

Newsheat

Volume 4 • Issue 2 • Summer 2014

Harvest is progressing rapidly across the state, with many areas finished or nearing completion of harvest. Estimates put Nebraska's harvest at 52 million bushels, up 42 percent from 2013.

NWGA welcomes new board member, Mark Spurgin
page 3

Nebraska Wheat hosts Nigerian trade team
page 6

New state fair booth location
page 12



Michael Thomas Jr.
President
Ogallala

We started wheat harvest in Ogallala on Friday, July 11th. We are seeing very high yields and heavy test weight. The area saw 10 inches of moisture in May and June combined with cooler than normal temperatures. It seems like everyone in our area has fantastic wheat! If the prices would quit going down we would really have

something.

NWGA will be attending several Certified Seed Days and the Chase Country Fair next month. Please feel free to ask us any questions during the seed days and stop by the Mobile Baking Lab at the Chase County Fair for some fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies.

MTJRFarms@gmail.com



Dayton Christensen
Past-President
Big Springs

Harvest is going well in the southeastern Panhandle. Seventy percent of the wheat is cut out here. We've seen some high test weights, 61-63.9, and up to 14.8 protein. We expect good harvest conditions the rest of the week as it is going to be a bit cooler. Some farmers have experienced weed problems in their wheat even after spraying (top dressing) twice. However, yields are average to above average with some farmers in this area reporting 70-75 bushel wheat. I wish you all a safe and good harvest.

jdchristensen@atcjet.net



Scott Osler
Executive Board
Elsie

In Chase and Perkins Counties we had a dry early spring which allowed the fertilizer to stay in the root zone and forced the wheat to root down. We then had a very wet May and June which resulted in an exceptional wheat crop for those producers in our area. Harvest is underway and we are grateful for the blessings we have received.

Our hearts go out to those who didn't receive the rain they needed or were unfortunately in the path of the many severe storms which have plagued our state this year.

I would like to wish everyone a successful, smooth harvest and stay safe!

scott3y@gmail.com



Randon Peters
Executive Board
McCook

With harvest in full swing, the weather has been very cooperative. Rainfall has been plentiful in June and we have had enough dry conditions to get a good start on harvest. Unfortunately our June rains may have come too late for many wheat fields in southwest Nebraska with yields ranging from abandonment on many continuous fields, to an average on the conventional summer follow fields of 30 bushels an acre, to some no-till till fields that had just enough moisture to survive with little stress that may be averaging over 80 bushels an acre.

As it's been said, beggars cannot be choosers; we are quite happy with what we have received so far. As the busy season is among us, I offer a friendly reminder to practice safety at all times.

I hope all is going well on your operations and as always, if you have any questions comments or concerns I can always be reached by e-mail or can be found on Twitter.

randonpeters@gmail.com.



Mark Spurgin
Executive Board
Paxton

I have be told that wheat is a desert crop, and this growing season kind of indicates that this could be true. Last summer we had very little rain. In the fall we planted in soil with little moisture but received .30 of rain during planting, which let the wheat get a start. The winter was dry; spring added very little moisture; then in June we received 5 inches in two different rains.

The wheat is short, but is going to average from 30 to 60 bushels per acre. Timing is everything and we received the rain just in time. I can't really say if wheat is a desert crop or if we were just lucky to receive the rain at the right time. At least it held on until we did receive moisture. Hope everyone is having a safe and good harvest.

spurg@nebnet.com

MARK SPURGIN JOINS NWGA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Mark Spurgin, a wheat farmer and cattle rancher from Paxton, Neb., was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association (NWGA). He will fill the vacancy left by Mark Daum who decided to not seek reelection to the board.

Spurgin owns and operates Spurgin Inc., a diversified dryland-irrigated farm and small feedlot located in Keith, Lincoln and Perkins counties. He raises wheat, corn, edible beans, soybeans, popcorn and feed crops.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska, the Colorado School of Banking, and the Command and General Staff College of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Spurgin has served on many other agriculture committees and organizations. He's been a member of the West Central District and Keith County Farm Advisory Committee, the Keith County Planning and Zoning Board, the District 7 Commissioner Association, the Nebraska Cattlemen, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association. Spurgin also traveled with the Governor and the US Meat Export Federation on trade missions to Japan, China, Mexico and Cuba. Spurgin is also a member of the American Legion Post #303.

"We're excited to have Mark join our Board of Directors," said Michael Thomas Jr., NWGA president. "He brings a vast amount of knowledge and experience and will be an asset to our organization."

NAWG FILES COMMENTS ON WATERS OF THE U.S. INTERPRETIVE RULE

NAWG Update – This week NAWG submitted comments on the Interpretive Rule (IR) related to certain conservation practices and “dredge and fill” permits under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released an IR linking 56 Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) conservation practice standards to a “normal farming activity” exemption under the CWA. NAWG is concerned that the conservation practice standards could become the only activities to be considered normal farming activities, and growers’ traditional work with NRCS on voluntary conservation efforts would become more regulatory in nature.

The IR also requires those not working within the NRCS program to meet the practice standards to comply with the exemption, but left no flexibility for different requirements that might be imposed by individual states. The agency’s goals of clarity and making things easier for producers were not reached in this proposal and NAWG asked for it to be reconsidered.

The comment period for EPA’s larger waters of the U.S. regulation remains open until October and NAWG will also be preparing comments on this regulation. To read the comments, visit the NAWG website: <http://www.wheatworld.org/wp-content/uploads/NAWG-Comments-Interpretive-Rule.pdf>

Nebraska wheat hosts US Wheat Associates Meeting

The Nebraska Wheat Growers Association and Nebraska Wheat Board hosted the 2014 summer US Wheat Associates (USW) meeting in Omaha, June 8-11, 2014.

The honor of hosting the summer USW meetings typically falls on the home state of the outgoing USW chairman. At the end of the meeting, Dan Hughes of Venango, Neb. passed the gavel on to Roy Motter of California.

Representatives from 19 different state wheat associations, USW, the National Association of Wheat Growers and several industry organizations attended the meeting. The event started with a screening of the “Great American Wheat Harvest” documentary, with representatives from Zeorian Harvesting & Trucking in attendance to answer questions.

The next day included committee meetings covering topics ranging from wheat quality to communications, Hard White wheat, research and biotechnology, international trade and SPS. The day concluded with a reception hosted at a local microbrewery: Upstream Brewing Company. There Department of Agriculture Director Greg Ibach welcomed representatives to the state and shared a brief video about Nebraska agriculture.

Tuesday included meetings with the Long Range Planning committee, a budget meeting and the start of the Board of Directors meeting. During the Board of Directors meeting, attendees heard from various speakers on different subjects, including University of Nebraska-Lincoln biotechnology researcher Dr. Tom Clemente. Ardent Mills CEO Dan Dye also spoke to the group. The day concluded with the Chairman’s Reception held at Scoular Ballroom. Ag comedian Damian Mason entertained the audiences

with his mix of Bill Clinton impersonations and his take on agriculture vs. urban America.

The final day included the final half of Board of Directors meeting, and the official passing of the gavel from Hughes to Motter. Nearly 35 participants remained following the meeting to participate in a tour of “Wheat Past and Present.”

During the tour, participants visited the Florence Mill, which served as the Mormon Quarters gristmill, and was repurposed again during the gold rush. The group also visited the Mormon Trail Museum, Union Pacific’s Harriman Dispatch Center and toured ConAgra’s headquarters. The tour finished with a dinner on ConAgra’s campus consisting of several ConAgra, wheat-based foods.



Dan Hughes presides over the USW Board of Directors meeting.



Participants in the “Wheat Past and Present” tour pose in front of the Florence Mill.

Special Thanks

Two NWB members step down after 10 years of service

Chris Cullan of Hemingford and Delferd Schlake of Blue Springs both served 10 years as the District 1 and District 6 representatives for the Nebraska Wheat Board. Both are also active members of NWGA. Together they've put countless hours into advancing our state and nation's wheat industry through meetings, serving on other committees, trade teams, trade shows, crop tours, field days and educational events. Thank you both for your service and dedication to our wheat industry.



Delferd and Chris prepare to deliver cinnamon rolls as part of the annual Bake & Take.



Chris explains certified seed production and the differences in wheat varieties to a Cuban trade team that visited his farm.



Delferd cuts cinnamon rolls at during the first year Nebraska Wheat baked at the State Fair.



Delferd explains where wheat production occurs in Nebraska to a Nigerian trade team that visited his farm.



Chris poses with members of a Chinese trade team that visited his farm.

Nigerian Trade Team visits Nebraska

Story By Angela Hensel

LINCOLN, Neb.— The Nebraska Wheat Board (NWB) hosted a Nigerian trade team June 24-26 across the western part of the state as an opportunity for Nigerian millers to learn about the production process it takes to get wheat from Nebraska to Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the top importers of U.S. wheat.

The Nigerian trade team's visit to Nebraska was sponsored by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) and is part of an agreement between the NWB and USW, a national cooperative of 19 wheat-producing states that focuses on international marketing. Each year USW brings foreign trade delegations to the United States to visit with wheat farmers, see the wheat crop first-hand and visit with grain marketing companies. They also conduct reverse trade visits, taking US farmers and industry representatives into the countries where USW operates.

The trade team consisted of eight senior managers from Nigeria's milling and noodle/pasta manufacturing industries and two representatives from U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), Gerald Theus and Muyiwa Talabi. Theus is USW's regional assistant director based in Cape Town, South Africa, and Talabi is USW's marketing consultant based in Lagos, Nigeria. Representatives for the Nigerian team came from a variety of flour mill companies in Nigeria including Dufil Prima Foods, BUA pasta, Honeywell, Dangote Flour Mills, Flour Mills of Nigeria and First Blends.

The Nigerian trade team's visit to the U.S. started on June 22, when the group flew into Denver and spent two days with the Colorado Wheat Commission. NWB staff met the Nigerian team in Imperial on the morning of June 24, where the group toured Frenchman Valley Coop's (FVC) headquarters. The visit gave the team a chance to see how a coop works to collect and store grain from different farmers in the area.

After the stop at Frenchman Valley, the trade team traveled to Elsie to visit NWB District 7 representative Brent Robertson's farm. During the visit Robertson discussed crop rotation techniques he uses and his use of GPS technology in farming equipment. Robertson said

the use of GPS and other technologies allows him to be more accurate in determining crop and soil conditions as well as applying fertilizer to his crops.

For Robertson, the visit also provided a unique experience for him to reconnect with some of those whom he had visited during his own recent trip to Nigeria. Robertson traveled to the country as part of a USW delegation in January.

"It's very rewarding to be able to invite the people I saw and met while I was in Nigeria onto my farm and show them how we operate," Robertson said. "It helps make the connection between farmers and millers even stronger."

After the visit to Robertson farms, the team made its way to Grant for a lunch with the FVC board members. The lunch allowed the trade team to hear more about the farmer's perspective and for the board members to learn about the international production and market in Nigeria.

Next the team went to the farm of NWB District 3 representative Larry Flohr. Flohr, a certified wheat seed producer, described the process of growing certified wheat seed. Some members of the trade team also went out to the field to look at some of Flohr's Hard Red Winter wheat crop.

The team's final visit of the day was to FVC's shuttle facility in Chappell. Here the trade team learned about how the grain from FVC's elevators is deposited into train cars to be shipped off to other parts of the U.S.

Day two began with a visit to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's High Plains Agriculture Laboratory. Dr. Dipak Santra, an alternative crops breeding specialist, spoke with the group about the development and testing of new wheat varieties. Santra explained how UNL's Dr. Steve Baenziger develops the new wheat varieties he then grows at the facility. The purpose is to see how the new varieties respond to the climactic conditions of the High Plains. After the presentation the group toured some of the wheat test plots.

The final day in Nebraska for the Nigerian trade team kicked off with a visit to Chief Industries' Kearney plant. Allen Mitchel, vice president of sales for Chief Industries, led a tour of Chief's manufacturing facilities and answered questions from the Nigerians about the production of grain bins.

As the group concluded this final stop, they commented on the connection that has developed between the Nigerian team and the NWB during the past few years.

Talabi, who has traveled to Nebraska for the past three years with the USW trade team emphasized the hospitality the Nebraska Wheat Board has provided for them. "Anytime we are here we feel very much at home," Talabi said. He added that having an opportunity like this is extremely beneficial given the large amount of U.S. wheat Nigeria imports. "Nigeria will always be there for the U.S. wheat market."

Royce Schaneman, the executive director of the NWB, agreed with Talabi in the importance of Nigeria to the U.S. Wheat Market. "Given the large international market of wheat, developing these connections is vital" Schaneman said. "We are always honored to welcome the Nigerians to our state."

Following the visit to Chief Industries the group traveled down to Superior to meet the Kansas Wheat Commission, who would lead the Nigerian trade team around Kansas until Saturday June 28, when the group headed back to Lagos.



The team visited Frenchman Valley Coop to learn about grain storage and shipping on shuttle trains. *Photo: Angela Hensel*



The team toured wheat plots at the High Plains Ag Lab where they also visited with wheat researchers. *Photo: Angela Hensel*



NWB member Brent Robertson and his wife Amy visit with members of the Nigerian trade team about the farming equipment and techniques used on their operation. *Photo: Royce Schaneman*



NWB member Larry Flohr explains the process and purpose of being a Certified Seed Producer. *Photo: Angela Hensel*

Letter from BNSF to Nebraska Wheat and wheat farmers

Dear Nebraska Wheat,

I am writing to update you on the state of our investments in the railroad, as part of the continuous communication you have received directly from me since Feb. 1. We are dedicated to restoring the level of service that you have come to expect from us. I have met with numerous groups and associations in the past five months and listened to your feedback. As we now move forward into the fall harvest this year, I would like to outline the steps we have taken in preparation to move significant amounts of grains.

As we move through summer, the additional capacity we have promised is beginning to come online as we implement our \$5 billion 2014 capital plan. As many of you know, capacity comes in three ways; people, locomotives/railcars and track. I am glad to report that we are making considerable progress in all three of those areas.

This week, I was on our Lakeside subdivision in eastern Washington and saw several of the 10-20 mile capacity expansion segments that either are in place or will be in the next several months. In addition, we now have 22 miles of double track in service on the Glasgow subdivision. By October, we will have about 60 miles of double track on this important subdivision in Montana and western North Dakota. These improvements are all a part of the \$1 billion expansion and maintenance capital program we are executing this year on our northern region.

Our locomotive fleet continues to increase as well, having received about half of our 2014 program of 500 locomotives. In fact, the number of trains holding for power on our Northern Corridor is lower than it has been for several months. We have also hired well over 4,000 people, which is far along the path of achieving this year's plan of over 5,000 new hires. As capacity is added a siding and a segment at a time, we will expect pronounced velocity improvements.

We have also been making significant progress on reducing past due orders and will continue to greatly reduce the total number that now stands around 7,000 cars. Our plan is to spot 450 cars per day, and combined with new orders coming in, should result in a reduction to less than 2,000 past due cars by mid-September. If the new harvest is as strong as it appears to be, we will never reach zero past dues. That said, we expect substantial volume improvements as we will offer more shuttles and COTs this fall than we did in 2013 and our performance will be better than it was last year.

I recognize that some customers' plans to utilize their ordered freight may have changed during our delay to provide empty

railcars. I want to let you know we plan to temporarily change our car order cancellation policies. Effective Friday, July 11 we will suspend our order cancellation charges and refund pre-payments on cancelled car orders until Aug. 15.

As you all know, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has been paying close attention to rail service issues and several of you have contacted them directly. In response, they have taken several actions. In April, responding to regional concerns about fertilizer availability, they asked that we pay special attention to getting the product to market. We had already begun this effort, and this being a relative small number of trains, we completed this initiative ahead of time and we believe achieved success.

Following some additional listening sessions, the STB has now asked for that same focus on past due grain orders. While we will comply with the directive, we are concerned with some of the implications. First, we at BNSF are acutely aware that these service issues arise from strained network capacity, and we believe our mission is to move as much volume as possible given the limits of our network capacity. We believe we best accomplish this by balancing the capacity allocated to single cars versus shuttles. Intervening in that balance will have the unintended consequence of reducing the amount of grain moved; less than the market needs us to move or that the railroad is capable of handling.

Second, we are concerned that these specific orders will encourage all system users to seek regulatory intervention. Altering our service priorities through regulation will potentially pit one region versus another, or even one commodity versus another, compromising the network and hurting the system overall. And this is not an idle concern—already ethanol producers have publicly asked for a focus on their product.

In summary, we have and will continue to make every effort to frequently communicate and be transparent with our customers, and also our regulators and other interested parties. For our customers, you will see improvement in our railroad, and on behalf of our leadership a continued commitment to the resources necessary to handle all of our customers' business.

Sincerely,

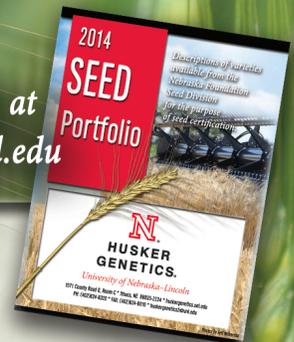
John Miller
Group Vice President,
Agricultural Products

Help protect
Nebraska
developed
varieties.

Call (877)482-5907.

Buy
Certified
Seed
IT PAYS!

Download the
2014 Seed Portfolio at
HuskerGenetics.unl.edu



**HUSKER
GENETICS®**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

1071 County Road G, Room C * Ithaca, NE 68033-2234 * huskergenetics.unl.edu
PH: (402)624-8020 * FAX: (402)624-8010 * huskergenetics2@unl.edu

Mobile Baking Lab assists disaster relief efforts in Beaver Crossing, Pilger

The Nebraska Wheat Growers Association worked with the Salvation Army to bring fresh-baked wheat foods into the communities of Beaver Crossing and Pilger following the devastating tornadoes that hit both communities.

On May 13, NWGA pulled the Mobile Baking Lab into Beaver Crossing and began baking cookies. In addition, 40 pounds of pasta were donated to help make spaghetti dinners for the residents and volunteer crews working there. The following morning, the Baking Lab returned again to serve up fresh-baked cinnamon rolls for breakfast and bake off a few donated pizzas for lunch.

When tornadoes ripped through Pilger, NWGA joined with volunteers from the Nebraska Soybean Association and the Nebraska Sorghum Board to make cookies and cinnamon rolls for residents and volunteer crews.

“Helping people is just part of the ethos for most farmers and Nebraskans,” said NWGA executive director Caroline Brauer. “For us, seeing that our neighbors needed help and knowing we had the resources in the Mobile Baking Lab to provide that help, it was something we felt we had to do.”



The Mobile Baking Lab arrives in Beaver Crossing and begins preparations to make cookies to go with dinner being served by the Salvation Army to residents and volunteer crews.

**From the field,
to the mill,
to the bakery.**

**ConAgra Mills proudly
supports Nebraska wheat**

- We have three flour mills: two in Omaha and one in Fremont
- We buy 90% of our wheat via truck, most of it coming from farms in Western Nebraska

We strive to be your preferred wheat buyer



ConAgra Mills

800-851-9618 • conagramills.com

**WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR
PARTNERSHIP**



**WITH
NEBRASKA WHEAT PRODUCERS**

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, BNSF
has been working with farmers to deliver your grain to the world. And to help you feed the world, we have added capacity to our fleet and have used new tools that let us communicate more closely with you so we could serve you even better. BNSF has been proud to work with farmers for more than 150 harvests. We look forward to a partnership that keeps on growing stronger in the years ahead.

Katelin Hofmann
BNSF Ombudsman
406-256-4059





THE NEBRASKA WHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 95063
Lincoln, NE 68509

Telephone (402) 471-2358
FAX (402) 471-3446

Every year you invest in seed, fuel, fertilizer, machinery and other inputs required to produce wheat. How much do you invest in equitable farm programs, international marketing and environmental issues that dictate how you run your farm?

Membership in the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association should be a part of your general operation cost, just like seed, fertilizer and fuel. Membership is really a type of insurance to help protect and improve the price you are paid for the quality wheat you produce. Membership dues are a tax deductible *investment* in your industry.

Membership Fees

- Grower/Producer/Landlord**
 - \$75.00 annually
 - \$375.00 – 5 years
(receive premium choice)
 - \$1500.00 Lifetime
(receive two premiums)
- Associate Member** – \$100.00 annually
- Elevator** – \$100.00 annually
- College Student** – \$25.00 annually

Make checks payable to:

Nebraska Wheat Growers Association

Please mail this form and your payment to:

PO Box 95063
Lincoln, NE 68509

Thank YOU for your support!

Name of Farm or Operation:

Name of Main Contact:

Additional Name(s) on Membership:

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

County: _____

Referred by: _____

Thank you for your commitment to the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association! NWGA frequently needs help from its members to influence issues. Sometimes that help is a simple letter or phone call to a legislator; sometime it involves representing NWGA at a meeting, simply sharing your opinion on an issue, help with an NWGA committee or meeting consumers when helping in the Mobile Baking Lab.

Please check below the issue area (s) you would be interested in assisting NWGA in its mission of enhancing profitability for grain producers. Thank you!

- State Affairs International Policy Membership Educational Events
- Research/Value Added Environmental Policy Baking Lab Events
- Domestic Policy (Transportation/Basis/Federal Farm Policy/Risk Management/Taxes)

Return Service Requested



Nebraska Wheat to change locations at the State Fair

After 5 years of hosting the “World of Wheat” interactive display in the Nebraska State Fair exhibition building, Nebraska Wheat is moving its booth.

Nebraska Wheat will join several other commodity organizations, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources to create “Raising Nebraska.”

“Raising Nebraska” is a 25,000 square foot interactive display about Nebraska Agriculture that will debut at this year’s state fair. Several pieces of the “World of Wheat”

display will move over to the new building, including the tabletop threshing machine, the hand mill, and the fresh-baked wheat food samples; these pieces will be joined by information and interactive displays that provide a broader look at the entirety of agriculture in Nebraska.

Most notably, the Mobile Baking Lab will be replaced with a permanent kitchen, located in the new Raising Nebraska building. However, Nebraska Wheat will still be baking fresh bread, cinnamon rolls and chocolate chip cookies for the event, while helping tell consumers and fairgoers how wheat gets from the field to their tables.

