

**OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE**115 SE 8th Street 📍 Pendleton, OR 97801 📞 541.276.7330 🌐 www.owgl.org

Oregon Wheat Growers League and our members are especially grateful to the USDA and ODA for the tremendous outreach and coordination efforts regarding the Novel WUHAN Coronavirus (COVID-19). As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout our region, we are now seeing attempts to contain the spread with orders in neighboring states to "shelter in place." As efforts to quarantine and prevent the spread of COVID-19 are considered, we respectfully request in advance, exemptions from future "shelter in place" and other quarantine type orders to facilitate the flow of wheat to market. ***Exemptions for our farmers, trucking companies, storage facilities, barging operations and grain exporters*** who are hard at work continuing to supply necessities to various communities are necessary to avoid disruption in the food supply chain.

The safety of our farms, grain handlers and employees is paramount. Our industry is taking the extra steps necessary to support staggered shifts, social distancing and additional sanitization of workplaces. We recognize that we must continue operations in order to ensure a steady supply of wheat to market. While additional quarantines are not currently in effect, the situation can quickly change. Thus, we ask to be involved in any plans for policy changes that would affect the supply chain related to wheat. We further seek exemptions to quarantines- should they become necessary- for those involved in moving wheat to market. To illustrate, a couple of areas that are important:

On Farm Operations: In order to have wheat to supply, we need to assure that our farms can continue to employ agriculture workers to support planting of the spring crop, irrigation, servicing machinery, and other farm operations. There is not an option for delaying this work: mother nature does not wait for us. If we do not have the labor to plant and tend to our crops, we will not have wheat to harvest in July and August.

Movement of Wheat by River: The Columbia River trade corridor is the lifeblood of our regional economy. It is the nation's number one wheat export gateway and number two for corn and soybean exports. It is the third largest grain export gateway in the world, as well as the West Coast's leader in dry bulks, mineral bulk, wood exports and auto imports and exports. We need to assure that those working to move product along the river can continue operations.

Movement of Grain by Rail and Road: This particularly impacts our interior elevators. Ensuring rail can continue operations, even through quarantined areas if those are instituted, will allow wheat to continue to get from farm and elevators to export ports.

Federal Activities: Inspections through Federal Grains Inspection Service and support for federal activities that allow for export of wheat is important. Approximately 85-90% of Oregon Wheat is exported to international markets making flour. It is a critical aspect of the supply chain.

We must still provide for our communities and the food supply chain. Thank you for your efforts as we all navigate through this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Clint Carlson,
OWGL President