

Keep momentum going on trade for wheat farmers



CHANDLER
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OTHER VIEWS

With the United States bringing in a new administration, one of a different political party, some changes in trade policy and strategy could be expected. As the Biden administration takes shape, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) encourages it to build upon the trade successes of the Trump administration.

Additionally, NAWG stresses the importance of coalition-building in pursuing solutions to trade disputes and to work toward restoring a functional appeals system at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Further, NAWG urges the Biden administration to advocate for wheat on the world stage by continuing to support export market development programs through the annual budget process and to work collaboratively to reduce trade barriers. The U.S. exports 50% of its wheat crop, making it a priority for America's farmers, which should also mean a priority for the new administration.

The Trump administration's efforts

to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), now known as the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), proved to be beneficial for wheat growers. Mexico has also consistently been a top market for U.S. wheat exports. Through NAFTA, the U.S. had tariff-free access, which was maintained in USMCA.

Additionally, USMCA made important improvements to Canada's grain grading system, which provides better treatment of U.S. wheat being sold to Canadian elevators, and it updated the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards that were modeled from the SPS requirements in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Maintaining tariff-free access and strengthening science-based disciplines for SPS measures with Mexico is essential to the U.S. wheat industry. NAWG is counting on the Biden administration to fully honor the intent of the USMCA.

Another notable success garnered by the Trump administration is the Phase 1 trade deal with China. In exchange for the U.S. cutting some of its tariffs on Chinese goods, China pledged to purchase more American farm, energy and manufactured goods. Retaliatory tariffs from China had a significantly negative impact on farmers.

However, since the signing of the Phase 1 agreement with China, combined with the

market development efforts undertaken by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), U.S. wheat sales to China have totaled more than 2.8 million tons, representing a near doubling of our long-term average annual sales to China.

Separately, trade and investment discussions with Vietnam, a growing wheat import market, resulted in securing a reduced tariff rate for imported U.S. wheat.

Additionally, the bilateral agreement with Japan negotiated by the Trump administration put the U.S. back onto a level playing field with our competitors. The next administration should continue to build upon these market development actions.

Unfortunately, China continues to be a bad actor in the trade arena and some countries are following suit. In 2019, the United States won two WTO cases against China's tariff rate quota (TRQ) scheme and domestic support policies. However, China has yet to fully comply in either case.

Additionally, India and other developing countries have been on the same trend of providing trade distorting subsidies that far exceed WTO commitments. The Biden administration should build on the China domestic support case's success to bring other countries into compliance through litigation.

American wheat farmers need a strong voice on the world stage. There are many

opportunities for the Biden administration to be an international advocate for wheat and capitalize on new trade deals. For instance, Brexit provides an opportunity for change to wheat exports to the United Kingdom, and hopefully wheat tariffs will be fully eliminated in a final U.S.-U.K. agreement.

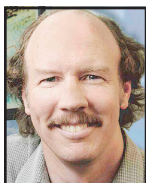
Additionally, the U.S.-Kenya negotiations could serve as a model for future Free Trade Agreements (FTA) across Africa, and a priority in these and future negotiations should be to provide more favorable tariffs and SPS provisions for U.S. sourced wheat.

International trade is critical to U.S. wheat growers, and our overseas customers demand high quality wheat, which American farmers are proud to supply. NAWG urges the Biden administration to continue to work from the Trump administration's trade successes. Additionally, the new administration must hold bad actors, like China, to their commitments and make them accountable for violating any WTO rulings.

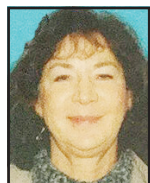
Further, NAWG asks the Biden administration to be a strong advocate for wheat on the international stage and to help find new market opportunities for wheat.

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Effective and efficient climate policy that farmers can support



STEVE GHAN



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OTHER VIEWS

What if there was a simple and powerful solution to climate change that would benefit the economy, avoid government growth, and preserve personal freedom? What if that solution would also grant a pass on agriculture fuel?

Sound too good to be true? The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, introduced in the last Congress with 86 cosponsors, will be introduced again in this Congress. If you're concerned about impacts of climate change on future generations of agriculture, it merits your consideration.

This legislation is based on the carbon fee and dividend concept. A steadily increasing price on the carbon content of fossil fuel is applied as close to the source (mine, well, or import) as practical. That price signal is passed on through the economy, raising the price of fossil fuel and

carbon-intensive products for utilities and consumers.

After paying for the modest administrative costs of this simple policy, the net revenue is returned to the economy in the form of equal monthly dividends to each legal resident (those under 19 get half a share).

Dividend recipients are free to use it as they wish. If they want to keep using their gas guzzler, they can use their dividend to pay more for gasoline. They can use it for food if it costs more. With the increasing price on carbon, many will use their dividend to reduce their carbon use, for example, by purchasing a new or used electric vehicle. The market will provide more carbon-free products.

The carbon fee on fuel used for agriculture would be refunded under this legislation, like the highway fuel tax is refunded when fuel is used for agriculture. In addition, if the carbon emitted during fertilizer production is sequestered permanently underground, the carbon fee can be refunded to the manufacturer.

The price on carbon is substantial, increasing by \$10 per ton CO2 emitted each year (equivalent to about 10 cents per gallon of gasoline), with national emissions reduction targets of 40% in 12 years and 90% by 2050.

The dividends are also substantial, rising

to more than \$3,400 per year for a family of four after 10 years. For 61% of households, their dividend in the first year would exceed what they'd pay in carbon fees, and for 85%, it would be at least 98% of their carbon fees.

But what about China and India? To discourage businesses from shifting operations to countries without an equivalent price on carbon, this legislation includes a border adjustment that adds a carbon fee to imports from such countries, and distributes the revenue from that fee to U.S. exporters. This also motivates trading partners, such as China and India, to implement effective climate policies. Global carbon emissions decline.

Economists love this climate policy because it relies on market forces rather than mandates to drive down emissions. The market, not the government, picks the winners.

Republicans will love the policy because the government doesn't keep the revenue. Democrats will appreciate it because the dividend means more to the poor than the wealthy. (Note that neither the fee nor the dividend depends on personal income.)

Farmers can support it because it's powerful enough to drive down most of the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, but waives most costs of

the policy to farmers.

Studies of its impact on the economy conclude that jobs will shift from carbon-intensive industries like fossil fuel extraction and refinement to a wide variety of carbon-lite industries, with a small net overall gain in jobs.

While this legislation is powerful, it is limited to emissions of CO2 and HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons used as refrigerants). Other legislation is needed to support reductions in emissions of other important greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, and to reward CO2 removal and long-term storage. We've already written about the Growing Climate Solutions Act, which facilitates a market for sequestering carbon in soils and trees. Future columns will address emissions of methane and nitrous oxide.

You can be part of this solution to climate change by communicating your support for it. For more information, see energyinnovationact.org.

Steve Ghan is a highly cited climate scientist and leads the Tri-Cities Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby. He meets with mid-Columbia farmers to discuss agriculture and climate change. Kathleen Walker was raised by a hardworking Washington state farmer.

A lesson from a Kalahari Bushman girl



ANDREW
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A SLICE OF LIFE

Have you seen the movie "The Gods Must Be Crazy"? If not, please do.

It is a wonderful film involving the various tribes of people who inhabit Southern Africa and how they relate to each other. It is funny, touching — and even a good romance too.

The central character is a man of the San tribe, a group we know as Kalahari Bushmen. The standard image of the San is deep bush people in the Kalahari desert of Botswana who live a basic lifestyle — men with little loin cloths, bare-breasted women, children with minimal clothing, and a diet of dug-up roots, bushmeat, and water from dewdrops. The San are an isolated people in the Kalahari and have clearly defined features that are unique to their tribe, so a San is very easy to distinguish from other people.

I was on a job in Botswana dealing with livestock disease problems and had a weekend clear. The manager of the bed-and-breakfast where I was staying had a brother, a county counselor (a position similar to our congressional representative) — who offered to take me out sight-seeing to a rhinoceros reserve.

The lunch entertainment at the little restaurant turned out to be a black rhino (the species known to be more dangerous) who came sauntering across the lawn and went to the swimming pool for a drink. He then took a nap in the shade, another drink, a quick snack on a bush and departed. Very curious behavior for a rhino and this was interesting, but I'd seen lots of rhinos in East Africa. But then something happened that was a significant lesson for me.

Our waitress at lunch was a young San woman — that distinctive face was unmistakable — and my stereotype immediately came to mind, but she was wearing a waitress uniform. After lunch my host opened his computer to show me something and it balked — he could not make it work. As our San waitress cleared our table she saw his struggle with the computer and asked if she could help. My stereotype of San leapt

into operation. What? A San girl fixing a computer?

Frustrated, he handed the computer to her. Really?

Click, click, click, click, click.

And then "There you are," as she handed the computer back to him with a smile — fixed and working perfectly.

The lesson for me was about the immediate stereotype into which I had cast that young woman because of her obvious tribal identity. It was ignorant and arrogant of me. History has moved along and the San people no longer fit the movie stereotype. Why couldn't a modern San have computer savvy? Why did I allow myself to have that unconscious bias? Was I demonstrating my own tribalism?

I had been working in Africa for about 15 years, and when I first went to Tanzania in 1964 the ratio of Black people to white people was about 40,000-to-1, so I was entirely accustomed to being in a minority. When I thought about this situation, I was ashamed to admit that after years of experience working with Eastern Africans but not Southern Africans, I had this peculiar response based on a stereotype from a movie as to what Southern African San would be.

I should know better than that.

Currently, a major issue here in America is systemic racism. Indeed, it is truly here — and a component of that systemic racism is personal racism. A component of personal racism is stereotypes, and those stereotypes cripple us in how we relate with the people who are trapped in our self-imposed bias. If we accept stereotypes developed from movies or not-necessarily-true stories or violent television programs, we do a disservice to both ourselves and to the stereotyped persons we meet. In that process we both are wounded, and I myself had been caught in that trap.

Can this be solved and the wounds healed? Yes.

We can do it, but it takes effort and thought and making alterations to our perceptions and stereotypes and behaviors. We'll all be better off when we do so, all across the nation.

Dr. Andrew Clark is a livestock veterinarian with both domestic and international work experience who lives in Pendleton.

Six helpful hints for spelling, reading



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THE EDUCATION CORNER

With the development of vaccines for the coronavirus and distribution underway, there may be an end to distance learning just around the corner. This said, there are still many children struggling with their reading and parents assisting their children with schooling. Learning to read is not the same for everyone.

Reading text is a "human"-created skill and not a natural skill for our brains to process. Therefore, depending on acquisition of a long spectrum of skills, some children have no problems learning to read while others struggle. To add to the confusion, English is a blend of several different languages and rules, making it even harder to understand.

There are those few people in our country who spend their time studying our language and all the rules that apply, yet most of us do not aspire to be linguists. Webster, back in the 1800s, brought us a complete rule book of most of the words and rules behind their spellings. There was a time when teachers were expected to know all those rules prior to starting to teach.

Over the years we have relied on textbook publishers to provide those rules embedded in their curriculum. Many of us do not always pick up on the rules or remember them because the curriculum moves on quickly. When challenged why a word is spelled a certain way we dismiss it and say something like "the English language just has some odd spellings." In most cases, there is a reason behind that spelling, whether it be from the root of the word or the language the word was adopted from.

Having kids read to adults is always beneficial — well, most of the time. What do we find ourselves saying to a child when they come to a word they do not recognize? The most popular response is "sound the word out." The only problem is that the only

English words that can easily be sounded out are one-syllable, short vowel words. In the English language you have to be able to identify the vowel sounds in words, many of which contain multiple letters, and then you are able to blend the word and hopefully get the sounds close enough that you are able to recognize the word from your auditory vocabulary or lexicon.

No worries — here is some help. This will be enough to get you by without having to become a linguist. There are six basic syllable rules that most English words follow, or at least follow closely enough that you can get an approximation, and then recognize the word. The same six rules also help with spelling.

Here they are — open syllable (go, me), closed syllable (cat, fin), vowel team, "r"-controlled (first, far, or), vowel/consonant/silent "e" (same, case) and consonant "le" (little, able). Common blends, digraphs and diphthongs can also cause confusion. Blends are connected letters where you can hear all the letter sounds. Digraphs are a cluster of consonants that create a new sound, and diphthongs are a cluster of letters with at least one vowel. These are the most commonly found word parts in elementary texts. The letter "y" is sometimes considered a vowel but there is a reason. English words don't end in the letter "i" so they use "y" (my, sky, by).

A great activity for students to do is sort single syllable words into each of the above groups. This allows them to work with words along with looking for vowel sounds. This activity only focuses on vowel sounds. The objective is to identify the vowel sound in each word or syllable, and then blend the sounds together to get an approximation close enough that they can recognize the word or are able to spell the word closely enough to be able to recognize it.

Happy word discovery.

Dr. Scott Smith is a Umatilla County educator with 40-plus years of experience. He taught at McNary Heights Elementary School and then for Eastern Oregon University in their teacher education program at Blue Mountain Community College. He serves on the Decoding Dyslexia-OR board as their parent/teacher liaison.