnesota in the Twin Cities, where they visited Buhler and CHS before touring the ports of Savage. While at CHS, Ryan Caffrey, vice president of global wheat trading and risk management, gave a market outlook; Caffrey manages risk for all global wheat positioning and origination trade teams located in the major wheat growing areas of the United States, Black Sea, Danube, South America and Australia.

They wrapped up the day by meeting with a representative from StoneX, an “institutional-grade financial services network that connects companies, organizations, traders and investors to the global markets ecosystem through a unique blend of digital platforms, end-to-end clearing and execution services, high-touch service and deep expertise.”

The trade team experience was a first for MWRPC Vice President of Operations Coreen Berdahl.

“I’d never been to any of the facilities we visited so that alone was a great experience for me,” Berdahl said. After stops in the Twin Cities, the delegation headed to Duluth to tour the Port of Duluth-Superior, making sure to squeeze in a little sightseeing.

As she handed the trade team off to North Dakota to continue its trip, Berdahl hoped that they were able to form a complete picture of the value chain.

“I think it’s important for those purchasing the wheat to get to see where it’s actually coming from,” Berdahl said. “It’s important that we give them the opportunity to shake the hands of the people they work with on a daily basis and strengthen those relationships.”

Along with visiting Ardent Mills, the Southeast Asian trade team connected with Jim Anderson, a University of Minnesota spring wheat breeder.

“We also have the trade teams meet with Jim Anderson, going through his plots and the wheat breeding process to emphasize the inverse relationship between quality and yield,” Vogel said. “We’re really trying to walk that line. We’re developing varieties that are competitive that the farmer wants to grow but also has enough yield and maintains the quality needed by the end user.”

As the trade teams boarded their flights home, MWRPC hopes they were reminiscing on all that Minnesota and U.S.-grown wheat have to offer. 🌾



HOLDING THE LINE

In 2023, the best advocacy offense was a good defense

By Drew Lyon

Few, if any, Minnesota farm groups would say they checked off all their policy priorities during the 2023 legislative session. But the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers (MAWG) managed expectations in a contentious legislative environment, found inroads where they could with the Democratic majority and emerged with numerous policy wins to bring home to its membership base.

“Overall, we came out in pretty decent shape,” MAWG President Mike Gunderson said.

While the board worked with ag groups and legislative leaders to promote policy, it also helped prevent harmful legislation from reaching Gov. Tim Walz’s desk.

“It was a very good year of defense,” MAWG CEO Charlie Vogel said. “That’s half the battle.”

Bruce Kleven, who lobbies on behalf of MAWG, said Sen. Aric Putnam, chair of the Senate Ag Committee, emerged as a key supporter of Minnesota agriculture. Putnam, a college communications professor, made clear at the session’s start that he arrived as ag chair with little farming background. Instead, he relied on farmer

feedback to help shape the committee’s policy proposals.

“He has turned out to be pretty levelheaded regarding ag policy and interested in what we have to say,” Kleven said. “Sen. Putnam is naturally inquisitive and genuinely wanted to work with the ag groups.”

Sen. Putnam was instrumental in working with MAWG and other farm groups on treated seed regulations. A House proposal would’ve created a regulatory program overseen by the commissioner of agriculture with producers having to prove a need to use the treated seed, but the senator helped remove the proposal in conference committee.

“He took that seriously and said, ‘We’re not doing that.’” Kleven said.

The second component of the treated seed discussion involved proper disposal of seeds expired beyond their germination date. MAWG asserts that the legislature should decide the Pollution Control Agency’s authority, not the agency.

“We’re monitoring this very carefully over the interim,” Kleven said, “and we’ll put in comments if necessary.”

MAWG supported the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, which increases the credit amount for eligible sales



Senate Ag Chair Aric Putnam (far left) looks on as Gov. Tim Walz signs the Ag Omnibus Bill into law. Minnesota Wheat advocates applaud Sen. Putnam and House Ag Chair Rep. Samantha Vang (far right), for engaging with farmers throughout the 2023 legislative session.

of agricultural assets (farmland, machinery, etc.) to 12% for sales to socially disadvantaged farmers and 8% for sales to other beginning farmers. In addition, the bill boosts the maximum credit amount to \$50,000 for eligible sales and expands eligibility to include the sale of assets between family members.

The organization also applauded the passage of the agricultural homestead tax credit, which increased from \$1.14 million to \$3.5 million due to spikes in land value over the past decade.

“That tax credit is really going to make a difference for farm families,” Gunderson said.

Wins and setbacks

Thanks to MAWG’s leadership, the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) – in legislation carried by Sen. Robert Kupec – received its first funding bump in several years, from \$94,000 over the biennium to \$120,000.

“NCI is very near and dear to our hearts, and we were pleased to see

the legislature continues supporting this program,” Gunderson said.

The legislature also approved a funding increase for the Department of Agriculture’s international trade program. Minnesota ranks fourth nationwide in agriculture exports, with Minnesota wheat farmers generating over \$200 million in shipments each year.

“Exports are so critical to our industry, and we all felt MDA needed more resources to compete with other state’s international marketing budgets,” Gunderson said.

One key piece of legislation that MAWG and business leaders couldn’t stop was Paid Family Leave, which grants workers as much as 12 weeks to care for a newborn, along with 12 weeks off in the event of their own illness. The program begins in 2026 and will be funded through a .7% payroll tax on employers.

“That’s a big one that gives a lot of groups heartburn,” Kleven said. “It’s

going to hit everyone.”

Kleven’s consternation was eased by the calm leadership of Gunderson, who was first elected MAWG president in 2021.

“Mike’s been a good president,” Kleven said. “He’s always been very interested in legislation.”

Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen remained a key champion, both publicly and behind the scenes, throughout the session.

“He knows what the ag groups do and don’t like,” Kleven said. “The commissioner is a steady hand on the wheel; he’s part of the negotiations in the final bill. We know he does a lot behind the scenes.”

The 2024 legislative session begins Feb. 12. In the meantime, dialogue with legislative leaders on both sides of the aisle will be crucial.

“The rural-urban divide is real, and we have a lot of engagement opportunities with our urban brethren,” Vogel said. 🌾

A CLASS ACT

Growers honor Rhonda K. Larson during USW summer meetings



Outgoing Chair Rhonda K. Larson is honored by her peers during U.S. Wheat Associates' summer board meeting in Minneapolis.

By Sydney Harris

Wheat growers spend their days making decisions that directly impact their farm – which variety to plant, when to sell their crop, which color tractor to buy.

The list goes on.

That's why it only makes sense that farmer-leaders are the ones making decisions that affect wheat producers across the country. Those grower-directors gathered in Minneapolis in July for the U.S. Wheat Associates' (USW) 2023 summer board meeting.

'An incredible experience'

When a passionate leader is at the helm, an organization thrives. For the past year, Rhonda K. Larson was that passionate leader, expertly navigating the role of USW chairperson.

To commemorate Larson's year serving as chairperson, USW and the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council held a reception in Larson's honor. Representatives from Minnesota Wheat – including Council Chair Tim Dufault; Vice Chair Mark Jossund; Secretary Peter Hvidsten; Treasurer Mikayla Tabert; Directors Kevin Leiser and Scott Swenson; and Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers President

Mike Gunderson and Directors Erik Younggren and Steve Lacey, along with staff leaders – were all on hand to salute Larson, who farms in East Grand Forks.

“Rhonda is everything you want in an ag leader: studious, positive and collaborative,” said Dufault, who, along with Larson and Jossund, represents Minnesota on USW. “She’s served Minnesota Wheat and USW with excellence, and we’re so proud to have her on the team, both as a director and friend.”

At the reception, guests roamed around the Bell Museum, taking in Minnesota’s official natural history museum and planetarium after a short program honoring Larson, who will remain MWRPC’s Area 1 director.

“She might be stepping down as chairperson, but she’s not done,” said Darren Padget, USW past chairman. “She’s just moving aside and will still be involved. It’s been a privilege to serve with her. Rhonda, thank you. We appreciate your service.”

As she passed the gavel to Oklahoma grower Michael Peters, who will serve as the 2023/24 chair, Larson reminisced on the year.

“Thank you all for having the faith in me to represent you,” Larson said. “It’s been an incredible experience, with world travel opportunities. I encourage everyone to go on a trip and see it for yourself. And, I can’t say enough about the staff here at USW. They were there every step of the way, and they do their work so well. Thank you.”

Building sustainability awareness

Customers no longer blindly grab goods from the shelf. What they buy matters and where it comes from matters even more. That’s why USW is committed to being transparent with their customers and evolving their corporate social

responsibility framework, which began in 2015 when they joined the U.S. Sustainability Alliance and published their “USW – A Global Leader in Sustainability” fact sheet.

“We need our customers to know that our growers are already doing the right thing,” said USW Vice President of Communications Steve Mercer. “They’re already growing sustainably.”

To continue its sustainability awareness journey, USW launched their “Stories of Stewardship” series, putting farmers front and center in the story. And, with many definitions of sustainability flooding the industry, they’ve defined what the buzzword means to USW: “Farming in a way that sustains the economic viability of their family’s operation to produce safe, wholesome wheat for the world, while ensuring the land is passed on in better condition for the next generation.”

Ill-gotten gains

With roughly five percent of wheat exports dedicated to food aid, USW invests time and energy to ensure a strong position against competing wheat-producing countries, including developing a food aid working group.

continued on page 12



Oklahoma farmer Michael Peters (far right) replaces Rhonda K. Larson as USW chair. Idaho grower Clark Hamilton (far left) moves to vice chairman, while North Dakota’s Jim Pellman will serve as secretary-treasurer.

USW's Mission

U.S. Wheat Associates is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry, promoting the reliability, quality and value of all six U.S. wheat classes to wheat buyers, millers, bakers, food processors and government officials in more than 100 countries around the world.

A vast majority of aid is sent to Ethiopia, the second most populous country in Africa, with more than 1.7 million metric tons (MMT) of hard red winter wheat (HRW) donated since 2020. Unfortunately, all U.S. aid has been indefinitely suspended after it was discovered earlier this summer that food aid intended for underserved Ethiopians was being stolen and sold on the local market.

During the meeting, the food aid working group received an update on the situation from USW Director of Trade Policy Peter Laudeman.

"It's a huge disappointment to see this type of theft occur," Laudeman said. "We've been working really hard to visit with USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to try and get a picture of what the future of HRW exports is going to be since this is a substantial market."

A main concern about the suspended shipments is where the wheat intended for Ethiopia will be diverted.

"When we look at replacement markets for Ethiopia, there is no immediate substitute," Laudeman said. "U.S. food aid is mainly going to Ethiopia and Yemen. Yemen was receiving all soft whites and Ethiopia was all hard red winter. I doubt there's going to be a substantial permanent replacement opportunity."

But there is a bright side.

Though a portion of the donated wheat was stolen, roughly half of that wheat still landed in the laps of those severely affected by famine. And above all, food is being provided somewhere that there otherwise wouldn't be food – even if some of it was being sold illegally – versus donating cash, which is virtually untraceable once it's delivered. In

FY22, the U.S. gave \$1.5 billion in aid to Ethiopia with two-thirds of that being food, feeding an estimated 12 million people.

"It's more important to deliver food to people that need it than cash," Laudeman said. "You don't know where the cash is going or if there's food really available on the market to purchase with it."

As the situation evolves and more details are uncovered, USW will remain vigilant in protecting U.S. wheat growers and their interests in the food aid sector.

What's in store?

To round out the meeting, USW President Vince Peterson addressed the group, providing an overview of the past year and an outlook for the year ahead. Along with Peterson, various guest speakers gave industry updates.

Wading through the positives and the negatives affecting the domestic and global wheat industry, Peterson highlighted that 13 of the top 20 U.S. export markets increased purchases in 2022/23 by nearly 2 MMT with eight USW offices operating in those 13 countries. Peterson addressed the negatives, like June U.S. wheat ending stocks falling six percent below last year and the lowest since 2007/08, head on, refusing to shy away from the challenge.

"We look forward to taming future challenges together," Peterson said. 🌾



MWRPC Chair Tim Dufault (right) also chairs the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) and is pictured here visiting with NCI Director Mark Jirik during a tour of the Minneapolis Port.

SUPPORTING THE WHEAT NETWORK

Following the USW board meeting, farmers and industry leaders, including MWRPC Chair Tim Dufault, embarked on a Northern Crops Institute-led tour of the Minneapolis Port. The tour included a cruise of the Mississippi River and visits to an intermodal yard, CHS' barge-loading facility and CHS' headquarters in Inver Grove Heights.

"A big part of our role is showing overseas buyers the U.S. infrastructure," NCI Director Mark Jirik said. "Part of that is also making sure our U.S. partners – our farmers and our industry partners – understand there's an entire network supporting each other and making sure that our overseas customers, our buyers for U.S. wheat, understand that the industry is here to support them as well."

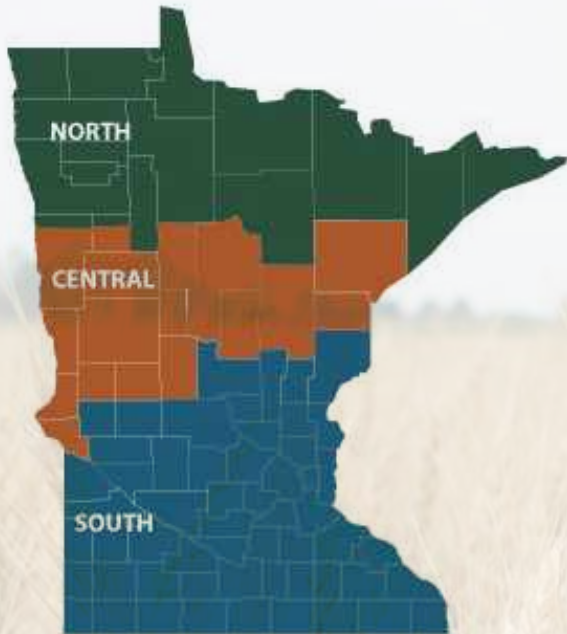
2023 Minnesota Wheat Varieties

We would like to thank all of the Minnesota wheat producers who responded to our annual wheat variety survey. The results of this survey help guide our U of M spring wheat breeder, Jim Anderson, in developing suitable varieties for production in Minnesota.

The results of the survey depict what varieties are most popular, and what characteristics are most important to you as growers.

Survey Findings:

- WB9590 was the most popular variety statewide, with 24% of the acreage planted in 2023.
- Second most popular was MN-Torgy with 19% of the state's acreage.
- Third on the list was SY Valda at 9%, followed by WB9479 at 7% and MN-Rothsay at 6%.
- In the northern growing regions of the state, WB9590 was the most popular variety with 28%.
- MN-Torgy was the most popular variety in the central growing region, with 36% of the acres planted.
- In the southern region, MN-Torgy was first on the list at 39% acres planted.



This survey is conducted from the check-off funds collected by the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council.



2023 TOP FIVE VARIETIES BY ACRES STATEWIDE IN MINNESOTA



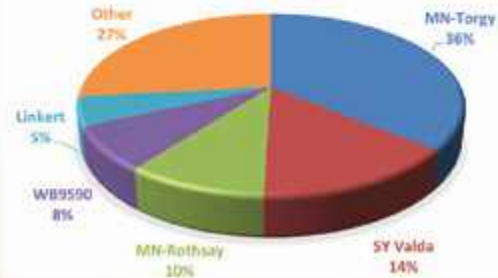
Total Acres Surveyed: 332,435

2023 TOP FIVE VARIETIES BY ACRES IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



Total Acres Surveyed: 265,267

2023 TOP FIVE VARIETIES BY ACRES IN CENTRAL MINNESOTA



Total Acres Surveyed: 64,027

2023 TOP FIVE VARIETIES BY ACRES IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA



Total Acres Surveyed: 3,141



A welcome 'asset'

New Montana Wheat and Barley Committee Exec. VP hits the ground running



By Cassidy Strommen

If there's one component that new Executive Vice President Kent Kupfner wants people to know about the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee (MWBC), it's that the farmer-driven organization helps lead the state's agriculture industry.

"We're proud to represent production agriculture and wheat and barley growers around the state, and we're confident that the product that we produce is consistent and reliable and of high quality," said Kupfner, who began his leadership role with MWBC in November 2022.

The committee was created in 1967 after the Montana Legislature responded to state wheat farmers' requests for a self-help market development program, resulting in the MWBC, a refundable checkoff program. In 1973, a refundable barley checkoff was added and the organization changed its name to reflect both commodities.

A half-century later, the committee continues promoting the same priority areas that helped establish MWBC and helps oversee an industry that generates over \$4 billion in economic value. Checkoff funds are invested into research projects, market development and education services that directly benefit Montana wheat and barley growers.

Kupfner holds those values near and dear to his heart. Before joining the MWBC team, Kupfner bought and sold commodities and managed logistics for grain elevators. His commercial grain trading experience made him an ideal fit for MWBC.

"I am relatively new to that position, but certainly not new to the grain industry," Kupfner said. "I spent 30 years in the commercial grain industry, and most of that has been in

Montana, so I am able to promote and represent U.S. wheat and specifically Montana wheat in the marketplace."

Kupfner takes direction from seven farmer directors who represent districts across Montana. The farmers set the budget and help determine the directions they would like to see the committee take. Kupfner's collaboration with the board is essential to upholding the committee's mission.

"Kent brings a lot of experience to the table," said Denise Conover, a Broadview farmer who chairs MWBC. "It has been a very smooth transition because he knows how the process works, especially when talking to overseas buyers. He is truly an asset to the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee."

The 2023 growing season has been a relatively good one for Montana wheat and barley growers, having received more rain this growing season than in previous years. With the expected increase in bushels, Kupfner is excited to invest more checkoff dollars toward research projects, market development and education services.

"We're definitely seeing a large rebound in production for spring wheat, barley, durum and winter wheat, and so our gross revenues will certainly be higher. We will certainly handle that influx of money judiciously," Kupfner said. "What that allows us to do is rebuild some of our reserves that we've dipped into. It'll just help finance our overall mission."

The committee is looking forward to upcoming visits from trade teams, including groups from Southeast Asia, Korea, Japan and Mexico. Teams will be hosted across the state, especially in the north-central "Golden Triangle" where grain production is the most heavily concentrated in Montana. 🌾



PRESSING ON

S.D. Wheat Growers Association continues advocacy push despite headwinds

By Drew Lyon

As the 2023 hard red spring wheat harvest began in South Dakota, growers searched for silver linings amid disagreeable moisture patterns, low prices and a persistent decline in acres.

“It was dry early, and our row crops look excellent now,” said Doug Simons, who farms spring and winter hard wheat, corn and soybeans in St. Lawrence and serves as president of the South Dakota Wheat Growers Association (SDWGA). “We’re in good shape, but the wheat got hurt some because we were pushing 90 (degrees) in May and June and that doesn’t do the wheat any good.”

In South Dakota, wheat acres are about equally divided between winter and spring wheat. As of mid-July, winter wheat yields were down nearly 20% in South Dakota and spring wheat yields had dropped by 29%, although Simons reported some growers have fared relatively decent during harvest. Many farmers either used the wheat for hay or replanted.

“We’ve seen a decline in the wheat the past six or so years, and that looks to continue this year,” said SDWGA Executive Director Caren Assman, adding that she’s advising growers to stick with a four-crop rotation. “It’s been a challenge.”

But the organization, which lobbies for farm-friendly policy in Pierre and Washington, D.C., continues its efforts to advocate for South Dakota producers as the upcoming Farm Bill takes shape in Congress. Simons said he’s urged lawmakers to expand the farm safety net.

“(The Farm Bill) has been our biggest push,” said Simons, who represents South Dakota on the National Association of Wheat Growers. “We’re trying to get our ducks in a row

because there’s no bigger importance right now than the Farm Bill because our reference prices are so low compared to the cost of production.”

Members don’t need to worry about SDWGA’s ability to communicate with federal legislators. Assman, who’s served about 15 total years across two stints as SDWGA executive director, has established connections with lawmakers going back decades.

“I’ve lobbied with Sen. (Mike) Rounds since he was governor and with Sen. (John) Thune when we were both in the Capitol,” she said. “We have a great relationship over my 40 years in association management. We’re in constant contact all year long.”

The best way wheat producers can support SDWGA’s policy initiatives is to become a member. A 1-year membership is only \$100, while a 3-year membership (\$250) costs less than 25 cents per day.

“We’re advocates for wheat growers and if you don’t have someone speaking for you, you get left behind,” said Simons, who farms with his brothers Dennis and Dean and nephew Sam. “The money is going to get spent in Washington, D.C. – we know that – so it’s our job to get our share for wheat growers.”

Following harvest, SDWGA turns its attention to the annual Ag Horizons Conference Dec. 5-6 in Pierre featuring keynote speaker Naomi Blohm, a senior market advisor with Total Farm Marketing. Growers will also gather for SDWGA’s annual meeting and set their 2024 policy agenda.

“There are lots of factors out of our control,” Assman said, “but everything we do is designed to help our members and our industry.”🌾

COMMON GRO

N.D. farmers create connections with EPA

By Drew Lyon

Over the course of nearly 30 years, North Dakota agriculture's "E-Tour" with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has helped the agency strengthen its connections with farmers and better understand the diversity of the state's farming industry.

"It's established credibility," said Doug Goehring, commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture. "We show that we can't take a one-size-fits-all approach, and I got to tell you, we get such great feedback."

North Dakota, with its 13 different microclimates and roughly 50 different commodities, boasts a unique geographic landscape. Ninety percent of the state's land is agriculture-based.

"We all learn at the EPA every time we come up to North Dakota about the diversity of crops grown there," said Mark Smith, EPA's deputy regional administrator for EPA's Region 8 office in Denver, Colo. "It's really unprecedented anywhere else in the United States."

The E-Tour is hosted by the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA) and brings together leaders

from across North Dakota livestock and commodity groups, including wheat, barley, soybeans, corn and sugarbeets. This year's tour took place in late June in the Williston area in northwest North Dakota.

"We've kind of got it down to a science," said NDGGA President Ed Kessel, who grows winter and spring wheat, barley, corn, sunflowers and other specialty crops near Belfield, N.D. "There was a lot of good interaction with the group."

Typically, the multiday tour starts with an overview of the state's rich agriculture history from Commissioner Goehring, who has served in his post since 2009. In past years, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum has also participated in the introduction.

"That gives us the opportunity to talk about different production systems from east to west and our row crop production," Goehring said. "That catches their attention."

Of course, farm visits are also marquee events of the E-Tour.

"They get a chance to look at the equipment and it all pulls together," Goehring said.

In lighter moments, EPA officials have a chance to experience farming's mechanical complexities, Smith said.

"It's fun to see some of our D.C. folks drive a four-track and laugh when they let the clutch out too quickly in front of the governor," said Smith, who grew up on a Kansas farm.

Flyover country

For the EPA officials and farmers alike, an aerial view of the wetlands in North Dakota's Prairie Pothole Region is a tour highlight.

"That's the best part of the tour," Kessel said. "We show them the landscape to show them how we mitigate wetlands and different areas, and what a 100-foot, 200-foot buffer looks like and how that impacts farmers."

During the plane tour, Commissioner Goehring used a map to explain to EPA administrators the region's uniqueness.

"It was pretty neat," said Paul Di Salvo, a wildlife biologist and senior regulatory specialist with EPA. "It was interesting to see how expansive these prairie pothole regions are on the landscape, and we also had some good discussions on the challenges facing farmers around those areas."

Di Salvo, who was joined by nine other EPA employees, said the plane ride highlighted the variety of North Dakota's economy, from canola fields to wind farms to oil rigs.



NDGGA's E-Tour affords EPA officials the opportunity to see the technology farmers use to apply best management practices.



UND



“The landscape really uses so many different types of resources,” he said, “and you just see so many different types of grain crops.” Growers also showed how their production practices are complicated by the Endangered Species Act.

“With the (act) in the mix already, how’s that going to impact us? We wanted to get feedback from them and demonstrate our concerns we have when we started having to use different maps for being able to apply pesticides,” Kessel said.

The tour later visited with North Dakota Extension in Minot to learn more about how farmers use the latest technology to safely apply herbicides.

“We’re spending a lot of money on technology,” said Kessel, who was joined by several of his fellow NDGGA board members. “Farmers are doing the work that they do because we’re on the land and it’s important to us. We’re here to take care of it.”

50 years of progress

Beyond the educational component, the E-Tour is a chance for farmers and EPA leaders to engage on a personal level, not only while visiting farms and research centers, but during meals and breaks in the action.

“It gives us a chance to show from EPA’s standpoint that we’re not faceless bureaucrats and for some of us, we’re not even in the D.C. office at all,” said Smith, who’s worked with the agency for over 30 years and participated in the 2022 E-Tour. “And our staff is gaining an understanding that agriculture is a way of life in North Dakota and its importance to rural communities and families.”

Smith commended NDGGA for creating an environment that’s conducive to nonconfrontational dialogue.

“They work very hard to foster a personal engagement, which builds trust and a better exchange of ideas,” he said. “The North Dakota Grain Growers really know what they’re doing in terms of organizing this tour.”

Dan Wogsland, NDGGA’s recently retired executive director, said the tour has positively affected how EPA implements its regulation.

“I’m convinced that when the EPA go back to their respective communities and someone says, ‘This is what they’re doing in North Dakota,’ and they’ll say, ‘That’s not what I saw.’ It creates a better understanding between North Dakota and the EPA, especially in light of the Endangered Species Act and pesticide registration,” Wogsland said.

Next year will mark 30 years of the E-Tour. While regulatory action isn’t perfect, Di Salvo said EPA and farmers continue working together to preserve the land and the family farm.

“Farmers are putting those best practices into place the best they can, and in the past 50 years, we’ve come a long way to make sure people are protected,” he said. “Progress marches on.” 🌾

NDGGA E-Tour visits Howe Seed Farm in Casselton, N.D.





A PEOPLE PERSON

Dan Wogsland calls it a career

By Drew Lyon

Throughout a respected career in legislative advocacy, Dan Wogsland always made everyone he encountered feel like a friend.

“When Dan was in a room, he had a presence,” said North Dakota farmer Ed Kessel, president of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA). “When he laughed, you could pick that up from a thousand miles away. He’s going to be missed.”

Wogsland’s infectious laughter still reverberates far and wide, just on the golf course instead of a boardroom or legislative office. In June 2023, Wogsland retired as NDGGA executive director after 19 years at the helm. During his career, he never forgot that the agriculture industry is centered around working toward a common goal while building relationships across political stripes, commodities, languages and countries.

“We’re in the people business, so it’s the people and the members who really make it,” he said. “You’ve got to thank the members for sticking with the organization and being behind us. It’s just been a great opportunity.”

Wogsland hasn’t lost his passion for people or for agriculture. It’s simply time to step aside, he conceded, enjoy the good life with his family and let a

new voice help lead NDGGA into its next phase.

“There’s still a lot of life left,” he said. “It’s been a wonderful run and I’ve met so many people, and have worked for – and with – so many wonderful people and directors and leadership in NDGGA.”



Dan Wogsland (middle) built relationships across the political spectrum, including U.S. Sen. John Hoeven (right)

A passion for policy

Wogsland grew up on a farm near Walum, N.D. After graduating from North Dakota State University (NDSU), Wogsland and his wife, Debra, raised wheat, barley, sunflowers, dry edible beans and soybeans for nearly 30 years on the family farm.

The North Dakota farmer was also no stranger to the political realm when he joined NDGGA in 2004. For 16 years, Wogsland served in the North Dakota Senate and has the distinction of being the last Democratic Senate Majority

Leader in the North Dakota Legislature.

“I’m the answer to a trivia question,” he said with a smile. “But that was a great opportunity, and I met a host of people and got involved.”

Established in 1967, NDGGA represents its members through education, leadership, proactive advocacy and representation to boost profitability and value-added opportunities. Wogsland said the group has helped move the needle for North Dakota grain producers on many policies, including crop and water issues; improving NDSU Extension; and promoting farm-friendly legislation through engagement with North Dakota’s state and federal lawmakers and agency leaders.

“The knowledge he brought into the room on the ag side was phenomenal,” Kessel said. “We wish him well and thank him for everything he did for our organization and industry.”

In the most recent legislative session, Wogsland said NDGGA helped craft one of the state’s strongest budgets, which included support for Extension services and investments in agriculture’s future.

“That was very rewarding,” he said, “and that’s a tribute to everyone pulling together and working together with decision makers.”

Wogsland deferred credit for NDGGA’s successes, pointing to his



Dan Wogsland (far left) visits with NDGGA staff and directors on the eve of his retirement.

farmer-driven board and Washington, D.C., lobbyist Jim Callan.

“You never do it alone,” he said. “It takes a village and certainly we’ve had the opportunity to work with a wonderful board of directors and wonderful leadership.”

The organization’s annual tour with the EPA, which predated Wogsland’s

tenure, has been another initiative that has helped make NDGGA a respected team in agriculture circles.

“Our ‘E-Tour’ has been an awesome opportunity, not only for the EPA to observe our environmental stewardship, but also for North Dakotans to meet with federal regulators so they can understand,” Wogsland said. “That’s

been critical.”

Wogsland is excited about the NDGGA’s involvement with the Midwest Council on Ag, a lobbying group overseen by former Rep. Collin Peterson.

“Collin’s vision of this is so outstanding, to bring everyone together to accomplish common goals,” Wogsland said. “If it means something to farmers and ranchers, it means something to that supplier and it also means something to that plant or bank or insurance. It touches everybody.”

Having a bird’s eye view of the legislative action never failed to thrill Wogsland, a self-described “political junkie.”

“When you love all that, that’s sitting on the 50-yard line of the Super Bowl, every day,” he said. “I had a front row seat.”

Wogsland said he’ll continue supporting NDGGA – but from afar.

“I think the world of this organization and I know that they’ll move forward full steam ahead. I’ll stay a member,” he said with a laugh, of course. “But I’m going to watch it all from the golf course.” 🌾

Filling big shoes: NDGGA names replacement

After an extensive search, NDGGA named Kayla Pulvermacher as its new executive director in early July.

Pulvermacher, a native of northwest North Dakota, arrives at NDGGA after serving as CEO of the North Dakota Association of Builders. Over the course of a nearly 20-year career, she’s also worked with Dakota Credit Union Association, Clearwater Communications and North Dakota Farmers Union.

“Getting to advocate on behalf of all the (North Dakota) growers is just an honor,” Pulvermacher told Red River Farm Network upon the announcement.

Pulvermacher said advocating for the Farm Bill and deregulation will be key priorities in her initial start with NDGGA.

MEETING

Conference shows wheat,

By Mark Askelson

While the grains may be ancient, the market for them is growing and evolving. That was the message shared during the second annual Ancient Grains Conference at the Oliver Kelley Farm in Elk River, Minn. The conference, hosted by the Northern Crops Institute (NCI), was aimed at providing an educational and promotional setting to explore the characteristics and use of ancient grains. Otherwise known as heritage grains, ancient grains include wheat, barley, sorghum, oats, millet, amaranth, flax, teff and more. Presenters offered insight into ancient grains trends, challenges and opportunities and participants even had the

opportunity to participate in cooking and stone milling demonstrations.

The Ancient Grains Conference also caught the interest of Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen, who made an appearance at the event.

“I’m interested in anything we can do to diversify our agriculture in this state,” Commissioner Petersen said. “It’s apparent consumers are interested in the ancient grains market, and we need to continue to explore other opportunities and capitalize on the trends that we’re seeing currently. The state of Minnesota has a number of resources available to help those in the ancient grains industry be successful.”



Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council Executive Director Charlie Vogel (right) gets to work in the kitchen during the 2023 Ancient Grains Conference.

NEEDS



ancient grains can coexist

Making healthy choices

In her morning keynote, Ardent Mills Director of Specialty Grains & General Manager of Emerging Nutrition Shrene White emphasized that consumers are more empowered than ever before when it comes making healthy choices.

“They no longer hope to find food that meets their health needs,” White said, “they expect it.”

According to her reports, consumers are placing a higher priority on finding foods and ingredients that both taste good and deliver positive aspects to the experience. White also noted that they are willing to pay for it as well. Sales for sandwich bread and cereal/granola bars with the ancient grains label are up 6.5% and 3.1% despite those units costing more than traditional varieties. However, there is still room for growth. White emphasized a need for the ancient grains community to capitalize on the momentum, align with other grains, and continue to educate and communicate in order for ancient grains to become a sustainable solution in the marketplace.

Trending in the right direction

During a panel discussion on Growing Ancient Grains in the Market, Laurie Scanlin, principal scientist at the Ardent Mills Innovation Center, highlighted that ancient grains have grown from a niche market into nationwide commercialization.

“A few decades ago, ancient grains and

quinoa and flax could only be found in health food stores,” she said. “Now every grocery store in the country is carrying them and products that include them are proud to market that whole grain or ancient grains affiliation.”

Kelly LeBlanc, Oldways vice president of nutrition programming, indicated that the whole grains trend will continue as consumers are still looking for products that are indicative of good health and sustainability. Specific ancient grains that are trending upward include millet, amaranth, teff and quinoa.

Growing the Midwest value chain

The final panel discussion during the conference focused on the Artisan Grain Collaborative between Mark Askegaard and his daughter Beth McConnon, who grow organic wheat south of Moorhead, Minn.; Patrick Wylie of Baker’s Field Flour & Bread, who mills Askegaard’s wheat; and Laune Bread co-owner Chris MacLeod, who uses the flour in his bakery. The partners showcased the benefits of a farm-to-fork partnership and how the end user benefits from the partnership as well.

“Our customers value that we talk directly to people growing our product,” said Wylie. “As a result, our customers have also become more knowledgeable about farming because we communicate with them every step along the way.”

Wylie also added that as a miller, he and his customers value the

sustainable farming practices that the Askegaards incorporate into their farm.

“It ensures that the land that the wheat is grown on will continue to be productive for years to come,” Wylie said, “which assures us that we can also continue to sell a good, quality product to our consumers for years to come as well.”

Wylie hopes that there are more bakeries, mills and farms willing to participate in the Ancient Grains Collaborative so that they can continue to build the market for decades to come.

A diverse group

The diversity of the small grains industry was well-represented during this year’s Ancient Grains Conference, which included participation from mom-and-pop operations all the way to the largest flour mill in the country. While it may seem that the giants of wheat industry are competitors with growing markets of ancient grains, this conference proves how they are working together.

“A lot of people look at the ancient grains as being a competitor to wheat,” said Charlie Vogel, executive director of the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council. “But when you look at these products they’re promoting, wheat flour is the carrier flour. Many of these other ancient grains are additives to that. By advocating for ancient grains, we are also advocating for the wheat growers and strengthening the market as a whole.” 🌾



Minnesota Wheat Open Golf Scramble

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The Minnesota Wheat Open Golf events are a way to say thank you to members and supporters of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers. Thank you for making these events a great success. The membership dues and sponsorships help raise the funds necessary to continue our work in St. Paul and Washington D.C. We are proud of our past successes and we continually work on issues important to wheat growers in Minnesota.

Thank you for supporting the 2023 MAWG Shoot Out

The annual MN Wheat Sporting Clay Shoot Out had 34 novice and advanced shooters participate. Growers and ag professionals enjoyed a beautiful day of shooting at the Northwest Sporting Clay course in Thief River Falls, MN.



Annie Oakley Winner



(l-r) Charlie Vogel, MN Wheat Executive Director and Dave Gregerson

Top Team



Representing Border Bank in random order: Jesse Doyea, Vaughn Mulcahy, Rob Metzger, Tyler Bennefeld & Alex Engelstad and Vogel

Top Individual



(l-r) Pete Kappes and Vogel

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The Sporting Clay Shoot Out is an event of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers.

For more information or to join us next year as a participant or sponsor, please contact MN Wheat at 218-253-4311 ext. 7 or email mnwheat@mnwheat.

MEET THE BEEETLES

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

Growers in northwest Minnesota now have a new insect to contend with. In June 2023, Integrated Pest Management survey scouts with University of Minnesota Extension spotted the cereal leaf beetle in Mahnomen and Norman counties.

“Scouts take a look at a number of different crops – wheat, soy, etc. – but also for general stuff,” Extension Entomologist Ian MacRae said. “They didn’t anticipate finding cereal leaf because it’s not one we scout for or find.”

MacRae said although the cereal leaf beetle is found in North Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin, he can’t recall an instance when the insect has been located in Minnesota east of the Minnesota River Valley. It has since been located 13 miles east from its original location, along with fields south of Ada.

“We’re finding them pretty regularly,” MacRae said. “That’s the level where we’re finding them; it’s more widely distributed than we previously thought. I would’ve thought we were dealing with a recent introduction, but I’m less convinced that’s the case now.”

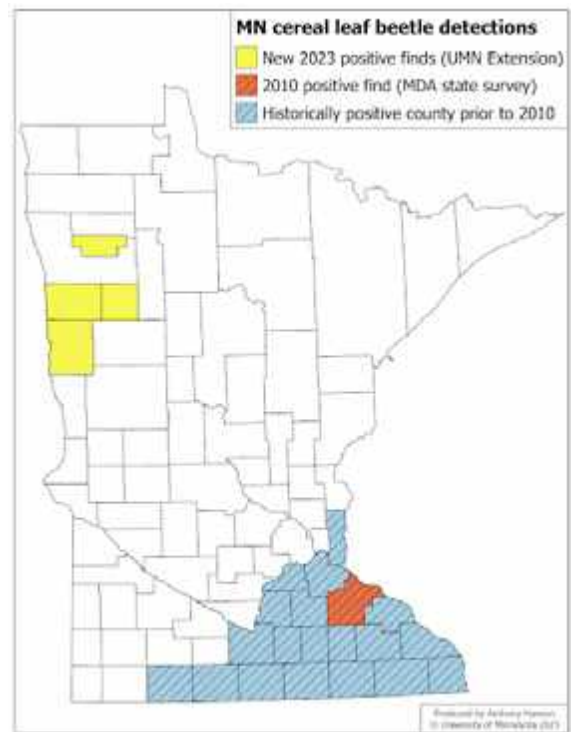
One field was found to have 25% wheat stems infested and could’ve benefited from an insecticide application if the beetle had been found earlier. More scouting uncovered feeding damage and larvae of the insect in a number of fields within 15 miles of the original findings.

The cereal leaf beetle is native to Europe and was first spotted in the United States in the early 1960s. It feeds on small grains, grassy plants and weeds. The cereal beetle’s development time is relatively slow, taking between four to 23 days for larvae development. Once fully grown, larvae will drop and burrow into the ground to pupate.

“The adults are very mobile, and they’ll move along the leaf,” MacRae said.



Adult cereal leaf beetles are about 0.25 inches long.



However, growers shouldn’t be alarmed yet about potential yield loss.

“The populations that we’re finding in most fields aren’t economically damaging,” MacRae said. “They’d have to be a lot larger. Typically, those thresholds early in the season when you’ve got small plants prior to tillering, if you have three or more eggs or more larvae across the field, you’ve got a problem you’d want to treat.”

MacRae recommends growers follow the basics by scouting their entire fields – a “W” pattern of scouting is recommended – and contact their local Extension office if the cereal leaf beetle is encountered.

“Growers want to make sure they’re not dealing with high populations,” MacRae said. “This is a potentially damaging insect. It tends not to be, but it doesn’t mean that that’s going to happen all the time.”

The University of Minnesota Extension contributed to this report. 🌾

PUSHING PROFITS

On-Farm Research Network continues trials in 2023

By Sydney Harris

Minnesota's wheat growers don't settle for the status quo.

That's why Minnesota Wheat's On-Farm Research Network (OFRN) works hard to deliver valuable trials that provide growers with pertinent information to bring back to their operations.

This growing season, the OFRN team is keeping busy with multiple trials, all of which are producer-driven, including nitrogen rates, rye termination timing, Pivot Bio and Johnson-Su bioreactors.

"The idea is to take promising research from the small plots and prove it in a large-scale environment with real producer equipment," said OFRN Research Coordinator Melissa Carlson, who also serves as vice president of research with Minnesota Wheat.

A multiyear endeavor, the nitrogen rate trial has been ramped up this year with additional sites added, examining six different nitrogen application rates from zero to 180 pounds.

"We want to look at the most economical, profitable nitrogen rate application in multiple contexts," Carlson said. "You can keep pushing the nitrogen to keep pushing yield, but at what point do you realize diminishing returns? We want to figure out what's most profitable."

The rye termination timing trial continues to move along, examining weed suppression to monitor how much, if any, the rye can help.

"Working with the OFRN team on the rye termination timing trial has been a great experience," said Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council Chair Tim



Minnesota Wheat Vice President of Research Melissa Carlson (left) and MWRPC Treasurer Mikayla Tabert (right) prepare compost for the Johnson-Su bioreactors.

Dufault. “Minnesota wheat growers are lucky to have this program in their state.”

Diving into the biological realm, the OFRN is conducting a trial this year using Pivot Bio.

Pivot Bio has developed a proprietary microbial technology to supply some of the nitrogen that cereal crops require, reducing additional N fertilizer need by as much as 30 pounds.

“We had visual response at one of our four sites,” Carlson said. “It’s an engineered free living nitrogen fixing bacteria that we treated the wheat seed with. In wheat or other grasses, you can apply free living bacteria that will associate with the roots of the crop, but they don’t necessarily need it to live.”

Pivot Bio microbes “provide nitrogen to crops throughout the growing season by mapping the trillions of interactions of soil microbes and identifying the few that have robust internal DNA software to convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form plants can use.”

Though it won’t be ready to apply until the 2024 growing season, the OFRN team embarked on the journey of making Johnson-Su bioreactors, a composting method that creates compost packed with microorganisms that improve soil health and plant growth. To start the trial this year, the OFRN bought vermicompost, which they tested and found 900 species of bacteria and fungi within. Then, they seed treated wheat and had liquid in-furrow applications in



Follow the On-Farm Research Network on Facebook to stay informed of current trials.

soybeans, sunflowers and sugarbeets in large on-farm plots and in small plots at the University of Minnesota Northwest Research and Outreach Center.

“We want to see if applying these microorganisms will give us a boost on our fertility use efficiency,” Carlson said. “We’re applying the whole community of microorganisms versus a product that maybe only has one or two different strains, to hopefully increase the likelihood of crop response.”

As the 2023 growing season reached harvest time, the OFRN team remained hard at work, conducting checkoff-funded, producer-driven projects. After the combine makes its last pass, Carlson and her team will begin compiling and analyzing the collected data, which will be presented Dec. 13-14 during the 2023 Prairie Grains Conference in Grand Forks, N.D. 🌾

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Learning opportunities

MN Wheat Research Committee holds Summer Plot Tour

By Mark Askelson

As farming practices continue to trend in a direction that focuses on sustainability, soil health and disease protection, the Minnesota Wheat Research Committee (MWRC) is playing an important role in the future of wheat production by sponsoring the research of those practices. The Research Committee – which comprises wheat farmers, industry representatives, crop consultants and directors from the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council (MWRPC) and the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers – allocates the funding that comes out of the wheat checkoff each year to the needs of the growers for various research projects. The projects are then carried out by the small-plot researchers, some of whom are based at the University of Minnesota Crookston.


In July, Prairie Grains Magazine staff joined the Research Committee during its annual Summer Plot Tour at UMN Crookston to get a closer look

at the checkoff-supported research. Projects highlighted included a bioreactor seed treatment, winter rye and wheat termination timing and the effects of different drainage spacing.

“Many of these projects are carried out over the course of three-four years because in our part of the country, there is no such thing as a normal growing season,” said MWRC Chair Tim Osowski, who farms in Argyle. “The summer plot tour gives a chance to see year-to-year results and how the various weather patterns may have impacted them.”

Jochum Wiersma, a small grains specialist with UMN Extension, ditched his original topic of wheat stem sawfly; instead, he showcased what can happen if a winter wheat crop is terminated at the same time spring wheat is planted in an adjacent field. Wheat curl mite lives in green material and can survive over mild and wet winters,





such as the one in 2022-23; growers could see more of wheat curl mite if climate change patterns continue. Because technicians at the research plot this spring waited too long to spray and terminate the winter wheat, the wheat curl mite was able to bridge the “green gap” to an emerging spring wheat crop, which led to disease.

The aftermath was a yellowish wheat crop mixed in along the edges with extremely short stalks and a suspected low yield. While this wasn't originally part of this specific research plot, Wiersma said it provided a good learning opportunity for researchers and producers.

‘Need to know’ basis

Cover crop termination timing was also the topic of a research project highlighted by UMN Extension Educator Angie Peltier. Peltier examined the results of different termination dates of a fall-seeded rye cover crop in both wheat and soybean rotations. Despite some of the obvious soil health benefits of cover crops, a short growing season makes any delays to usual spring field work risky. However, Peltier says interest in cover crops is growing because it can stabilize yields, improve field trafficability, protect from weeds and reduce wind erosion.

“Farmers need to know how to do cover crops and do it well in the event this transforms from something they should be doing to something they have to do,” said Peltier, who also works on research projects via Minnesota’s soybean checkoff. “In addition to whatever regulations may come down the road, many producers are just tired of losing precious topsoil and seeing fields overrun by water hemp.”

The research projects highlighted

in the MWRC aren't just important because the researchers think they are; they're important because the farmers know these projects address present and future agronomic issues and can help improve yields. Research Committee members are either farmers themselves or work with farmers and know the difficult problems that growers need solved.

“I get to be a voice for the farmers and the research projects they would like to see done,” said Ben Genereux, a MWRC member and Central crop consultant. “I work with farmers every day and they are always looking for better ways to farm. I can bring awareness to both sides of the table.”

Calling all growers

While the current group of committee members is diverse, representing various farming practices and industry groups, Osowski noted a need to draw more growers from outside the central Minnesota area.

“We do have committee members from all parts of Minnesota, but we would like to see more representation from up north and down south,” he said. “Minnesota has a very diverse landscape, and we want to continue to make sure all farming practices are represented.”

Melissa Carlson, Ex-Officio MWRC member & MWRPC's vice president of research, commended the Research Committee's work on behalf of producers.

“We have a great group of research-minded members that have been fantastic to work with,” she said. “They are very interested in the results of these studies as they want to see how these practices work here on the research plots before they do it on their own farms.”

If interested in joining Minnesota Wheat's Research Committee, contact Carlson at mcarlson@mnwheat.com or email MWRPC Executive Director Charlie Vogel at cvogel@mnwheat.com 🌾



Ben Genereux, Central crop consultant and Minnesota Wheat Research Committee member, examines a wheat plot at the University of Minnesota Crookston's North Farm during MWRC's Summer Plot Tour.

ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

Growers encouraged to participate in Great Plains Sawfly Survey Project

Growers in Prairie Grains' readership area – Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana – are encouraged to participate in the Great Plains Sawfly Survey Project. The survey is a multi-state collaborative project to determine areas of wheat stem sawfly infestation and current practices related to its mitigation on farm yields and profits.

The wheat stem sawfly has been a key pest in several locations throughout wheat production areas of the Great Plains, especially over the last decade.

Scan this QR Code to participate



MN Beginning Farmer Tax Credit expands to further incentivize land transfer

Owners of agricultural assets that lease or sell to beginning farmers in Minnesota may be eligible for the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, which is open for applications through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Rural Finance Authority (RFA).

Those who have previously applied should take note of the Nov. 1 application deadlines for sales. Additionally, recent legislative changes have resulted in several updates to the program to further incentivize farmland sales:

- An increase in the tax credit amount to 8% of the sale price for buyers and 12% if the buyer is an emerging farmer (previously 5% for all);
- A new maximum tax credit of \$50,000 (previously \$32,000);
- Direct family members such as parents, grandparents and siblings are now eligible for farmland sales.

Qualifying applicants can include individuals, trusts or qualified pass-through entities renting or selling land, livestock, facilities, buildings or machinery used for farming in Minnesota to a beginning farmer.

A beginning farmer is defined as a Minnesota resident with the desire to start farming or who began farming in Minnesota within the past 10 years. They must provide positive projected earnings statements, have a net worth less than \$979,000 and enroll in, or have completed, an approved farm business management (FBM) program.

To be eligible for the tax credit, both the asset owners and beginning farmers must submit applications. Beginning farmers are also eligible for a nonrefundable Minnesota tax credit equal to the amount paid for FBM tuition, up to a maximum of \$1,500. This tax credit is available for up to three years. Full eligibility requirements and application materials can be found at www.mda.state.mn.us/bftc.

NDSU awarded nearly \$300,000 for crop breeding research

Over the summer, Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded \$299,581 to North Dakota State University to facilitate breeding research and develop new genetic and genomic resources for a variety of wheat species.

These funds are distributed through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the nation's leading competitive grants program for agricultural sciences.



Northern Soy Marketing is a collaboration among five qualified state soybean boards.

See For Yourself program shows soy’s long journey

A large amount of Northern Soy Marketing’s (NSM) member states’ – North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Nebraska – soybeans are sent to overseas markets through the Pacific Northwest (PNW). In July, soybean growers from North Dakota and South Dakota embarked on See For Yourself (SFY) programs to the PNW to witness where their soybeans leave the United States.

The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) began its SFY program in 2013 as a way for North Dakota soybean producers to learn about what happens to their soybeans once they depart North Dakota and head to the PNW.

On the South Dakota SFY program, growers


visited the Federal Grain Inspection Service and the Washington state capital in Olympia, then Port of Grays Harbor in Aberdeen, CHS/Cargill Export Terminal, Port of Seattle and BNSF Stacy Yard all in Seattle.

To learn more about NSM, visit soyquality.com.

Palmer amaranth confirmed in Montana

In June, Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) confirmed a single male plant of Palmer amaranth in a residential planter near Shelby. This is the first case of Palmer amaranth confirmed in Montana.

Palmer amaranth (*Almaranthus palmeri*), a fast-growing, prolific-seeding pigweed was found growing in a residential planter near Shelby, most likely introduced from contaminated birdseed; no seed was produced. The site will be monitored for the next several years to ensure no additional plants emerge.

To report a suspected Palmer amaranth plant, contact your local county weed district, MSU Extension agent or the Montana Department of Agriculture. Leave the plant in the ground so it can be correctly identified, take plenty of pictures, record GPS coordinates and arrange for a site visit as soon as possible. For additional resources and contact information, visit the Early Detection, Rapid Response webpage at agr.mt.gov/Noxious-Weeds.



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Study Shows Higher Profits for Ag Water Quality Certified Farms for Fourth Straight Year

Farmers enrolled in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) enjoy higher profits than non-certified farms, according to a recent study by the Minnesota State Agricultural Centers of Excellence. This marks the fourth year of data highlighting improved financial outcomes.

The “Influence of Intensified Environmental Practices on Farm Profitability” study examined financial and crop production information from farmers enrolled in the Minnesota State Farm Business Management education program. The 101 MAWQCP farms in the study saw 2022 net farm income an average of more than \$23,500 or 7.5% higher than non-certified farms. Looking at four years of data, the average income for MAWQCP farms was \$16,000 - \$40,000 higher. Other key financial metrics are also better for those enrolled in the MAWQCP, such as debt-to-asset ratios and operating expense ratios.

The four years of data serve as an indicator of a positive return on investment for whole-farm conservation management that farmers implement to become certified.

“For four years now, we see that farm operations in the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program

have, on average, better economic outcomes on top of the known environmental benefits,” said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. “There are many advantages to the MAWQCP, and I encourage all farmers and landowners to look into certifying their land and contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District for more information.”

To find details on the economic study, visit: <https://www.agcentric.org/farm-business-management/annual-fbm-reports/>.

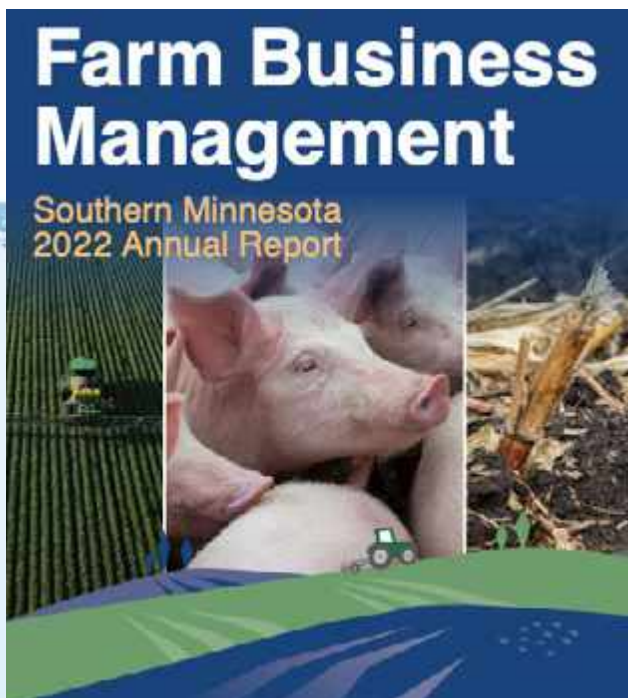
“Minnesota Farm Business Management is proud to support farmers who are water quality certified and continue to demonstrate profitability compared to their peers,” said Keith Olander, executive director of AgCentric and Agricultural Partnerships. “The water quality certified cohort sets a standard for other environmental enhancements to be implemented on-farm through a data supported process as farmers continue to improve their soil health while protecting their economic viability.”

The MAWQCP connects growers with local conservation district experts to identify and mitigate any risks their farm poses to water quality on a field-by-field basis. Producers going through the certification process have priority access to financial assistance. After being certified, each farm is deemed in compliance with new water quality laws and regulations for 10 years, along with, an official MAWQCP sign to display on their farm and other benefits developed by local MAWQCP providers.

Since the program’s statewide launch in 2016, 1,360 farms totaling over 985,000 acres have been certified across Minnesota. Farms have added over 2,623 new conservation practices, which protect Minnesota’s waters. Those new practices help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 50,000 metric tons each year.

“This program works on every level,” Gov. Tim Walz said, “and it works because producers are at the center of it, producers help write it and producers help execute it.”

Farmers and landowners interested in becoming water quality certified can contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District or visit MyLandMyLegacy.com.



Brought to you by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

IT'S NOT JUST YOUR LAND. IT'S YOUR LEGACY.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program rewards farmers like you for what you do best, taking care of your land and its natural resources.

To get started and learn more, contact your local soil and water conservation district or go to:

MyLandMyLegacy.com



AIC

AG INNOVATION CAMPUS

Bridging ideas to success

Time to Crush It!

The Ag Innovation Campus serves as an incubator for agricultural innovations, with a goal to foster new and novel products, create jobs and increase the value of agriculture in the region, state and nation.

The Ag Innovation Campus will host a variety of private and public groups within agriculture by providing the tools and technology to expand value-added agricultural products while offering a campus suitable for real-world learning both in production agriculture as well as the technologies serving the campus. The ample supply of soybeans in the region will provide consistent soybean meal and soy oil to help researchers unlock new uses for soy.



RSVP for the Grand Opening here!

You're Invited!

**AIC Phase 1
Grand Opening**

Date: Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023

Time: 10:15 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Location: Crookston, Minn. (tour starting in Fargo)

Expected guests include:

- State of Minnesota officials
- City of Crookston leaders
- AIC directors and Acting CEO Tom Slunecka
- Agriculture luminaries

Tentative agenda below

- 10:15 a.m. Bus pick-up from Big Iron
- 10:30 a.m. Bus pick-up from Wyndham Wingate hotel
- 10:45 a.m. Tour Northern Crops Institute (NCI) in Fargo, N.D. and lunch
- 1:45 p.m. Depart on bus for Waukon Dairy Farm
- 3:00 p.m. Depart Waukon Dairy farm for AIC
- 4:00 p.m. Welcome, speakers and official ribbon cutting
- 5:00 p.m. Crush facility plant tour and food available
- 6:30 p.m. Bus departs for Fargo

For more event information, contact Events Manager Todd Ginter at Todd@agmgmentsolutions.com

This grand opening is made possible by the United Soybean Board, the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council and the soybean checkoff.

