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.

And Speaking of the Station….

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

Current plans are to skip the usual current presentations on 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 is 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.
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 as many growers who required 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. Just so you know and can plan early.

Award Winners with the Local Touch

In mid February the Weatherford Awards Gala was held in Portland and here 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, also nabbing Weatherford Awards were Dr Jim Peterson, OSU’s premier wheat breeder for giving us varieties that cover 60% of the planted acres in the Northwest, generating millions of dollars for producers with his nine releases.

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 but were also noted for their role in founding Country Natural Beef, the first cooperative that feature 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. The 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 in 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.
CRP Clarification

As 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 nation-wide 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.

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 no ag pesticides at this events.

Household materials can be delivered March 20 in The Dalles, 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.

The May 8 event in Moro will also feature an ag collection from 10 am to noon. You will be able to dispose of up to $400 of wastes at no charge and for a minor fee for amounts above that.

Watch for more details as these days approach.

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 she possessed 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.
Wind Power Workshop April 6

Got wind? How you can 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.

Wheat Marketing Video Meeting

The next regular session of the Statewide Wheat Marketing Seminars will be held at Extension Offices in wheat producing counties on Thursday March 11 beginning at 8 am running an hour. These sessions allow you to see, hear and learn from 11-14 counties and 60-75 growers and marketers around the state about some of the latest issues and trends in management of your operation.