

## Scope of (Clean Water Act) jurisdiction is an issue of 'national importance'

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"It's worth noting that these lawsuits are over an embattled legislation that's been put on hold by the courts to prevent it from taking effect. Our delay rule will keep in place that status quo," an EPA spokeswoman said in an email.

The rule sets the reach of the Clean Water Act. The American Farm Bureau Federation in earlier statements warned that the 2015 rule would expand the act's jurisdiction to ditches and low spots that are only occasionally wet and would expose

farmers to citizen lawsuits for activities as routine as plowing a field.

States have been suing to overturn or uphold the 2015 rule. In an announcement Feb. 1 in the Federal Register, the EPA and Corps said the two-year suspension heads off the possibility that conflicting federal court decisions will cause the rule to vary between states.

"The scope of (Clean Water Act) jurisdiction is an issue of national importance and therefore the agencies will endeavor to provide for robust deliberations and public en-

agement as they re-evaluate the definitions of 'waters of the United States,'" according to the notice.

Ferguson has sued the Trump administration 21 times. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a fellow Democrat, said the latest suit seeks to protect "our economy and our quality of life."

"This (Trump) administration's continual efforts to roll back crucial protections for our nation's beautiful spaces and the health and safety of all Americans will not go unchecked," Inslee said in a statement.

## High-pressure ridges persisting off the West Coast will be 'disastrous' for California

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Winter wheat conditions are near-normal in Eastern Washington.

Douglas also said he's heard winter wheat conditions in the Southern Plains are the worst they've been in 10 years.

Model forecasts vary, indicating La Niña could last through October, continuing drought conditions in the southwestern U.S. and Southern Plains, or possibly end earlier.

In the spring, a high pressure ridge will keep the West

warm and dry. Northwest flow into the plains will push moisture to the east, keeping winter wheat conditions there poor, Douglas said.

In the summer, warm and dry conditions will continue to impact the West, Douglas said.

Expanding drought is evident in California and the Southwest, Douglas said, adding that spring high-pressure ridges persisting off the West Coast will be "disastrous" for California.

"They had some good moisture there in November," he said. "It started turning dry

in December, they had a very dry January. ... It looks like they're going to have virtually no precipitation in February, and now you look at this forecast, complete blocking of all storms getting into California."

Douglas said 2018 is most likely to resemble 2001, 1956, 1951, 1994 and 2014.

Oregon will be a little drier than Washington, Douglas said.

"The last good wet month is really March, and from then on out you're flirting with dryness," Douglas told growers.



U.S. Wheat Associates

Bakery consultant Roy Chung demonstrates baking techniques in 1982 at a U.S. Wheat Associates baking seminar in Indonesia.

## Chung has worked for U.S. Wheat for more than 40 years

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Industry leaders light up when they talk about Chung.

"It's in his soul," said Mike Miller, the U.S. Wheat chairman, a member of the Washington Grain Commission board and a Ritzville, Wash., farmer. "This is who he is. He doesn't do it for any other country. He's trying to do it so we can sell more wheat at a better price."

Chung's "unparalleled" knowledge of wheat starch properties and how they perform in a food product leads people to seek out his expertise. He helps companies design production lines and new products, said Dana Herron, a Connell, Wash., seed dealer and grain commission board member.

"We would be 20 years behind in marketing and sales if there's no Roy Chung," Herron said.

### Getting his start

Kah Hee "Roy" Chung, 63, has worked for U.S. Wheat for more than 40 years.

Before that, he assisted in his father's bakery in Malaysia. Chung was home during college vacation and helping his father, who immigrated from China to Malaysia during World War II, when a consultant from Western Wheat Associates asked to use the bakery for a product demonstration. Western Wheat later merged with Great Plains Wheat to form U.S. Wheat Associates.

"My father was generous in allowing his competitors into the bakery to observe the demonstration as well," Chung said.

Chung's father did not speak English and the consultant was working alone, so Chung served as his assistant and interpreter for the event. Months later, he received an

offer to join Western Wheat, but declined, as he was not yet finished with school. He was studying production engineering at the Ungku Omar Polytechnic in Malaysia.

Western Wheat waited two years for Chung to complete his education, and he was interviewed by Tom Mick, who would later become CEO of the Washington Grain Commission. Mick hired him to join WWA.

"He has a unique ability to teach people how to make a superior end-product and at the same time reduce costs that would make it profitable," said Mick, who is now retired.

Mick said Chung could "pull miracles," convincing reluctant bakers to change wheat or flour sources.

"I think (Chung is) one of the greatest hires I've ever been involved with," Mick said. "To the wheat producer, he is a godsend."

### Selling U.S. wheat

If a buyer is new to U.S. wheat, Chung goes back to basics. He explains the difference in U.S. wheat classes, their uses and the suitability of different classes for the products they make in each country.

He likens this to teaching them the ABCs before turning the letters into words, then the words into sentences.

"For the more experienced buyers, it gets even more exciting if you can string sentences to make paragraphs," Chung said. "And then paragraphs to make a chapter and

eventually chapters into an entire book."

U.S. Wheat employees, he said, show a company the possibilities they can get from the wheat American farmers produce.

"We will provide examples of how others are making money from the wheat that they buy from the U.S.," he said.

Chung says he is always sincere in his approach and communication.

"Don't bring the buffalo to the river to make it drink if the buffalo is not thirsty," he said.

If a buyer is similarly sincere, U.S. Wheat will hold his or her hand all the way and show them how to extract value in any market, Chung said.

"He's made those companies so much money using Pacific Northwest soft white wheat, he is highly respected," Herron said. "People listen to his every word, because he has their best interest at heart."

### Teaching bakers

U.S. Wheat cooperates with United Flour Mills in Thailand to offer specialized baking courses at the mill's baking and cooking school in Bangkok. Chung was instrumental in offering the first course. The program has continued for 38 years.

"U.S. Wheat finds value in educating young bakers to see and feel the differences in quality when compared to wheats of other origins," Chung said. "The lasting impression we impart to these bakers (stays

for their entire lives."

Many bakers trained at the school move on to the upper ranks of their organizations, helping their company expand and securing a stable supply of U.S. wheat.

"I like to say that I impart knowledge that will enable my students to make good judgment," Chung said. "More importantly, I leave them to pursue their careers in a more passionate way knowing that I, as a representative of U.S. Wheat, will always be there for them. I am sincere when I make this offer."

As a result of working with Chung, when mills go to grain purchasers with their specifications for U.S. wheat, they know what they want and how to ask for it, Miller said.

"He's actually helped raise them in the wheat world," Miller said. "He can go into their mill, they know exactly what he's talking about."

And they listen. "When they hear Roy's in the house, it's like Paul McCartney just showed up," Miller said. "They flock to him. He engages them, he remembers their names, asks them how they're doing, 'Have you addressed this problem?' or they ask him, 'Hey, we have this.' They trust him. He's no-nonsense. He stands behind his work."

### An 'encyclopedia'

Chung worked closely with Vietnamese flour millers and bakeries to help them understand the uses of U.S. wheat, said Dinh Xuan Quang, technical manager of

Vietnam Flour Mills. It took a long time because U.S. prices were higher than those of competing countries.

"Now, in Vietnam, the cookies and cake industry can't live without soft white wheat," Quang said.

Wilma Bocaya, vice president of Jollibee Foods Corp., a fast food bun manufacturing company in the Philippines, attended Chung's course in 1994, after a colleague attended the year before. Her company sends students every year.

"When we met Roy in 1993, we only had 105 Jollibee stores," Bocaya said. "This number has now grown into more than a thousand in the Philippines."

The company is expanding its baking operation this year to support further growth.

"Suffice it to say that the technical support we got from U.S. Wheat through Roy as consultant or as course instructor enabled us to provide products that meet our customers' expectations," Bocaya said.

Wantana Thongthai, president of United Flour Mills Food Center Co. Ltd., and operator of the baking school, has known Chung since 1988. The company feels strongly that U.S. wheat quality best matches its needs, she said.

"Through my tenure at UFM, I have not met a consultant more knowledgeable in his trade than Mr. Chung," she said. "He is known among us as 'the walking baking encyclopedia.'"

### Changing times

With the internet, many customers are more knowledgeable and demanding, Chung said. Few countries produce generic flour for breads, cakes and cookies, and most bakeries use specialized flour for specific products.

"We must justify these sales with scientific facts and examples of how this basic information has been used to produce more specialized flours for specialized products," Chung said.

U.S. Wheat must keep re-educating itself technically to sell wheat at an advantage, Chung said.

"If we fail to do that, we will be just another generic seller, and worse still, a residual seller," he said.

Chung said it's not currently possible to retire, since there are few people with his technical expertise in the industry. He'd like to leave his customers in good hands, he said.

He hopes to leave the U.S. Wheat office with a younger team of technical staffers who would work "as passionately and sincerely with our customers as I have."

If U.S. Wheat hired someone he could begin to train this year, he said, he could see retiring in five years.

Miller, the U.S. Wheat chairman, knows at some point Chung will want to slow down.

"I don't know if you can replace that type of historical knowledge and energy with one person," he said. "I bet you'd have to do it with two."

That could be a good thing for wheat farmers, Herron believes.

"If we had a couple more Roy Chungs, we wouldn't have to worry about competition overseas," he said. "He makes that big of a difference."