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Cover Story

At both the state and national levels, farm advocacy groups have plenty on their plate in 2023. In Minnesota, lawmakers are debating on how to invest a record budget surplus; in North Dakota, the Legislature is debating changes to its corporate farming laws. And in the nation's capital, Minnesota Wheat and the North Dakota Grain Growers have joined Collin Peterson's Midwest Council On Agriculture as Congress prepares to pass the next Farm Bill.



Against the Grain

Letter from the CEO: Let's work together

Winter is an opportunity to look back at where we have come from, and look forward to what lies ahead and craft some strategies to get there. As I look back on the 2022 growing season, I can't help but feel thankful. I distinctly remember finalizing the Minnesota Wheat budget in early June. As we looked at the planting conditions across the state, talked to many of you and looked at what it would take to get a healthy wheat crop to the bin, I failed to find a lot of optimism. Was a great, or even average, crop still possible? Absolutely, but everything – absolutely everything – had to go right, and I am too familiar with Mr. Murphy to assume that inevitability. However, as the season progressed, most everything did go right. The crop was planted, we stayed cool during flowering, timely rains...and by harvest time, lo and behold, a crop that was planted 4-6 weeks late, was for the most part ready for harvest. While not a bin-buster in most cases, it was on trend-line and excellent quality.

I am grateful for 2022.

As we look forward to the 2023 growing season, Mother Nature holds her cards close to the vest. However, we have some great tools. With our meeting season underway, I am continually reminded of the breadth and depth of quality research being done

on behalf of the wheat checkoff to develop varieties and discover best management practices throughout the region. I am proud of the collaborative work I see happening between our staff, farmers and other commodity groups that comprises our On Farm Research

Network. Will we bat a .1000? No, Mother Nature has reminded us in recent years that too much rain (harvest '19) or drought (2021) can still trump our best efforts, but we have put ourselves in the best position possible thanks to your continued support and collaborative efforts.

Winter is also when state budgets and legislative initiatives come to the forefront. Federally, efforts are underway to address the concerns surrounding the WOTUS (Waters of the United States) ruling and agriculture is beginning to get a lot of attention as Farm Bill renewal preparations begin. At the state level, the political landscape has continued to evolve. The trend of more legislators residing in urban/suburban areas continues, and the direct connection to the farm grows more distant. This does



Charlie Vogel

present challenges. However, Minnesota in particular does an excellent job of working as an industry to represent and advocate for the individual farmer in St. Paul. I have lived and worked in five states throughout my career, and no other point in my history have I seen commodity groups, farm organizations and

industry work together for the common good of the farmer and consciously avoid turf wars and side issues. I credit past leadership and Minnesota farmers for creating this culture; it is what is needed now. The structure is in place. The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, along with all the other commodity groups, stands ready to work to advocate for you. Now we just need your continued involvement and membership. This is what fuels these efforts across the finish line. Membership in grower associations matters and makes a difference. If you are not a member, or have a colleague who isn't, please consider joining the ranks. Together, we can do this.

Charlie Vogel is CEO of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers. Follow him on Twitter at @WheatGuyMN 🌾



TAMING THE BULLS



BY BETSY JENSEN



& BEARS

All bushels are not created equal

I volunteer as an EMT for our local ambulance service. In 2021 we started receiving a small stipend for our on-call time. It is not much but I have determined that any ambulance money I receive is going straight into my vacation fund. If I take a call for a full weekend, maybe I can get a full size instead of economy rental car. Get a nicer hotel room. Find somewhere for a nice supper. You get the idea.

Money managers will tell you I have the wrong idea. A dollar earned is a dollar earned and I should be making responsible decisions with every dollar I earn. To heck with them. I want a nice vacation, and I have earned it.

If I was a responsible grain marketer, I would advise you to be responsible with every bushel you raise. All bushels are created equal and need to be marketed carefully and with a risk management plan in mind. To heck with that idea.

I create my marketing plan every year and it is done carefully and with risk management in mind. I don't want to hit a home run. I just want to sell above my cost of production, make money farming and have my banker approve my line of credit for the next year.

But every now and then I want to hit a home run. I want to sell a few wheat

bushels in the teens or corn for over seven dollars. I call those gambling bushels and I want to hit it big.

I spend my winters working with farmers on their finances and marketing plans and some of you are holding too many gambling bushels. You own "Birthday Crops" that have been on the farm long enough to celebrate their birthday. Did you bake a cake to celebrate that bin of two-year-old wheat?

You need to draw the line between gambling bushels and the bushels that should be part of your risk management plan. That two-year-old wheat was once worth \$13. Will you sell it again if it gets back to \$13? What is your tolerance for risk management and gambling?

Maybe I have been preaching risk management too much. You need risk management, but it is okay to save a few bushels for a home run. Set aside those old crop corn bushels that you want to sell in July when there are hot and dry forecasts for the Corn Belt. Save some wheat for April when we freeze the winter wheat crop for the first time. It's okay to gamble, but set limits.

When adding up your bushels, don't forget to include the bushels in the bin, the 2023 acres you intend to plant and

maybe even a hint of 2024 since we can also contract those bushels today. We can sell those bushels in July when there's a hot and dry forecast. Sometimes there's a price spike in only old crop bushels, but more often we see prices rising for all production years. There are nearly always bushels to sell when the market rallies.

If I quit the ambulance service and no longer received my stipend, my life wouldn't change. I'd book a smaller car, a garden view room or cut a few days off my vacation. If wheat dropped \$2, how much would that affect your balance sheet? Would it change financials enough to affect some capital purchase plans?

I hope you hit a home run with some of your bushels. I also hope you have done the math and can live with the financial results just in case the home run doesn't happen. The gambling bushels let me dream about a big payout and bragging rights, but my financial future does not rely on them. Create your risk management plan and make sure to leave a little room for some risk.

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

'A great asset'

Tim Dufault promotes wheat through and through



By Bailey Grubish

A farmer becomes involved in a commodity organization for myriad reasons.

For one northwest Minnesota grower, it was his willingness to have his voice and opinions heard. To make a difference and help move the needle instead of passively hoping for change.

Tim Dufault, a fourth-generation farmer in Crookston, Minnesota, is an active and longtime farmer-leader. Dufault is currently serving his second term as chair of the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council (MWRPC). He volunteers his time because he'd rather step on the field than sit on the sidelines.

"I'm not one of those guys that sits back and grumbles, if there's something I don't like," Dufault said. "Either I shut my mouth and accept it, or I try and change it. I get involved and see if I can make a difference."

He continues to join in efforts to help Minnesota farmers better understand – and benefit from – the wheat checkoff as well as promoting the products grown by locals and distributed across the state, country and world.

"He's going to make a great chairman," MWRPC Vice Chair Mark Jossund said. "He brings a wealth of experience to the board. He's just a great asset to the board and he's going to do a great job as chairman."

Dufault joined the Council around 2016 and he's been soaking in the information and sharing his knowledge ever since.

"I've been on the board long enough to see how things run," Dufault said. "We're kind of in a place where it runs itself. We're not looking at any big changes. Years ago, we made a strong commitment to the research side with our On-Farm Research



TIM DUFAULT

MWRPC Chair Tim Dufault is a longtime farmer leader who represented Minnesota Wheat as part of a delegation of business leaders on a trade mission to the U.K. and Finland in 2021. Follow his humorous musings on life and agriculture on Twitter at @6dollarwheatguy.

Network and we're going to keep that, and so now it's how can we make that better?"

Playing the long game

He shared a few projects the Council is prioritizing in 2023 with the use of checkoff funds. Dufault spoke of the importance of the cutting edge research the Council sponsors, along with the various programs MWRPC supports to improve yield and find new markets for its crop.

The Minnesota Wheat On-Farm Research Network (OFRN) is celebrating a decade of projects and remains a perennial highlight from the Council. The OFRN conducts producer-funded, producer-driven research that investigates producer-selected research topics in a large plot environment.

In the coming months, the Council will hear a new round of research proposals to approve. Directors will be faced with

Checkoff Check-in

Area 2 Director Mark Jossund (Vice Chair), Area 1's Peter Hvidsten (Secretary) and Treasurer Mikayla Tabert of Area 1 round out MWRPC's officer team. Council directors must be wheat producers who 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 about six times annually.



Tim Dufault (right) talks agronomy with Minnesota Soybean Research Director David Kee during the 2023 Small Grains Update.

tough choices.

"I just wish we had more money, because there's a lot of interesting research that could be done out there," Dufault said. "It's too bad that we can't fund it all."

The research conducted at the ORFN focuses on various production aspects, from sustainability to reducing inputs or even food sensitivity. Dufault said that the committee looks at projects that might not put money in the farmers' pocket today, but 10 years from now it may increase the price of wheat.

The board is also continuing the promotion side of the Council to push U.S. wheat to growing international markets and making connections with potential buyers or partners.

MWRPC also brings millers from various countries to the U.S. to put them through a milling class to learn how to mill the different kinds of wheat found in the U.S. and to gain more technical knowledge.

Dufault shared the importance of Council programs, but he also has a passion for the policy side of Minnesota Wheat, where he began his advocacy for Minnesota growers. With his position as MWRPC chair, Dufault has a seat on the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) board, where he's able to continue supporting research that looks beyond the horizon.

Working in the wheat world

Prior to joining the Council, Dufault served on the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers board, the organization's policy wing. In 2020, as part of Farmers For Free

Trade, he testified in Washington, D.C., about the harmful effects of the U.S.-China trade war.

"I've always been interested in the policy side," Dufault said. "You have to work for your industry. It just doesn't happen, so you need to represent it. You have to get involved, so that was a big driver for me."

He also serves on the Crookston Public School board and is a member of several commodity organizations. Dufault is no stranger to jumping in to help where it is needed to keep organizations moving in the direction of its goals.

He holds a degree from the University of Minnesota Crookston for ag business management and North Dakota State University for Agriculture Economics.

Dufault has farmed nearly his entire adult life, and one of his off-farm jobs included an 11-year stint selling advertisements for *Prairie Grains Magazine*.

Serving as MWRPC chair has brought his agriculture journey full circle from being a farmer, to representing growers on MAWG, selling ads for the magazine that disseminates important information out to growers to his current position. He has dedicated decades to serving his fellow growers and continues to be a champion for the industry.

"He's thorough, he's direct, very involved and engaged," MWRPC Executive Director Charlie Vogel said. "Tim's really engaged, pragmatic and he's always willing to look at both sides and make the decision that is best for the growers. He is what you would want in a chairman." 🌾



A DIFFERENT PACE

DFL moves quickly to start 2023 legislative session

By Drew Lyon

Many political observers in St. Paul anticipated the 2023 legislative session would begin at a snail's pace. But with Democrats regaining control of the Minnesota Legislature for the first time since 2014, the DFL moved swiftly to fulfill its 2022 campaign pledges, from proposing legislation on cannabis legalization to public education investments.

"We're definitely off to a fast start this session, despite the fact that there are dozens of people in this building who really don't know the process all that well," said Bruce Kleven, who lobbies at the Capitol on behalf of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers (MAWG). "And yet, they're being confronted with major pieces of legislation in the first few weeks."

Early in the session, Gov. Walz signed a tax conformity bill which brings the state's tax code into conformity with federal tax law on 46 provisions that have been signed into law by U.S. presidents since 2019.

"None of the early pieces affect agriculture directly, but it still sets the tone that they're moving fast," Kleven said, "and it makes providing input on those bills from interested parties a challenge."

The chairs for the House and Senate ag committees have held listening sessions with farmers. Due to the lack of rural Democrats, both chairs – Rep. Samantha Vang and Sen. Aric Putnam – hail from Brooklyn Center and St. Cloud, respectively. Sen. Torrey Westrom, a longtime rural legislator, said many of his new colleagues (68 legislators are entering their first term in 2023) have much to learn about agriculture's impact on Minnesota.

"Too many people don't realize that food doesn't come from the grocery store; it comes from the farm," Westrom said.

High expectations

MAWG will look to grow its membership base this year. Members enjoy several benefits, including free registration to Minnesota Wheat events and membership in the National Association of Wheat Growers.

"Membership is the backbone of our organization," MAWG President Mike Gunderson said. "They're the voice of our organization. Without members, we wouldn't exist. Quite frankly – if you grow it, you should belong to it."

MAWG CEO Charlie Vogel said membership is critical to informing legislators on the distinction between production and urban agriculture. The louder the chorus, the clearer the message.

"If we're not talking to legislators about production ag, the natural assumption is going to be that urban ag is the same and it's just a difference in scale," Vogel said. "We'll have to be there educating and building relationships. Membership drives that."

The Legislature is debating on how to invest a record \$17.6 billion budget surplus, which will be revised once the "February forecast" is unveiled. The agriculture budget proposed by the Walz administration includes several MAWG priorities: funding for the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) program, the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), the Agricultural Research, Education, Extension and Technology Transfer (AGREET) program at the University of Minnesota and increasing resources for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's export efforts.

"There's a high expectation and a high sense of confidence that we can get these things accomplished together," Gov. Walz said. "(The ag budget) is focusing on those things that allow (farmers) to do what farmers do best."

The biennial session must conclude by May 22, and a special session appears unlikely. 🌾

MAWG offers a range of membership options. For producers, dues start at only \$85 for a one-year, auto-renew option and are 57% tax deductible. Wheat checkoff dollars cannot be used for lobbying purposes. To join, visit <https://mnwheat.org/growers/membership-info/>.



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Agriculture Leadership Network

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH ALN

Content subject to change

Kick-Off Meeting

Sept. 13, 2023 - Fargo, ND

Program Introductions, Set Personal Leadership Goals, NDSU Meats Lab Class, Industry Tours, Networking Event

Leadership Cultivation

Feb. 2-4, 2024 - Fargo, ND

Attend MFBF LEAP Conference, Advocacy and State Policy Issues Training, Media Training

St. Paul Capitol Experience

March 2024 - Eagan, MN

State Issues Update, Visits on the Hill, Capitol Tour, Mock Legislative Hearing

Program Selection

A class of up to 20 applicants will be chosen to participate in the 2023-2025 Agriculture Leadership Network. Selection will be based on the information provided in the application.

Participation Fee

Each participant will be responsible for \$1,000 (\$500 for 2023 and \$500 for 2024/25) to be eligible to complete the program. The initial \$500 will be due prior to attendance of the Kick-Off Meeting by the deadline that is provided. The participation fee will cover all hotel and meal costs, programming materials, and travel fees. ALN is coordinated by the Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota Wheat.

Summer Meeting & Tours

July 2024 - Crookston, MN

Farm and Agriculture Business Tours, Networking, Mid-program Review

Prairie Grains Conference

Dec. 13, 2024 - Grand Forks, ND

Attend Prairie Grains Conference, National Advocacy Updates, Media and Interview Training

Washington D.C. Experience

Spring 2025

Tours of D.C., Visits with Legislators at the Capitol, Meetings with National Agriculture Organizations in D.C., Program Wrap-Up



THE NEXT GO-AROUND

Mike Gunderson reelected MAWG president

By Drew Lyon

Mike Gunderson is ready for another bite of the legislative apple.

“It’s always good to get a year under your belt,” Gunderson said in between chores on the farm, days after he earned another year as president of the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers (MAWG). “I’m looking forward to the year ahead.”

Gunderson was

reelected president during MAWG’s January board meeting. Gunderson has sat on the MAWG board for about five years and currently represents the organization on the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) board alongside Tate Petry. During his first year as president, Gunderson appeared on Tucker Carlson’s Fox News program – one of the most-watched shows in primetime – to discuss high input prices, and helped advocate for Minnesota’s wheat farmers in St. Paul

and Washington,

D.C. MAWG will continue to rely on Gunderson’s years

of experience both with

MAWG and as a Minnesota

Farm Bureau director.

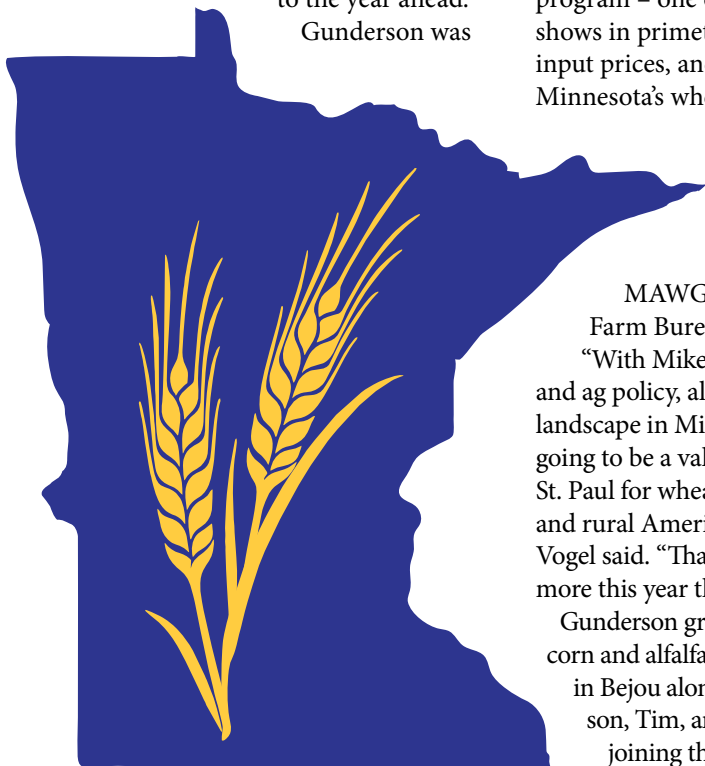
“With Mike’s history in advocacy and ag policy, along with the changing landscape in Minnesota politics, he’s going to be a valuable voice to advocate in St. Paul for wheat growers and agriculture and rural America,” MAWG CEO Charlie Vogel said. “That’s going to be needed more this year than in the past.”

Gunderson grows wheat, soybeans, corn and alfalfa on his cow/calf operation in Bejou alongside his wife, Connie, son, Tim, and mother. Prior to Mike joining the board, Connie served as a MAWG director.

“It was a tough start to the season last spring but

overall, it was a good year,” he said. “As always, we’re hoping this year is better than last.”

Gunderson will once again have a strong supporting cast. Kevin Leiser of Fertile was reelected first vice president and Austen Germolus will serve as second vice president, with Petry returning as secretary/treasurer.



Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers



MAWG last held its day on the Hill in March 2020, just before the pandemic shut down the Capitol.

“We’ve got some board members who are really looking to get involved,” Gunderson said. “I’m really excited for the board we have right now.”

MAWG, which marks its 45th anniversary in 2023, has enjoyed the recent return of Erik Younggren, a Hallock farmer and former president of NAWG. After a seven-year break, he returned to represent MAWG as District 1 director with fresh eyes, Vogel said.

“Erik brings a lot of institutional knowledge,” Vogel said. “He brings a lot of history. He’s really valuable in comparing and contrasting where we were with where we are now. When you’re constantly in it, incremental change can be hard to notice.”

On the flip side, Director Justin Osowoski, also of Hallock, is a younger farmer. He’s joined by at-large Director Steve Lacey.

“Justin is fairly new in his farming career and brings that fresh perspective,” Vogel said.

At the federal level, Gunderson is running for an open position on the National Wheat Foundation, a spot previously held by Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council Director Scott Swenson. The NWF holds the Annual Weight Yield Contests and hosts legislative receptions during Hill Visits in Washington, D.C. Petry is also seeking a spot on NAWG’s budget committee. Gunderson, Petry and Minnesota Wheat staff will visit the nation’s capital in late January for NAWG’s winter meetings.

“We’re definitely excited to get back there and visit with our legislators to talk about the Farm Bill and its importance to Minnesota producers,” Gunderson said.

In February, Gunderson hopes to advocate closer to home during a visit to St. Paul before MAWG travels to Orlando, Fla., for NAWG’s Annual Meeting at Commodity Classic.

“Across the board, we’re really focusing on building relationships this year,” Vogel said. “As we urbanize, the education efforts with legislators has to increase, because they don’t know what they don’t know.”

To view the last MAWG policy resolutions, visit mnwheat.org/resolutions.



Following redistricting in 2022, MAWG President Mike Gunderson (second to left) is now an Eighth District constituent of Rep. Pete Stauber (far left).



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NEXT GENERATION GRAIN LEADER

Ed Kessel bringing a youth movement to North Dakota Grain Growers Association

By Sydney Harris

Knowledge is power.

And when it comes to lawmaking, this age-old adage is especially true. Politicians making laws must understand how their decisions affect all their constituents, not just the demographic that they are most familiar with.

At the same time, it is impossible for them to be experts on every subject. Many politicians don't have an agricultural background, which isn't a fault of their own, making it difficult for them to fully grasp how policies impact the ag community.

Luckily for North Dakota farmers, they have the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA) to meet with policymakers and shed light on the repercussions – both good and bad – of their legislative decisions.

“They try to make the best decisions that they can but if they don't have the information – the boots on the ground information – those decisions can go

bad pretty quickly,” NDGGA President Ed Kessel said. “We aren't lobbyists, we're just trying to inform. We're there to educate on policy, trying to explain to lawmakers, or really anybody in government, what farmers need and how policies will affect farmers.”

Kessel, a third-generation producer, farms with his brother near Belfield, N.D., where he grows winter and spring wheat, barley, corn, sunflowers and other specialty crops. Curiosity got the best of him, and he ventured to his first NDGGA meeting in 2015.

“My neighbors and I got started going to meetings because we wanted to learn how policies affect our operations and have a voice at the capitol,” Kessel said.

After that first meeting, Kessel dove headfirst into the world of NDGGA. He's since come a long way.

Elected as president during the annual meeting at the 2022 Prairie Grains Conference, Kessel has a big year ahead of him. Closer to home, North

Dakota, which is one of four states that convenes biannually in odd-numbered years, holds its legislative session early January through April 28. Like most state and national groups, NDGGA and its lobbying team will be keeping a close eye



In 2018, Dickinson, N.D., farmer Ed Kessel was appointed to serve on North Dakota USDA Farm Service Agency's state committee.

on the upcoming Farm Bill and traveling to Washington, D.C., for Hill Visits and board meetings.

“We haven’t been back to Washington, D.C., since COVID, but we will be going in February,” said Kessel, who served as NDGGA’s first vice president in 2022. “We’re looking forward to getting into those offices and getting some farmers there to visit with those folks.”

‘A great perspective’

After spending seven years on the NDGGA board, Kessel has tucked quite a bit of legislative experience under his belt, preparing him to take on the president role. Though he hasn’t seen it all, he has experienced enough to lead the group with confidence through the coming legislative session, especially with the guidance of NDGGA Executive Director Dan Wogsland.

“We’re watching what’s going on at the legislative session, making sure that recent agricultural research is being addressed and receiving fairly stable funding,” Kessel said. “And Dan is there every day, taking phone calls and laying out the material that we need to make our decisions.”

Only time will tell which issues get thrown Kessel’s way during his term, but Wogsland is confident that Kessel has what it takes to expertly handle what’s coming and can offer a unique outlook on situations that may arise.

“Ed is a tremendous leader, and his wide background makes him an ideal person to be president of NDGGA. He’s going to do fantastic,” Wogsland said. “He brings such a great perspective – and a young perspective. We’ve been fortunate to have tremendous leadership on our board of directors. Ed is just another example of that.”

As president, Kessel aims to do more than just chat with legislators. He knows how easy it is to accept the status quo and hopes to rekindle his peers’ interest in agricultural policy.

“I hope to get more people involved

in agriculture, whether that be attending meetings or investing in memberships,” Kessel said. “We can’t always assume that someone else is going to do it.”

Driving this goal is understanding that as older generations retire, younger generations must be ready to take the mantle and fight for their industry. This won’t be an adjustment that happens overnight but will be gradual. And the process to prepare for this shift starts now, Kessel said.

“I want to get that next group involved in their industry and ready to take charge,” Kessel said.

But, above all, Kessel and the entire

NDGGA board of directors will be paying close attention to the ongoing legislative session ensuring that they are available as a resource to their elected officials.

“We know how federal and state policies that lawmakers make can affect our farm. If nobody is there visiting with them and explaining how this rule could benefit or hinder us, they will go into those decisions blind,” Kessel said. “And, when that happens, it’s usually not a good thing for agriculture.”

NDGGA will keep forging ahead with Kessel at the helm in 2023, working to ensure a bright future for North Dakota producers. 🌾

Originally named the North Dakota Wheat Producers, NDGGA has served North Dakota wheat and barley producers with representation, education and proactive advocacy since 1967. A full list of its 2023 policy resolutions can be found at ndgga.com/resolutions/.





BANDING TOGETHER

MAWG joins Collin Peterson-led advocacy group
by Drew Lyon

The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers (MAWG) is increasing its advocacy endeavors for 2023. At MAWG's January 2023 board meeting, directors voted to join the Midwest Council on Agriculture (MWCA), the startup federal lobbying group overseen by former U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson.

MAWG CEO Charlie Vogel said the decision to become a member of MWCA will help MAWG retain a similar presence in the nation's capital as it does in St. Paul. Ag groups work best when they're all singing from the same hymnal, he said.

"Eighty percent of what ag is after in D.C. benefits all of agriculture," Vogel said. "It's about focusing on those broad-based support items that I think Minnesota, in particular, does a really good job of at the state level. We don't waste a lot of effort fighting each other; we make a concentrated effort as ag groups to work together to have a common message to Minnesota legislators. This is kind of doing that same thing at the federal level."

Founded following the conclusion of Peterson's 30-year congressional career, MWCA comprises farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, commodity groups and agricultural lenders from across twelve states that are united with common objectives. The organization advocates for strong agriculture and economic policy promoting long-term sustainability and



During a 30-year career in Congress, Collin Peterson, pictured here with then-USDA Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue (middle) and Minnesota farmer Kevin Paap (left), cultivated a reputation as a moderate Democrat who easily worked with colleagues across the aisle.

growth of the Midwest's ag industry.

"We bring something to the table," said Peterson, a former chairman of the House Ag Committee who's now president of the government and policy affairs team, The Peterson Group. "Agriculture is a huge economic engine in this part of the country."

MWCA is also relying on agronomists and academic leaders for expertise. Peterson has expressed interest in creating a land-grant university center in the Midwest focused on agricultural economics akin to a program developed at Texas A&M.

"It's a great cross-section of agribusiness and academia," said Dan Wogsland, executive director of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association. "The idea here is putting together a policy center that can do an analysis on farm policy from a Midwestern perspective."

Having Peterson, one of the nation's leading experts on federal farm policy, at the helm of MWCA is one of the group's strongest selling points. Few know the innerworkings of farm-related legislation quite like the tell-it-like-it-is Peterson, a moderate Democrat who enjoys near-universal name recognition throughout the Midwest agriculture industry and is skilled at working with leaders from both parties.

"He's from here, lots of people know him and have crossed paths with him," MAWG President Mike Gunderson said. "He certainly has a lot of connections in Washington, D.C."

MWCA brings together both farm groups and agriculture businesses from across the

region. It's modeled after the Southwestern Council on Agriculture, one of D.C.'s most formidable lobby groups.

"Collin said as Ag chair, the most effective group at presenting information and having influence on farm policy was that (Southwestern Council) group," Vogel said.

In turn, Peterson said having MAWG onboard will help MWCA strengthen its advocacy case during a pivotal year for ag policy in D.C.

"It is great to have Minnesota Wheat as part of our growing coalition, especially as we head into a farm bill year," Peterson said. "The Midwest Council is moving forward with lining up our priorities for this Congress, and we will be taking these consensus issues to Washington D.C., in the coming months."

'On the same page'

Wogsland lauded Minnesota Wheat's participation. The organization joins dozens of the other Minnesota-based and regional companies as members.

"Having Minnesota Wheat at the table is tremendously important and we're really pleased they decided to join," said Wogsland, who sits on MWCA's board of directors. "The opportunity here to bring Midwestern states together is incredibly important."

Vogel said the group's affiliation with MWCA won't affect its longstanding support of the National Association of

In August 2022, the MWCA held its first full meeting in Detroit Lakes, Minn., with Peterson, USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small and Farm Service Agency Administrator Zach Ducheneaux featured as keynote speakers. To learn more about its members and ways to join, visit midwestcouncil.org.



Wheat Growers (NAWG).

"This isn't replacing our national groups," Vogel said. "We still have our national groups like NAWG to tackle, educate and lobby individual asks for our specific commodity. But now we can have CHS and Land O'Lakes and all these ag retailers and lenders and their lobbying push behind us. It's a way to get everyone on the same page."

The next Farm Bill, which expires at the end of the year, figures to take up plenty of oxygen in a divided federal government during 2023. MWCA will work on protecting crop insurance, Foreign Market Development (FMD) and Market Access Program (MAP) funding, along with addressing sustainability and environmental practices.

"Whether you're talking carbon credits or the buzzword of cover crops, it's not going away," Vogel said. "That's very nuanced. Federal policy is awesome at one-size-fits-all solutions. Nothing is more nuanced than sustainability and how to craft those policies and how they fit not farm-to-farm, but field-to-field."

There's strength in numbers. After all, as the well-worn adage goes in agriculture: If you're not at the table, you're on the menu. And MWCA is taking a seat to have its voice heard.

"We're under two percent of the population," Vogel said. "We can't go at it alone." 🌾

2023 Small Grains Update

MARKET INSIGHTS

How to best navigate a turbulent market

By Sydney Harris

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if farmers could plant their seed, tend to their crop, harvest their grain and be guaranteed a profit that would allow them to continue doing what they love year after year?

Except, we don't live in a vacuum. The factors affecting the market never cease to throw curveballs, keeping everyone on their toes. But those who adapt and stay nimble can still thrive in a turbulent market.

Allison Thompson, who has worked for The Money Farm since 2017 and is in the process of owning the business herself, traveled throughout northwest Minnesota in January as part of the Small Grains Update Meetings cavalry to share insight on the latest market trends and what to watch for in 2023.

Rising inflation and interest rates

Anyone who has gone grocery shopping lately has been subjected to the grips of the highest inflation rates in 40

years. Not only have farmers been impacted by inflation in store aisles, but even more so when they purchase their crop inputs.

"Inflation rates peaked in June at 9.1% and in November they were 7.1%," said Thompson, who lives on a grain farm near Mahanomen, Minn. "Obviously, inflation isn't going anywhere."

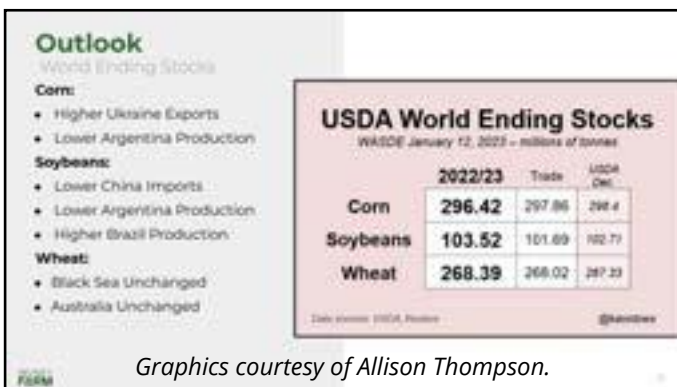
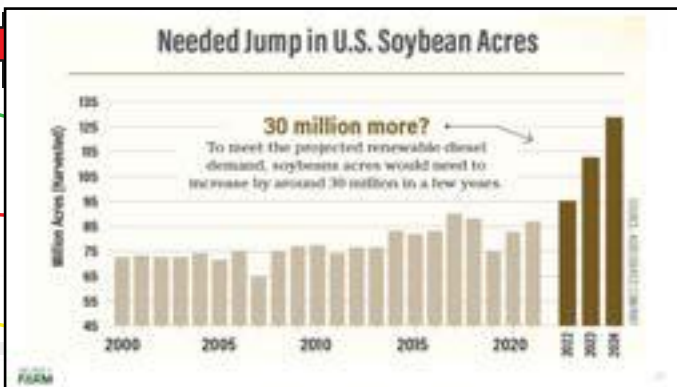
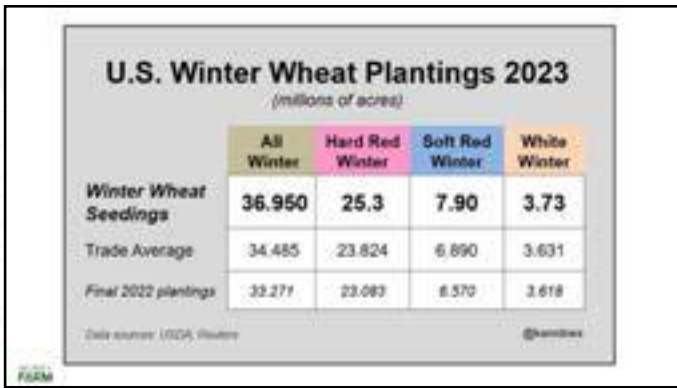
Consequently, interest rates have aggressively increased since March 2022. Although inflation is easing, indications point to more rate hikes.

"Unfortunately, I think we are going to see another rate increase at the beginning of February," said Thompson. "It's definitely created some volatility."

When it rains it pours, right?

2023 market drivers

A new year brings a heap of uncertainty for what the next 12 months will bring (case in point: few were predicting a war between Russia and Ukraine in January 2022). At times,



this reality can be beautiful and at other times, perilous. Either way, it isn't for the faint of heart.

Thankfully, farmers and the ag community are a hearty group.

As we venture further into 2023, Thompson identified "black swans" – unpredictable events – many of which are carryovers from 2022 and have the potential to impact the market. The weather is an item that reappears on this list year after year, which isn't surprising.

Over the last two years, South America has experienced a La Nina weather pattern, resulting in extremely dry conditions, compromising grain production. For the first time since the 1950s, South America is looking at a third year of La Nina, which Thompson coined a "triple play."

"When we started looking at South America's '23 crops earlier this year, we were looking at records, but we aren't seeing that trend follow through," Thompson said. "We've been in a weather market for the last month I'd say. Corn and soybean prices are being based on what Argentina's weather forecasts do daily."

The agricultural community is well-aware of the unpredictability of weather patterns, but nevertheless, Thompson will be keeping an eye on those long-term forecasts.

Another important factor to monitor moving forward is the ongoing Russia/Ukraine conflict, which enters its second year in March. Historically, Ukraine has been the third or fourth largest exporter of corn, depending on Argentina's production, and despite the current turmoil, they are still on track to hit that mark.

"I'd say that there's a good chance Ukraine could still end up third or fourth even given the conflict, depending on what Argentina's crop looks like with their dry conditions," Thompson said. "And, since China is their largest market, if they can't get that crop, China is going to be on the global market looking here as well."

What to do?

Farmers can't control the market drivers, but they can control how they take that information and apply it to their own operations. As farmers make plans for spring planting, Thompson is encouraging them to consider buying more wheat and soybean acres.

"We're going to need a lot more wheat and soybean acres coming in," Thompson said. "Looking at the 2023 price ratios and considering all the market drivers, I think that's pretty true."

There are sure to be surprises in 2023 but with careful analysis of crucial elements like geopolitics, weather patterns and inflation and interest rates, farmers will be better equipped to roll with the punches. 🌾

2023 Small Grains Update



U of M researcher outlines top varieties for 2023

By Sydney Harris

Some people go shoe shopping and others go shopping for the best wheat variety. The “other” people are farmers.

In early January, Jim Anderson barnstormed throughout northwestern Minnesota, speaking at the Small Grains Update Meetings explaining his top wheat variety picks for the 2023 growing season.

“I’m going to talk about all of the varieties and important characteristics just to calibrate and remind you what our program released in the last few years,” Anderson, a spring wheat breeder in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota, told an audience of northwest Minnesota farmers and industry professionals.

Those varieties include Linkert, which was released in 2013 and became the most popular variety for an impressive five years. In 2020, MN-Torgy had its debut and claimed 21.7% of Minnesota acreage last harvest season.

“MN-Torgy kind of surprised us as being the No. 1 variety in the state last year,” Anderson said. “It had a pretty good year this year in our trials as well.”

MN-Rothsay, the most recent release from the U of M, was in seed increase last year and will continue into certified seeds production in 2023.

Variety survey

You’d be hard pressed to find a farmer who enjoys paperwork, especially if that paperwork involves completing a

survey. But completing those surveys goes a long way to helping breeders like Anderson cater to farmers’ needs.

“Every year the Minnesota Wheat Growers does a variety survey and as a breeder, it provides valuable information to see what farmers are growing,” Anderson said. “And it gives us an idea of what characteristics are important as well as what varieties we think we may want to try to replace.”

According to the 2022 survey, MN-Torgy, WB9590 and SY Valda were the top three varieties grown in Minnesota.

Driving forces

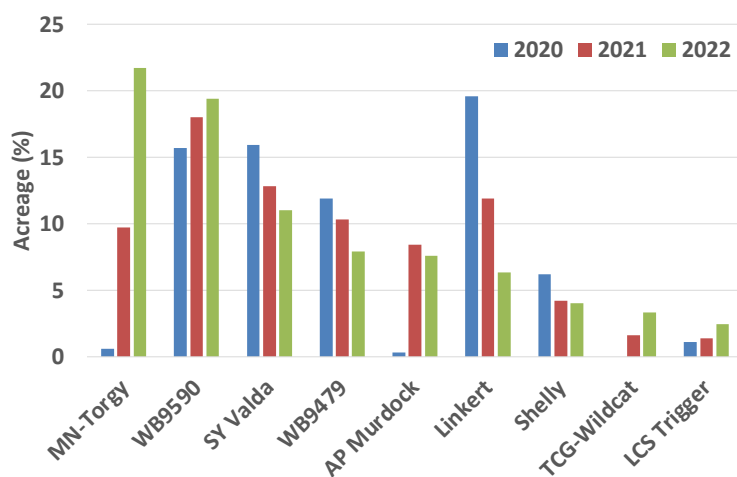
Farmers making their 2023 wheat variety picks might not be as exciting to follow along with as fantasy football picks, but it’s just as complicated and

Recent U of M Releases

Variety	Year of Release	2022 MN Acreage (%)
Linkert	2013	6.3
Bolles	2015	1.7
Shelly	2016	4.0
Lang-MN	2017	0.3
MN-Washburn	2019	1.5
MN-Torgy	2020	21.7
MN-Rothsay	2022	0.3



Variety Survey Results



PICKS

(tested at least 3 yrs., must be ≤ 5 FHB & BLS, ≤ 3 PHS, and ≤ 6 Qual.)
(All are 3 or 4 for BLS and FHB)

VARIETY	PLUSES	MINUSES
CP3530	Balanced	Ldg (5), Lr (7), Leaf dis. (6)
Driver	Yield	Ldg (5), PHS (3), Quality (6)
Dyna-Gro Ambush	Yield	Ldg (5), PHS (3)
MN-Rothsay	Yield (north)	Quality (5)
MN-Torgy	Balanced	
SY 611 CL2	Balanced	Quality (6)
SY Valda	Yield	Ldg (5), Quality (5)



might have as many moving parts.

To provide a comprehensive look at how varieties performed in key categories, Anderson identified characteristics most pertinent to making decisions.

“I’m going to show you data for yield, protein, straw strength and a couple of diseases,” Anderson said. “Just kind of hit what I think are the main factors driving variety choice.”

The diseases Anderson touched on were FHB (Scab), Bacterial Leaf Streak (BLS), Tan Spot/Septoria and Preharvest Sprouting (PHS).

First on the docket was yield.

Of the top ten yielding varieties in 2022, four were newer releases with MS Charger at 91.6 bushels per acre, Ascend- SD at 91.5 bushels per acre, Rothsay at 90.8 bushels per acre and CAG Justify at 90.7 bushels per acre. LCS Trigger earned the top spot with 98.3 bushels per acre.

“We’ve got some good genetics coming along for yield,” Anderson said.

Another critical element of wheat quality is the protein content, something all wheat growers have been painfully aware of a time or two when they’ve been discounted at the elevator. Anderson also tied in baking quality, ranking varieties from 1-9 with 1 being the best baking quality.

“Baking quality is a ranking that I assign based on the data we get from the USDA testing lab,” Anderson said. “They’ll bake a loaf of bread and look at the loaf volume and the gluten strength.”

In gold was Bolles with 16.8 protein and a baking quality of one. In silver was WB9479 with 16.1 protein and a baking quality of two. MS Barracuda took home the bronze with 15.9 protein and four baking quality. MN-Torgy had a protein at 15.1 and a baking quality of four, WB 9590’s protein was 15.7 and it’s baking quality came in at four and SY Valda’s protein was 14.7 with a baking quality of six.

Anderson’s 2023 picks

The highly anticipated moment finally came - Anderson’s picks for the 2023 growing season.

To be in the running, the variety must have been tested for at least three years, must be lower than or equal to five on the

Continued on page 22

FHB and BLS scale, lower than or equal to three on the PHS scale and rank a six or better on baking quality.

This year, all picks scored a three or a four for BLS and FHB.

“These answer a lot of questions on what we think are the best genetics out there,” Anderson said.

Unsurprisingly, last year’s most popular variety, MN-Torgy, is on the list.

“MN-Torgy is balanced for a decent protein and decent yield. There aren’t any real negatives when looking at the various characteristics,” Anderson said.

Future varieties

Anderson doesn’t see a new variety coming out of the University of Minnesota until at least 2024, if not 2025. Why? Because MN-Rothsay and MN-Torgy are performing so well.

“I get pretty excited about MN-Rothsay,” Anderson said. “I think it’s going to be hard for us to beat it and I don’t know what our next variety is going to be because the bar is set pretty high right now with MN-Torgy and MN-Rothsay.”

That seems like a pretty good problem to have. 🌾



The University of Minnesota’s wheat breeding program has been in place since 1888 and has released more than 35 varieties. The program supports Research and Outreach Centers in Crookston, Morris, Roseau, Lamberton and Waseca.

Funding for the University of Minnesota’s breeding program, which is overseen by Jim Anderson (pictured here) is provided by the Minnesota Wheat Research & Promotion Council and several federal and state programs. Complete data tables are available at varietytrials.umn.edu/spring-wheat.



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For a list of seed producers, visit the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association at www.mncia.org or call 1-800-510-6242.

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DEFINING U.S. WHEAT'S COMPARATIVE (COMPETITIVE) ADVANTAGE: DURUM

By Mark Fowler, USW Vice President of Global Technical Services

In the increasingly competitive global wheat market, it is important to review the advantages that U.S. wheat delivers to millers and bakers. But just what advantages does the durum wheat bring to the market?

Durum is the pasta wheat and the fifth-largest class of wheat grown in the United States with an annual average production over the last five years of 1.6 million metric tons (MMT), or about 58.79 million bushels. In part because of regional economies of scale, U.S. imports of durum at a five-year average are 1.18 million metric tons (MMT). In comparison, export volume at a five-year average is slightly less than 680 thousand metric tons (TMT).

Northern durum is grown in North Dakota, Minnesota and Montana and primarily exported through the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway or the Gulf. Desert Durum is a registered

certification mark owned by the Arizona Grain Research and Promotion Council and the California Wheat Commission. These groups authorize using the mark only for designated durum grain produced under irrigation in Arizona and California's desert valleys and lowlands. Desert Durum is exported from the Gulf or the West Coast.

Milling advantages

U.S. durum is competitive mostly with Canadian durum in the global market. U.S. durum is represented by three subclasses controlling for hard, vitreous kernel (HVK) content. Subclass options include Hard Amber Durum (HAD) with more than 75% vitreous kernels; Amber Durum with 60% to 74% vitreous kernels; and Durum with less than 60% vitreous kernels. Higher HVK values yield a larger quantity of semolina. U.S. durum has a large kernel size, allowing millers to benefit from higher extraction rates.

Desert Durum is harvested and shipped at a very low moisture content. This advantage to millers contributes to efficient transportation costs and high extraction rates. It also allows them to add significantly more water during the tempering and conditioning phase of processing.

Product advantages

The finest quality pasta is the primary product made from U.S. durum – long goods, short goods, pasta of all shapes and sizes. Other products made from durum include couscous and some varieties of traditional Mediterranean semolina bread. In all durum food products, one quality factor

is the most critical to the consumer – color. In its purest form, pasta is water and durum semolina. Couscous is large semolina boiled and eaten as an alternative to rice. In both products, consumers prefer a bright yellow, translucent appearance that U.S. durum delivers because of its higher HVK level. The higher HVK also allows the miller to provide a more uniform, consistent semolina to the pasta process, thus improving production efficiencies and color.

Sourcing opportunities

Like some other classes of wheat, U.S. durum planted area is declining. Total U.S. durum planted area in 2022 was 1.63 million acres, 10,000 acres less than the previous season. The area harvested was 1.58 million acres, a 4% increase. Improved weather conditions increased total durum yields by 64% to 40.5 bu/acre. USDA expects total U.S. durum production will be 1.7 MMT, rebounding 70% from last year's drought-stricken crop. Exports are expected to total 700,000 MT. Total durum sales in 2022/23 are up 14% compared to the year prior at 139,300 MT.

Proactively working with producers and suppliers is the best way to assure ample supply to the market. Desert Durum can be produced and delivered "identity-preserved" to domestic and export markets, which allows customers to purchase grain of varieties possessing quality traits specific to their needs. Annual production requirements can be pre-contracted with grain merchandisers ahead of the fall-winter planting season for harvest from late May to early July. Varietal identity is maintained by experienced growers planting certified seed and merchandisers who store



and ship according to customers' preferred delivery schedules.

Northern durum is competitively sourced by U.S. pasta producers in the Midwest and northern states. Export customers must be proactive when working with suppliers to obtain the best quality available, such as HAD.

U.S. Wheat delivers

We should not forget the advantages that all U.S. wheat classes bring to the market. First and foremost is consistency in quality and consistency of supply. Although each new crop year brings different challenges and opportunities, U.S. wheat is always available to the global market. Second, U.S. wheat delivers variety. Wheat is a raw material manufactured into a bakery ingredient: flour. The flour made from each class of U.S. wheat brings value to the market through specific quality characteristics that make a variety of baked goods and noodles. Further, blending flours from one or more types of wheat is an important component for customers to understand as part of optimizing flour performance at a minimal cost.

Each region, country, and culture have wheat-based food products that are uniquely their own. With six unique wheat classes, the United States has the right wheat class to deliver the optimal quality and value for every variety of product on the market. 🌾



The U.S. Wheat Associates Crop Quality Report showed that the 2022 crop had high vitreous levels, low moisture, high test weights, little to no damage, sound kernel characteristics and high color scores.



The finest quality pasta is produced from U.S. durum grown in the northern Plains and in the southwest as Desert Durum



In 2022, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) received a \$100,000 grant from the McKnight Foundation to help farmers evaluate climate-smart farming practices that can mitigate climate change, build farm resiliency, and may provide them with a new income stream. The money will be used toward the new Climate Smart Farms Project, part of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).

The MAWQCP Climate Smart Farms Project delivers individualized service to MAWQCP-certified producers through piloting an opportunity to receive annual payments of \$1,000, with the potential to continue annual participation up to five years. These bridge payment grants provide producers support as they work with local representatives to explore and prepare for evolving climate marketplaces and public programs. The purpose of the pilot project is to help producers access new and reliable earned income streams for the environmental benefits they are providing our state and nation.

The Climate Smart Farm Endorsement serves a support role in working with producers to identify the climate benefits within their production systems. The endorsement enables producers to explore the existing climate benefits they are producing and potential opportunities for additional actions unique and site-specific to their agricultural land and management.

“If you’re farming today, you’re facing a blizzard of climate pitches and proposals from industry and government,” MAWQCP Program Manager Brad Jordahl-Redlin said. “We saw that happening with our certified-growers and decided that we had the opportunity to bring resources and

provide space for our participating farms to take stock of their individual circumstance relative to this climate onslaught coming at them.”

The bridge payment grants are available to certified producers who have obtained the Climate Smart Farm Endorsement or are actively seeking the Endorsement. The grant application closes May 31, 2023, and can be accessed on the MAWQCP website. If you have questions about applying, please contact your Certification Specialist (www.MyLandMyLegacy.com).

“With a little money, and most importantly some time to assess their situation, we’re here to serve growers as they decide on a particular climate offering, or to stay out of these new carbon markets altogether,” Jordahl-Redlin said.

The MAWQCP puts farmers in touch with local conservation district experts to identify and mitigate any risks their farm poses to water quality. Producers going through the certification process have priority access to financial assistance. After being certified, each farm is deemed in compliance with new water quality laws and regulations for 10 years.

The more than 1,250 producers currently certified in the program – now in its seventh year of implementation – cover more than 912,000 certified acres and implement more than 2,500 new conservation practices. These practices are reducing over 43,000 tons of sediment of each year, 127,000 tons of soil and cutting nitrogen loss by nearly 50%. Gov. Tim Walz and the MDA have set a goal to certify one-million acres of farmland in Minnesota later in 2023.

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

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MyLandMyLegacy.com



ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

By Prairie Grains Magazine staff

Minnesota's dicamba restrictions to remain unchanged in 2023

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced that state-specific use restrictions for three dicamba herbicide products will remain the same for the 2023 growing season in Minnesota.

The affected dicamba formulations are Engenia by BASF, Tavium by Syngenta and XtendiMax by Bayer. These are the only dicamba products labeled for use on dicamba-tolerant soybeans.

The three products are registered for use in Minnesota in 2023 with the following restrictions:

Date Cutoff: No application shall be made south of Interstate 94 after June 12, 2023. North of Interstate 94, use is prohibited after June 30, 2023.

Temperature cutoff: No application shall be made if the air temperature of the field at the time of application is over 85 degrees Fahrenheit or if the National Weather Service's forecasted high temperature for the nearest available location for the day exceeds 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

During the 2022 growing season, MDA received 25 formal complaints and eight responses to an informal survey, all alleging off-target movement. This was a major decrease from 2021, which saw a total of 304 formal complaints and survey responses.

In Minnesota, Engenia, Tavium and XtendiMax formulations of dicamba are approved for use on dicamba-tolerant soybeans only and are "Restricted Use Pesticides." The dicamba products are only for retail sale and use by certified applicators.

Pesticide product registrations are renewed on an annual basis in Minnesota.

GreenSeam launches 2023 State of Ag Survey

GreenSeam, along with its partners and collaborators (including Minnesota Wheat), is seeking a glimpse of how businesses, organizations and leaders view the opportunities and challenges facing agriculture in Minnesota in 2023 and beyond. GreenSeam has developed the annual State of Ag survey to study ways to better understand, serve and support Minnesota workforce, businesses and organizations. The survey can be completed within 10-15 minutes at greenseam.org, and is available to producers and industry leaders through Feb. 17, 2023.

The 2023 State of Ag survey provides deeper insight into the future of agriculture. The results of the survey, along with the findings from a series of focus groups, will be published in a comprehensive 2023 State of Ag report, which will be released on National Ag Day, Tuesday, March 21.



NDSU hosting Field to Fork webinar

North Dakota State University Extension again will host the Field to Fork Wednesday Weekly Webinar series starting in February.

Experts from across the region will provide information about growing, preserving and preparing specialty-crop fruits and vegetables safely in this eighth annual webinar series, which has reached thousands of people.

The Field to Fork Wednesday Weekly Webinars will begin Feb. 15. The webinars will be held online from 2 to 3 p.m. Central time Wednesdays through April 26. They also will be archived for later viewing; however, participating in the live webinar allows participants to interact with the presenter.

The webinars are free of charge, but preregistration is required. The webinars will be held on Zoom. The Field to Fork website (www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/field-fork) has a link to register for the webinars. Participants will be sent sign-in reminders with the link for viewing if they are unable to attend.

“We are pleased to see the growth in popularity of these online educational sessions,” said Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension food and nutrition specialist.

“We have a variety of topics delivered by experts throughout our region. “The webinars will provide our participants with research-based information all the way from garden or field to the table.”



USDA announces 2022 Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your opportunity.

This every-five-year data collection remains the only source of impartial, comprehensive, state and county level ag data in the country. These data help federal and local governments, agribusinesses, extension educators, researchers

and many more make informed decisions that directly affect your operations, communities, and industries. This is why it's imperative that every producer – no matter the size of operation, urban or rural – are represented in these data.

Whether you respond securely online at accounts.usda.gov or complete the questionnaire and return it by mail, the important thing is that you are counted.

For more information or assistance, visit nass.usda.gov/AgCensus or call 888-424-7828.

Montana Grain Growers begin advocacy push to start 2023

Directors from the Montana Grain Growers Association didn't waste any time advocating on behalf of its members to start 2023. MGGA farmer-leaders visited with Sen. Jon Tester in a series of Farm Bill listening sessions held throughout the state. MGGA also headed to Helena to have boots on the ground during the 90-day legislative session, which ends May 10.

Additionally, a half-cent increase in assessment for wheat and barley was adopted for the first time in 14 years.

“From the start of the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee over 50 years ago, they have been opening up markets for our Montana wheat and barley worldwide,” MGGA President Nathan Keane said. “It is important to make sure we keep this committee funded well to continue opening markets and providing good education and research for our Montana wheat and barley.” 🌾



The Montana Grain Growers Association's leadership team is led by President Nathan Keane (second to left).



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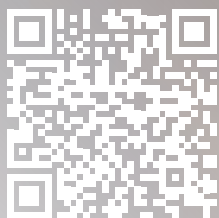


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