Grain and Rain

The average price for soft white wheat in Portland for February was $4.76 per bushel, with club averaging $8.60. Barley averaged $124.00 per ton for the same period.

Precipitation remained above average for the crop year with the Sherman Experiment Station reporting 1.39 inches. Seems to be the first time in several years that we’ve been above the long term average this late into the season. The February total keeps us at .28 over the long term average. The Dalles is reporting 1.47 inches and 1.26 in both Dufur and the Antelope area for February.

And Speaking of the Station…..

The Sherman Experiment Station was opened in 1909, so 2010 marks the 100th anniversary of the first Field Day. With this in mind, the faculty at the Columbia Basin Ag Research Center (CBARC) in Pendleton, under whose management the Sherman Branch Station lies, have decided that this year’s Field Day will be a special one.

Current plans are to skip the usual presentations on current research and focus instead on research of the past. A slug of old crop varieties have been or will be planted to show you how far we have come from 6 foot spring wheats, the old red varieties and the ones that were such an important part of providing fuel for the power sources of the day (bio-fuels are NOT a new concept). You may also see examples of every crop planted and be surprised at how long ago many of them were first tested and with some surprising results!

It will be a very interesting Field Day and not another one like it for another 100 years. So mark Wednesday, June 16 on your calendars and plan to attend.

Sad Note

We just received word about the death of Mary Verhoeven. Mary became a plant breeder after joining the team led by Warren Kronstad. Mary had no background in plant breeding, genetics or even agriculture, but Dr. Kronstad recognized she had the talent, people skills and persistence needed and brought her in and trained her. A familiar face at our local Field Days, Mary was also active in the barley breeding at OSU.

Mary Verhoeven passed away after a battle with colon cancer.
**CRP Clarification**

At one of a recent series of grower information meetings, it was brought out that there is an active comment period regarding CRP. In checking deeper, we find that there is a comment period (closes April 5, 2010), but it is not a simple general comment page.

The comment period is open to receive comments on the CRP’s new draft of its Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) examining the potential environmental impacts with implementing changes to CRP and to proposed new regulations regarding CRP.

One aspect is a possible NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) ruling that allows for a “No Action Required” alternative. If that would be the decision of choice, it would mean that we would expect no changes in the administration of the CRP.

Public meetings have already been held nationwide regarding the draft (the closest to us was Spokane last September), but the comment period was extended due to the weather conditions shutting down DC. You may contact USDA about getting a copy of the SEIS to study and then submit your comments to USDA.

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**Award Winners with the Local Touch**

In mid-February the Weatherford Awards Gala was held in Portland where the Austin Entrepreneurship Program of OSU recognized seven visionaries. This emphasizes the rich tradition of entrepreneurship and innovation in the rich tradition of Oregon and Oregon State University.

Award winners included Frank Cloutier (creator of many fine Hewlett-Packard pieces), Doug Engelbart (inventor of the “mouse” and several other technological firsts) and Cory Schrieber (Wildwood Restaurant founder and former Best Chef in the Northwest recipient).

But in a vein with more local favor, Dr. Jim Peterson, OSU’s premier wheat breeder, also nabbed a Weatherford Award for giving us varieties that cover 60% of the planted acres in the Northwest. His nine releases have generated millions of dollars for producers.

Joining Peterson were a couple of cowpokes from Brothers (actually they’re from the suburbs of Brothers), Doc and Connie Hatfield, who did so much to change the mindset of ranchers in harvesting the grasses in a sustainable and thriving manner. They were also noted for their role in founding Country Natural Beef, the first cooperative that features hormone and other substance free meats. Several local ranchers are members of that cooperative (which has since expanded beyond Oregon’s borders) and Hatfields were featured on several of our old Grazing Management Workshops. Country Natural Beef is the sole meat provider for a local fast food outlet (Burgerville) and it has made a positive impact. When the Oregon County Ag Agents hosted a national conference in Portland last summer, it was amazing how many of them were familiar with Burgerville and had to find one to try out the fare.

And finally, also honored was Bob Moore of Bob’s Red Mill fame. Moore is known as an innovative flour miller, noted for packaging and shipping natural stone ground flours, cereals, meals, baking mixes and bulk grains to major grocery chains, health food stores and 35 other countries. Mr. Moore recently made headlines by giving ownership of the business to his employees, but what’s his local connection? Moore has the two old grind stones that were the stalwarts of the Boyd Flour Mill at his Portland Mill site.
Hazardous Waste Collection Events

As spring time rolls around and spraying gets underway, it’s also a good time to clean out and get rid of old, un-used or unwanted hazardous waste from your home or garage… sorry ag pesticides not accepted at all these events.

Household materials can be delivered March 20 in The Dalles (the Dalles Disposal), April 17 in The Dalles, April 24 in Maupin, May 8 in Moro, May 15 in The Dalles, May 22 in Dufur and June 26 in Tygh Valley. Remember latex paints are not hazardous and should not be brought to these events. There is a plan to accept them at a later date this year, however, as new avenues for recycling become open.

Other Agricultural hazardous waste collection events:
May 8, 2010, Saturday, 10am-12pm, Moro, county road dept
November 9, 2010, Tuesday, 9am-2pm, Hood River Garbage Service
November 10, 2010, Wednesday, 9am-2pm, The Dalles Disposal

Remember, mandatory pre-registration is required to get an appointment. Please call our contractor, PSC Environmental Services, at 1-800-547-2436. Your load will be hand-checked in and documented for your disposal records.

The first $400 worth of disposal is FREE. A minor fee will be charged for additional amounts.

For more information, contact the TriCounty program at 541-506-2636 or visit www.tricountyrecycle.com

Wind Power Workshop April 6

Got wind? How can you cash in?

The Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (Northwest SEED) is sponsoring a workshop on April 6, 2010 at the Discovery Center near The Dalles to help answer questions about all aspects of becoming involved in the wind power picture. From small homeowner, personal use generators to large conglomerate sized wind farms, this workshop lets you hear from and visit with experts that can teach you what it takes to get a project started and what resources – both financial and technical – are available. Included in the agenda are several agency reps involved with wind attorneys representing landowners and others.

The workshop runs from 8:30 to 3 pm and has a $35 registration fee. Seating is limited so you are requested to register at least two weeks in advance on line at www.nwseed.org or by phone, toll free, 1-866-759-7333.
Attention Soil Testers

For those of you who need to certify your soil testing with an approved soil tester, you will want to know that Agri-Check, the soil test lab in Umatilla, has chosen not to seek certification through the NAPT (North American Proficiency Testing Program). It has nothing to do with the auspices of the lab or its work; the lab simply chose not to request that certification.

We share this because many growers who require a soil test from an NAPT approved lab for a 590 form or using Nutrient Management for one of the programs need to know that results from this lab will not be accepted. Keep this in mind and plan early.

USDA News and Updates

Funding Opportunities
NRCS is currently accepting applications for 2011 EQIP, WHIP and the new CSP program. Applications may be submitted at any time with your local USDA Service Center. The deadline will likely be October 1, 2010. Special EQIP funding is available to organic growers and those transitioning to organic production. The deadline for Organic EQIP applications is March 12, 2010. Contact NRCS for more information on available technical and financial assistance. Growers in Wasco County can contact Dana at (541) 298-8559 x113.

The next OWEB application deadline is April 19, 2010. Landowners interested in applying for assistance with large restoration projects should contact the Wasco County SWCD at (541) 296-6178 x3 as soon as possible to start the application process.

New Resource for Horse Owners
The Oregon Horse Welfare Council is a group of concerned horse people from throughout Oregon dedicated to helping horse owners struggling to provide for their animals and saving as many horses as possible from abuse, abandonment and neglect.

They also have a hay bank to provide established horse rescue organizations, sanctuaries, law enforcement agencies, and horse owners facing financial hardship with temporary hay and feed assistance and to assist such entities and individuals in planning for the future.

The OHWC contact for Wasco County is Liz Turner, (541) 296-4041. Find out more about the council at http://oregonhorsewelfarecouncil.com/. They will have a statewide directory coming out soon.

Upcoming Events

- The Wasco SWCD board meets the first Wednesday of the month at 1:00 PM at the USDA Service Center, 2325 River Road, The Dalles.
- Catch Ron Graves from the Wasco SWCD on the KODL Coffee Break (1440AM) with Al Wynn at 10:00 AM on the second Tuesday of each month.
- 4/25 – 5/2/10 – Soil & Water Stewardship Week – Contact Shilah at (541) 296-6178 x105 for more information.
- 5/15/10 – Urban Homestead Workshop 9:00 AM – The Dalles Imagination Garden, located on Klindt Drive in The Dalles. Call Tammy at (541) 296-6178 x3 to register.