**Grain and Rain**

The average price of soft white wheat in Portland was $5.23 per bushel in November 2008, and $5.28 per bushel in December. Club prices were $5.58 and $6.45 for the same months. Barley in Portland was $126.00 per ton (November 08) and $101.00 (December 08).

Precipitation, as measured at the Sherman Experiment Station, was .90 inches in November and 1.38 inches in December. Crop year totals (2.85 inches) show we are still 1.83 inches below the long term average at the Station. So after four months, we are at 62% of normal.

**Welcome New Sherman FSA Director**

Martin Nguyen was recently named to fill the County Executive Director position in the Sherman County Office of the FSA. He replaces interim CED Sheri Carlson, who moves back into her old familiar role. Carlson assumed the interim post created when Kevin MacIntyre transferred to the Wasco County office.

Feel free to stop in and meet Martin at the FSA office, especially if you have a good lead on a house or apartment for rent, so he can get situated in the county quicker.

**PURS Due January 31**

Looking for something to while away the winter hours as you are stuck inside? Remember, your Pesticide Use Reporting System forms are due to the state by January 31, 2009.

The PURS was released in 2005, but never operable. It was re-designed for release in 2007 to make it less intrusive on the pesticide user while still providing the information sought under the law.

The PURS must be and can only be submitted on-line. If you are not comfortable with the computer, find someone who is, but be sure you have all your records. The newer design version makes it easier to not have to re-enter many parts of the info.

It was recently announced that funds for continuing were not included in the governor’s state budget proposal for 2009. Indeed, the original law includes that the PURS shall sunset in 2009, but all things can change with different legislatures in place. However, budget constraints within the state may help make this bill more expendable. However, there are still funds to collect the data for any pesticides applied in 2008. Don’t miss the January 31 deadline.
**Pesticide CORE Class January 15**

There will be a Pesticide Applicator’s Core and Pre-exam workshop on Thursday, January 15, at the Sherman County Fairgrounds in Moro, at the 4H Pavilion. The workshop runs from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Participants will qualify for their Core requirements OR if they have already completed the Core, they will receive 4 hours of “Other” pesticide credits which apply toward their 16 hours needed to recertify.

This class is also aimed at preparing those needing a pesticide applicator’s license to be able to take the state exam and obtain their license and certification. We have invited a state test proctor to be there from 1 pm until 4 pm. Those wishing to take the exam need to bring a picture identification, $25 and a calculator (if desired).

There is a $10 registration fee for the class to cover refreshments and other expenses. The fee can be paid at the door. Pre-registration is NOT needed unless you want to take the exam afterward. Start the year off right with 4 hours of pesticide recertification credits!

**Concealed Weapons Permitting**

Expecting some possible changes to state and federal gun regulations, there is a concealed weapons class on Tuesday, January 20, at the 4H Pavilion at the Sherman County Fairgrounds in Moro.

It can be two sessions or just one and here’s the explanation. Our instructor is certified to teach the Oregon permitting class and Utah’s. Oregon does not recognize weapons permits from other states and in return, your Oregon permit does not make you legal in other states, including Washington. Utah’s permit, on the other hand, is recognized and accepted in 29 states including those surrounding Oregon, but not Oregon. We’ll cover both options Tuesday. Those who already have an Oregon permit may wish to obtain the Utah license to protect them so they don’t get accidentally caught across the border.

The classes begin at 10 am and conclude at 4 pm. We need enough sign-ups to justify the class and prepare for lunch. The $85 registration fee includes both classes but subtract $30 if you only want the Utah multi-state permit.

Please pre-register by calling the Sherman County Extension Office at 541-565-3230. Once you have attended the class and passed the exam, there will be fingerprinting available at $5 (a 50% saving over most places) and you can submit for the Utah license ($65.25 and good for 5 years) and for the Oregon Concealed Weapons permit.

Whether you choose to become licensed or not, come to learn about what is legal and what isn’t, as well as some important safety and weapons care instruction. But preregister and attend Tuesday, January 20, in Moro.

**Direct Seed Conference**

Once you get your permit, cruise on up the road to Kennewick, Washington to the Direct Seed Conference, January 21, beginning at 11 am, through 4:30 on January 22, 2009. Pre-register or do it at the door, for $220 for single registration or $280 for 2 from the same business.

Sessions include Precision Ag, wireworm diagnostics and control, seed establishment and harvest strategies for energy crops, using yield to plan fertilizer strategy, new carbon markets, weed fertility and herbicide management in energy crops, STEEP updates and international experiences in direct seeding.

**Ag Expos Call**

These two major Ag Expositions deliver a chance for farmers and ranchers to see new technologies and services and visit with those exhibitors who offer something of interest. The Portland Ag Expo is January 29-31, 2009 but focuses more on crops not normally associated with dryland wheat and cattle operations. The Spokane Ag Expo, February 3-5 is one of the largest and oldest ag shows in the nation and offers more focus on items of interest to our wheat and cattle industries from the dry side. Both Expositions address the wide variety of commodities; they just differ in their emphasis. They are always a good place to see what’s new and improved.