**Grain and Rain**

The average price of soft white wheat in June at Portland was $4.57 per bushel while club averaged $6.04. Barley averaged $130 per ton.

Precipitation reported at the Sherman Experiment Station in Moro was 1.90 inches for June. The crop year rainfall to date total stands at 13.73 inches or 2.82 above the expected average.

Grain price charts and Wasco County rainfall reports are posted on our website at: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco/ Look under the “Crops” tab on the left.

**Rainfall Historical Note**

Lee Kaseberg informs us that old time Sherman Experiment Station manager Merle Oveson procured the original rain gauges for growers to collect and report their monthly rainfall totals in 1936. Kasebergs still use their original gauge and according to Lee’s records, in those 74 years they have never recorded 6 consecutive months with over an inch of rain. Five years hit five consecutive months. This crop year, they stand at 9 consecutive months with over an inch of precipitation!

We have wetter years for the total, but never one this wet this long. If you’d be willing to share your rainfall numbers, we’d be happy to receive them. It does not take a fancy rain gauge, just a willingness and a consistency in reading your collector.

**Electronic Newsletter??**

The last couple of months the newsletter has sparked some interest that could best be served with an electronic delivery of the newsletter. Would you like to receive it via your computer?

Our proposal is to build a mailing list and then deliver each newsletter to your email account in pdf format shortly after it’s complete.

You get the newsletter quicker, so you never get word about a meeting too late, and if there’s something you wish to send a family member or landowner, this would make it easier for you to share. It should reduce our costs a bit, although for the first couple of letters, we would continue to send a hard copy version via snail mail.

Ready to give it a try? For Wasco County operators call or email us with your email address at 541-296-5494 or kim.mccullough@oregonstate.edu
Best Buy in Education

Everybody loves a bargain, especially one where you get the most for your money on an investment. Well, Oregon State University has been named a “Best Buy School” in the upcoming “2011 Fiske Guide to Colleges.” The report compares many areas, campus life, class offerings, research, quality of teaching, cost and reputation for graduates.

OSU was not alone in the ranking. Out of the more than 300 colleges and universities studied, 45 (21 public and 24 private) earned the Best Buy designation. While some colleges may have better locker rooms for their football players, OSU invests where it counts.

Go Beavs!

Oregon Ag Shines

What state produces all of the nation’s hazelnuts, blackberries, black raspberries, boysenberries and loganberries?

What state leads the nation in production of Christmas trees, Dungeness crab and ryegrass seed plus 11 other ag products?

What state has nine commodities producing over $100 million and 15 commodities with values over $50 million?

If you said “Oregon” it was more than a lucky guess. Oregon’s soil, climate and managerial resourcefulness allow it to produce 28 commodities ranked in the top three nationwide. That’s more than some states have for total diversity of production!

However, while Oregon’s diversity ranks it high in the number of commodities produced (approximately 235 ranking it 3rd or 4th nationally), our total gross value of $4.1 billion ranks us 26 of all states in total production.

For local producers, Oregon typically is the 12th largest wheat producer and while finished beef is not our strong point, 11 of Oregon’s 36 counties rank in the top 500 nationally for beef producing counties. Malheur and Harney Counties land at 11 and 12 on that list for beef cattle inventory. Oregon’s sweet cherry crop ranks third on the national scale.

Dr. Russ Karow made time to survey all the Resources.

Sherman C. Wheat Growers president Bob Martin compared notes with Brian Cranston, new Oregon Wheat Commissioner.
Congratulations To Sherman Experiment Station!

On June 16th we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first field day of the Sherman Experiment Station, the oldest crop research station in Oregon. It was a cloudy day and slightly cooler than historical records might indicate, but comments report it was the best and most fun field day they’ve ever attended.

We did not spend time on the new varieties or new research, rather the day was spent celebrating what got us here. Our first speaker talked about changes in dryland farming over the last century. We saw over 100 wheat varieties from our past (some were over 100 years old), including the major winter wheats, some key spring wheats and barleys, and 40 alternate crops. This became a game of when each alternate crop, many known as “miracle crops” of today, was first tried in rotation. Folks were surprised that several went back as far as 1910 or 1911, and they weren’t the answer then either.

This made looking at the wheat varieties all the more interesting, a literal trip down memory lane. Several of the varieties were shoulder high on me; the Omar club, that almost wiped out an industry when it suffered a major rust attack, was there and sported rust this year, too.

For break, Andrew Ross made two boxes of cookies, one using flour from a 100 year old variety and another made from Supersoft, tempered by Skiles wheat flour. Identical recipes demonstrated the difference in quality.

Break was followed by demonstrations and notes about the changes in farming practices and equipment, from a horse drawn disk to a D-2 crawler, to a modern Quad-Trac with all the bells and whistles... and power.

Ernie Moore gave an briefing on the Station’s unique endowment fund and how grower support helped save the Station in the early 90’s when another state budget crisis threatened to close the doors. This is the first known endowment fund for a station and has provided needed support and materials for the Sherman research farm.
Following that, the whole crowd made a short trip to the Sherman County Historical Museum. Many old photos featuring the station are on display as are several old research tools. Many of the wheat varieties tested and bred at the Sherman Station and used in 85% of the dryland wheat production of the PNW the station serves are also on display. Most attendees never made it to the second room there was so much to see.

At lunch, Ross once again utilized flour from heritage varieties and better selection by preparing over 40 loaves of breads using materials once popular or tested at the Station. Producers sampled breads made from Emmer, Spelt, hard white, soft white, barley, hard reds and even one made from a mixture of the alternate food stuffs tried over the years. Again, quality was evident as a key factor. It was interesting to see the differences in texture, taste, crumb size, weight, structure and durability. Kudos to the wheat breeders who have advanced end product quality and selection over the years.

In fact, double kudos to the breeders who, using your funds, have added four tenths of a bushel per year to the area’s average yield. You have truly gotten a return on your investments.

Even the after lunch speakers did well, speaking more from their hearts than from the prepared notes, caught up in what they had experienced earlier.

It was great day and to quote a certain reporter, “A good time was had by all.”

Photos Sought

The 100th Field Day was truly a great event, an historic one. We’d like to collect as many photos as you have from that day to maintain a recorded history of it. If you would be willing to share what you have, please bring the disk or photos into the Sherman County Office in Moro and we can either download them or copy them, and will place them into one major file.

No Newsletter for August

We’ll be back in print in early September complete with variety test results. Have a safe and bountiful harvest!