

Growers follow wheat from farm to market

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

The end of harvest is just the beginning of the story for Oregon wheat, as farmers from around the state learned Jan. 18-19 at the Oregon Wheat Commission's 2018 grower workshop in Portland.

A group of 15 people gathered at the commission offices in the historic Albers Mill overlooking the Willamette River. From there, they met with experts and toured facilities to witness firsthand what happens to their crop once it leaves the farm.

Oregon farmers typically grow 50 million to 70 million bushels of wheat every year, with a total economic output averaging more than \$815 million. Tana Simpson, OWC associate administrator, said the commission assesses 5 cents per bushel, which pays for programs such as export market development, grower services and university research.

The annual workshop is intended to show farmers the value they get in return for their investment, Simpson said.

"These are your dollars that you're going to see over the next few days," she said.

The group made its first stop at the nonprofit Wheat Marketing Center, which does quality and product testing using wheat samples from across the Northwest. Janice Cooper, managing director at the center, said they also do hands-on training for overseas customers making products such as crackers, noodles and tortillas.

"Most of the work we do is with Asian and Latin American trade teams that come here," Cooper said.

Laboratory supervisor Bon Lee demonstrated some of the high-tech equipment he uses to measure things such as gluten and starch content in dough. Lee explained in depth how he performs what is known as the "falling numbers" test, which checks for sprout damage in grain.

Low falling numbers has plagued parts of Washington and Idaho in recent years due to pre-harvest rains, Lee said.

"When it rains before harvest ... the sprouting process starts," Lee said. "Even if you dry it, it's too late."

The vast majority of Oregon wheat — 85 to 90 percent — is shipped overseas. The U.S. Wheat Associates is the industry's promotion arm, developing export markets in more than 100 countries.

Shawn Campbell, deputy director of the organization in Portland, said the most important thing farmers can do is maintain high quality, especially as the



George Plaver/Capital Press

Gary Hou, technical director and wheat foods specialist at the Wheat Marketing Center, makes crackers in the nonprofit center's food innovation kitchen.

global marketplace for wheat becomes more competitive.

Countries such as Japan are particularly interested in buying high-quality soft white wheat from the Pacific Northwest, Campbell said, and consumers there have the income to pay for it.

"If we didn't give our overseas customers what they wanted, they'd go elsewhere and find it there," Campbell said.

Next, the group traveled to the Pacific Export Terminal at the Port of Portland, where employees work around the clock loading and unloading wheat shipments from around the region. The terminal is capable of moving 900 metric tons of wheat per hour, while also providing another layer of quality testing on site through the USDA.

Kim Harper, quality assurance specialist, showed how he pulls samples

from wheat shipments and combs over each individual grain looking for things such as mold, insect and sprout damage.

"We're seeing wheat come from across the West and Midwest," Harper said. "We have to keep up on all that."

The group wrapped up day one with a stop at a downtown Portland bakery, and spent day two aboard a river tugboat and chatting about the latest wheat research with Oregon State University scientists.

Blake Rowe, CEO of both the Oregon Wheat Commission and Oregon Wheat Growers League, said workshops are designed to give farmers a feel for everything that happens off their farm.

"They'll actually get an appreciation of what a customer is looking for," Rowe said. "I think that is something that is helpful to them."

COMING EVENTS

For a complete listing of regional events, visit eastoregonian.com

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center gymnasium, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Good music, new friends and indoor walking for health. Free. (541-276-8100)

NO SCHOOL OPEN GYM, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. For ages 7-12. Dodgeball, basketball, foosball, pool, ping pong and more. Minimum 15, maximum 40, must be registered 2 days prior. Registration fee of \$5 includes a snack. (541-276-8100)

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:15 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. For children from 3-6 years old. (541-567-2882)

TODDLER STORY TIME, 10:15-11 a.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-966-0380)

NO SCHOOL MAKE-AND-TAKE CRAFTS, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Out of school with nothing to do? Kids ages 8 and up can drop in for a make-and-take workshop. Free. (Kaisa Hill 541-278-9201)

STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 2 p.m., Echo Public Library, 20 S. Bonanza, Echo. (541-376-8411)

GALE GORRORD BENEFIT DINNER, 5-7 p.m., Stanfield Community Center, 225 W. Roosevelt Ave., Stanfield. Lasagna, salad, bread and drink by donation, followed by a dessert auction. All proceeds benefit the Gale Gorrord family. (Rosalie Emerson 541-720-9509)

VFW BINGO, 6 p.m., Hermiston VFW, 45 W. Cherry St., Hermiston. Doors open at 5 p.m., games begin at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. (541-567-6219)

CHICKS WITH HITS TOUR, 8 p.m., Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 46510 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. Country legends Pam Tillis, Terri Clark and Suzy Bogguss will bring their greatest hits to Eastern Oregon. Tickets are \$49 for general admission, \$69 for premium seats and \$79 for platinum seats (first three rows), available at the Wildhorse Gift Shop or online. 21 and older only; country dance after party will follow in Cayuse Hall for all ticket holders. (800-654-5493)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27
ADULT OPEN GYM, 7-8 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Pick-up basketball for adults only. Free. (541-276-8100)

IMAC BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER, 7:30-10:30 a.m., Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. Benefits the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center project. Costs \$4.50. (Peggy Price 541-567-3806)

L'L BUCKS OPEN GYM, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. For students in



Contributed photo

Chicks with Hits — featuring Terri Clark, Pam Tillis and Suzy Bogguss — will perform Saturday at Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

first through third grades. (541-276-8100)

PARKING LOT SALE, 8:30-11:30 a.m., Agape House, 500 W. Harper Road, Hermiston. Clothing five items for \$1, furniture and bicycles as marked and knick-knacks you name the price. Sale will be indoors in inclement weather. Donations accepted. (Dave 541-567-8774)

FUNDRAISER BAZAAR, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton. Fundraiser bazaar includes vendors, food available for purchase and special guest appearances with Moana and Iron Man for the kids. Proceeds help fund a mission trip to Guatemala. Free admission. (Tanna King 541-304-9255)

FREE FOR ALL, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free art classes for children up to age 12. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)

YARN CLUB, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)

FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS, 10 a.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Workshops, photo scanning and more. (Stephanie Blackburn 541-567-6251)

ARTWORKZ JUNIOR ART SHOW OPENING EXHIBIT, 10 a.m., Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, 47106 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. View artwork of local youth 19 and under in a variety of mediums. On display through March 17. Free admission opening day only. (Randall Melton 541-429-7720)

SATURDAY CRAFTS FOR KIDS, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. Drop-in craft time for kids. Free. (541-567-2882)

HIP & HANDMADE, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free drop-in project class for adults. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)

JEWELRY MAKING: BEAD STRINGING, 12-2 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.,

Pendleton. Learn to string beads on jewelry wire to make necklaces and bracelets. Learn about various stringing materials, bead, clasps, and other components needed to make single strand or multiple strand jewelry. Two consecutive classes. Cost is \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members. (Kaisa Hill 541-278-9201)

PAPER MACHE FOR KIDS, 12:30-2 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Learn the techniques and possibilities of paper and paste sculptures, including pinatas, masks and more. Drop-in class for ages 7-12, cost is \$10 per session. (Kaisa Hill 541-278-9201)

MELONVILLE COMEDY FESTIVAL, 8 p.m., Hermiston Community Center, 415 S. Highway 395, Hermiston. Opener Cory Michael will be followed by co-headliners Kermit Apio and Derek Richard. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$35, available at the Hermiston Community Center. (Warren Smith 541-561-7488)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28
KIDS KLUB, 9:30 a.m., First Christian Church, 518 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. For children of



photo by Rick McEwan

Public Reception Thurs., Feb. 1, 5:30 - 7:00 PM
Wilderness & Sublimity: Photography and the Conservation of Hells Canyon
at the Pendleton Center for the Arts

Flu, cold weather cause blood shortage

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

"Donors are critically needed to restock the shelves for patients."

— **Neil Tosuntikool**, donor recruitment director of Pacific Northwest Red Cross Blood Services Region

The Red Cross is facing a "critical" blood shortage as a particularly widespread flu season and cold weather have kept people from donating.

Record-setting low temperatures and other severe weather in some parts of the country has caused the cancellation of 550 blood drives so far in January, representing 16,500 donations that went uncollected, while blood drives that remained on schedule have seen large numbers of people cancel their appointment due to illness.

"Blood and platelet donations are currently being distributed to hospitals faster than they are coming in," Neil Tosuntikool, donor recruitment director of the Pacific Northwest Red Cross Blood Services Region, said in a statement. "Donors are critically needed to restock the shelves for patients in their community as well as areas where donors are unable to give due to inclement weather."

According to the Red Cross, the organization accounts for about 40 percent of the nation's blood supply and needs at least 13,000 blood and platelet donations per day to keep up with demand. The most useful blood donations come from those with O-negative blood, since it's the universal blood type that can be used in any patient,

while AB-positive is the universal plasma donor.

Blood drive locations can be found online at redcross-blood.org or by downloading the Red Cross Blood App, which allows users to locate drives, schedule appointments, track their donations and earn rewards. Potential donors can also call 1-800-733-2767.

The next Red Cross blood drive scheduled in Umatilla County is on Monday 1:30-6:30 p.m. at McLoughlin High School, 120 S. Main in Milton-Freewater. Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston and St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton each have their next monthly blood drive on Feb. 19. For residents looking to donate sooner, Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities have a variety of blood drive options in the next month. Morrow County does not have any listed on the Red Cross website in the next month.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

Dog alerts family to porch fire

HERMISTON — A family's dog helped save their home on Thursday morning after it alerted them to a fire on their porch.

Umatilla County Fire District 1 battalion chief Jimmy Davis said the fire caused "very minor damage in total" to the house on Sagebrush Road north of Hermiston after being caught quickly. He said it was believed to have been started by an overloaded extension cord hooked to a heat lamp that had been set up for the dog on the covered porch.

The family called 911 about 8:15 a.m. after the dog began barking, and UCFDI responded. No one was injured in the incident.

Book Talk features 'A Man Called Ove'

STANFIELD — A feel-good story about a cranky old man who gets a crash course in relationships with his new neighbors is the topic of a book club discussion in Stanfield.

The public is invited to discuss "A Man Called Ove" by Fredrik Backman during the upcoming Book Talk. The gathering is Thursday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Stanfield Public Library, 180 W. Coe Ave.

Treats will be served.

A *New York Times* bestseller, the story unfolds after the neighbors crash into the curmudgeon's mailbox. It leads to a heart-warming and comical tale of crazy cats, unexpected friendship and the art of backing up a U-Haul.

Multiple copies of the book are available at the library. For more information, call 541-449-1254.

AARP offers driving refresher course

MILTON-FREEWATER — A new and enhanced driving class offers current information about rules of the road.

Taught by volunteer instructor Kevin Oleson, the AARP Smart Driver course is Friday, Feb. 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Blue Mountain Community College, 311 N. Columbia St., Milton-Freewater. The fee is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members.

Participants also will receive information about how age-related factors can impact driving and ways to make adjustments. While the course is designed for older drivers, anyone with a license is welcome to attend.

For more information or to register, call 509-938-7176.

The family of the late

Bob Jensen

wishes to extend our sincere gratitude to all who helped and supported us during the time of our loss. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and concern with food, flowers, memorials, cards and words of comfort.

Thanks to the special people who assisted with the Memorial Service and made it inspirational for our family and friends.

We appreciated the great care and support provided by the Hospice professionals and volunteers.