

# Prairie Grains

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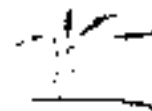
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## Cover Story

*Jared Goplen practices what he preaches. The University of Minnesota Extension Educator and Minnesota farmer oversees multiple checkoff-funded programs, and helps to inform farmers on the benefits of including small grains in a corn-soybean rotation. Cover photo courtesy of University of Minnesota Extension.*



# Against the Grain

## Staying the Course

In one of my first official duties as the newest president of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, I traveled to our nation's capital to attend Hill Visits alongside fellow leaders from the National Association of Wheat Growers. Washington, D.C. looks and feels differently than it did just a few years ago. And in a sign of how the methods of advocating have shifted since 2020, we interacted with legislators both in-person and virtually. We respect both parties' positions on how they prefer meeting; this allows us take advantage of all the communication formats at our disposal.

Though advocacy has changed in a myriad of ways since I first sat on the Minnesota Farm Bureau Board more than a decade ago, the messages and intent remain the same: The work goes on. As a nonpartisan advocacy group, we engage across both aisles to improve the profitability and economic outlook for our state's wheat farmers. Advocating for farmers is a worthy endeavor. And that's the message we relayed to our federally elected officials this winter in meetings with both representatives and senators: While the grain prices

have improved over the past year, many challenges remain. The fate of the next farm bill. WOTUS. Infrastructure. Regulations. Supply chain issues. But



Mike Gunderson

with challenges also come opportunities. We anticipate a similar environment awaits during Minnesota's Legislative Session. The state Senate appears prepared to conduct their business in-person, while the House is looking to hold their committee meetings virtually. There's a lot at stake this session. Our state leaders will be negotiating how a record \$7.7 billion budget surplus should be invested, along with allocating funds from the American Rescue Plan and the bipartisan infrastructure package. MAWG and our lobbyist, Bruce Kleven, will be working all of our channels to ensure Minnesota agriculture has a voice in these discussions, even if we won't be holding our traditional day on the Hill.

Membership is one of the pillars of this grassroots organization, and we could use your help. Membership dues help fund our advocacy efforts and start at just \$85 a year – that's less than a quarter

each day to help fund our lobbying efforts in St. Paul and Washington, D.C. Isn't investing in MAWG worth your pocket change at least? I'd say so; it just makes sense (pun intended). In 2020, my predecessor, Gary Anderson, worked with Minnesota's ag community and legislators to pass full Section 179 conformity, which saves rural Minnesotans and businesses about \$200 million in tax relief. Now that's what I call a healthy return on investment. And I speak from experience – I've been a MAWG member for nearly 30 years. Someone has to speak up for farmers. If not us, then who will?

I'm proud to lead this organization as we near our 50th anniversary in 2025. In my four years on the board – and as a longtime farmer in Mahnomon County – I've seen firsthand how MAWG can improve your bottom line and help bring policy ideas into legislation. I look forward to working with our board and staff to keep this proud association moving forward. We hope you'll join us along the way by signing up for a membership at [mnwheat.org/growers/membership-info/](http://mnwheat.org/growers/membership-info/).

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

# TAMING THE BULLS



BY BETSY JENSEN



& BEARS

## Understand Your Plan

I love it when a plan comes together. Except for a few Powerball tickets, I do not leave much to chance. I am a planner. While on family vacations, there are complaints about my spreadsheets of plans. There are also complaints when I do not have anything planned. If you are a planner, you understand my frustrations. Everyone looks to me and complains either way.

The first three months of the year are the busiest time of the year for me since I am developing plan A, plan B and probably plan C for farmers. Let's start with more wheat. Now less. What if we forward contract wheat today? How about buying that new combine? I really do have the perfect job for my personality. I am not sure how I stumbled into farm business management. I must have developed a spreadsheet that led me to this position.

It is rewarding to work with farmers to map out a plan to profitability. It is their plan, not mine. After working with so many farmers, I have come to accept that the Gospel according to Betsy is not a real thing. I have an opinion about everything, but it is never the right answer for that farmer. Each farmer is unique and has their own goals for their farm. It is my job to listen, develop a plan, make some changes and see if the farmer's dreams can become reality.

I do not judge when it comes to crop marketing. Everyone has their own cash flow needs, profitability levels and risk tolerance. Your plan can look completely crazy to me, but it is your plan. If you do not have a crop marketing plan, you may notice my toe tapping or fingers drumming the table as my anxiety rises. You need a plan! Even a crazy one!

2022 may be the year of the crazy crop marketing plan, at least to begin the year. We may need to modify the plan this spring or summer if prices become less crazy. For now, crazy markets deserve a crazy plan.

If you have not forward contracted anything for 2022, congratulations. Your plan to "Do Nothing" has worked so far. As you begin to develop your 2022 plan, start by asking yourself the opposite of your typical question. Instead of asking "Should I sell?" ask yourself "Should I hold?"

Is it a good idea to hold commodities at these price levels? I have asked "Why are you holding?" very often this year. If a farmer still owns significant amounts of 2021 crops and asks me "Should I sell?" I just turn the tables and ask "Why are you holding?" That farmer and I have very different ideas about risk tolerance and cash flow needs. I cannot answer "Should I sell?" for that farmer. Remember, the

Gospel according to Betsy is not a real thing.

This winter you need to develop plans for your farm. Your banker creates a cash flow for your business and you need to understand the plan. Imagine your crazy marketing plan works and plug that into the cash flow. What if the crazy plan becomes a reality? What if the plan does not work and prices return to historical levels? What if yields are average, above or below? Have some plans in place so you are not surprised when things change during the year.

There are many Farm Business Management instructors across the Northern Plains who can help you develop plans. There are great software programs for you to develop a plan on your own. Take the next blizzard day and spend time with a pencil, paper and calculator, or a spreadsheet. It is important to develop and understand your plan.

My vacation advice is only marginally better than my crop marketing advice. Go somewhere you love and have a great time. If a travel partner develops a spreadsheet to plan the days, say thank you and just go along with it.

*Betsy Jensen is a Farm Business Management instructor at Northland Community and Technical College. 🌾*

## Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council Elections

The Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council is seeking candidates for three positions on its board of directors. Members of the Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council are elected to direct Minnesota wheat checkoff dollars for wheat promotion and research activities.

Board members must be wheat producers willing to serve as leaders and advocates for the Minnesota wheat industry and to work to improve industry profitability and viability. To be considered, a person must have shared in the profits and risk of loss from producing wheat during the current or preceding marketing year.

Directors are elected to serve three-year terms, and the board meets approximately six times throughout the year. The following positions are open:

- Area 1 Representatives: Two (2) Positions open
- Area 2 Representative: One (1) Position open

**NOTE: Elections will be held via mail ballot. Request a ballot by calling the MWRPC office or emailing Christina Iliev, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, at [christina.iliev@state.mn.us](mailto:christina.iliev@state.mn.us). Ballots need to be returned with a postmark of February 28, 2022.**

### Area One - Two Positions Open

Two Incumbents:

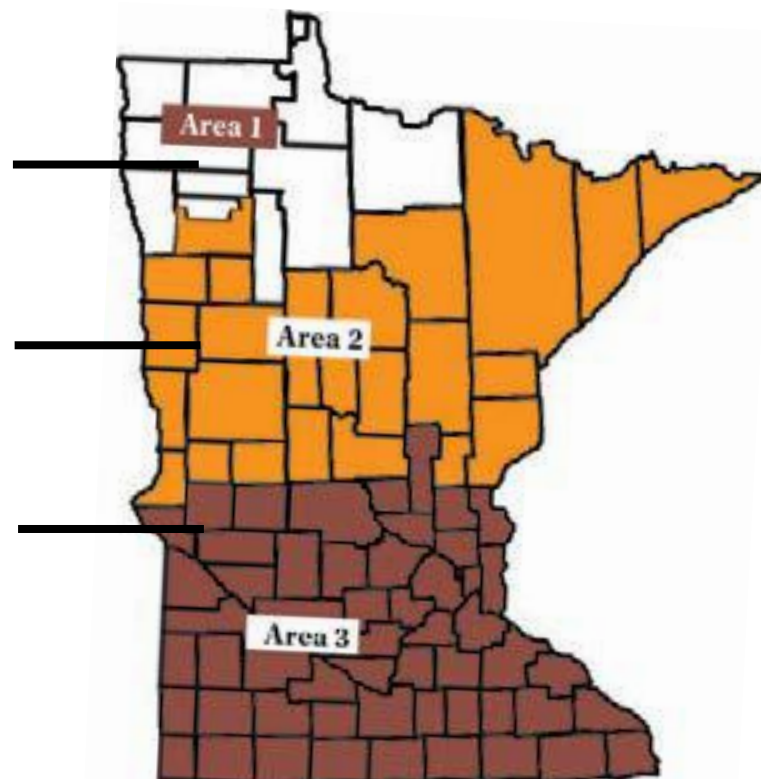
1. Tim Dufault, Red Lake Falls
2. Tony Brateng, Roseau

### Area Two - One Position Open

One Incumbent:

1. Kevin Leiser, Fertile

### Area Three - No Positions Open



## MEET THE COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### **Tim Dufault - Area 1** Crookston, Minn., Polk County

Tim grows corn and wheat on his fourth-generation family farm. He is a member of several organizations, including: Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota Farmers Union.

#### **Why do you wish to serve on Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council?**

Wheat is an important crop on my farm and I believe that investing in research and promotion is needed to advance the industry. Individuals could never do this on their own, so the checkoff provides an opportunity for growers to do it together. We have seen checkoff-driven research work for us time and time again. This is how we beat fusarium. I want to give back to the industry that has been part of my farm for so long. I see trade issues, being able to compete around the world, and building demand as some of the biggest challenges facing wheat. Much of our crops are consumed overseas. Trade is vital to American agriculture. We need to get that message heard in Washington, D.C.



### **Tony Brateng - Area 1** Roseau, Minn., Roseau County

Tony grows wheat, soybean, corn and grass seed. He is active in many organizations, including: Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, Minnesota Corn Growers, Canola Council and the Roseau-Lake of the Wood Rye Grass Growers. He also serves on Minnesota's Wheat On-Farm Research Network's Advisory Committee.

#### **Why do you wish to serve on the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council?**

I have enjoyed being on the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council board of directors for the past nine years. I have become involved with the council's ongoing research and promotion programs. I would like to continue on the council board to help make the checkoff decisions.



### **Kevin Leiser - Area 2** Fertile, Minn., Polk County

Kevin grows wheat, soybeans and corn. He's a member of the following organizations: Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

#### **Why do you wish to serve on the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council?**

The main reason I want to serve on the Council is to make sure wheat is profitable and competitive with other crops. By serving on the Council, I could help promote research that finds the best ways to make wheat profitable and an important part of our rotations. It is also important that we work with foreign countries to promote more agricultural trade.



# SIMONS SAYS

By Drew Lyon  
*Ag Management Solutions*

In a state that produces about a 50-50 mix of winter and spring wheat, Doug Simons is smack dab in the sweet spot. “We’re in a unique place,” said Simons, who farms in Miller S.D., about 80 miles east of Pierre. “There’s a very small area where you can go grow winter and spring wheat, and the middle of South Dakota is about the only place. You go south into Nebraska, it’s winter wheat, and you go north into North Dakota, and it’s spring wheat.”

Simons represents all of the state’s wheat farmers in his leadership position at the South Dakota Wheat Growers Association (SDWGA). In December 2021, Simons was reelected president of the advocacy group.

“It’s truly a privilege to be able to represent our farmers and advocate on their behalf,” Simons said.

Simons joined the SDWGA board about eight years ago, after a friend termed off the board and recommend Simons run for the position. Simons previously served as vice president before being elevated to president. During his tenure, he’s found that, among farm groups, there’s safety in numbers.

“If we as growers don’t stand up and advocate for ourselves, then who’s going to?” he said. “There’s fewer and fewer of us all the time. It’s hard for (agriculture groups) to make very much noise when it comes to policy making, especially national level, but we’ve got keep trying.”

SDWGA (formerly known as South Dakota Wheat Inc.) Executive Director Caren Assman said Simons’ background – he farms with his two brothers and father on the multi-generational family farm – affords him the ingredients to lead

an advocacy group.

“What I like about Doug is that he’s a producer that comes from a large family and understands how important communication is,” Assman said, “and that there’s a process to working through when you’re working with a number of people, so everyone’s views get heard so we can get to a solution.”

The longtime farmer has a working knowledge of the policy issues that are important to South Dakota producers, including research funding, infrastructure, conservation practices and crop insurance.

“Doug’s ability to work with people on issues is his strongest attribute,” Assman said. “He has a good understanding of the needs that small grains farmers require from our elected officials.”

Simons had planned to attend the National Association of Wheat Growers semi-annual Hill visit to Washington, D.C. in January, but stayed back due to the pandemic. Instead, SDWGA visited virtually with elected officials.

“Our biggest focus federally would have to be with the Farm Bill,” Simons said. “Everyone’s vying for available government dollars, and we’re outnumbered, so if we don’t stay on top of the issues and inform officials, the money’s going to go someplace else.”

SDWGA relies on membership dues to fund its advocacy efforts. Membership levels start at \$100 per year, or \$250 for a three-year membership, which equates to less than 25 cents per day.

“If we don’t speak up for ourselves, there’s not a lot of people who are going to do it,” Simons said. 🌾



## 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

# On the horizon

## Peltier Complex begins construction, launching in 2024

By Sydney Harris  
Ag Management Solutions

With the ongoing development of a new state-of-the-art research facility, North Dakota's agriculture industry is stepping into the future.

Ground broke in November for North Dakota State University's Peltier Complex (formerly known as the Agricultural Products Development Center), which will replace Harris Hall and the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) building. Located on the southwest corner of campus, construction on the building is set to last 20-24 months and conclude in early 2024, when the building is expected to open to students and researchers.

As the largest scholastic building on campus, the complex will house the food, cereal and meat sciences, the Northern Crops Institute, North Dakota Trade Office and several USDA laboratories. The Peltier Complex has comprehensive benefits to agriculture, extending to students, researchers, producers and consumers. Producers from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana all stand to benefit from the Peltier Complex.

"This building allows us to really home in on the research that's needed to make sure that the products that we're producing in this region have the consumer attributes that people want," NDSU Vice President of Agricultural Affairs Greg Lardy said.

Lardy added that the Peltier Complex's reach will help boost economies throughout North Dakota agriculture, which occupies nearly 90% of the state's total land and generates about \$7.6 billion in cash receipts each year.

The project is the culmination of several years

of work, and has received wide support across all sectors of agriculture, including key North Dakota legislators, commodity groups, stakeholders and individual and corporate donors. Commodity organizations such as the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA) will be able to conduct research and host international trade teams at the Peltier Complex.

"It really demonstrates a commitment to the state's number one industry," NDGGA Executive Director Dan Wogsland said. "We will have a showpiece for the world, to show them that we in North Dakota are very serious about agriculture. We in the northern regions are very serious about our research, about our Extension and about showing folks how to use the crops that are available in the northern regions."

NDGGA is one of numerous partners contributing to the Peltier Complex project, and helped advocate for \$50 million in state funding toward the project.

"The project has been a team effort and is a positive step for agriculture in the northern region," Wogsland said.

### Continued innovation

The building is named after Joe Peltier, who was an active promoter of

agriculture and a long-time supporter of NDSU. The Peltier family has been in the grain business since 1906 as part of Arthur Companies, formerly known as Arthur Farmers Elevator Company. Today, Keith Peltier, son of Joe and Norma Peltier, is CEO and president of ProSeed and sits on the Board of Directors for Arthur Companies.

"It's just a great honor to be able to have our name associated with the Peltier Complex," Keith Peltier said. "It's going to be what I'm going to call the premier ag complex in North Dakota and probably the Upper Midwest."

Though Peltier's focus involves growing the crop in the field, he said that "for farmers to get maximum return for their dollars, they have to be able to market or sell it somewhere." The Peltier Complex will provide the opportunity to promote North Dakota's products and its various uses, which, Peltier said, "creates demand for our crops, benefiting all of agriculture."

NCI works to market and educate the agriculture industry on the value of commodities grown in the northern region will play a vital role in the Peltier Complex.

"(The Peltier Complex) is really bringing the power of market development together under one roof," NCI Director Mark Jirik said. "Combining these organizations will streamline our projects and make it much more of a powerful entity."

As NCI moves into the complex, Jirik is excited about the opportunities on the horizon.

"Since NCI was formed 40 years ago, exponential advances in research and technology have been the driving force behind our organization," Jirik said. "Who knows what the next 40 years will bring? The Peltier Complex will allow us to continue our innovative work of promoting our products to an international audience."



The Peltier Complex will open opportunities, markets and address the complicated issues facing crop and livestock production, food systems and the development of new agricultural products.



The facility will gather scientists, teachers, farmers, customers and students to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.



The Peltier Complex will be built on the southwest corner of the North Dakota State University campus.



◀ Montana Grain Growers Association President Tryg Koch speaks during MGGGA's 2021 Annual Convention & Trade Show.

# Seeking Solutions

Tryg Koch has no problem tackling the tough issues

**By Bailey Grubish**  
*Ag Management Solutions*

It's human nature to complain. Cynicism can block an organization or person in a cycle from never taking the next step to finding a solution. But for Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGGA) President Tryg Koch, he leads with a problem-solving motto. No obstacle is too big to address. "I really feel strongly about this, that it's really easy to come up with a problem and really easy to never think

of a solution. It's so easy to do that as producers, as families, as people in general," Koch said. "We always want to complain, but we never want to take that next step. Here's the problem, now how about I provide a solution, and that's kind of my motto with the Grain Growers. That's why I do this, because there's always issues on our farms, why is this happening, why is that happening, what can I do to change it and this is how I can help change things."

Koch first learned of MGGGA at a Montana State University Northwestern

Agricultural Research Center event, and came away impressed by how the advocacy group promoted policy for producers.

Eleven years later, Koch has grown as a leader. In December 2021, he was elected MGGGA president.

"I'm really looking forward to him using his past experiences and bringing that leadership to MGGGA," MGGGA Executive Vice President Alison Vergeront said. "Tryg is just a really dynamic person, he's a strong leader. He is one of those leaders, he can lead



**Tryg Koch is an avid outdoorsman. He also trains and raises bird dogs on his 10-acre family farm.**

from the front, but he can easily sit back, listen to all the different sides of policy discussion and piece it all together and respect all the sides. I really love that he can remain so open, understanding and respectful. I feel like that's not always an easy task to do when you're talking ag policy."

### Policy priorities

Putting his motto into action, he plans to work on solutions for numerous challenges facing Montana producers.

The next farm bill is at the forefront of his mind. MGGGA has started brainstorming what actions can be taken to improve the Farm Bill when it expires in 2023.

Another high priority for the organization is the drought monitor system for the state.

"What we really want to try to get a handle on this year is the drought monitor system and how that works for

our producers, because we don't really feel that the system that they use really represents a state such as Montana, that's so big and the counties are so big," Koch said. "It's really difficult."

One idea Koch shared is trustworthy reporting from producers across Montana to give wider coverage and a more accurate representation of the rain fall. MGGGA is also working with the National Weather Service for improved satellite imagery and is continuing to work on solutions.

### Members wanted

MGGGA is a membership-driven organization, which funds the advocacy efforts.

"One of the big things that we are focusing on, is teaching our members and showing our members and non-members the value that the Montana Grain Growers Association can bring to their farm and their operations," Koch

said. "Membership is so important. We don't have an organization without membership."

He also spoke on building relationships between MGGGA directors and producers in Montana.

"That's the biggest thing – I think that people sometimes get nervous, or they don't know who to talk to when they have an issue," Koch said. "We really want to strive on that we have an open book policy, we want you guys to know who your directors are in your county, call your officers. We're here for you guys, don't be scared."

Another challenge that MGGGA is working through is the additional barriers that COVID-19 has created for traveling as an organization. MGGGA travels to Washington, D.C. to speak with lawmakers on behalf of their farmers, but with COVID-19 restrictions it's more difficult for the board to set up meetings and attend as a large group.

*Continued on Page 14*

## MGGA takes to the Hill

The Montana Grain Growers Association traveled to Washington D.C. in early January to attend the Wheat Industry Winter Conference. Topline issues covered at the National Association of Wheat Growers meetings included; climate and sustainability, international trade, research and Farm Bill programs.

While in the nation's capital, MGGA, which is a member of NAWG, had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Senators Jon Tester and Steve Daines and Rep. Matt Rosendale. MGGA directly asked for support with winter wheat categorized as a cover crop without having to terminate the crop and discussed the challenges with drought, input costs and supply chain disruptions.

"We were able to share with our delegation about the drought and some of the costs we are facing with fertilizer, fuel, and chemical prices," Nathan Keane, MGGA Vice President said. "MGGA is passionate about sharing the reality of the situation in Montana and this week we accomplished just that!"



MGGA farmer-leaders advocate with legislators in Helena and Washington, D.C. All photos courtesy of MGGA and Tryg Koch.

### 'Family man'

As MGGA president, Koch represents the board on the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station board, overseeing the seven agriculture experiment stations in the state.

"It's great (being a part of MGGA) and I would say the biggest thing that's come out of this is to fully understand how policy is set and made," Koch said. "It's really cool to be involved and help your fellow farmers, producers. ... That's the coolest part for me. Growing is number one, but I think it's very important for producers to understand how these policies are made and why. I think that's a great thing that Montana Grain Growers does. It's our number one goal to try to get the information out to our members of the Montana Grain Growers Association."

When Koch isn't leading MGGA, he is working on his first-generation, 2,000-plus acre Heritage Farms, alongside his wife, Alisha Koch; stepchildren, Lincoln and Landry May; his dad, Paul Koch; and his business partner, Lee Buller. They started Heritage Farms in 2007 and have been growing ever since.

On the farm in Flathead Valley, the Kochs raise small grains, forage and oil seed crops. Heritage Farms supports three separate businesses: small acreage management, selling alfalfa and grass seed, as well as selling Agrigro around the area. Koch has a degree from MSU-Northern in Ag Mechanics, Diesel Mechanics and Welding.

"Tryg's a great family man, great business guy, he's passionate about agriculture and will just literally give you the shirt off his back if you needed it," Vergeront said. "He's wonderful." 🌾



Tryg and Alisha Koch at their wedding in June 2021.



Tryg Koch is a lifelong resident of Montana's Flathead Valley.

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[MyLandMyLegacy.com](https://www.mylandmylegacy.com)





# SCOUT'S HONOR

## U of M's 'weed-watcher' tackles pests, promotes small grains

By Drew Lyon  
Ag Management Solutions

Each year, the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council invests checkoff resources into sponsoring unbiased on-farm research projects that shine a light on agronomic and production challenges facing the state's wheat farmers.

For researchers like University of Minnesota Extension Educator Jared Goplen, working with wheat checkoff funds is a privilege and responsibility – with a big payoff for growers.

“These projects wouldn't be possible without the checkoff,” said Goplen, who was hired in 2017 through the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Transfer (AGREET) program. “And if these projects didn't exist, I guarantee there would be fewer growers growing small grains, because it would be that much harder to make variety selections and get some of that agronomic information. The checkoff is essential for these programs.”

Goplen, who was dubbed the “weed-watcher” by the Star Tribune, authored two research projects in 2021 that were recently published in the annual On-Farm Cropping Trial Northwest & West Central Minnesota and 2020 Minnesota Wheat Research Review. The first project was an ongoing research study in conjunction with North Dakota State University that sought to identify insect and disease issues in small grains as they developed throughout Minnesota. The study provides timely alerts about small grain pest and disease issues for small grains producers, ensuring that sound economic control options can be implemented. Goplen's U of M colleagues, Anthony Hanson and Dr. Jochum J. Wiersma, assisted in the survey.

“NDSU has been running these surveys for a long time, but adding the Minnesota component really compliments that,” Goplen said.

The drought that affected parts of Minnesota and North Dakota proved beneficial to farmers in one aspect: the lack of moisture kept pests relatively at bay. As a result, only a small number of diseases were detected during the 2021 growing season.

“It was very quiet, really a boring year for the scouts because we were mostly in healthy small grain fields,” Goplen said, “but certainly a good year for the most part for farmers in that respect.”

The 2021 small grain scouting program comprised more than 380 unique field visits in approximately 80 fields, covering over 400 miles. Most scouted areas were located in western Minnesota and ranged from Kittson County in northwest Minnesota down to Olmsted County in southeast Minnesota. The project went further south in Minnesota than in recent years, when the southern-most scouting occurred in Morris. Scouting began in May through late July, when the crop reached maturity.

“This gives us a chance to see them as these problems come up from the south,” Goplen said, “and gives us a heads-up as to what to expect further north.”



Jared Goplen continues to coordinate the U of MN's 2022 Small Grains Update, which offers the latest recommendations for production and pest management. These 10 workshops run into late February and will be discussion-based meetings with a unique regional focus and include the following topics:

- Production agronomics
- Variety selection
- Soil fertility
- Economics

Panelists include Goplen, Extension Small Grains Specialist Jochum Wiersma and other guests.

“We focus on the areas of Minnesota where small grains aren't a primary crop,” Goplen said.

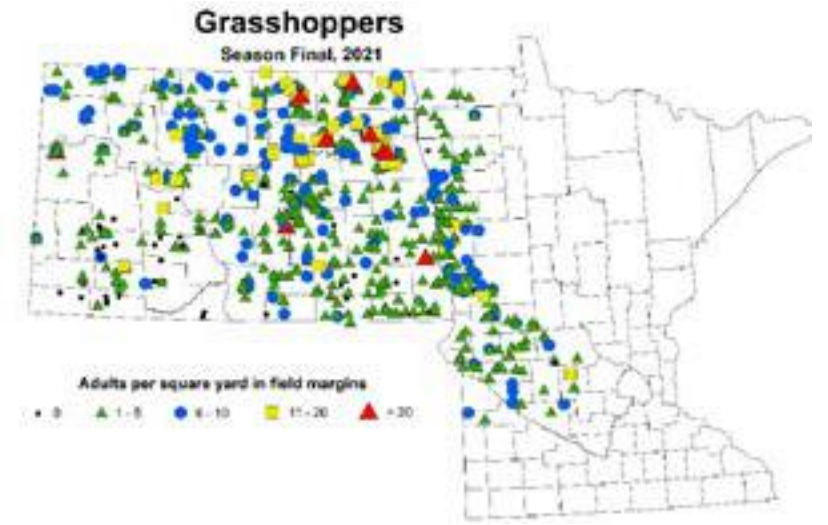
This event is part of the Strategic Farming series, an interactive online program that provides up-to-date, research-based information to help you optimize crop management strategies for 2022. The webinar will start with a brief presentation followed by discussion framed around farmer/participant questions on the topic. Visit [extension.umn.edu/](http://extension.umn.edu/) to register.

“Whether you are a farmer or crop consultant already producing small grains, or a farmer looking for another crop to add to the rotation, these workshops are for you,” Goplen said.

The workshops are sponsored by the Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council.



Before becoming an Extension educator in 2017, Jared Goplen was a University of Minnesota graduate student.



Grasshoppers, which thrive in dry climates, posed a problem in the northern areas. Cereal aphids arrived earlier than normal in the growing season, causing some issue in other areas of Minnesota and North Dakota.

“The dry weather makes it hard for many diseases to develop,” Goplen said, “and grasshoppers are one of those that tend to proliferate better than others.”

This project is expected to continue in 2022.

### Southern comfort

Goplen's second research project, also co-authored with Wiersma, is a recurring study that addresses two objectives: evaluate variety performance for hard red spring and hard red winter wheat varieties throughout southern Minnesota, and hold winter workshops and summer field days to promote wheat production in southern Minnesota.

“We're trying to bring more awareness and resources to farmers in southern Minnesota to incorporate small grains back in the rotation,” Goplen said. “The checkoff is helping to give us an opportunity to serve small grain farmers in southern Minnesota.”

Goplen said interest in adopting small grains into a rotation has increased in recent years because of resistance and disease problems in corn and soybeans, along with a greater focus on soil health. This checkoff-sponsored data equips farmers with relevant information on the benefits of diversifying.

*Continued on Page 18*



To learn more about Minnesota Wheat's Research Reports, visit [mnwheat.org/council/wheat-research-reports/](http://mnwheat.org/council/wheat-research-reports/)



Minnesota Wheat's On-Farm Trials are funded by MWRPC, the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, the University of Minnesota and North Dakota State University Extension.

"There's been an interest in diversifying," Goplen said. "Without good variety trials that can show you which varieties are best and how they can perform in southern Minnesota, it's hard for growers to make that leap."

Due to the pandemic, the workshops were held virtually in 2021. In total, 138 growers participated in the workshops, which encourage growers to consider including a third crop in their rotation.

"There's not a lot of third crops in the rotation in southern Minnesota," Goplen said. "A lot of people forget about that rotation benefit that's been talked about for a number of years."

Goplen cited a Wisconsin study showing that including wheat into a corn-soybean rotation improves corn and soybeans yield by 6-10%. He also reported that Extension studies indicate that a corn-soybean-rotation improves yield by an estimated \$20 per-acre. When wheat prices are higher, boosting yield by just 5% can increase gross returns by nearly \$50 per acre.

"When you plug in all your budgets, it might not look all that lucrative," Goplen said, "but if you start to account for that yield bump that you're going to get, over the course of that rotation – in terms of net return – you're going to make at least as much as the corn-soybean rotation. It is worth your while."

Goplen isn't just a researcher. He walks the talk by growing small grains on his family farm in Camby in southwest Minnesota. "I'm practicing what I preach," he said. "At least I can say when I succeed – or fail – that it's backed by research." 🌾



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## What Does it All Mean?

Join us at 9 a.m. on February 16, 2022 as the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council sponsors the Spill the Beans Webinar series to give a 101 on the varying fuel markets and its impacts on the soybean industry. Register today at: <https://bit.ly/3eYCWi6>.



*Spill the Beans webinar series is presented by the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and will run via Zoom each Wednesday through March 9.*



# TRIAL RUNS

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

This winter, staff from the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council and farmer-leaders have been hard at work reviewing and approving projects for the 2022 On-Farm Research Network (OFRN).

According to Minnesota Wheat Vice President of Research Melissa Carlson, who oversees the OFRN, growers can expect a slew of new research data from the program in 2022.

“We’re going to have a big turnover with our projects this year,” she said.

The projects will be pitched during Small Grains Updates meetings, which run through February. All past data from the OFRN is available at [mnwheat.org/council/farm-research-network/](http://mnwheat.org/council/farm-research-network/). To participate in the trials, contact Melissa Carlson at 952-738-2000 or [mcarlson@mnwheat.com](mailto:mcarlson@mnwheat.com).



## Continuing trials

Elevated P and K fertility in a wheat soybean rotation – 2022 is the fourth year of this trial, which tests the addition of an extra 50 units of P and K compared to the grower’s usual rate of P and K throughout four years of a wheat-soybean rotation.

## Trials for 2022

**Rye termination timing** – Minnesota Wheat has partnered with the University of Minnesota to test rye termination dates when rye is planted after wheat harvest, and soybeans are planted into the rye residue the following spring. The OFRN will be testing termination dates of one week prior to planting, termination at soybean planting and rye termination one week after planting.

**Foliar copper applications in wheat** – Several consultants and growers on non-peat soils have noticed copper deficiencies beginning to show up inside and outside of the Red River Valley. We’d like to test whether or not applying a liquid copper fertilizer around the tillering stage will have an economic increase in yield.

**Reduced tillage** – This trial will be tailored toward growers interested in conservation practices, but haven’t yet implemented those practices on their farm. The OFRN team will take a look at reducing one tillage pass in the fall on a field that would normally get two passes of tillage after wheat harvest.

## RESEARCH GENERAL TRIAL OVERVIEW

Are you interested in participating in the On-Farm Research Network?

Here are some of the criteria:

- The participant will work with a Research Coordinator to plan and implement the trial.
- All inputs are applied by the participant using their equipment or by their local cooperative.
- Plots must be at least 400-500 ft long and wide enough to allow for a full combine pass through the plot that avoids sprayer tracks (usually 70-140 ft).
- It is preferred that participants replicate each treatment at least four times
- Coordinators will be available at the time of trial implementation and harvest to assist with flagging and data collection.
- The Research Coordinators will analyze the data from the trial and return it to the participant as quickly as possible.

**Value of volunteer spring wheat** – The OFRN is seeking to quantify some of the field effects when volunteer wheat is left to grow after harvest, compared to a grower’s regular control practices. The intent is to further delve into the amount of residual nitrate taken up by the wheat, the amount of biomass out in the field prior to freeze-up, and the effects of the residue on the following crop’s stand establishment and yield.

**Fertility trials in the works:** The OFRN is focused on finalizing a nitrogen response protocol finalized to examine differences in N needs among its top commercially available varieties to help update UMN recommendations. The team has also been working with a fertilizer supplier for testing polyhalite, an alternative source of sulfur for crops in the region.

## Saluting our sponsors

The OFRN is sponsored by several farm groups, including the Minnesota Wheat & Promotion Council, the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, the Agriculture Fertilizer Research and Education Council, and Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program.

## Advisory Committee

The OFRN greatly appreciates the dedication of its Advisory Committee members: Angie Peltier, Ben Genereux, Ethan Hulst, Tony Brateng, Tim Osowski, Kris Folland and Ryan Casavan, who continue to be invaluable in providing direction to this program. 🌾

## What’s the Matter?

Minnesota Wheat is pleased to welcome a new team member. Chris Matter, a native of Thief River Falls, has joined the organization as a project lead. Matter will assist Carlson on checkoff-funded research proposals, including the OFRN.

“We’re going to focus on sustainable and regenerative agriculture – cover crops, reduced tillage, things of that nature and give farmers tips on how to do these things,” Matter said. “Ag is changing every day, and there are some good ideas out there.”

Matter recently graduated from the University of Minnesota Crookston with a BS in agronomy. He’s eager to begin working on the OFRN because the program is farmer-driven and forward-focused.

“We want the farmers to tell us what they want – we’re working for them,” Matter said. “We want those checkoff dollars to go to a good cause.”

*Minnesota Wheat VP of Research Melissa Carlson contributed to this article.*



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"Traceability has never been more vital," SSGA Executive Director Eric Wenberg says during the brand unveil event.

## Quality assurance plan benefits the U.S. soybean and specialty grain markets and global food manufacturers

By Shane Frederick  
Ag Management Solutions

In December, the Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance introduced U.S. Identity Preserved, a designation signifying a premium crop with a verifiable origin. This quality assurance program, years in the making, represents a significant advancement in food traceability for food manufacturers, processors and exporters.

As traceability in food production becomes increasingly preferred by

consumers and manufacturers, the U.S. Identity Preserved (IP) quality assurance plan and accompanying designation (see below) and website, USidentitypreserved.org, represent a step forward for customers looking for grains with specific traits or qualities such as variety, protein and sugar levels, color, bean size or flavor.



When manufacturers purchase a U.S. Identity Preserved product, they can be assured the grains are traceable from their fields of origin throughout the process of production, processing, packaging and distribution, which provides the knowledge and assurance customers need.

"With our U.S. Identity Preserved designation, we're delivering a quality assurance plan that brings together the U.S. IP industry and reinforces the United States as a quality origin for those IP crops," SSGA Executive Director Eric Wenberg said. "U.S. Identity Preserved

will help U.S. processors and exporters broaden access and open more foreign markets, as well as better compete in the international market."

### Crops grown with a purpose

Customers can order specifically what they need for the future so IP producers can grow it today. This ensures quality, consistency and safety of food; fork-to-farm traceability, and a dependable supply so it is worthwhile for growers and customers alike.

"As a launch partner, Global Processing will begin using this new, industry-defining mark that signifies the value of U.S. Identity Preserved field crops," said Rob Prather, SSGA chairman and chief strategic ambassador at Global Processing Inc. "This program enhances our offerings in sustainable, traceable and regenerative products ensuring a stable, consistent and healthy global food supply."

### Value adds value

With growing consumer and retail demand for increased understanding of how and from where food is produced, traceability has never been more vital. Growers participating in the program must follow rigorous specifications throughout the production process (pre-planting through harvest), storage, processing and distribution. This includes taking great care to avoid any cross-contamination, adhering to field verifications and program audits, chain of custody verification, proper labeling and product identification and other checks and assurances.

"The value U.S. Identity Preserved processors offer comes through the strict protocols and safety measures that ensure the quality, consistency and security of their products throughout the value chain," Wenberg said. "Identity Preserved products demand a premium because of the close attention IP farmers, processors and shippers pay to quality requirements and safety and the commitment to fulfill the needs of their customers."

*Continued on Page 24*



National and international agricultural industry leaders mingle during SSGA's IP launch at broadhead's Minneapolis headquarters.



SSGA's Rob Prather talks IP to attendees and media at the brand unveil event in Minneapolis. The following day, Prather was elected SSGA chair at the organization's annual meeting.

Learn more about the designation, its benefits, the IP value chain and how to get involved at [USIdentityPreserved.org](http://USIdentityPreserved.org).

### Higher education

Class is now in session at SSGA. It's time to enroll at SSGA University!

SSGA, the premier business organization focused on U.S. Identity Preserved field crops, is giving it the old college try, unveiling an online educational platform that will teach the Identity Preserved system for U.S.-grown field crops. Importers and other buyers will learn how the U.S. Identity Preserved system for specialty soybeans and grains are grown and processed in the United States, as well as the core considerations and benefits of using U.S. IP crops as ingredients in the foods and products they manufacture.

Those who complete SSGA University courses will receive an official completion certificate from SSGA, along with access to SSGA University's Identity Preserved technical manuals that will allow them to dig even further into their respective subject areas and keep them for future reference.

"Our program of Identity Preserved technical courses is directed toward new buyers who can benefit from acquiring U.S. IP products from the United States, as well as current buyers who have the desire to increase their knowledge of U.S. IP products," SSGA Executive Director Eric Wenberg said. "We want to educate customers on what it takes to get U.S. Identity Preserved products to market, from producer to processor to end user. It will be a great training and educational resource for anyone who takes our courses."

Classes begin with the IP Highway, a four-chapter course that focuses on the U.S. Identity Preserved system, including:

- Defining Identity Preserved and the benefits of U.S. IP field crops
- Traceability of U.S. IP products and demand for transparency
- Intermodal transportation of U.S. IP products, including shipping logistics and costs
- Purchasing U.S. IP products, including product verification and contract evaluation

After passing the IP Highway of courses, participants may choose from one or more of the next group of courses, which cover individual foods and how premium U.S. Identity Preserved ingredients vastly improve the quality,

consistency and profitability of those products. Those courses include:

- Soy milk and Tofu
- Tempeh
- Miso and Natto
- Soy Flours
- Specialty Grains

"For buyers, the advantage of taking these courses is seeing and truly understanding the benefit U.S. Identity Preserved field crops bring to their companies," Wenberg said. "Although these premium ingredients may cost more at the onset, they will

provide the greater value throughout the manufacturing process, resulting in better products for their own customers."

SSGA is supported by both the North Dakota Soybean Council and the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, among several other commodity groups.

For more information, go to [soyagrainsalliance.org/ssga-university](http://soyagrainsalliance.org/ssga-university).



Advertorial

## 2022 OBJECTIVES FOR CROP AGRONOMIC EVALUATIONS

By Peter Comis, WestBred® Regional Commercial Manager, Northern Region

As a regional commercial manager, I extract as much knowledge as possible from each season so I can provide helpful agronomic advice to our growers. What activities should the Northern Region consider in 2022?

### Four Key Activities Planned for 2022:

- 1. Variety Performance** – The foundation of our team's work in the Northern Region is based on monitoring results of small- and large-scale test plots, looking at the performance of WestBred wheat varieties versus the competition.
- 2. Weather Conditions** – We will observe the performance of WestBred wheat plots in different growing conditions across the region in 2022. One of our goals this year is to improve our knowledge of varieties and how they react to various growing conditions.
- 3. Seed Treatment and Plant Stands** – While it's challenging to predict planting conditions, we intend to explore stand counts versus targeted plant populations on early-seeded wheat with both treated and untreated seed to track stand loss.
- 4. Yield Components** – In select trials, we plan to take an in-depth look at yield components. Per each variety, our goal is to count initial plant stand, number of heads (tillers) and seeds per spike. After harvest, we will take 1,000 kernel weights to determine which yield component varieties are reaching their yield potential.

Knowledge we gain from these evaluations in 2022 will be utilized to help our growers remain productive and profitable. Our WestBred team looks forward to working with growers this season.

For additional information, contact Peter Comis, WestBred Regional Commercial Manager, Northern Region at 919-600-3788, or [peter.comis@bayer.com](mailto:peter.comis@bayer.com).

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"I'm very pleased with our participation": Minnesota farmer Mike Skaug is proud to be Water Quality certified.

## Minnesota farmer shares the 'Water Quality' good news

Soon after he enrolled in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP), Mike Skaug's commitment to soil health was featured in a local newspaper. But Skaug isn't the type to bask in the spotlight. He's a team player and wants to bring awareness to other growers about the benefits of the MAWQCP.

"I'm not in it for the publicity," he says. "It's just that us farmers are so independent and like to do our thing, and we sometimes feel like we don't want to get tied up in something because it's too time consuming. But this is a great program for farmers and I'm proud to have completed the process."

Skaug, who was elected president of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association in 2021, farms in Polk County with his wife, DeAnn, and their son, Ryan. The Skaugs rotate spring wheat, corn and soybeans on the fifth-generation farm.

"That's beneficial for weed control — we're using fewer chemicals because of our rotation system," he says. "The program brings awareness to all of that stuff and you get to thinking about other things you can do on your farm to be an even better steward of the land."

Skaug enrolled in the MAWQCP because he was already incorporating conservation practices on his operation, and wanted regulatory certainty.

"I was intrigued and realized I was doing a lot of the things the MAWQCP required," he says. "There were some things we had to do to become certified, but it was just a good idea."

In the four years since he enrolled, Skaug knows he made the right decision.

"I'm very pleased with our participation," Skaug says. "This program has benefitted both our bottom line and soil health."

Farmers can contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District to apply for MAWQCP

certification and then complete a series of steps with local certifiers using a 100 percent site-specific risk assessment process. By law all data is kept private, and only by signing a formal release can a farmer's name be released publicly. After becoming certified, farmers like the Skaugs receive a 10-year contract ensuring them they will be deemed in compliance with any new water quality laws, an official MAWQCP sign to display on their farm, and other benefits developed by local MAWQCP providers.

More than 1,000 producers are currently certified in the program, covering more than 800,000 certified acres, and implementing more than 2,000 new conservation practices. The program, which launched statewide in 2015, is more than 80% toward the Walz administration's goal of certifying one million acres by the end of 2022.

"We applaud Mike's grassroots efforts to get the word out about our program," says Brad Jordahl Redlin, MAWQCP program manager. "He's a prime example of a farmer who was already promoting conservation practices on his operation even before he enrolled in the MAWQCP."

Skaug had several years of split applying nutrients on his corn crops, and also tried experimenting with cover crops. Reducing his tillage on soybeans in the fall was another priority. He says the MAWQCP and his local soil and water conservation district helped him take a fresh look at his operation.

"They really helped us adopt a plan that we think is going to work," he says. "It wasn't difficult at all."

Skaug says he'll continue to promote the MAWQCP to farmers throughout Minnesota.

"I've been recommending it to other farmers because so many have been doing the same practices that we've been doing," he says. "It would be easy for them to do it."



USW donated the instruments needed to analyze and compare wheat, flour and baking performance at the new lab. Funding for the equipment came from the Agricultural Trade Promotion program administered by USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service. Photo courtesy of Universidad Mayor.

## New wheat flour lab to help promote U.S. wheat exports to South America

By U.S. Wheat Associates

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) sees a robust growth opportunity for U.S. wheat exports to South America in 2022 and beyond. To meet rising demand for bread, snacks and other wheat foods, regional flour millers are hungry for information they need to purchase a wider range of high-quality wheat classes.

In a competitive market, U.S. wheat must compete in Colombia, Peru, Chile, Brazil and other South American countries with imported Canadian and Argentinian wheat. Technical training and comparative analysis to demonstrate the advantages of U.S. wheat classes are important parts of USW's work in the region. However, those efforts are somewhat constrained because a substantial portion of the funding for activities was needed for travel costs to conduct activities in sometimes limited facilities in each country or at U.S. educational institutions.

### ATP funding yields innovative idea

A potential answer to this challenge arrived in 2019 when the Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) program, administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), was created to help U.S. agriculture build new export markets. Under ATP, USW's regional South American office staff in Santiago, Chile, proposed an innovative promotional concept to establish a regional flour milling, cereal chemistry and baking laboratory in cooperation with a respected university.

Through pandemic-related delays and customs challenges, USW and its project partner, Universidad Mayor, worked steadily to build a facility on the university's Santiago campus and equip the lab with a test flour mill, wheat and flour analysis instruments and bread ovens. In December 2021, USW and the university dedicated Laboratorio De Analisis De Granos Harinas Y Panificacion at an event attended by Chile's Minister of Agriculture, U.S. State Department and FAS officials, the university rector and executives with several Chilean flour mills.

"We are very pleased to open the first lab of its kind in this region with Universidad Mayor," said Miguel Galdós, USW regional director in South America. "We know that technical managers at South American flour mills have more influence today on the types of wheat their mills need to purchase. USW will be able to help more of those managers understand the differential advantages of U.S. wheat classes by conducting programs at this regional lab. At the same time, having access to consistent and reliable testing and analysis will lead to improvements in production processes and help improve the quality of regional wheat-based end products."

### More efficient, more effective

"Before now, South American millers would have to send wheat samples to a commercial company in Guatemala for analysis, so this lab adds much more efficiency in its support for regional customers," said Mark Fowler, USW vice president of Global Technical Services, who participated in the dedication event.

As a partner in the new lab, USW purchased and installed all the equipment using ATP funds, while Universidad Mayor built the lab and will cover fixed costs. USW Santiago in return will share equal access with the university to the lab for technical support activities supporting U.S. wheat exports to South America and remain the lab's only private partner for 15 years.

### Golden opportunity

After attending the dedication event, USW Vice President of Overseas Operations Mike Spier called the new lab "a golden opportunity" to demonstrate the competitive baking advantage of U.S. wheat classes compared to wheat from other origins.

"With the ever-changing travel restrictions and quarantines, USW hasn't been able to organize in-person technical activities for several months," Spier said. "The lab provides everything USW Technical Specialist Andrés Saturno needs to get back to demonstrating the superior end-use baking performance of U.S. wheat classes to partners in Chile and other customers in USW's South America region."

### Impressive team and project

For USW Chairman Darren Padgett, a wheat farmer from Grass Valley, Ore., the dedication event was his first overseas trip to meet with customers in more than two years and his first visit to South America.

"I was very impressed by the enthusiasm of the regional USW team and among the guests at the dedication for this new lab," Padgett said. "I understand why, partly because we visited a supermarket in Santiago and saw the types of bread consumers purchase and how they shop. In Chile, consumption is very high, and they buy most of their bread for the day by the piece. Consumers there and across South America are looking for excellent quality products with a 'clean label' – very few additives. I think this lab will help USW demonstrate how flour from our wheat helps millers and bakers meet that demand."

*Continued on Page 28*



U.S. and South American leaders learn more about the new lab.



The USW/Santiago team who worked tirelessly to build the new laboratory to promote U.S. wheat exports to South America share their enthusiasm for the project with USW guests

The evidence of that was on display at the dedication event as artfully crafted bread products and pizza refreshments baked by Master Baker Didier Rosada and his wife Kathy Cruz using flour milled from U.S. wheat. USW frequently works with Rosada's Red Brick Consulting company to conduct baking seminars in Spanish-speaking countries. The week of the dedication, Rosada and USW held a workshop using U.S. wheat flour for customers representing 75% of Chile's milling industry.

Traditional preferences and the landed price of imported wheat will remain a competitive challenge for U.S. wheat in South America. But the complete value of U.S. wheat becomes more obvious to customers through demonstration and training. Now there is a dedicated facility for that work, giving USW the opportunity to interact with regional customers more frequently and invest more of its funding to show them the unique advantages of U.S. wheat. 🌾



U.S. Wheat Associates have offices in more than a dozen countries.



## USW tabs Minnesota farmer to lead wheat checkoff group

By Drew Lyon  
Ag Management Solutions

A Minnesota farmer is now helping to oversee the nation's wheat checkoff program.

The U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) board of directors elected new officers for the organization's 2022/23 (July to June) fiscal year at their meeting Jan. 14, 2022, in Washington, D.C. After serving a year as chair, Rhonda K. Larson of East Grand Forks, Minnesota, was elected chairperson.

The board also elected Clark Hamilton of Ririe, Idaho, as secretary-treasurer; and Michael Peters of Okarche, Okla., as vice chairman. Larson will begin her new leadership roles at the USW board meeting in June 2022. Current Chairman Darren Padgett of Grass Valley, Ore., will become past chairman at that time.

USW is the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry. USW promotes 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. Funding is made possible through checkoff dollars, goods and services from 17 state wheat commissions and cost-share grants from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. Minnesota currently has three farmer-leaders serving on USW – Larson, Kevin Leiser, Tony Brateng – the most of any state.

"As farmers we need to make a profit and part of the way to do that is to make it a priority to improve wheat quality and continue to bring quality wheat to the world," Larson said. "I am humbled by the respect and encouragement I have received from wheat farmers in Minnesota and from the other U.S. Wheat directors, and I will do my best to represent them well."

Larson was raised on her family's Red River Valley farm

and engaged full-time in the operation for nearly 30 years. Her father started the farm growing potatoes, wheat and barley. With her two brothers and her son, the third generation on the farm, they currently grow wheat and sugar beets. Larson has been a board member of the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council for 17 years: serving as chair from 2010 to 2012. She served on the Wheat Foods Council board and is a long-time member of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers and the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association. As a USW director, she served on the Long-Range Planning Committee and the Budget Committee. Larson received a bachelor's degree in public administration and a Juris Doctor's degree in law from the University of North Dakota.

After 30 years farming, she still enjoys the challenge of producing new varieties.

"I am interested in the promotion of wheat varieties, which contain all the valuable traits of high protein, disease resistance and high bushels with excellent milling quality," Larson said. "I believe research and promotion can help improve the profitability of wheat production." 🌾



Rhonda K. Larson is also a substitute teacher. Photos courtesy of U.S. Wheat Associates.

# ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

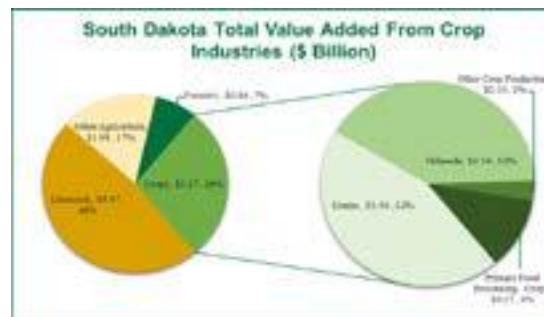
## Updated Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule maps now available

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has issued updated maps that will help farmers across the state comply with the Groundwater Protection Rule (aka the Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule). The rule restricts fall application of nitrogen fertilizer in areas vulnerable to contamination and it outlines steps to reduce the severity of contamination in areas where nitrate is already elevated in public water supply wells. An updated map of public water supply wells with elevated nitrate levels can be found at [mda.state.mn.us/](http://mda.state.mn.us/).

MDA has also made changes to the Fall Nitrogen Fertilizer Application Restrictions map, which is also viewable on MDA's website. The restriction of fall application on these acres will begin Sept. 1, 2022. Farmers are encouraged to check the new maps prior to the fall of 2022 to determine if their fields are subject to these restrictions.

## South Dakota releases Agriculture Economic Contributions Study

This South Dakota Agriculture Economic Contribution Study quantifies agriculture and its related industries' contribution to the economy.



This study relies heavily on the 2019 data from the IMPLAN modeling system, the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture and other USDA/NASS datasets. This study is patterned after similar studies completed in other states, including Minnesota.

The results of this study indicate that although there have been challenging times in agriculture, forestry, and related industries, they are still a significant part of South Dakota's economy, supporting about one in every 5 jobs across South Dakota.

In 2021, agriculture, forestry, and related industries in South Dakota are estimated to contribute:

- \$11.7 billion in total value added
- 129,753 jobs
- \$32.1 billion in output (sales)
- \$11.6 billion in household income

The full report can be viewed at [danr.sd.gov/](http://danr.sd.gov/).

## Plans for North Dakota soybean processing unveiled

In late December, CGB Enterprises Inc. and Minnesota Soybean Processors announced a joint venture for the construction of a state-of-the-art soybean processing plant near Casselton, North Dakota.

North Dakota Soybean Processors LLC, jointly owned by CGB and Minnesota Soybean Processors, will own and operate the new facility, which is expected to crush 42.5 million bushels of soybeans in the first year.

"This soybean crushing facility is another landmark investment in North Dakota agriculture, one that will add tremendous value for our soybean growers, create quality jobs and benefit all North Dakotans through greater economic activity and tax revenue that supports essential services and critical infrastructure,"

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said.

The soybean processing plant is expected to break ground this spring. According to CGB, the facility is scheduled to begin full operations in 2024, subject to various government permitting, and infrastructure and incentive approvals. Once fully operating, the project is expected to create 50 to 60 new jobs.



Minnesota Soybean Processors is a 2,300-member cooperative with an

existing soybean processing facility located in Brewster, Minnesota. The group started crushing soybeans in 2003 and added a biodiesel refining facility in 2005.

## Montana Grain Growers Association comments on Montana Rail Link Move to BNSF

The Montana Grain Growers Association has commented on an announcement by Montana Rail Link (MRL) that the Dennis Washington company is seeking to turn over business operations to BNSF Railway. MRL has operated Montana's southern line from Huntley, Montana to Sand Point, Idaho since 1987, when it leased the line from what was then Burlington Northern.

"MRL has done a great job as a partner to BNSF and Montana agriculture since they leased that route from BN years ago," MGGA Executive Vice President

Alison Vergeront said. "As far as the grain business goes, the southern line relieves the pressure on our HiLine when the Midwest has a big crop. And, of course, there are a lot of other products travelling both routes at all times. We expect BNSF will be every bit as efficient going forward."

BNSF has offered to retain all railroad employees at current positions and salary. The Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C. will review the dissolution of the lease, a process normally requiring several months. The transfer is expected to enhance rail capacity, since trains and crews will no longer be required to be "handed off" at the interchange points.

Overall, MGGA says customers should see little in the way of change, as both railroads intend a smooth transition of operations.

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