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# EXPORT WORRIES



Photos by E.J. Harris/EO Media Group  
Farmer Jeff Newton plants barley in a field March 30 northwest of Helix, Ore. Newton says he is currently working 20-hour days to get his crops in the ground. TOP PHOTO: Kuper Bracher, 12, loads a trailer with soft white wheat from a bank-out wagon on July 25, 2017, in a field outside Helix, Ore.

## Trade uncertainty hits home for Oregon wheat farmers

“We’ve been through tough times before. We’ll figure these trade deals out. It’s a bump in the road right now.”

Eric Orem, Lexington, Ore., wheat farmer

Economic impact ripples into rural communities

By GEORGE PLAVERN  
Capital Press

The beginning of spring ushers a flurry of activity on the vast, rolling wheat fields of Umatilla and Morrow counties in northeast Oregon. Farmers drive large sprayer rigs over still-green plants to control weeds and pests, while crossing their fingers for make-or-break rainstorms that can turn otherwise average yields into a bumper crop.

This year, however, a new layer of uncertainty has emerged for the Northwest wheat industry. Since the U.S. pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, growers are worried about maintaining strong relationships with longtime foreign customers in countries such as Japan, which signed on to a revised version of the trade deal March 8 in Santiago, Chile, along with 10 other nations.

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Capital Press graphic

## Wolves move, but don't follow Washington's plan



While Eastern Washington now has 13 breeding pairs, the North Cascades recovery zone lost one of its two breeding pairs from 2016. The state's third recovery zone, the South Cascades, has no confirmed wolves.

“It (recovery) has taken a hit,” said Tim Coleman, executive director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group in northeast Washington.

Coleman said that he suspects wolves in northeast Washington will

disperse south when the population thickens. The department has confirmed 28 wolf mortalities in the past two years, some of them breeding females. “That certainly has a significant impact,” Coleman said.

The department killed three wolves last year to stop depredations on livestock, and the Colville tribe legally harvested three wolves. Two wolves were killed by vehicles, two were lawfully shot while attacking

livestock and four were killed under suspicious circumstances.

According to the department, here's where the nine dispersing wolves went:

- Dirty Shirt pack: Three members left this pack in Stevens County. A male went more than 100 miles into British Columbia before being killed. The report does not say how the animal died. Efforts to reach the department for more information

were unsuccessful.

A female also went into British Columbia, but returned to the pack after eight days and traveling 300 miles. Another adult female went 30 miles north and established the territory of the new Leadpoint pack, also in Stevens County.

- Smackout pack: A male traveled at least 1,700 miles from Stevens

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## High-fiber, gene-edited wheat cleared for commercialization

Cultivar not subject to USDA's deregulatory process for GMOs

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

A new wheat cultivar that's been gene-edited to boost fiber content can be commercialized without undergoing USDA's deregulatory process for genetically modified crops.

The agency has decided the wheat variety, which was developed by the Calyxt biotech company, isn't subject to USDA regulations for trans-

genic crops because it's not a potential plant pest.

While genetically modified organisms regulated by USDA have traditionally incorporated foreign genes, Calyxt's “nutritionally-enhanced wheat” is altered by knocking out a gene through a proprietary “targeted mutagenesis” process.

The company intends to “potentially commercialize” the wheat variety, which would involve

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Capital Press file photo

The USDA has determined a wheat cultivar that's gene-edited for higher fiber content doesn't need to undergo the deregulatory process for GMOs because it's not a potential plant pest.



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