

Registration for popular Wheat Academy opens

Program goes deeper, offers hands-on experiences

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Registration opened Oct. 10 for Washington State University's hands-on Wheat Academy.

In the past, the program — which has space for 75 participants — has filled up in eight days to three weeks, said Drew Lyon, WSU weed science professor.

The two-day academy is Dec. 11-12 on the WSU campus in Pullman. Courses run 90 minutes, with presenters offering hands-on opportunities.

Lyon said he hopes growers leave the academy with a deeper understanding of the

Online

<http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/2018-wheat-academy/>

science behind management decisions and researcher recommendations.

"It's more intimate with the scientists and presenters," Lyon said. "The first year we did this, we had some growers walking out of a (soil chemistry) class just shaking their heads and saying, 'Wow, that was pretty deep, but I loved it.'"

Participants pick eight of 12 available courses.

"There's always something to be worried about if you're a farmer and always something to do if you're a researcher, always some problem to be looking into," Lyon said. "Hopefully, we do a good job of covering the bases — we have entomology talks, disease talks,

soils talks, weeds talks."

Topics this year include herbicide decisions in integrated weed management systems; balancing soil fertility and crop root growth; nutrient management in wheat cropping systems; market strategy development; pulse production; diversifying the PNW's wheat portfolio; drones in agriculture; and a tour of WSU's wheat greenhouses, with wheat breeders academy participants getting to try to make plant crosses.

Farmers pay \$75, while industry members pay \$125.

Farmers who miss registration are put on a waiting list for the next year. About two-thirds of academy participants are newcomers, Lyon said.

"They probably have a little time to think about it, but I wouldn't think about it too long, or it will be filled up," he said.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Drew Lyon, weed science professor at Washington State University. Registration for Lyon's popular Wheat Academy opened Oct. 10.

Some ranchers feel 'left behind' without COOL in new trade deal

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Some ranchers who hoped mandatory country of origin labeling would be included in a new trade deal between the U.S., Canada and Mexico now say they're disappointed it was left out of the agreement.

"We were excited and elated when the Trump administration (was) campaigning on the issue of 'Buy American, use American,' and we really thought we had an opportunity to get mandatory COOL re-implemented," said Kenny Graner, a North Dakota rancher and president of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association.

"As one of those patriots that he has always mentioned as taking a hit ... I feel left behind," Graner said.

"It's a huge disappointment, it reflects the fact the president continues to listen to the same advisors that have brought these bad trade agreements to us in the first place," said Bill Bullard, CEO of R-CALF USA.



Bill Bullard

COOL was repealed in 2015, when the World Trade Organization authorized Canada and Mexico to impose more than \$1 billion in retaliatory tariffs, ruling that labeling violated U.S. trade obligations and discriminated against imported cattle and hogs from Canada and imported cattle from Mexico.

Without COOL, Graner said, competing countries can import cattle from other countries and harvest, package and ship them to U.S. processing plants, where they can be repackaged and labeled as a U.S. product.

"We're held under some of the highest standards when it comes to production of beef in the world," Graner said. "The quality of cattle, the standards of the way we raise and feed our cattle — there is a difference."

Other ranchers welcomed

the new deal, saying it allows continued duty-free, unrestricted access to Canada and Mexico markets.

"When COOL was the law of the land for five years, it did absolutely nothing to drive demand for our product, it did nothing to address food safety," said Kent Bacus, director of international trade for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. "The only thing it resulted in was the WTO decision against the U.S. that could have resulted in more than \$1 billion in retaliation against U.S. agriculture. There wasn't a lot to win by adding that in there, and I'm glad our negotiators were wise enough to see that, and did not put us in further jeopardy by bringing up failed policies of the past."

Graner believes COOL was not included in the new agreement because multi-national beef lobbying groups with a large influence in Washington, D.C., did not want it.

"They enjoy the ability to source cattle or beef outside

this country, bring it into the U.S., commingle it, drive down their costs and at the same time drive down our domestic price, which increases the profitability for the multi-national packers," he said. "In my mind, they're part of the swamp."

Graner said his organization will continue to defend mandatory COOL, writing additional letters to the White House. R-CALF has

asked for a meeting with Trade Ambassador Robert Lighthizer. Bullard sees several opportunities to support or reinstate COOL during the 60-day period when Congress reviews the agreement.

Bullard believes Trump can be convinced that the new deal doesn't strengthen American ranchers' domestic supply chain.

"I think this president un-

derstands some very important aspects of international trade," he said. "He has to understand you cannot have transparency and fair trade if you give the meatpackers the ability to continue sourcing cheaper, undifferentiated beef and then pawning it off to U.S. consumers as if it were produced under the U.S. superior health and safety regime."

'Big Idaho Potato Harvest Meeting' set for Nov. 14

The Idaho Potato Commission's annual Big Idaho Potato Harvest Meeting will be Nov. 14 at the Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Event Center in Fort Hall.

Commission President and CEO Frank Muir said the meeting aims to bring various industry leaders together for a single post-harvest event to discuss the growing season, field trends and forecasts and research. It replaced an earlier series of post-harvest meetings between the commission, growers and industry organizations.

Ideally, the 10 a.m. Mountain start enables attendees from around Idaho to drive to and from the event in a single day, he said.

"We have just finished a very strong year for Idaho potato farmers" in terms of harvest acres and potato quality, he said. "We expect an even stronger year for Idaho potato farmers in 2018-19."

The agenda includes meetings of several industry organizations, and presentations on topics ranging from the economic performance of the Idaho potato industry over the past 15 years to updates on a quality initiative started two years ago and potato cyst nematode control efforts. Scheduled speakers include Muir, Tina Gresham of USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; the University of Idaho's Mike Thornton and Nora Olsen; John Keeling of the National Potato Council and Potatoes USA CEO Blair Richardson.

Potato Growers of Idaho will present Grower of the Year awards and host a political action committee fundraiser. PGI and the Idaho Grower Shippers Association jointly manage the Idaho Potato Industry PAC.

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