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## ABOUT PRAIRIE GRAINS

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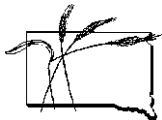


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# PRAIRIE GRAINS

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Cover Photo: *Marlene Dufault/MLD Communications*



## Mistakes Will Be Made

More and more I find myself admitting I was wrong, and I made a mistake. Of course, I don't say it aloud to my husband and kids, but internally I think, "Dang, wrong again." Am I wrong more often, or just better able to admit that I made a mistake?

The ability to admit mistakes is critical to crop marketing. You are going to be wrong. What works in 2020 will not work in 2021. Each crop year is different, and if you are consistent in your crop marketing, some years you will make more marketing mistakes than other years.

I will be talking to my grandkids about the year 2020, and I will not have many good things to say. If there was ever a year to make mistakes, it is 2020.

From the pandemic, to the alphabet soup of new government programs and then low commodity prices, nothing I do seems to be the

*Imagine 2020 as a dropped pebble in the water, and we are going to see the waves of that pebble for many more years.*



right thing. It's like someone threw every ball in the air and I am spinning in place trying to catch all of them.

I am hoping that 2020 will be the year I make every possible mistake. Just rip it off like a band aid and hope for better opportunities, choices and decisions in future years.

In 2020, we have not been given many opportunities to make good decisions. It's not like I passed up selling wheat at eight dollars, or beans in the teens. All we got was mediocre opportunities. I thought I was making a good decision locking in low fuel prices, and then they went lower.

I own a giant trading table from the Minneapolis Grain Exchange and this year a favorite past time is to just pound

my head against the table. I feel certain I'm not the first wheat trader to do so.

I am not here to complain or whine. I am here to reassure you that there are plenty of other farmers who are secretly pounding their heads against a desk, a wall, or even a tractor steering wheel. There is a lot of frustration and backwards glances asking, "Could I have done something different?"

I still remember the day, Thursday, February 27, when I listened to a podcast predicting a huge drop in the stock market, the Olympics would be postponed, and our economy would shut down. I assumed it was a conspiracy theory podcast and shrugged it off. The stock market had already dropped over ten percent so wasn't the coronavirus already priced into the market? The stock market

dropped another twenty percent after I listened to that show. I should have listened to those speakers.

Mistakes have been made in 2020 and it will be important to learn from those mistakes. Unfortunately, I do not think we are going to have the luxury of hindsight for a few more years. Imagine 2020 as a dropped pebble in the water, and we are going to see the waves of that pebble for many more years.

As you navigate the new challenges of 2020, make sure you have a copilot. Someone to remind you to grab your mask as you leave the house. To explain a new government program. To help you understand how to forward contract for deferred months and turn those grain bins from hope chests to treasure chests.

And when you make a mistake, admit it and move on. Hindsight only tricks us into believing we had other options. You chose the best option at that time. When you review your sales opportunities today, choose the best one for you. Not every decision will be a mistake, even if it feels like it.

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# NDGGA Remains Busy from Bismarck to Washington

Despite the global pandemic, 2020 has been a busy year for the North Dakota Grain Growers Association. There have been challenges. The NDGGA was forced to cancel several events including its popular annual EPA E-Tour during which EPA representatives travel to North Dakota to learn about the state's environmental stewardship. However, there have also been opportunities to adapt, embrace technological possibilities and find new ways to connect with the farmers the NDGGA represents.

On July 28, the NDGGA partnered with the North Dakota Wheat Commission to host the first ever Virtual Spring Wheat Tour. "The virtual tour went over really

well," said NDGGA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Tom Bernhardt. "We had some very informative speakers and producer reports from around the state. We've gotten some really positive feedback."

Like most organizations, the NDGGA has become very familiar with virtual meetings, which have enabled board members to continue collaborate on issues that will be important to N.D. farmers in the upcoming legislative session.

"We're hoping the legislature will make funding the Ag Products Development Center at NDSU a top priority since the facility would provide multiple benefits to the biggest industry in our state," Bernhardt said.

The NDGGA has also been working on possible commodity transportation issues. "We've been meeting with the North Dakota Ag Rail Business Council and the National Ag Rail Business Council to ensure that grain shipments in the state won't be affected if the Dakota Access pipeline is shut down," Bernhardt said. "We're hoping that won't happen, but we're keeping an eye on it."

Furthering the NDGGA's commitment to providing national representation, James Callan serves as a constant Washington presence for the organization. Callan continues to work closely with the N.D. congressional delegation on variety of policy issues

including crop insurance quality loss and malt barley endorsements, cover crop haying and grazing, H2A farm labor and USMCA grain grading. "James has been doing a great job lobbying on behalf of N.D. farmers," Bernhardt said. "With the turbulent year we've been having, we're glad to have him keeping us abreast to the latest news from D.C. We're combining our efforts to ensure the success of N.D. agriculture even during uncertain times like these."



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**Amanda Radke—Agricultural Advocate**

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# A Commitment to Reliability in a Time of Uncertainty

By Dalton Henry, USW  
Vice President of Policy

For the better part of a century the United States has been known as the breadbasket of the world. Today, that reputation continues ringing as true as ever at a time when it may be needed most.

Reliability and certainty go hand in hand. That is why the U.S. export grain industry and the government agencies that protect and promote U.S. agriculture snapped into action when the first COVID-19 “shelter-in-place” orders forced many workers to stay home. Individual businesses developed mitigation plans including more cleaning shifts and personal protective equipment for employees. Workarounds were found to limit staff member contact and to ensure trade could continue



to flow, even when items as routine as loading paperwork were being curtailed.

It wasn't just private businesses that took steps to keep wheat exports flowing smoothly. While other countries used bureaucratic delays on regular functions such as permits and inspections to slow down exports, the U.S. Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) issued a public letter stating they would “take all necessary steps” to ensure export inspection services would continue unabated.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued a similar letter, promising to continue

critical inspections and issuance of phytosanitary certificates. Both agencies clearly understand that maintaining U.S. agricultural exports is vital, not just to the U.S. economy, but also to meeting our commitments to our partners around the world.

USDA wasn't the only federal agency to recognize that U.S. farmers need to stay on the job. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for providing federal guidance in national emergencies, especially concerning critical industries. In less than a month, they have expanded the guidance defining “essential” workers and should,

therefore, stay on the job in the event of “stay-at-home” or “shelter-in-place” orders to include the entire grain supply chain. That guidance includes workers in transportation, inspections, production, input suppliers and even business providing repair services.

Keeping those businesses running, keeps U.S. farms running, and helps give our overseas customers peace of mind.

As we saw at a container facility in the Port of Houston when a worker tested positive for COVID-19, there will no doubt still be small disruptions as we work through this uncertain time. But with government and industry commitment to maintaining supply chains, wheat will continue flow to customers at home and abroad from the U.S. breadbasket.

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Every Friday, U.S. Wheat Associates compiles information from market sources, including U.S. wheat exporters of all classes from various U.S. ports. The prices represent the value of number two grade and the proteins indicated.



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# Working Through COVID-19: NAWG Continues to be a Strong Voice for Wheat Farmers

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) continues to advocate on behalf of America's wheat growers and guide its members through the COVID-19 pandemic. Over these past several months, NAWG has been actively working on both COVID-related issues and others including defense of glyphosate, quality loss programs, trade, appropriations, and others.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, NAWG has been fighting for aid for wheat farmers to offset the losses caused by the pandemic. After the CARES Act was enacted in April, we asked USDA to factor in price volatility during the first quarter of the year in evaluating economic loss.

When the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) was announced in May to aid 2019 crop losses, we were successful in justifying inclusion of hard red spring (HRS) and durum wheat in the program. Following the announcement, USDA sought comments to justify eligibility of additional commodities in CFAP. We filed comments pointing to the significant wheat price decline in March and subsequent decline in April that has continued as justification for adding all classes of wheat to the program.

In a follow-up letter to USDA after the comment period closed, NAWG reiterated our request to make assistance available for

all classes of wheat and to begin providing assistance for 2020 crop losses as wheat harvest is well underway.

NAWG's leadership team met with USDA Undersecretary Bill Northey on July 23<sup>rd</sup> to specifically discuss CFAP and aid for 2020 crop losses. We have also asked Congress to provide additional and significant funding to address COVID-related losses and to ensure that all wheat farmers are included in the program. As the pandemic continues to take its toll, this will be one of our top priorities.

Outside of COVID-19, NAWG received a big win in its case against California's false and misleading Prop 65 labeling requirement for products with glyphosate residue on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The judge issued a decision in favor of NAWG by granting summary judgment and issuing a permanent injunction on the warning requirement of Proposition 65. As a member benefit, NAWG has produced a series of materials for our states on what this means for wheat farmers and the future of glyphosate.

Recent months have also seen activity on several fronts including on quality loss programs. NAWG has

been engaged with FSA on implementation of WHIP+ quality loss as well with RMA over the past year on developing a new Quality Loss (QL) option, which was one of our priorities in the 2018 Farm Bill and will enable farmers to remove a poor-quality year from their APH. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Agriculture Committee moved the United States Grain Standards Reauthorization Act (GSA) forward which was met with applause from both NAWG and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW). NAWG has worked for many months to ensure that wheat is properly represented in this legislation, including by testifying before the Committee last year.



On July 1<sup>st</sup>, NAWG and USW issued a joint release welcoming the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) "into force." Additionally, NAWG joined with other groups in highlighting to President Trump the positive impacts of the China Phase 1 agreement for farmers. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, it was announced China purchased 130,000 metric tons of HRW and 190,000 metric tons of HRS. And finally, NAWG has also continued to advocate for our FY 2021 agriculture appropriations priorities, including full funding for the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative.

NAWG has been diligently working to ensure the needs of wheat farmers are being met despite the impacts of COVID-19. For more information on NAWG and how to get involved, visit [www.wheatworld.org](http://www.wheatworld.org).

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The advertisement features a green Handlair grain vacuum machine with a long conveyor arm, set against a background of a white grain bin. The text is arranged in a clear, professional layout, highlighting the machine's capabilities and providing contact information for M.R. Yutzenka & Sons.

# Home Baking Influence on Wheat Industry Yet To Be Determined

By Shawna Aakre,  
Continually Still

The spring of 2020 brought with it some challenging times, but also a joyful resurgence in home bread baking. Grocery staples were flying off the shelves, including baking supplies, while many spent more time than usual at home due to the COVID-19 impact.

A world-wide survey conducted by WorldGrain.com showed 35 percent of flour milling respondents reporting an increase in sales and 65 percent reporting a decrease or staying the same.

The North Dakota Mill saw an increase during this time

in family flour demand, the 5, 10 and 25 pound bags sold at retail level. The retail flour market is a fairly small market to begin with and is about two to three percent of what the mill produces.

“Since it is a small percentage of what we do, we were able to just up production and meet demand,” President and CEO Vance Taylor said. “Demand for flour from bakers that manufacture bread for grocery store shelves increased as well, but bakers making baked goods for the restaurant sector dropped demand. That offset the increases in other market areas.

Taylor said the roughly 170

mills across the country were each affected differently depending upon their customer base. But in general there was a slight increase in flour production.

“I think there is a lot of hope that some trends are changing and proving for the industry, but I think only time will tell. Hopefully the increased demand continues to happen, including the increased consumption of retail flour.”

Taylor said despite the decrease in restaurant demand while they remained closed, there seems to be a lot of pent-up demand from them as they reopen. So it remains to be seen whether

or not current retail flour demand will stick or decline.

Unfortunately, this shift in demand for flour has not translated into the markets. Tim O’Connor, Wheat Foods Council President, said it boils down to simple economics.

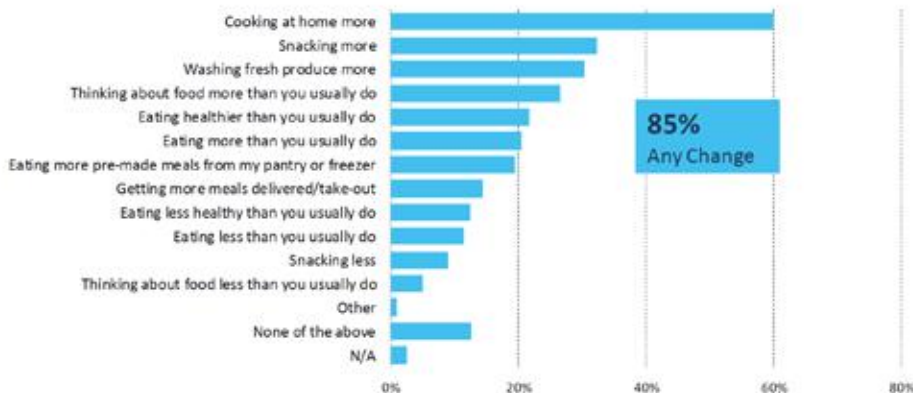
“The global supply of wheat and significant production and exporting of wheat by other countries has weighed on the market and will continue to do so until global demand reaches equilibrium or exceeds supply.”

O’Connor also said the entire commercial baking industry will be affected as long as restaurant traffic

## More than 8 in 10 Americans have altered their food habits as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

Women, those under age 35, and parents are among some of the most likely to have made changes

Changes to Eating and Food Preparation Due to COVID-19



**41%** of consumers under 35 say they are snacking more than normal (vs. 26% who are age 50+). Younger consumers are also more likely to have changed their behavior in many of these ways, both in terms of healthy and less healthy choices.

**41%** of parents with children under 18 are snacking more (vs. 29% without children)

Women are more likely than men to report that they are thinking about food more than usual (31% vs. 22%) and eating more than usual (24% vs. 17%)

Q13b: Has there been any change to food you eat or how you prepare food as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis? Select all that apply. (n=1,011)





remains suppressed. However, wheat growers remain excited about the increases in flour purchases and home baking. Everyone's question seems to be whether or not this will translate into a long-term trend or if it is a pandemic phenomenon, O'Connor said.

Home Baking Association Program Director Sharon Davis said it is too early to tell if consumers will change their behavior to more cooking and baking at home or revert back to a more convenience oriented lifestyle.

Davis said that the retail sale of flour over the last several decades has been a bit of a concern. While demand for ready-made wheat products on grocery store shelves has remained strong, lingering questions about food ingredients among consumers causes

some confusion. She said this is an opportunity for wheat producers to ramp up their education and promotion to the home bakers.

"The biggest issue that arises is that if consumers are not baking at home, their biggest concerns may be if they know the healthful values of wheat in the context of everything else that is in the market place right now," Davis said. "Why not promote more to help people become stronger home bakers. Strong home bakers equate to people becoming stronger consumers of baked goods in general. Those are the same people that understand the ingredients in the flour products they are buying."

She said consumer trends pre-COVID-19 demonstrated the desire for a "clean label" on products, meaning

## The vast majority of Americans have altered their food habits as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

they recognize "distinctly" the ingredients used to produce their food. Beyond the clean label, trends included a bit of an up-tick in at home baking among Millennials. "The two top priorities to purchasers currently are nutrition and clean label. During COVID-19, these still remained top concerns, but low cost also rose up to be of more concern than in the recent past."

As a result of COVID-19, home baking and cooking spiked about 60 percent,

according to a 2020 Food and Health Survey by the International Food Information Council Foundation. Davis said this is important for wheat producers and entire wheat industry to acknowledge.

"Where that translates is that not only did the consumer recognize those were good ingredients to have, but they also learned how to use them, which social

*continued on page 10*

### The top 4 food safety issues in 2019 have all decreased, due to the rise in concerns related to COVID-19

More than a third of consumers avoid certain foods/beverages due to their top food safety issue



\*New in 2020  
\*\*Revised in 2020

Q56 (REVISED TREND): What in your opinion are the three most important food safety issues today? Please rank from 1 to 3, with 1=Most Important. (n=1,011)  
Q57: In the previous question, you identified [INSERT TOP CONCERN] as your #1 food safety issue today. Do you ever avoid specific foods and/or beverages when shopping because of this concern? (n=1,011)



## Home Baking Influence continued from page 9

media played a huge part in that. They are going to social media to learn tips of how to bake and watch videos on how to do these things since a large percentage of Millennials did not take cooking or baking classes in school or learn from their parents. They're going online and they are very confident and not afraid to bake more often and tackle baking new things."

She hopes the trend, short-term or not, renews interest in giving more attention to the home baker again to ensure they can be successful, as well as understand the science behind the ingredients they use to cook and bake. Buying a bag of flour is one thing Davis

said, but knowing how to successfully use it and understand how it is used in grocery store and restaurant foods is the end goal.

The Home Baking Association saw a 150% uptick in website traffic this spring as people searched for information on how to bake with staple items at home, including bread and pizza crust.

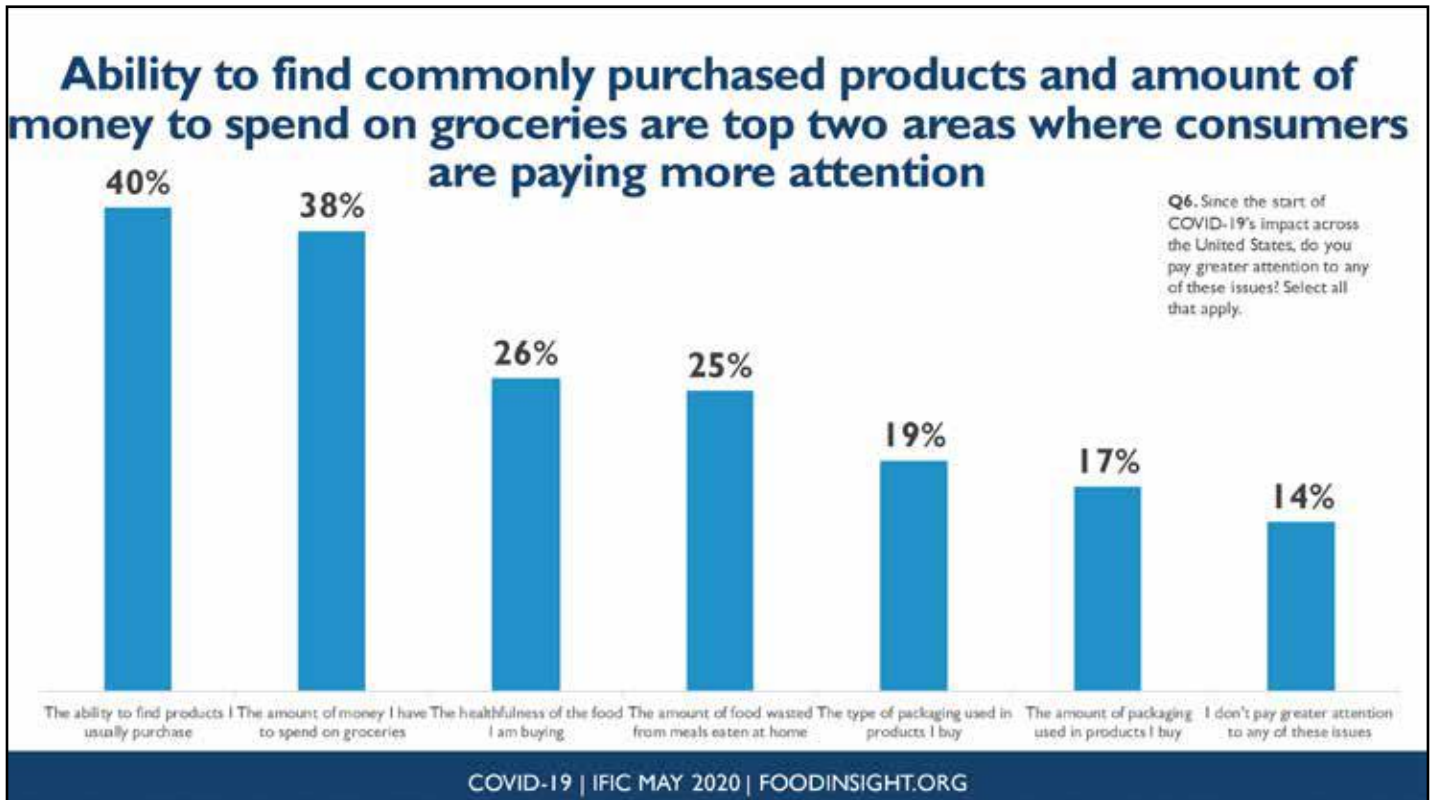
"Home bread baking is an activity that the whole family can do together, both for food and to pass the time. The smell of fresh bread is comforting, and bread is a food that people want when life gets a little uncertain. Also, bread baking is something

most everyone can do in their homes," according to Brian Sorenson, Program Manager at the Northern Crops Institute.

Sorenson said that despite export disruptions caused by fears of short supply from countries that were

not willing to sell, United States wheat exporters were able to keep shipping to get through the pandemic. He said it will be interesting to see the impacts of the pandemic on total domestic wheat consumption for this year and next.

The pandemic has significantly changed Americans' concerns and beliefs about food safety, at least for now.



# MN Soybean Growers Association VP elected chair of Ag Innovation Campus

The Ag Innovation Campus (AIC) board of directors certified its elected officers during a virtual board meeting in June. Mike Skaug, vice president of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, was named chair of the AIC.

"The Ag Innovation Campus is a game-changer for Minnesota's ag economy," says Skaug, a Beltrami farmer.

Gene Stoel, a Lake Wilson farmer and director with the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council (MSR&PC) was named AIC vice chair. MSR&PC director Tom Frisch will serve as treasurer. Jimmy Gosse, a microbiologist with the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, was tabbed as secretary.

The Ag Innovation Campus in Crookston will host a specialty crushing facility, allowing universities, commodity groups and private seed developers access to affordable processing that aims to lower costs while promoting growth of value-added products.

Once established, the AIC will host private industries to create products from the co-products of the facilities, benefiting all parties from farm gate to consumers.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, MN lawmakers clarified language for the Ag Innovation Campus, ensuring \$5 million will be directed toward soybean research and value-added agricul-

ture. The funds for the AIC will be available in July with a tentative groundbreaking date projected for late 2020.

Agriculture contributes roughly 25 percent to Minnesota's GDP, and northwest Minnesota is home to one of the country's largest

soybean-rich areas. In 2019, the 11 northwest Minnesota counties near Crookston produced more than 50 million bushels of soybeans.

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# When It Rains, It Pours... How Heavy Rainfall can Lead to Nutrient Loss

*By Lindsay Pease, UMN Extension Specialist in Nutrient & Water Management*

From May to July, 13 inches of rain fell at the Northwest Research & Outreach Center—about 3.5 inches greater than the 30-year average. What started out as a near-normal season for rain took a sudden turn with seven inches of rain in July. Quite literally, when it rained, it poured.

Many factors play into whether heavy rains lead to nutrient loss. Some of these factors are how much it rained, what soil type you have, what crop you grew,

how much fertilizer you applied, how quickly it rained after you applied the fertilizer, and whether you have tile (or irrigation). One of the key factors that determines if water will become soil moisture or runoff is rainfall intensity. The soil can only absorb water so fast. This is the soil's infiltration rate. If rainfall intensity exceeds the soil's infiltration rate, you get ponding or runoff.

Infiltration rate depends on both the soil's physical properties (texture, bulk density, etc.) and its moisture content. Coarser-textured soils absorb water faster than finer-textured soils. Drier soils absorb

water faster than wetter ones. Less compacted soils absorb water faster than more compacted ones. In general, if soil moisture is high and you get a high-intensity rainfall event, then conditions are right for surface runoff.

By my estimation, from May through July rainfall intensity in the Valley likely exceeded infiltration rate on 6 days for sandier soils and up to 21 days on our clayey soils. That means between 6 and 21 chances for ponding and surface runoff. Nutrient loss in surface runoff is more an environmental concern than an agronomic concern. It can damage



Dr. Lindsay Pease

crops and cause erosion, but it does not carry nutrients away in the same way that leaching does. Surface runoff does not carry much

*continued on page 14*



Photo Credit: Lindsay Pease



Photo Credit: Lindsay Pease



Photo Credit: Lindsay Pease

*continued from page 12*

nitrogen with it, but it can carry a lot of sediment-bound phosphorus downstream. Although phosphorus binds tightly to our soil in the field, this can change once it moves into a stream, the pH changes, and it is exposed to different biological drivers.

Once rain makes it into the soil, then nutrient loss from leaching becomes a concern. Rainfall is one of the strongest predictors of nutrient movement into shallow groundwater (or tile drain flow). Rainfall tends to have a stronger influence on nutrient leaching than either fertilizer management or soil texture. This holds true whether you are looking at nitrogen or phosphorus. For nitrogen, the soil moisture that comes with rainfall drives the mineralization process.

For phosphorus, we see pulses of phosphorus loss shortly following rainfall. This can temporarily increase nutrient availability for the crop, but nutrients will move along with water as it leaches away.

Although we cannot control the weather, we can try different strategies to improve our chances of keeping nutrients in the field. Managing water with controlled drainage is one option.

Testing out cover crops or reduced tillage to see if those help improve soil structure is another strategy. We may not have any silver bullets, but we do have options. That is not to say that it is not impor-



Photo Credit: Lindsay Pease

tant (and economical) to optimize soil fertility. It simply means that when we are looking at soil as a

system, fertilizer management is only one aspect keeping nutrients in the field.

# Wheat Market Outlook – Full impact of COVID-19 Still Unclear

By Frayne Olson, PhD  
Crop Economist/Marketing  
Specialist NDSU Extension

The wheat supply chain is one of the most complex marketing systems in the world. Within these supply chains, wheat quality is ultimately defined by the characteristics of the final product, such as taste and texture of bread or cakes, noodle color and strength or crispiness of a thin crust pizza.

This diversity can make it difficult for farm managers to understand the dynamics of the wheat markets and how changes within supply chains can impact wheat prices. This is especially true today as COVID-19 is impacting consumer demand for wheat and durum products, both domestically and internationally.

The starting point for many

wheat marketing discussions is a review of the most recent USDA supply and demand projections. The conversations often quickly shift to production forecasts, such as planted or harvested acres and yields. The market price implications of rising or falling production forecasts are well understood by farm managers. However, the price impacts of demand or crop usage changes is more complex and not as well understood.

The USDA supply and demand report separates wheat demand forecasts into four categories; food, seed, feed and residual and exports. Of these, the food and export categories have the largest usage levels and are most important for wheat price movements. Food use, or domestic demand for wheat, makes up about 45% of total wheat consumption. It is relatively

stable and the supply chains are well defined. Domestic flour mills, dough manufacturers and bakeries have sophisticated systems for purchasing wheat, tracing quality and monitoring end use performance.

Farm managers most often see shifts in domestic demand through changes in local basis levels and quality premiums or discounts. Changes in domestic wheat demand are often too small or not rapid enough to directly impact futures market prices.

In contrast, U.S. wheat export demand, which also makes up about 45% of total use, can change quickly and is very difficult to accurately forecast. Export sales can provide a “shock value” strong enough to shift futures market prices. This is the reason export pace is monitored so closely.



Dr. Frayne Olson

Once again, the world wheat market is very complex. There are multiple countries that export wheat, a long list of countries that import wheat and a very diverse set of quality specifications traded in the world market. For example, some countries prefer high protein wheat,

*continued on page 18*

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# Virtual **SEPTEMBER MARKETING SEMINAR**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020  
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

As times change, so do we! Please join us for this virtual event. Presenters will be together at one location to maximize the delivery of their valuable information. Your registration and participation is requested!

## **PROGRAM**

- 3:45-4:00 p.m. Login to virtual meeting via emailed link
- 3:55 p.m. **Welcome** - North Dakota Grain Growers and Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers
- 4:00 p.m. **Ag Policy and Its Influence on Marketing**  
*Howard Olson, SVP Government & Public Affairs, AgCountry Farm Credit Services, Fargo, ND*
- 4:30 p.m. **Crunching the Numbers**  
*Betsy Jensen, Farm Business Management Instructor, Northland Community & Technical College, Stephen, MN*
- 5:00 p.m. **Environmental Protection Agency Update (Mountains & Plains: ND, SD, MT, WY, UT, CO)**  
*Gregory Sopkin, Administrator, EPA*
- 5:15 p.m. **Profits Through Intensive Marketing**  
*Bret Oelke, Owner, Innovus Agra, LLC, St. Cloud, MN*
- 6:00 p.m. **COVID, China and Confusion: 2020/21 Crop Market Outlook**  
*Dr. Frayne Olson, Crops Economist/Marketing Specialist, NDSU, Fargo, ND*
- 6:45 p.m. **Final Comments / Adjourn**

## **REGISTRATION REQUIRED to view the seminar**

Registration is FREE to all attendees. Follow the link below to register for the virtual marketing seminar. Confirmation email with meeting link will be emailed after registration.

Register online at  
<https://bit.ly/3i9F4mR>

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## **Crunching the Numbers**

– *Betsy Jensen, Farm Business Management Instructor, Northland Community & Technical College*

Grab some Dots Pretzels and crunch through a list of numbers. What will it take to make a profit in 2020 & 2021?

## **COVID, China and Confusion: 2020/21 Crop Market Outlook**

– *Dr. Frayne Olson, Crops Economist/Marketing Specialist, NDSU*

Where we were, where we are and where this might go. Trying to make sense of the tea leaves.



## THE SPEAKERS

### Ag Policy and Its Influence on Marketing

– **Howard Olson**, SVP Government & Public Affairs, AgCountry Farm Credit Services  
Howard will review the alphabet soup of farm programs the last 2-3 years, what's yet to come in 2020 and what we might have going forward - with an eye on the elections. Then we'll talk about how they impact your marketing plan...if at all.

### Profits Through Intensive Marketing

– **Bret Oelke**, Owner, Innovus Agra, LLC  
When times are tough, and margins are tight producers have to be on their "A" game. It's also difficult to make money by following the herd; "outside-the-box" thinking is required.

Interactive Q & A will be available after each presenter.



HOWARD OLSON



BRET OELKE



BETSY JENSEN



DR. FRAYNE OLSON



A PROGRAM OF



Advertorial

## What Variety Inferences Can You Make in the Combine?

By Grant Mehring, WestBred® Technical Product Manager, Northern Region

Choosing varieties for 2021 doesn't have to wait until November, when 2020 trial data becomes available. At harvest, threshing wheat through the combine allows you to make key variety observations. Let's work under two assumptions:

1. Your farm is growing three spring wheat varieties, and you will keep the best two and switch out the worst for a new variety.
2. You can only make on-combine inferences on varieties you have planted.

### From the combine, answer these questions:

- How does crop appear from the combine cab?
- Are there pockets of off-color wheat, such as orange, which is indicative of severe bacterial leaf streak?
- What is the lodging situation – erect, flat or having just a bit of a lean?
- When you pull samples or look in the semi, are there yellow bellies indicating nitrogen shortage or shrunken kernels indicating scab?
- How is the wheat threshing – easy with relatively little engine power, or hard with greater engine exertion?
- How fast is the combine traveling? What's the difference in profitability, – in fuel, time and labor – combining 1.5 vs. 3.0 mph?

Answers to these questions can help you make good variety decisions for the next crop. As harvest began in July across the Northern Plains, start making 2021 variety plans from the combine cab.

For additional information, contact Grant Mehring, Wheat Technical Product Manager, Northern Region, at 701-373-1591 or [grant.mehring@bayer.com](mailto:grant.mehring@bayer.com).

WestBred®

Performance may vary, from location to location and from year to year, as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible and should consider the impacts of these conditions on the grower's fields. Bayer, Bayer Cross, WestBred and Design® and WestBred® are registered trademarks of Bayer Group. ©2020 Bayer Group. All Rights Reserved.



*continued from page 15*

while others prefer low protein. Some importers prefer white wheat while others are accustomed to red wheat.

So far, the short-term impacts of COVID-19 on global wheat trade have been limited. However, the pandemic is not over and more significant shifts in international wheat trade may be coming.

There are three factors that could influence the current global wheat trade; changing consumer demand, economic recession and shifting currency exchange rates.

The term “demand” has a very specific meaning in economics. The formal definition is “a consumer want or need supported by an ability to pay.” One of the key elements in this definition is a consumer’s ability to pay. The global economic

recession resulting from COVID-19 has been wide spread and significant. Current forecasts suggest an economic recovery may be slower than first expected.

Consumers in many countries are adjusting their priorities and changing buying habits. Personal and family spending is being scrutinized. Some people have already been laid off or lost their jobs, others are worried about future layoffs or business closures. Fortunately, many food items made from wheat, such as breads, biscuits and crackers, are basic food products and relatively inexpensive. However, the demand for some specialty items like cakes, cookies and pastries may be weakening.

It is still too early to tell what the net effect of COVID-19 will be on overall global wheat demand, but wheat importers from countries

experiencing major economic declines are becoming more price sensitive and reducing their company level inventories. The relative price of U.S. wheat versus competing exporters is becoming more important.

Economic turmoil can also alter the currency exchange rates between wheat importing and exporting countries, which impacts the net price of the wheat traded. For example, over the past several years, Mexico has been the largest importer of U.S. wheat. The economic disruptions caused by COVID-19 have contributed to a drop in the value of the Mexican Peso relative to the U.S. Dollar of about 16% since mid-January. In contrast, the value of the Mexican Peso relative to the Russian Ruble as dropped less than 0.5% since mid-January. This change in exchange rates has increased the cost of

U.S. wheat relative to Russian wheat for a Mexican importer, even though the price of U.S. wheat stays the same.

In this example, it is unclear whether the drop in the value of the Mexican Peso relative to the U.S. Dollar is large enough to change Mexican wheat buying levels. Wheat quality and consistency, timeliness of deliveries and contract default risk can also play a critical role in buying decisions. However, uncertainty about changing consumer demand and economic uncertainty is causing international wheat buyers to become more cautious.

Fortunately, the USDA tracks and reports wheat export sales every week. These reports are released to the public every Thursday at 8:00 am CT and are monitored very closely by market traders and analysts. Farm managers can also use this information to refine their marketing plans and choose appropriate marketing tools.



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# Become a MAWG Member Today!

The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers places a high priority on legislative issues such as crop insurance, the farm bill, wheat research funds and water and other environmental issues.

By joining the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, you become an important member of an organization that is committed to providing you with the latest advancements and improvements in the wheat industry.

Choose the type of membership that is best for you and your farm operation. Call the MAWG office at 218-253-4311 to join.

**Visit [mnwheat.org](http://mnwheat.org) to join today.**



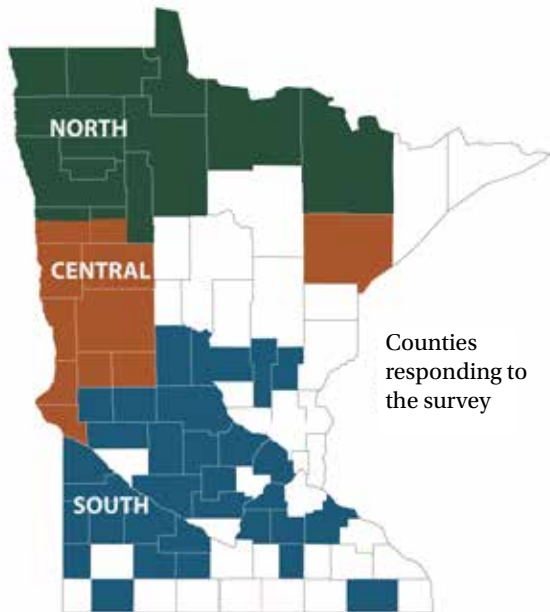
Minnesota Association  
of Wheat Growers

# 2020 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 tell us what varieties are most popular, and what characteristics are most important to you as growers. We hope that this will improve in the future. Next year, when you receive the survey, please take a few minutes to complete and return it.

## Survey Findings:

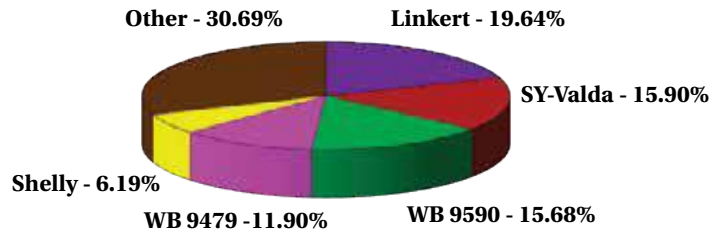
- Linkert was the most popular variety statewide, with 19.64% of the acreage planted in 2020.
- Second most popular was SY Valda at 15.90% of the state's acreage in 2020.
- Third on the list was WB 9590 at 15.68%, followed by WB 9479 at 11.90% and Shelly at 6.19%.
- In the northern growing regions of the state, Linkert was the most popular variety with 20.59%.
- SY Valda was the most popular variety in the central growing region, with 22.37% of the acres planted.
- In the southern region, Linkert again was first on the list at 24.75% acres planted.



Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council  
 2600 Wheat Drive • Red Lake Falls, MN 56750  
 800-242-6118 • email: mnwheat@gvtel.com

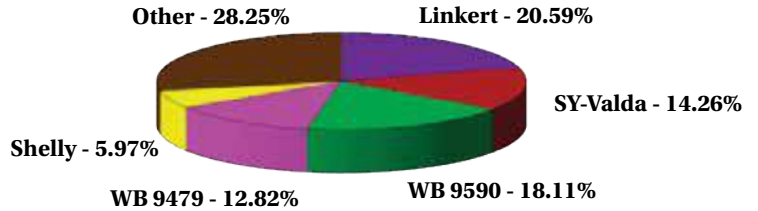
## Top Five Varieties in Minnesota, 2020

Total Acres Surveyed in 2020: 432,315



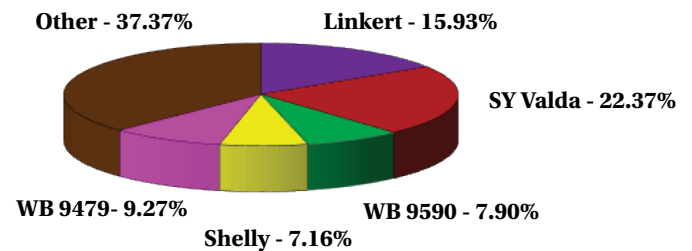
## Top Five Varieties in Northern Minnesota, 2020

Total Acres Surveyed in 2020: 333,578



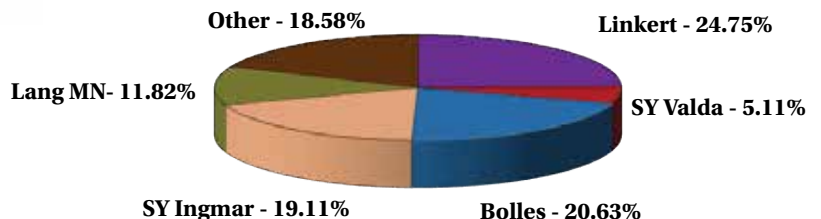
## Top Five Varieties in Central Minnesota, 2020

Total Acres Surveyed in 2020: 93,457



## Top Five Varieties in Southern Minnesota, 2020

Total Acres Surveyed in 2020: 5,280



## MN SPRING WHEAT VARIETIES - YEARLY COMPARISON

Variety	Release Date	Entire State 2020	Entire State 2019	Entire State 2018	Northern 2020	Northern 2019	Northern 2018	Central 2020	Central 2019	Central 2018	Southern 2020	Southern 2019	Southern 2018
Linkert	2013 U OF M	19.64%	22.25%	27.28%	20.59%	23.94%	29.30%	15.93%	16.45%	20.63%	24.75%	18.27%	24.18%
SY-Valda	2015 Syngenta	15.90%	15.51%	8.91%	14.26%	13.80%	9.70%	22.37%	22.12%	6.85%	5.11%	2.62%	0.64%
WB 9590	2017 WestBred	15.68%	13.77%	2.48%	18.11%	15.91%	3.05%	7.90%	6.75%	0.71%	0.00%	---	---
WB 9479	2017 WestBred	11.90%	9.16%	3.45%	12.82%	10.31%	4.15%	9.27%	5.37%	1.33%	0.00%	2.70%	
Shelly	2016 U OF M	6.19%	7.09%	8.18%	5.97%	6.18%	7.66%	7.16%	10.28%	9.50%	3.26%	7.12%	14.24%
MN-Washburn	2019 U OF M	4.38%	0.32%	0.00%	3.89%	0.31%	---	6.36%	---	---	0.66%	---	---
WB-Mayville	2011 WestBred	2.81%	5.36%	9.63%	3.47%	6.21%	11.71%	0.59%	2.58%	3.25%	0.00%	---	---
SY-Ingmar	2014 Syngenta	2.41%	2.82%	3.73%	1.50%	2.36%	3.42%	4.72%	4.10%	4.76%	19.11%	10.97%	3.88%
Bolles	2015 U of M	2.15%	4.35%	10.45%	1.09%	2.38%	6.36%	4.85%	10.43%	23.72%	20.63%	25.49%	20.42%
LCS Cannon	2018 Limagrain Cereal Seeds	2.10%	0.24%	0.03%	1.86%	0.20%	---	3.10%	0.39%	0.13%	0.00%	---	---
SY Mc-Cloud	2019 Syngenta	1.75%	0.24%	---	1.74%	0.25%	---	1.91%	0.20%	---	0.00%	---	---
Lang-MN	2017 U of M	1.50%	1.95%	4.38%	0.57%	0.71%	3.95%	4.24%	5.94%	6.02%	11.82%	11.88%	1.85%
TCG-Heartland	2019 21st Century Genetics	1.29%	0.22%	---	1.42%	0.28%	---	0.91%	---	---	0.00%	---	---
LCS Trigger	2016 Limagrain Cereal Seeds	1.16%	0.71%	0.38%	1.15%	0.76%	0.47%	1.23%	0.56%	0.09%	0.57%	---	---
Ambush	2016 DynaGro	1.14%	0.54%	0.29%	1.39%	0.70%	0.38%	0.32%	---	---	1.00%	---	---
Prosper	2011 NDSU	1.02%	1.92%	1.89%	1.03%	2.33%	1.30%	1.01%	0.40%	3.96%	1.04%	3.45%	1.43%
TCG-Spitfire	2015 21st Century Genetics	0.99%	3.91%	3.13%	0.97%	3.96%	3.51%	1.15%	3.92%	2.06%	0.00%	---	---
WB 9719	2017 WestBred	0.84%	1.03%	1.00%	0.82%	0.97%	0.67%	0.95%	1.30%	1.98%	0.00%	---	2.69%
HRS 3530 / CP 3530	2015 Croplan	0.65%	1.08%	1.36%	0.56%	0.90%	1.56%	1.00%	1.75%	0.76%	0.42%	0.89%	0.51%
MN-Torgy	2020 U of M	0.59%	---	---	0.50%	---	---	0.90%			0.57%	---	---
Samson	2007 WestBred	0.49%	1.11%	1.46%	0.64%	1.44%	1.79%	0.00%	0.00%	0.43%	0.00%	---	---
Ballistic	DynaGro	0.47%	0.11%		0.61%	0.15%	---	0.00%	---	---	0.00%	---	---
HRS 3419 / CP 3419	2014 Croplan	0.34%	0.51%	0.77%	0.37%	0.60%	0.72%	---	0.22%	0.99%	4.39%	---	0.51%
Allegiant 822	CHS	0.32%	---	---	0.41%	---	---	0.00%	---	---	0.00%	---	---
Prevail	2014 SDSU	0.31%	0.23%	0.31%	0.40%	0.30%	0.32%	0.00%	---	---	0.00%	---	3.98%
AP Murdock	2020 AgriPro	0.28%	---	---	0.29%	---	---	0.27%	---	---	0.00%	---	---
LCS Rebel	2017 Limagrain Cereal Seeds	0.27%	0.81%	0.36%	0.25%	0.77%	0.41%	0.32%	0.97%	0.24%	0.00%	---	---
Other		3.43	4.76	10.53	3.32	4.28	9.57	3.54	5.27	12.60	7.67	16.61	25.67
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100.1%	101%	100%	100%



# Thank you for supporting the 2020 Sporting Clay Shoot Out

This year's annual MN Wheat Sporting Clay Shoot Out had 41 novice and advanced shooters participate. All of the growers and ag professionals enjoyed a beautiful day of shooting at the Northwest

Sporting Clay Association course in Thief River Falls, MN.

Prizes were also awarded to the best individual and the best team shooters.

**THANK YOU** to our sponsors.  
The day was a success because of you!



**Strickler Ag Services**



## The winners are....

Top Individual, score: TJ LaPlante  
Top Team - Strickler Ag Services: Brent Strickler, TJ LaPlante, Brad, Eric Johnson & Neil Johnson



**Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers**

*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 or email [mnwheat@mnwheat.com](mailto:mnwheat@mnwheat.com).*



## NEW 2019 Varieties

- ND Rolette
- ND Hammond

## Top Varieties

- ND Grano Durum
- ND Riveland Durum
- ND17009GT Soybean
- ND VitPro Hard Red Spring Wheat



[ndcropimprovement.com](http://ndcropimprovement.com)

# Introducing UMN Extension's Newest Program: Digital Crop Doc

By Dr. Angie Peltier, Extension educator - crops and Phyllis Bongard, Educational content development and communications specialist

While a human pathogen has changed many of the ways that those in agriculture interact with one another this year, the threat from plant pathogens remains unchanged. If specific weather conditions favor the interaction between a susceptible variety or hybrid and a plant pathogen, disease will occur.

This summer, COVID-19 precautions have limited how UMN Extension personnel can interact with growers to diagnose diseases of agronomic crops in Minnesota. Because the need for this 'detective work' still exists, members of the UMN Extension crops team have launched a new online program called MN Digital Crop Doc, <https://extension.umn.edu/crop-production/digital-crop-doc>

## HOW DOES DIGITAL CROP DOC WORK?

If you have disease developing in one of your fields and are wondering what it might be or you're just looking for confirmation, the UMN Extension crops team would like to help you with disease diagnosis for several crops:

- Corn
- Soybean
- Small grains
- Sugarbeet
- Alfalfa

When you're out scouting, you can simply take photos of disease symptoms with your smartphone and submit them to the Digital Crop Doc website.

Along with the photos, the website houses an online form that asks you for those context clues that in a typical year we would be able to gather by field observations or by asking you questions.

Once you submit the form and photos, it's immediately sent to Extension employees that will work hard to provide a timely visual diagnosis. One of our team members will contact you with a diagnosis, a request for more information or a suggestion to submit the samples to a plant disease clinic.

## HOW WILL I BE CONTACTED?

All information that could personally identify a field or the person submitting the form will remain confidential. Personal information will only be used to contact you with a diagnosis.

## ARE THERE OTHER BENEFITS?

Digital Crop Doc submissions may help Extension identify new or emerging diseases that could better guide our research and educational programs to meet the needs of Minnesota's crop producers.

*Photos & Source: University of Minnesota Extension/ Minnesota Crop News*



# Ag Community Showing Resilience In Face of COVID

By Shawna Aakre,  
Continually Still

Farmers experience a roller-coaster of factors that impact their daily business decisions, lifestyle and health. Due to current trends of lower commodity prices, tariff impacts and, for some, irregular weather patterns, mental health in the agricultural community has been a topic gaining more momentum in the last five to seven years.

The most recent setback to farmer well-being has been the financial burden, emotional strain and isolation created as a result of COVID-19 impacts.

“Initially the farmers I worked with didn’t indicate significant stress due to COVID-19. They were already fairly isolated on their farms, so life went on somewhat normally. More recently, I am getting calls related to struggles with isolation and the inability to meet friends and have social time. For many of our farmers, the social aspect is a significant factor in well-being and stress management,” said Monica McConkey, Licensed Professional Counselor and MN Rural Mental Health Specialist.

The reality is that no one is immune to stress, especially in the current environment. McConkey points out that farmers will always be under stress, as they and their families regularly deal with

*If health is your most important resource, it needs to be a key priority to manage - Professor Sean Brotherson*

“

factors outside of their control, economic or otherwise. People are beginning to struggle even more as they feel the isolation caused by summer community activities being stripped away for all ages she said.

“I originally underestimated the impact of COVID on farmers. But they are definitely feeling it, especially the more extroverted, social people that need that interaction. I think now that we head into harvest, that will take up some time and thinking. After harvest, depending upon where the country or COVID is at, it could be a really hard winter.”

But it is not simply just a story of increased mental health concern and stress according to Sean Brotherson, Professor and Extension Family Science Specialist at North Dakota State University.

“There is also a tremendous story of resilience in the face of previous stresses and the currently added challenges as many continue to move forward to provide food and other key resources that are necessary for people. While some community events have been more limited, there has been more time

for personal activities and family time, which are also good outlets for stress reduction. I’ve been very impressed with how farm and ranch operators and communities have responded to the particular challenge in ways that are resourceful and innovative.”

He said the overall impact the current agricultural environment will have on the mental and overall health of producers in 2020 and beyond remains to be seen. Before COVID-19 even entered the scene the Upper Great Plains region was heavily impacted by agricultural stresses said Brotherson.

He said that the response of agricultural producers and groups in the industry to mental health concerns in that time has been encouraging and positive. There is acknowledgment of the stresses people experience and mobilization to provide resources to assist those struggling across the agricultural community.

“I always like to remind people that among all the assets that exist on the farm and ranch operation, such as land, seed, equipment and others, the most important resource for any of them is

the health of the farmers and individuals who are operating on that farm. If health is your most important resource, it needs to be a key priority to manage. I encourage people to remember and adopt that perspective as it is a helpful way to think about furthering mental health and wellness in agriculture,” Brotherson said.

Brotherson and McConkey both encourage farmers and ranchers to reach out to a mental health care provider and also to utilize the growing number of mental health resources. They cited extension resources, crisis lines and telemental health, which has become more prominent due to COVID-19.

Brotherson added that there has been an increase in participation of webinars and video series provided, which he views as a positive indicator that people are seeking education and assistance in managing their mental health. He said there are a number of organizations providing those resources, like the American Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union and American Agri-Women.

Shauna Reitmeier, Northwestern Mental Health Center Chief Executive Officer and Mental Health Practitioner, said she has seen a positive response to the webinars she has been a part of through the American Agri-Women and the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center.



“They are reaching a broad array of people involved in agriculture or intersecting those in agriculture. In their feedback, many have stated how helpful the webinars have been. We have heard from them the desire for other connection opportunities to discuss mental health topics.” Reitmeier said as a result of the webinar feedback, the group started routine “Cultivating Resiliency Virtual Coffee Chats” where people can ask questions, connect or listen in and use the information to work through their own particular situation. She said there are coffee chats that are both gender specific and all-inclusive.

“Our farmers show strong resiliency I think. They just are the sort of people that keep plowing through, just going to do the job. And you know, I think that COVID-19 is not lost on our farmers. With all the executive orders at least in Minnesota, it hasn’t stopped what they are doing.”

Specifically in the northern part of Minnesota, Reitmeier said farmers have been hit doubly with too much rain and COVID-19. But across the whole region, plans for school this fall may have a great affect on farm families as they go through harvest.

McConkey said the key will be for farmers to develop good coping skills to manage that stress. This begins with paying attention to one’s thinking and effects of those thoughts. She works with farmers to put energy, thoughts and efforts into the things they can control

instead of worrying about the things that are outside of their control. Finding a trusted someone to listen who will not fix or judge, but also may understand a farmer’s experiences can be very helpful McConkey said.

Agriculture has felt a significant loss in the last several years McConkey said. Compared to the 1980s, when she said there was a negative connotation associated with seeking mental health, the industry is working more on long-term promotion of mental

health importance. Now with COVID-19, she has seen significantly more attention focused on making mental health resources and providers more readily available.

“When I look back at farmer mental health provisions in the United States, I see them as much more reactive. When farmers are struggling financially, there is an increased awareness and some programs are funded in the heat of the moment. Then the dust settles. People assume that if the finances are okay, then the farmers will be okay.”

She said that that could not be farther from the truth since farmers continuously deal with stress. But, McConkey has a message of hope for farming families in the midst of the current storm.

“Our farm families are very resilient. They are also very strong in faith. Turning attention to what is important in life, having hope for the future, embracing family and friends, finding joy in their work and life are all positives that help cope with stress.”

Signs to be aware of, acting as “dashboard lights” signaling mental health concerns Sean Brotherson, Professor and Extension Family Science Specialist at NDSU, shares four areas to observe for mental health concerns. He said these indicate a person needs to slow down and see a mental healthcare provider or take steps to improve mental health soon.

#### Physical Health

- headaches
- tension (people often hold stress in neck, shoulders, back)
- aches in body
- lot of fatigue
- Existing health issues becoming worse

#### Mental/Emotional Signs

- continuing feeling of sadness beyond what is typical
- sense of discouragement
- persistent depression
- anxiety
- restlessness
- panic
- strong mood swings
- quick to anger
- more irritable
- difficulty concentrating

#### Relational

- begin to socially isolate oneself a lot more (can mask it with not coming in for dinner or working longer hours)
- communication difficulties
- sense of persistent tension in a relationship

#### Behavioral

- self-medication
- substance/alcohol use to self-medicate
- sleep difficulties

# Tri-State Mental Health Resources

## MINNESOTA

**Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline:** 833-600-2670 x 1  
A 24/7 call center with trained staff and volunteers.

### **Minnesota Rural Mental Health Specialists**

Monica McConkey: 218-280-7785 (generally serves area north of Highway 12)  
Ted Matthews: 320-266-2390 (generally serves the area south of Highway 12)  
Monica and Ted work with farmers throughout Minnesota as a free, no paperwork service available through Minnesota Legislature funds.

**Crisis Text Line:** text “MN” to 741741

Minnesota’s suicide prevention and mental health crisis texting service, available 24/7.

## UMN EXTENSION

**Coping with Rural Stress Resources** - <https://extension.umn.edu/rural-stress>

**Managing Farm Stress Resources** - <https://extension.umn.edu/managing-farm>

**MN Dept. of Agriculture** – Coping with Farm and Rural Stress Resources -

<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/about/mnfarmerstress>

**Farm Information Line:** 1-800-232-9077, [fil@umn.edu](mailto:fil@umn.edu)

For general questions or to set up a financial counseling session with research-based answers from Extension agriculture and natural resources experts.

**Northwest Mental Health Center** - 1-800-418-7326

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## NORTH DAKOTA

**First Link 24-Hour Helpline** - 211 or 701-235-7335 or text your zipcode to 898-211

A 24/7 service available to anyone for listening and support, referrals, resources and crisis intervention.

**NDSU Extension** – Farm and Ranch Stress Resources - <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/farmranchstress/>

**Regional Human Service Centers** - <https://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/>

ND Dept. of Human Services operates eight regional human service centers that provide counseling and mental health services.

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## SOUTH DAKOTA

**Avera Farm and Ranch Stress Hotline** - 1-800-691-4336

A 24/7 service specifically for farmers to speak with mental health professionals to help navigate what you’re experiencing, including symptoms or signs of anxiety or depression.

**Online** - [www.avera.org/services/behavioral-health/farmer-stress-hotline/](http://www.avera.org/services/behavioral-health/farmer-stress-hotline/)

**Helpline Center** – 211 or 1-800-273-8255 or text sdfarm to 898211

South Dakota’s 24/7 call center with trained staff to help with mental health and provide resources.

**South Dakota Ag Mediation Program:** 605-773-5436 or 605-280-4745

**South Dakota Rural Help Line** - 800/664-1349

**SDSU Extension Farm Stress Site** - <https://extension.sdstate.edu/tags/farm-stress>

# USW Welcomes Commitment to Continue Export Grain Inspections During COVID-19 Pandemic

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) President Vince Peterson issued the following statement regarding the statement from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service confirming the agency is prepared to "take all steps necessary" to ensure grain inspections will continue despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"Wheat importers around the world trust the United States as a reliable supplier. One of the foundations of that earned trust comes from the assurance provided by the official inspection process and certification performed by the Federal Grain Inspection Service that accompanies every cargo exported. We are pleased to see reassurance from USDA that it will do all it can to ensure that the U.S. wheat store will remain open during this time of global uncertainty. U.S. Wheat Associates will continue to monitor supply chains, inspection services and do our part to ensure customers can receive the wheat they need."*

## Statement to Industry

March 16, 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is rising to meet the challenges associated with the new coronavirus disease, Covid-19. As leaders of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Agricultural Marketing Service, we can assure you that the agencies are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our employees while still providing the timely delivery of the services to maintain the movement of America's food supply from farm to fork.

These agencies are prepared to utilize their authority and all administrative means and flexibilities to address staffing considerations. Field personnel will be working closely with establishment management and state and local health authorities to handle situations as they arise in your community. As always, communication between industry and government will be key. We are all relying on early and frequent communication with one another to overcome challenges as they arise.

In this time of much uncertainty, we know that many of you have questions about how the department will continue to ensure that grading and inspection personnel are available. We have all seen how consumers have reacted to the evolving coronavirus situation and how important access to food is to a sense of safety and wellbeing. It is more important than ever that we assure the American public that government and industry will take all steps necessary to ensure continued access to safe and wholesome USDA-inspected products.

As we come together as a country to address this public health threat, know that USDA remains committed to working closely with industry to fulfill our mission of ensuring the safety of the U.S. food supply and protecting agricultural health.

Dr. Mindy Brashears  
*USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety*

Greg Ibach  
*USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs*

The full Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) statement can be found here:  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAMS/bulletins/281851c>

# Destinations of U.S. Agricultural Exports have Shifted over Last Quarter Century

The United States is the world's second largest agricultural trader after the European Union. U.S. agricultural exports have grown significantly over the last quarter century, from \$46.1 billion in 1994 to \$136.7 billion in 2019.

The elimination of agricultural trade barriers as a result of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—superseded by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in July 2020—nearly quadrupled exports (by value) to Canada and Mexico.

Coinciding with policy developments, rising household incomes and changing trade policies in developing East and Southeast Asia have driven export growth, especially for China, whose share of U.S. agricultural exports more than quadrupled from 3 percent during 1994-2000 to 14 percent during 2010-19.

Meanwhile, there has been a sharp decline in the share going to Europe and high-income East Asia, particularly Japan. These charts are drawn from the Economic Research Service product, U.S. Agricultural Trade at a Glance.

## COMPOSITION AND DESTINATIONS OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS HAVE SHIFTED

With U.S. agricultural output growing faster than domestic demand for many products, U.S. farmers and agricultural firms have been relying on export markets to sustain prices and revenues. As a result, U.S. agricultural exports have grown steadily over the past quarter century, reaching \$136.7 billion in 2019, up from \$46.1 billion in 1994.

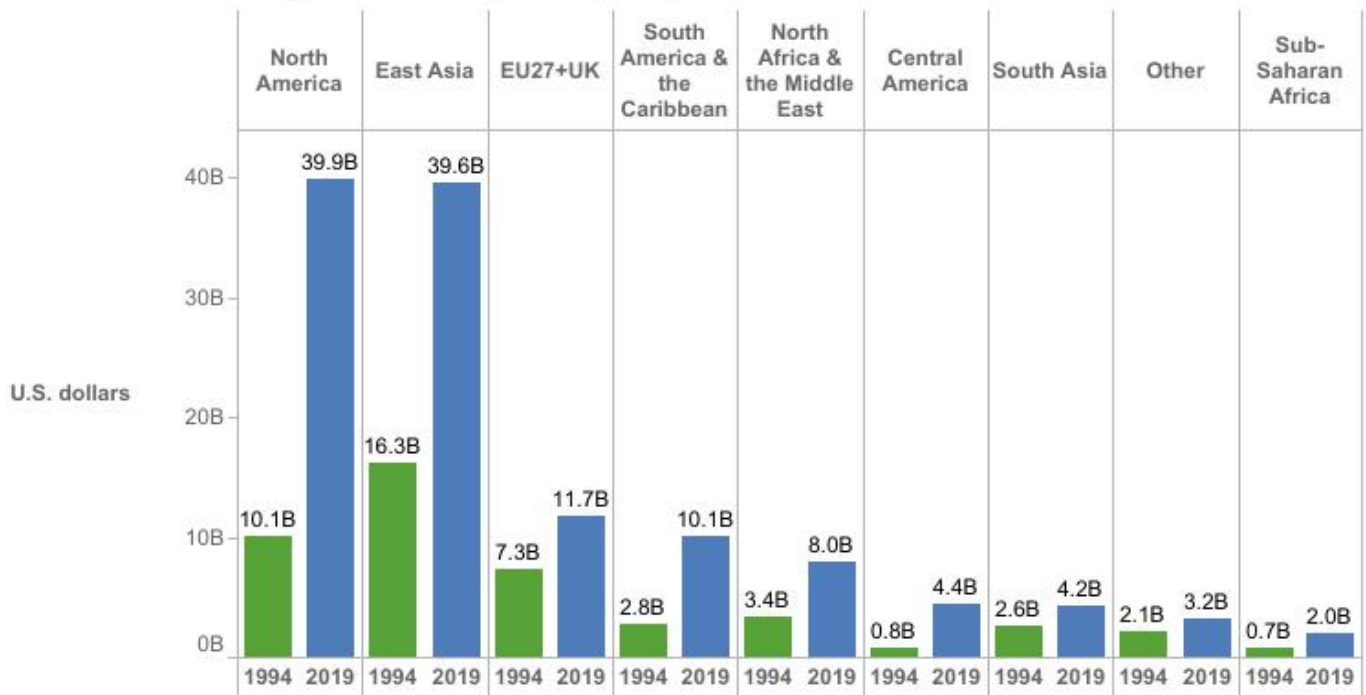
However, the product composition of agricultural exports shifted at roughly

the same time, reflecting changes in global supply and demand.

Most notably, exports of consumer-oriented products—including high-value products (HVP) such as dairy products, meats, fruit, and vegetables—showed strong growth driven by increasing population and income worldwide and growing diversification of diets.

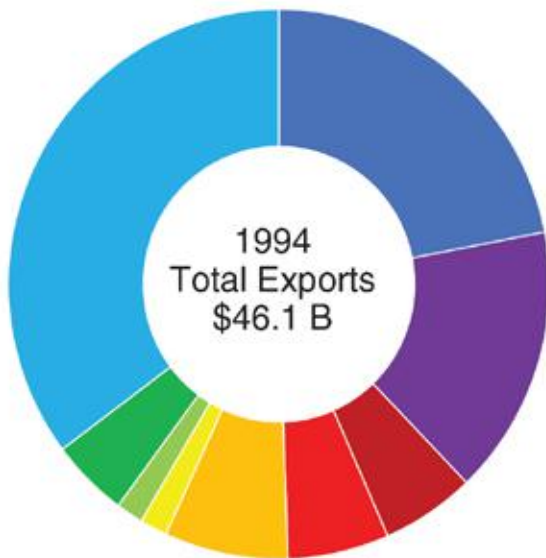
Source: USDA/ERS

U.S. export values per region, 1994 and 2019



Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States (FATUS).

# Shares of different regions in U.S. agricultural exports, 1994 and 2019



- East Asia 35.2%
- Other 4.6%
- Sub-Saharan Africa 1.6%
- Central America 1.6%
- North Africa & Middle East 7.4%
- South America & Caribbean 6.1%
- South Asia 5.6%
- European Union & UK 15.9%
- North America 22.0%



- East Asia 29.0%
- Other 2.3%
- Sub-Saharan Africa 1.5%
- Central America 3.2%
- North Africa & Middle East 5.8%
- South America & Caribbean 7.4%
- South Asia 13.0%
- European Union & UK 8.6%
- North America 29.2%

Notes: Agricultural exports include unprocessed bulk commodities like soybeans, corn, wheat, rice, and raw cotton, as well as highly processed, high-value foods and beverages like sausages, bakery goods, ice cream, beer and wine, and condiments sold in retail stores and restaurants. Fish, shellfish, and forestry products are not included. Geographical regions are consistent with those as defined in the USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service's Global Agricultural Trade System except South Asia and Southeast Asia have been combined.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) using data from ERS *Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States*.

# Preparing for fall harvest; grain-bin safety

By Marlene Dufault  
MLD Communications

During the long hours of harvest as grain farmers and their families empty grain bins in preparation for fall harvest, it is important to be aware of grain bin hazards. The moisture of a wet autumn can cause grain to cake or crust at the surface known as bridging.

Bridged grain prevents grain flow, hiding pockets of air in the grain, and farmers trying to break up bridged grain can quickly fall through due to the instability. Grain being emptied from the bin acts like quicksand with the ability to engulf in seconds and suffocate - the leading cause of death in storage bins. Bridged grain can become very dangerous if precautions are not followed. It is never advised to enter a bin of flowing grain. Doing so can put you at risk of being pulled down with the grain.

Grain can entrap someone to their knees and waist in 3-5 seconds. Depending on the size and speed of the unloading auger, a person can be completely engulfed in less than 30 seconds, leading to suffocation.

It's important to take safety precautions on the farm - especially when working in and around grain bins as grain bins present many safety risks. Purdue University has recorded more than 800 flowing grain entrapments since 1964 and, many "non-fatal" incidents are believed to go unreported.

In February 2020, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue issued a proclamation naming February 16-22 as Grain Bin Safety Week. The Secretary had previously sat down with the Governor of South Dakota, Kristi Noem, to talk about the importance of grain bin safety on the farm. Governor Noem grew up on a farm



in Hamlin County, South Dakota and has a personal connection to farm safety. She has been an advocate for increased grain bin safety efforts for years. "We hope grain operators, farmers and community leaders will join us in expanding knowledge of safe practices not just during National Grain Bin Safety Week, but year-round," said Secretary Perdue. "Tragedies like the one Governor Noem's family experienced happen too frequently.

Training is key for working safely around grain bins. Many online and in-person farm safety training resources are available to help keep you and your employees safe.

Risks come with working on the farm but taking precautions can help you and others stay safe. When you take your grain in, be sure your safety is top of mind. Farmers are often in a hurry to get things done. Nothing is worth losing a life.

## OSHA recommends the following precautions:

- IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, DO NOT ENTER STORAGE BINS. Use tools and mechanical equipment to eliminate grain that is caked on the walls of the bin, without entering the bin. If you do enter your bin, test the air to be sure there's enough oxygen and no dangerous gases.
- STOP THE FLOW OF GRAIN. Turn off and disconnect, lock out, or block-off all powered equipment, especially grain-moving equipment (like augers).
- WORK WITH OTHERS. Be sure you can hear and see one another. Station an observer who is equipped to provide assistance and perform rescue operations outside the bin.
- USE a body harness with an anchored lifeline or boatswain chair when entering from a level at or above stored grain.
- DO NOT walk on or "down" the grain to make it flow.
- DO NOT enter onto or below bridged grain or when grain is built up on sides.
- DO NOT enter without having rescue equipment and a rescue-trained observer stationed outside who is in constant contact with you.
- CONFIRM that all safety precautions are in place and it is safe to enter.
- MN Department of Labor and Industry <http://www.dli.mn.gov/>
- US Dept of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/grainhandling/>
- ND OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/contactus/bystate/ND/areaoffice>

# USDA Awards 2Blades Foundation \$650,000 to Study Wild Emmer Wheat for Rust Disease Resistance

*USDA Awards \$650,000 Grant to 2Blades Foundation to Study Wild Wheat & Help Prevent Diseases Now Costing Wheat Farmers \$3 Billion Each Year*

The 2Blades Foundation and collaborators at the University of Minnesota, Kansas State University, and the John Innes Center will study wild emmer wheat to discover genes that can help farmers combat devastating wheat rust diseases which are estimated to cost farmers and consumers nearly \$3 billion each year.

The United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture has awarded a grant through their Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) for the study of emmer wheat — one of the very first cereals to be cultivated in agriculture — to identify genes that could help make wheat resistant to “rust” diseases. Wheat rusts have destroyed crops since Roman times, including multiple epidemics in the US in the past century. The current project builds on 2Blades' 12-year effort to source resistance genes from wheat and its domesticated and wild relatives, and to deploy them in finished wheat varieties. It brings together leading scientists in wheat and wheat rusts with key resources.

The project team includes: Jesse Poland, a wheat geneticist at Kansas State University's Wheat Genet-

ics Resource Center, which maintains extensive collections of wild wheat relatives including wild emmer wheat; Brian Steffenson, a plant pathologist at the University of Minnesota, with extensive expertise in cereal rusts and specialized facilities for conducting resistance assays; and Brande Wulff, from the John Innes Centre in the United Kingdom, who has developed the methodology to quickly identify resistance genes through association genetics.

Wheat provides roughly 20 percent of calories and protein for human nutrition worldwide and is the third largest crop grown

in the United States. It is attacked by a number of diseases, among the most damaging being stripe rust (*Puccinia striiformis*), stem rust (*P. graminis*), and leaf rust (*P. triticina*).

The best and most environmentally sound way to defend against these diseases is through the deployment of resistance genes in wheat varieties. The use of genetic resistance is particularly important in developing countries where fungicides used to combat rust disease may be expensive or unavailable.

The world wheat harvest is threatened by the recent emergence of new virulent

forms of the fungal pathogen *Puccinia graminis*, which can cause pandemic disease with the rapid and complete destruction of infected crops.

“In the face of this threat to world food security we are working with our partners in the United States, England, Australia and Japan to develop new wheat lines which are completely and securely disease resistant, and to ensure that these lines are available to farmers everywhere, and freely available to farmers throughout the developing world,” said 2Blades Chairman Roger Freedman.

Read More at [2Blades.org](https://2Blades.org).



Wheat Rust. Photo Credit: Kansas State University Wheat Genetics Resource Center

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