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NEWS RELEASE

Congress approves wheat growers' request for \$1 million in falling numbers research funding

(March 27, 2018, Ritzville, WA) For more than a year, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Washington Grain Commission have been working with a group of Pacific Northwest industry stakeholders and members of the region's federal delegation to increase falling numbers research funding through an appropriations request. That request, \$1 million to the Agricultural Research Service, was included in the Omnibus appropriations bill passed last week by Congress and signed by the president.

"A successful appropriations request normally takes years, but with the help and support of a bipartisan effort with congressional leaders, we were able to succeed in a very short timeframe," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. "We are especially grateful for the leadership shown by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Rep. Dan Newhouse in the House and Sen. Patty Murray in the Senate. These legislators, along with the rest of Washington's delegation, were instrumental in successfully guiding our request through the process."

In Washington State, the request was supported by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and Washington State University. The national wheat industry groups, the National Association of Wheat Growers and U.S. Wheat Associates along with Oregon and Idaho wheat grower organizations also supported the appropriations request and helped educate legislators on the need for more research funding.

"Addressing the falling numbers issue has been a high priority in our region, with implications beyond our borders to our international customers. We are appreciative to all those involved in recognizing the issue and look forward to expanded efforts to address it moving forward," added Gary Bailey, chairman of the Washington Grain Commission.

"Over the years, myself and many of my neighbors have been hit with falling number discounts. Wheat farmers desperately need to understand and find a solution to this problem, and this additional funding will provide a huge boost to that effort," said Marci Green, a farmer from Fairfield, Wash., and president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

In 2016, low falling numbers hit a large portion of the Pacific Northwest's wheat crop, costing growers between \$30 million and \$130 million in discounts. Not only will this funding help researchers understand and address the causes of low falling numbers, either through breeding or other methods, but it will also fund research into how low falling numbers impacts end-use products.

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