

**OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE**115 SE 8th Street  Pendleton, OR 97801  541.276.7330  [www.owgl.org](http://www.owgl.org)

## 2021 POLICIES & PRIORITIES

### General Guidance to the OWGL Board

The following statements provide general principals which should help guide the development of the League's positions on issues.

#### 1. Regulatory Programs

- a. The OWGL believes regulatory programs affecting agriculture should:
  - i. Provide positive incentives;
  - ii. Not assess fines and penalties on first inspection unless:
    - (1) the violation is serious;
    - (2) clear rules have been provided in a form that is understandable.
  - iii. Have a different schedule of penalties where gross negligence is determined, relative to accidental occurrences which happen in spite of reasonable care and diligence;
  - iv. Provide reasonable education and training to affected parties;
  - v. Promote voluntary compliance.
- b. The OWGL opposes any incentives or regulations which permit or promote third parties filing legal actions and collecting legal fees and costs.

**2. Initiative Petition Reform:** The OWGL generally supports the initiative petition process. The process should include a method to correct oversights, and form and style mistakes before an initiative may be assigned a ballot title. OWGL actively opposes local initiatives that attempt to change or diminish the state pre-emption of agricultural practices, pesticide regulation, or crop selection.

**3. Coordination of Communication:** The OWGL recommends coordination of communication efforts between board members and active volunteers when dealing with the state legislature to establish a lead individual on each issue.

**4. Economic Development:** Oregon Wheat is a top commodity export, resulting in total direct and indirect economic output of more than \$815 million. OWGL supports investments to maximize wheat's economic potential. OWGL encourages maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure critical to the support of farming operations. OWGL encourages economic development throughout the state to increase the standard of living and the quality of life for all Oregon residents in a manner that remains compatible with our primary agricultural uses.

**5. Emergencies:** The use of emergency clauses in legislation should be limited to bills that address the consequences of actual man-made or natural disasters. They should not be used to accelerate the implementation of new legislation or to hinder referrals to voters. When used, an emergency clause should require a 2/3rds majority vote of the legislature.

# OWGL 2021 Priorities

## Environment and Regulations

1. Ensure that pesticide labels and application regulations are consistent with best practices and available scientific research.
  - a. Support restoration of full funding for the State's pesticide programs; regulation, reporting, incident response, complaint processing and public information.
  - b. Support continued implementation, training, and grower education on any new Worker Protection Standards.
2. Oppose efforts to modify State pre-emption of seed/crop choice and pesticide regulation.
3. Oppose efforts to place additional State restrictions or bans on pesticides beyond the EPA labels without clear and convincing scientific evidence that greater restrictions are needed in Oregon.
4. Support acceleration of research and development of environmentally-sound, reduced risk chemistry, economically viable crop protection products in accordance with the goals and purposes of the Food Quality Protection Act. Support federal agencies to use sound science, transparent procedures, and balance in its implementation.
5. Support retention of the Section 18 (c) special local need process.
6. Support Watershed Management Programs.
  - a. Ag Water Quality Management Plans including an adequate monitoring plan.
  - b. Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships.
7. Monitor and react to proposed changes in labor, wage, and benefit requirements for employers that reduce the competitiveness of Oregon wheat growers in global markets.
8. Actively engage in legislative, agency and NAWG carbon and climate discussions in a constructive manner to represent Oregon wheat growers' interests, ensuring proactive practical input to ensure policies are viable for grower adoption and the ongoing economic viability of agriculture.
9. Oppose prescriptive carbon/climate legislation or regulation that has a negative impact on production agriculture's economic viability and/or does not recognize regional or preferential differences in farming practices.
10. Support recognizing agricultural practices scientifically proven as a benefit to the economics of wheat farming and the environment. Support policies being inclusive and flexible to include allowances for regional geographic or preferential differences in farming practices.
11. Support voluntary incentive programs that value and reward the achievements of agriculture in protecting and restoring the environment by rewarding early adopters, along with those taking steps to institute improvements.
12. Pursue changes in the wildlife damage and compensation programs to make them more effective in managing wildlife populations to reduce damage and to compensate growers when crop damage occurs.
13. Support the protection of a landowner's ability to take emergency action to protect their property from flood events and channel erosion.
14. Protect the ability of farmers and their employees to conduct fire prevention, suppression, and control efforts on agricultural and rangelands. Ensure that firefighting entities (federal, state, local) have the maximum ability and authority to coordinate with and utilize farmers and their equipment and resources when fires occur. Advocate for statutory changes to voluntarily allow cropland to be covered by rangeland protection associations.

## Research & Technology

1. Aggressively lobby in the 2021 state legislative session to fully restore research and extension funding.
2. Advocate for increased state and federal funding for wheat research and extension programs to:
  - a. Maintain and expand staff positions in wheat research programs at ARS and OSU.

- b. Promptly fill any open positions.
  - c. Invest in equipment and facilities for programs conducting research to benefit Oregon Wheat producers.
3. Actively support increased federal funding for the ARS-Pendleton program and continued funding for the Resilient Dryland Farming Program.
  4. Work with university and research partners to accelerate development of suitable quality wheat varieties for all Oregon growing regions and conditions using plant breeding innovation, especially 2-gene Clearfield varieties, varieties with herbicide tolerance traits, and varieties adapted to low-rainfall areas.
  5. Work with university and research partners to accelerate development of weed management control options in chem-fallow systems, especially for herbicide resistant weeds.
  6. Support structures to ensure wheat variety releases are aligned with market expectations and requirements. Continue to work for consistency between Oregon and neighboring states on regulatory and inspection issues for certified seed.

## **Farm Policy, Markets, and Transportation**

### **Farm Policy**

1. Support implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill and actively engage in preparations for the next Farm Bill.
2. Support continued crop insurance premium subsidies, expanded conservation programs, and Title 1 shallow loss programs for growers.
3. Work with RMA to address crop insurance issues from local areas:
  - a. Pursue adjustments to the Actual Production History (APH) procedures to provide more favorable treatment for growers who suffer wildlife losses.
  - b. Support more favorable treatment of falling number adjustments.
  - c. Seek elimination of APH penalties for events when no crop insurance claim is filed.
  - d. For hail and windshatter damage, engage a mechanism for realistic yield: allow use of the average yield for the unaffected crop left in the field or, if no crop remains unaffected in the field, allowing that year to be excluded from the APH.
4. Support the availability of electronic documents and signatures for producers' farm program agreements.
5. Work with USDA to address disparities in producer assistance programs payment rates.
6. Support the elimination of limits on Transition Incentive Program payments when a direct family member is involved.
7. Support providing mechanisms to flexibly account for CSP enhancements that utilize new technology developments and/or practices relevant to local conditions.
8. Support development of crop insurance supplemental coverage that covers the administrative withdrawal of water (man-made drought) for irrigation that is not triggered by a disaster declaration due to actual drought.
9. Support legislation that would require federal agencies to complete an EIS which includes consideration of agricultural and other human water uses, before making administrative withdrawals of water.

### **Markets**

1. Support increased funding for overseas marketing programs (MAP and FMD) and maximize allocations of ATP (tariff relief) funding for US Wheat Associates.
2. Support expansion of OWC marketing programs to emerging markets and sustain existing market access.
3. Support continued direct funding for projects through US Wheat Associates and/or Tri-State Wheat Commissions.
4. Support trade agreements that provide level footing for, and enhance competitiveness of, Oregon wheat growers.

5. Support continued monitoring and enforcement of foreign and domestic compliance with multi-lateral and bi-lateral trade agreements.
6. Support for actions to ensure the non-disruption of grain inspection services.

### **Transportation**

1. Advocate for expanded transportation capacity to handle increasing shipments of all types of freight, while improving service and reducing costs for moving grain.
2. Continue to support the operation and maintenance of the Columbia and Snake River Navigation System, including all its existing dams, locks, channels, and jetties. Actively engage with the Corps of Engineers, other commodity groups, shipping interests, and tribes in efforts to expand port facilities and barge and lock capacity of the System.
3. Actively support efforts to communicate the benefits of the dams on the Columbia and Snake River System
  - a. With Board approval on a case-by-case basis provide support for maintaining other dams important to agriculture, irrigation, hydropower, flood control and navigation.
4. Continue to work for consistency between Oregon and neighboring states on regulatory issues, especially for farm vehicles.
5. Participate in Surface Transportation bill processes to advance the Oregon transportation strategy.
6. Support retention of weekly container shipping service at the Port of Portland.

### **Public Education**

1. Improve public education efforts with scientific information on issues surrounding wheat, agriculture, food, and nutrition.
2. Develop multi-media material for website and social media.
3. Continue to expand social media/communications programs for growers and the urban public.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Explore options to reduce the cost of health care for farmers, farm families, and employees, especially in rural areas. Increase access to mental health resources. Support extending the use of telehealth services as an option.
2. Support increased investment to essential communications networks, including accessible and affordable rural broadband and cell service.