Oregon State University Extension Service

MID-COLUMBIA FARMER'S NEWSLETTER

May 2023

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Grain and Rain

The average price for soft white wheat in Portland for March and April was $7.80 and $7.53 per bushel for 10.5% protein. A year ago the price was at $11.43 and $11.02 during March and April. So far the price in May has been at around $7.20, a year ago the price was up at $11.12. Barley prices stayed steady over the last two months at $240/ton and so far in May the price is at $220/ton for old crop and $210 for new crop.

Precipitation at the Sherman Station in Moro for March and April was 1.22 and 1.76 inches at 126% and 183% of average. The crop year total is at 104% of average for the Sherman Station with 9.44 total since September. Average precipitation across Sherman County in March was 0.94 ranging from 1.58 east of Grass Valley to 0.51 in Wasco. Average precipitation in April was 1.09 ranging from 1.76 at the Sherman Station in Moro to 0.61 in Kent.

Precipitation at The Dalles Airport for March and April was 0.79 and 0.92 inches at 67% and 111% of the 30 year average. Crop year total for The Dalles Airport is at only 67% of average at 8.13 total, surprisingly lower than in Moro and lower than many other areas in Wasco County. Average precipitation across Wasco County in March was 1.76 ranging from 2.77 in Mosier to 0.70 in The Dalles. Average precipitation in April was 1.09 ranging from 1.68 in Mosier to 0.43 in the Columbia District (east end of Fifteen mile Rd).

Climate Outlook

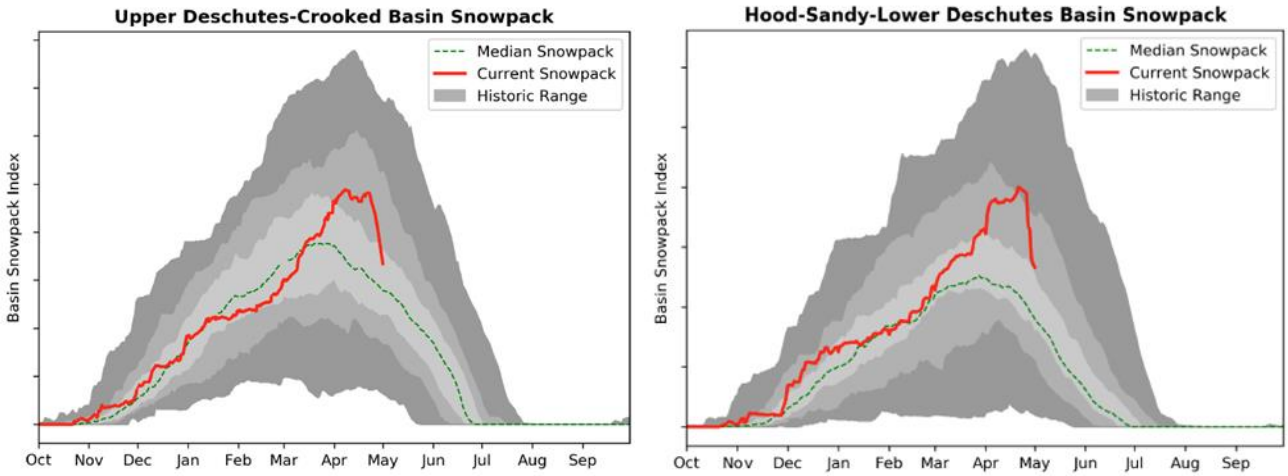
Rainfall over the last 3 months in the Mid Columbia is at 50-70% of average with temperatures 1 to 3°F below average. Over the last month the drought monitor has changed little in the Mid Columbia Region and current conditions are expected to continue for the next three months. Roughly half of both Wasco and Sherman county are in D2 severe drought, while the other half in the northern ends of both counties are in D1 moderate drought with some areas in northwest Wasco County out of drought.

La Niña seems to be persisting this spring though it is fading quickly now. Some forecasts continue to predict the development of a strong El Nino, though these developments may still take a while to be reflected in our local weather. The El Nino could be similar to strong El Nino events experienced in 1982-83, 1997-98, and recently in 2015-2016. The fluctuations over the last few weeks of hot and cold have been the result of an "omega block" weather pattern that stayed over the eastern U.S. allowing more warmth and moisture to form over the central through eastern U.S. while we stayed cooler than average. This is being followed by the development of a high pressure ridge forming over the Pacific Northwest keeping us warm and dry as it often does during the summer. However, this ridge will not be enough to block the jet stream. Rather the jet stream is reversing orientation and flowing from the Northwest across the rest of the U.S. Temperatures will be 20°F above average as a result of this riding pattern, but it should be short lived for a week or so. Evaporation rates are going to be high as well, likely 2-3" per week which will not improve conditions for winter and spring wheat

Climate Continued….
unfortunately, fingers crossed for cooler temperatures and more rainfall in late May and June.

In the North Central Region of Oregon (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla Counties) the next three months are expected to be 0.1°F above average with precipitation at 103% above average. May is predicted to be 1.3°F above average, June is expected to be 1.1°F below average, and July is predicted to be 0.1°F above average. In terms of precipitation May is forecasted to be 72% of average, June is forecasted to be 148% of average, and July at 108%. According to NOAA over the next three months there is a 33-40% chance for below average precipitation and a 33-40% chance for above average temperatures across northern Oregon.

Snowpack



March and April continued to be cold and wintry at higher elevations. For the Hood, Sandy, and Lower Deschutes Basin snow water equivalent increased from 126% to 177% of median as of May 1. Precipitation is at 88% of median since October. For the Upper Deschutes Basin snow water equivalent declined from 158% to 131% of median as of May. Precipitation is at 94% of median since October. Across the Columbia River in Washington state the Klickitat Basin snow water equivalent at 130% of median as of the end of April.

Wheat Crop Conditions
Winter wheat conditions as of May 1st were looking decent for the Pacific Northwest. **In Oregon only 28% of the crop is in very poor to poor condition, 38% fair, 30% good, and 4% excellent. The good to excellent category of 34% is the lowest it has been at this time in the last five years, but just slightly lower than the 2021 crop.** However, a lot can still change at this stage of game so we might still have an average harvest depending on what the weather does. Stripe rust has still not been found in eastern Oregon and Washington yet this year. The harsh winter weather has kept stripe rust levels down. Still researchers suggest that producers with the wheat variety Magic need to keep an eye out for rust as we warm up, though temperatures look warm enough that rust should not be an issue. Wheat in Washington is 10% very poor to poor condition, 33% fair, 54% good, and 4% excellent. Idaho wheat is 6% very poor to poor condition, 59% fair, 34% good, and 1% excellent. Reported spring wheat planting in Washington was 74% completed at the end of April, similar to last year and just 3% below the 5 year average for this time of year. 40% of the Washington seeded spring wheat has now emerged. The USDA crop progress shows **winter wheat across the U.S. is at 28% good or excellent, which is up 2 points a week prior and just 1 point below last year's 27% rating.** Winter wheat rated as fair was 30%, and winter wheat rated poor to very poor was 42%. Winter wheat headed was 25%, up 7 points from last week and 2 points above the 5-year average. Many areas of the U.S. continue to be drought stressed, especially in Kansas and Oklahoma where the winter wheat crop has received little rain so far and many producers might not even harvest a crop at all. Recent rains in other areas of the southern plains have helped the wheat though.

Global Wheat Outlook
In the April monthly report from the International Grains Council (IGC) they predict that the 2022/23 global wheat production will reach a record 803.0 MMT (million metric tons). Global consumption continues to increase with the IGC forecasting a 1% increase to 793 MMT with ending stocks expected to be 284 MMT. **The coming year (2023-24) is expected to bring a decline in wheat production of 2% to 787 MMT, while consumption is forecasted to be up at 794 MMT creating a possible gap of 7 MMT.** Ending stocks are also expected to be down by 2% to 277 MMT in the next year.

Global Wheat Outlook Continued...
The European Commission decided to suspend imports of grains and oilseed crops from Ukraine to Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia through June 5 due to concerns of Ukrainian exports flooding crop markets in surrounding countries and lowering prices for local farmers. Many global grain merchants are stopping operations in Russia, including Louis Dreyfus, Cargill, and Viterra. There continues to be concern over the next Black Sea Grain Initiative expiration date on May 18. Russia continues to push back at Turkey and Ukraine demanding that sanctions need to be lifted on Russian institutions. Recently Russia had called for a two-day suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative agreement resulted in some volatility in the wheat markets, but was short lived. Russia also continues to sell grain at surprisingly low levels, eroding the price in some wheat markets. Southern Europe is looking hot and dry with reduced yields expected for cereal crops, especially in Spain and Portugal. In Spain barley production this year is expected to be 28% below the 5 year average. In northern Europe conditions look more promising with rainfall over the last several weeks, though this has delayed spring planting in many areas.

In Australia much of the winter wheat is planted during April through June and so far moisture has been good for planting. However, the anticipated strong El Nino could greatly reduce wheat yields in the second half of the growing season with drier and hotter than average conditions expected. Some analysts are claiming already that El Nino could result in 20% less grain being exported out of Australia in the next marketing year. Australia has cut a record breaking crop over the last three years, largely due to beneficial weather due to La Nina, which has also helped yields in Oregon.

Wheat Marketing Outlook
Wheat futures markets continue to show high volatility and are dropping into prices not seen since summer of 2021. Volatility may start to decrease as many investors are starting to reposition themselves expecting a possible recession coming soon. The recent conflicts between Russia with Turkey and Ukraine in regards to the Black Sea Grain Initiative should have created more of a stir in prices, but the market is getting acclimated to conflict in the region. At this point some analysts think that weather will likely return to being the main driver in price changes. The current price for soft white wheat continues to lower to levels not seen since May 2020 when the price was at $6.00 per bushel. The lowering value of the U.S. dollar will continue to improve conditions for oversea buyers, though it is still relatively high compared to previous levels. Economists at the Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri expect to see most commodity prices lower this harvest season, decreasing overall farm income as a result after a record year for farm income in 2022. However, across the U.S. commodity prices are still anticipated to stay above the previous 5 year average. Both inflation and farm input costs are expected to lower, but will likely stay above average.

For the week ending April 20th exports for all classes of wheat were below the ten week average of 8.2 million bushels at 5.7 million bushels. White wheat exports were slightly up at 2.3 million bushels, higher than the ten week average of 2.0. For the week ending April 27th exports for all classes of wheat were at 7.8 million bushels, slightly lower than the ten week average, but above the previous week. **White wheat exports were significantly lower than in previous weeks and the ten week average. Overall, marketing for all wheat classes is at 90% of the expected amount for the year and is 6% behind the export pace needed to meet USDA forecasts** at the end of the crop marketing year at the end of May. White wheat exports are slightly behind at 86% of the total expected exports being completed at this time. This is 9% below the USDA export estimate. White wheat exports continue to be dominated by the Philippines and China, followed by Japan and South Korea comprising the top 4 destinations for soft white wheat this marketing year. There continues to be increased interest in soft white wheat in South America as the U.S. Wheat associates continues to provide education to encourage the use of our wheat. Chile is the number 8 white wheat buyer for this marketing year. Recently there have also been several donation tenders of soft white wheat going to Yemen.

PNW Wheat and Barley Acreage Outlook
Wheat acres are estimated to be up this year in Oregon and Idaho, but down in Washington. **Winter wheat in Oregon is expected to be up by 3% from last year at 750,000 acres.** Idaho farmers will plant 1.2 million acres of wheat, up 3% from 2022. Winter wheat in Idaho is unchanged from a year ago at 770,000 acres, but spring wheat will increase by 10.5% at 420,000 acres. Wheat acres in Washington have decreased from a year ago with winter wheat down 3% at 1.80 million acres and spring wheat down 7% at 440,000 acres. Part of this decline is due to the strong pulse market that is increasing acres in chick peas and lentils in Washington. **Across the nation wheat is up 9% from a year ago at an estimated 37.5 million acres. Winter wheat acres are anticipated to reach 37.5 million acres, up 13% from last year and spring wheat is expected to reach 10.6 million acres, down 2%.**

Barley acres are expected to be up this year after an overall decline in acres planted last spring. Oregon will seed 40,000 acres of barley which is up 11% from last year. Washington barley acres are expected to be up 18% from last year at 85,000 acres. Idaho barley acres are also up by 5% from a year ago at 590,000 acres.

Growing Degree Days Update

With the rapid warm up we are catching up on our Growing Degree Days, though maybe too much and too fast for the wheat. Looking at our Growing Degree Days (GDDs) for Moro as of May 9th we were still 241 GDDs behind last year's crop. GDDs refer to the number of heat units available for crops to grow. Every degree above 32°F of the average temperature counts as 1 GDD. These are calculated by subtracting the average daily temperature by 32. **Assuming a winter wheat crop planted on October 1st we are at 1,874 GDDs as of May 9th. Last year we were at 2,538 GDDs at this time.** If you planted wheat this year on September 15th you gained another 460 GDDs over planting on October 1st, but if you planted later in October on the 15th you lost 440 GDDs and 760 GDDs if planted at the end of October. Wheat at lower elevations than Moro is also further along given warmer temperatures with more GDD similar to earlier planted wheat in Moro. After this hot week the GDDs might be caught up, we need 8 days of 30 GDDs to get caught up with last year, that is days with an average temperature of around 60 F. Last year we had a warmer fall and winter, but had several cooler weeks in May and June during which GDDs lagged behind average, but created perfect weather conditions for an incredibly high yielding crop. Temperatures above 90 F are not conducive for improved yield, but if it is short lived enough the wheat can bounce back still.

Fertilizer Trends

Though the price of wheat has lowered in the last several months, at least the price of fertilizer is also decreasing and hopefully lowering some input costs. At the end of April the price of Urea fertilizer dropped below $600 per ton for the first time in the last several years. The last time the price was below $600 per ton was back in September 2021 when the price was $585/ton. In addition, the price for anhydrous dipped back below $1,000/ton for the first time since October 2021 when the price was $995/ton. These prices may be the low point for 2023 so don't set your hopes on them getting any lower. The relatively warm winter in Europe helped decrease natural gas demand which decreased the cost of using it to produce fertilizers. In addition, the availability of natural gas allowed many European fertilizer companies to start back up or continue operating after many had to shut down. However, if the price for natural gas or oil starts climbing back up the price for fertilizers will closely follow. Fertilizer costs:

- Anhydrous is down 10% from a month ago and 40% from a year ago at $928/ton or $0.57/lb. of N.
- Urea decreased in price by 5% from last month and 41% from a year ago at $595/ton or $0.65/lb. of N.
- UAN28 is slightly lower than a month ago at $426/ton or $0.76/lb of N.
- UAN32 is slightly lower from a month ago at $508/ton or $0.79/lb of N.

Biofertilizers – Bio what?

Biofertilizers are primarily free-living bacteria and fungi that when applied to crops enhance nutrient uptake, stimulate natural process (such as nitrogen fixation), reduce plant stress, and can improve crop quality. **Biofertilizers capable of supplying nitrogen to wheat are becoming more common and could be an option for farmers to reduce input costs by using less nitrogen fertilizer.** Often biofertilizers are used to partially supplement full synthetic fertilizer rates. One study was completed in corn where the crop was inoculated with the bacteria *Azospirillum brasilense* to reduce fertilizer. *Azospirillum brasilense* is a nitrogen-fixing bacterium that colonizes the rhizosphere (roots) of various grasses and cereals. The researchers inoculated corn at seeding with two strains of the bacterium *A. brasilense*. The research took place in Brazil where they conducted 30 field trials over 10 years. They had treatments with 100% of nitrogen and those that were inoculated with *A. brasilense* with only 75% nitrogen added at seeding. What they found was that yields were similar under both treatments. **The use of the bacteria was able to supplement the remaining 25% of the recommended nitrogen fertilizer.** The plants that were inoculated had better root growth which increased N fertilizer use efficiency. Using the bacteria treatment reduced the cost by $15 US dollars per HA or $37.05 per acre and reduced CO_2 emissions by 582 kg or a 0.64 of a ton per acre.

Similar products are available for wheat and forage crops in the United States. Envita is a biofertilizer product produced by Azotic North America LTD. The active ingredient is a naturally occurring, food grade bacteria, *Gluconacetobacter diazotrophicus*, that was originally discovered in sugarcane. This bacteria fixes nitrogen from the air and soil, similar to the strain of bacteria used in the study completed in Brazil. Envita forms a symbiotic relationship with wheat and provides nitrogen to the wheat's cells throughout the plant both in leaves and roots. Envita fixes nitrogen from the air and soil for the host wheat plant to use, similar to legumes (such as peas) that are nitrogen fixers through their relationship with rhizobia in the roots. Envita can be applied as a foliar spray in the spring alone or mixed with an herbicide application. Azotic North America LTD claims that Envita can maintain wheat yields when synthetic nitrogen is reduced by a rate of 27% or can boost yields when applied with a full rate of nitrogen. Azotic North America LTD has completed several trials for corn, but only one study with wheat. The trial with wheat tested Envita applied to spring wheat in South Dakota. The nitrogen rates were reduced by different levels with and without the application of Envita. Azotic North America LTD claims that Envita increased yields by 7% in those trials according to their website. However, no research has been completed with Envita at this time in Oregon or in winter wheat.

Biofertilizers Continued...
I am working on determining how effective this product will work in our dryland environment in on going trials this year and planned next year with grant funding from the Oregon Wheat Commission and the OSU Agricultural Research Fund. I am also examining the use of other bacterial products to apply, such as the Universal Microbe Package produced by Fresh Tracks LLC. This product contains several different bacteria strains that are meant to increase nutrient efficiency and can help with nitrogen and phosphorus availability for the crop. Another company is taking a different approach by applying a product that causes crops to attract beneficial microbes already present in the soil to their roots to increase nutrient efficiency. This product, Source, has been used in corn with some yield response being detected. They now have a newer formulation Source DC that is labeled to put on wheat, but not yet labeled in Oregon.

At the end of the day the question is if these products will make a difference on your farm or not and if they will pay. **When fertilizer prices dramatically increased last year the math made it clear that if these products work you would save money by apply these products at a price of around $15 per acre and reducing your nitrogen fertilizer rates by 25%. However, now that the prices for many fertilizers have decreased to levels not seen since fall 2021 the math is not as clear. If you want to learn more please come to one of the crop tours in Sherman or Wasco County discussed below.**

Post Wildfire Rehab Considerations for your Wheat Fields
Unfortunately every year at least one wheat field in the region is lost in flames due to an issue with a harvesting combine or more frequently from the usual ignition sources of power lines, vehicles, and trailers driving along roads. Fires are devastating when they burn a crop and farm infrastructure, but they also damage soils and allow for increased erosion. Wind erosion in the months following a fire, along with water erosion in the following fall and winter can remove a lot of valuable topsoil in the Mid Columbia. Sometimes wildfires will leave a decent amount of residue if the winds were pushing the fire quickly, but other times only a moonscape is left. Scarifying the soil can help reduce wind erosion following the wildfire by lightly disturbing the soil and causing the soil to clump better. Scarifying can be done by lightly disturbing the surface with using a disk or other tillage implement. The idea is not to till the whole field, but rather lightly scratch across the field every other pass with a disk or harrow type implement. Spreading out straw can also help reduce wind erosion, but is time intensive for large fields, though using an automatic bale feeder on a truck may help reduce labor efforts.

Cover crops can also help stabilize the soil following a wildfire. Though it is often hard to get cover crops established until later in the fall when soil moisture returns. It is also a balance with using cover crops in dryland wheat farming to minimize soil moisture loss for future cash crops. Last summer soil probes were placed in a field that the Sunset Valley Fire burned outside of The Dalles in July 2021 to determine the impact of cover cropping burned areas on soil moisture. Following the wildfire the producer planted a cover crop of winter wheat in November. I put soil probes in the ground in May after the producer had terminated the cover crop with herbicide. I had a good comparison with probes placed within 40 ft of each other in three different zones: a burned area that was cover cropped, a burned area that was left alone (where the drill ran out of seed), and an unburned portion of the field that was in chem fallow where the fire had stopped. Probes were placed at 6 and 12 inches into the soil and measured soil moisture hourly through September.

The probes found that the unburned part of the field averaged more moisture compared to the probes in burned areas at both 6 and 12 inches, but only by 1 to 3% volumetric water content. At 6 inches the cover cropped area averaged slightly less moisture (1%) than the burned area that was not cover cropped. At 12 inches the burned and cover cropped area also averaged less moisture than the area that was burned and not covered by 3%. However, in the earlier part of the summer the cover cropped area had higher levels by 3-4%. **Overall using the cover crop caused only a marginal difference in soil moisture at 6 inches, but did lower the soil moisture at 12 inches by 3%, a detectable, but marginal difference.**

Soil samples were also taken in August and soil moisture analyzed. Theses samples showed that at 6 inches the unburned part of the field had the greatest moisture (.65 inches) followed by burned and covered (.26 inches), and burned (.19 inches). At 12 inches the unburned area had the greatest moisture (.87 inches), followed by the burned area (.63 inches), and the burned and cover cropped area (.51 inches). **Overall in the top 6 inches wildfires significantly reduce soil moisture and cover cropping causes a marginal change in soil moisture. Cover cropping in burned areas can slightly decrease soil moisture from 6 to 12 inches, but likely not enough to produce changes in future cash crops.**

Past research in dryland wheat in Oregon suggests that it takes one inch of water to grow 7 bushels of wheat in productive areas and probably 5 bushels in lower production areas. With this study the unburned area had a total of 1.52 inches of water in the top foot, compared to burned areas at 0.82 inches/foot and burned and cover cropped areas at 0.77 inches. **As a result of the wildfire 0.75 inches of soil water was removed, which could correspond to a decrease in 3 to 5**

Post Wildfire Rehab Considerations Continued...
bushels of wheat or $21 to $36 per acre assuming the current price of wheat at $7.20/bu.

Chickpea Prices are Up
Chickpea stocks are low both globally and in the United States. Over the last four years prices have stayed relatively low, but due to the recent shortage the price is up. Wheat is the main competitor for chickpeas and lentil acres. With the price of wheat declining and the price of pulses increasing there will likely be more lentil acres being planted in Washington were precipitation patterns and cooler temperatures are more conducive for growing pulse crops. Poor weather in other regions of the globe have also added to this shortage. Production has been down in Australia, Mexico, and Canada due to weather over the last growing season. In addition, both Russia and Ukraine are large suppliers to India and the recent conflict there has caused large disruptions. Production in the U.S. was also below average last year, though considerably up from the 2021 drought year across the Pacific Northwest. Lentils and chickpeas are being contracted at 40 cents per lb and small chickpeas at 29 cents per lb. Typical production of chickpeas is 1,200 to 1,500 lbs to the acre? In the past prices have been volatile as after the drought year of 2021 when prices at been at a low of 26 cents went all the way up to 50 cents per lb.

Hay and Pasture Outlook
AgWest Farm Credit's 12-month profitability outlook for hay suggests slightly profitable returns for alfalfa and breakeven returns for timothy. Drivers include improvements to irrigation conditions and softening prices. Timothy hay exports are expected to be down leading to decreased returns for timothy hay producers.

USDA pasture and range conditions have recently been ranked in Oregon as 20% very poor, 20% poor, 35% fair, and 25% good to excellent. Good and excellent percentages were up from last year slightly at the start of April, but are now similar to last year. Wait and see if the moisture can keep up as the temperatures will likely continue to rise into May and June. At least as of now only 15% of hay producing areas in the PNW are in drought compared with 67% a year ago. The abnormally cooler spring did put some local alfalfa productions areas behind, but we are quickly catching up now.

Hay prices in the Central Oregon region (Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson/Wasco Counties) continues to hold steady at relatively high prices. Prices reported are from the Oregon Direct Hay report (accessed here: https://beav.es/iTs) and are all for small square bales in this report.

- Premium quality alfalfa over the last three months has stayed consistent at $400/ton. Overall the price is expected to decrease following the decline in the national alfalfa price that is now at $263 per ton, surprisingly lower than recent prices I have seen with the Oregon Direct Hay Report.
- Over the last several months mixed grass hay with premium quality has been averaging $430/ton ranging from $400 to $485/ton.
- Premium quality orchard grass is slightly decreasing from an average of $405 in March to $384 in April to $350 so far in May. One sale of good quality orchard grass sold for an average of $290 back in March.

Cattle Markets
Cattle inventories continue to tighten to record low levels in the United States leading to higher prices. The U.S. beef cow herd fell to 28.9 million cows at the start of 2023. Currently low cattle inventories are expected to persist through 2025 given that it takes 25 months to rebuild with cows having a nine month gestation and 16 months for cattle to be finished out. Rebuilding could also take longer if drought persists in the Southern Plains. 46% of cattle and 38% of alfalfa production acres in the United States were considered to be in drought at the end of March 2023. Returns for feedlots have been hitting record levels thanks to record low inventories. Cattle feeders have been getting returns over $300 per head in April. The current breakeven price is $160 per cwt for fed steers. Live steer prices broke previous daily records set in 2014 by $10 at $182.86 per cwt. The highs for the season have probably peaked though and cattle inventories might not be as tight in the fall as expected right now.

Beef production is down by 35.2 million lbs from a year ago indicating how much cattle inventories have been lowering consistently over the past year due to drought impacts. U.S. Cattle slaughter was at 623,000 head for the week ending May 6th, down 37,000 from a year ago. Cattle slaughter weights have been lowering, down 7 lbs from a year ago at 1,357 lbs. The price for live steers nationally is at $173.98/cwt, down $3.17/cwt from a week ago, but still up a significant amount of $30.56 from a year ago. Dressed steers are down $3.10/cwt from a week ago and up $50.26/cwt from a year ago at $280.95/cwt. Choice beef cutout is at $309.41/cwt, up $0.11/cwt from a week ago and up $51.12 from a year ago. The price for corn is up slightly from a week ago and down $1.68/bu lower than a year ago helping to decrease feedlot expenses and increasing profits. The USDA expects 2023 export volumes for beef to decline by 13% year-over-year decline. Despite the decline this would still be the third largest beef export volume on record. China

Cattle Markets Continued...
suspended the import of beef from Brazil on Feb. 22 due to a case of mad cow disease. Brazil supplies China with 41% of its total beef imports and this suspension will allow the U.S. to increase its Chinese export share.

AgWest Farm Credit's 12-month outlook for cattle suggests profitable returns for cow/calf producers and slightly profitable returns for cattle feeders in 2023. Bull prices here in the PNW have been up $1,000 from a year ago at $6,000 to $6,500. Feeder calf sales in Montana have been up to $250 per cwt or $2.50 per lb! I have also heard of local cattle sales for heifers in the $2.50 per pound range. Average prices being reported out of Toppenish, Washington for March through May 5th have been around $212.70/cwt for steers, $197.98/cwt for heifers, $98.28/cwt for butcher cows (low quality though), $159.50/cwt for bulls, and $2,188.00 per cow calf pair. Prices being reported out of the Madras Livestock Auction show steers around $245 to $277/cwt depending on weight class, heifers are at $175-$267.50/cwt, bulls at $100-$132/cwt, butcher cows at $80 to $115, and cow calf pairs at $2,000 to $2,425. Commercial cattle slaughter numbers were recently reported for 2022. Oregon had 28,000 head, while Washington had 1,112,000 and Idaho at 583,000 head.

Broadband Listening Sessions
Broadband is a foundational service that can open doors for health, economic opportunity, education, social engagement and more. The Oregon Broadband Office wants to hear about your access and experience with broadband as they write the state's first broadband plan which will be the foundation for $350-$500+ Million of federal funding to flow into the state. Inform the plan so money goes where it's needed!

Community listening session will be held between May 22 - June 9. Find and register for your local meeting on the Oregon Broadband Office Help Plan page. You can find additional broadband resources on https://extension.oregonstate.edu/broadband.

Cooperators needed for Cereal Leaf Beetle study
Tetrastichus julis (aka Tj wasp) is a larval parasitoid wasp that can offer effective biocontrol to suppress Cereal Leaf Beetle (CLB) damage in cereal production systems. During 2023, growing season, a survey of commercial cereal fields in the PNW region will be conducted to understand the extent of distribution of this parasitoid wasp and parasitism of CLB larvae by *T. julis*. Please complete this survey and indicate if you are willing to serve as a cooperator in this study and let us sample your production systems. Take the survey here: https://beav.es/Syn Sent on behalf of Navneet Kaur, OSU Extension entomologist.

USDA Mental Health Awareness Month Workshop Series
You're invited to the USDA Mental Health Awareness Month Workshop Series taking place on Tuesdays through June 6, 2:00-3:30pm ET. The workshop series convenes farmers and ranchers, faith leaders, rural health providers, USDA employees, and Federal, state, and university partners to dialogue and discuss mental health challenges, stressors, and the resources and services available to address them. Click here to register and learn more: https://www.usda.gov/ocr/eia/fbnp If you have any questions, please contact center@usda.gov.

- *Farm Stress and Suicide Prevention: Data, Challenges, and Opportunities co-hosted by the American Farm Bureau Federation* Tuesday, May 9, 2023. Recording may be available - check for it on their website.

- *Rural Mental Health Matters: Challenges, Opportunities & Resources for Communities cohosted by the National Association of Behavioral Health and Development Disability Directors*. Tuesday, May 23, 2023, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

- *Farm Stress and Suicide: Faith, Place, and Community Health*. Tuesday, May 30, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

2023 OSU Extension Crop Tours and Experiment Station Field Days
- Sherman County Crop Tour –Thursday, June 1st from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm starting at and finishing at the Wasco School Event Center (903 Barnett St, Wasco, OR 97065). 2 ODA pesticide credits approved. Please register here: **https://beav.es/ipS** or call 541-298-3581. This tour will feature AgCopter, CoAxium Wheat, biofertilizers in wheat, and sunflowers to reduce soil compaction following wind energy development. The tour will also stop and look at local trials with McGregor and MCP with wheat varieties, seed treatment, and starter fertilizers. The tour will conclude with lunch catered by the Dirty Cowgirl. Thanks to our sponsors: Wasco / Sherman County SWCDs, McGregor, Wheatland Insurance, BASF, and Ag West Farm Credit.

2023 OSU Extension Crop Tours and Experiment Station Field Days Continued...

- Wasco County Crop Tour – Thursday, June 8th, 8:30 am to noon, starting at the wheat trials next to the Dufur Community Cemetery off of Hwy 197 and finishing at JTI in The Dalles with lunch provided by Paco's Tacos again this year. Stops so far include wheat varieties, AgCopter, Wyeast RC and D, and biofertilizers with wheat. 2 ODA pesticide credits anticipated. Please register here https://beav.es/iGW or call 541-298-3581. Thanks to our sponsors: Wasco County SWCDs, JTI, Wheatland Insurance, BASF, and Ag West Farm Credit.

- Pendleton Experiment Station Field Day – Tuesday, June 13th, 7:30 am, Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center, 48037 Tubbs Ranch Rd. Adams, OR. All attendees are asked to register for free here: https://beav.es/Syh Thanks to our platinum sponsors: AG West Farm Credit, United Grain Cooperation, and MCGG!

- Sherman Experiment Station Field Day – Wednesday, June 14th, starting at 7:30 am at the Sherman County Fairgrounds and ending at 1 pm with free lunch sponsored by MCP. All attendees are asked to register for free here: https://beav.es/Syh Thanks to our platinum sponsors: MCP, AG West Farm Credit, and MCGG!

- June 20, 8 am - noon – Gilliam County Crop Tour - USDA-NRCS Condon Service Center

- June 22, 2 pm to 5 pm – Morrow County Crop Tour – starting northwest of Lexington at (45.5600, -119.4969)

- June 29th, 1 pm – WSU Crop Tour in Bickleton, WA – Intersection of Cemetery Rd with Goldendale Bickleton Rd (46.024942, -120.283326)

Oregon's top 10 agriculture commodities for 2022 ranked by Commodity Value-Dollar:

1. Greenhouse & Nursery: $1,321,200,000
2. Cattle & Calves: $676,227,000
3. Grass Seed (all): $639,178,000
4. Hay (all): $578,702,000
5. Milk: $550,620,000
6. Winter Wheat: $276,325,000 with 705,000 acres producing 31,725,000 bushels
7. Grapes for Wine: $271,000,000
8. Industrial Hemp: $247,767,000
9. Potatoes: $237,046,000
10. Blueberries: $171,667,000

OSU Researchers Looking for Areas to Soil Sample in Eastern Oregon

OSU researchers are asking for your help with the development of a statewide map of soil carbon sequestration potentials. This map is needed to support the development of strategies to increase soil carbon. They need to sample soils across Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla counties. They will hand dig a single shallow soil pit in a field, pasture, or CRP ground ~3.5 ft deep across a 12 ft square. They hope that each pit will only take 4 hours. The soils will be placed on a tarp and then returned back into the pit when they are done – they will be taking a few handfuls with them though for lab tests. Soil samples will be analyzed for bulk density, texture, pH, and total carbon, and you can receive any of this information for your property upon request. What they are trying to measure is the so called carbon saturation deficit, which is the technical term for the amount of additional organic carbon that a given soil can reliably retain for multiple decades, in addition to the organic carbon that is already there. This information will help clarify where soils have the potential to sequester carbon and where they do not. By mapping this they can determine where in Oregon it would make most sense to reward growers for the extra effort it would take to manage their lands for higher organic matter levels. Unfortunately, information about carbon storage capacity in Oregon is mainly available for the Willamette Valley and sparse in the rest of the state. All data obtained at your site will be made available to you, including a figure that shows the amount of additional carbon that your soil can potentially sequester. However, they will not share exact numbers, measurements, or coordinates of individual locations to the public without your explicit consent. If you are willing to let them dig a soil pit please contact Markus Kleber: markus.kleber@oregonstate.edu (phone 541-737-5718).

Cycle Oregon Gravel Ride in northern Sherman County May 19th – 21st

Just be aware that Cycle Oregon is coming to Moro on May 19th -21st. Cyclists will mainly be on gravel roads. On the first day cyclists will be riding gravel roads around Wasco while the next day they will be riding gravel roads near Grass Valley. They will be staying at the Sherman County Fairgrounds so expect some additional traffic and people in Moro this weekend.