



Washington Association of Wheat Growers

109 E. First Ave. • Ritzville, WA • 99169 • Phone (509) 659-0610 • Fax (509) 659-4302

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Contact: Michelle Hennings (509) 659-0610

WAWG continues to seek relief for farmers affected by falling numbers

In an effort to alleviate a burden on wheat producers, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) led the charge in requesting the Risk Management Agency (RMA) waive a reporting procedure when wheat farmers are hit with a low falling number discount at the elevator, regardless of whether or not a claim is filed. WAWG is disappointed that RMA has denied this request.

“The falling number discount and its effect on a producer’s actual production history (APH) has been a growing concern in the Pacific Northwest,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. “We had hoped for immediate relief for producers, but we understand RMA’s position that it might create an inequality among other commodities with quality issues.”

WAWG joined with Idaho Grain Producers Association and Oregon Wheat Growers League, along with 33 other Pacific Northwest Ag organizations, in writing a letter to RMA Administrator Brandon Willis asking him to consider waiving the procedure that requires crop insurance companies to reduce a producer’s actual production history when falling number discounts are assessed at the elevator. A farmer’s APH is averaged over 10 years and is used to determine future crop insurance guarantees.

In addition to WAWG’s letter, 12 members of the Pacific Northwest’s Congressional delegation, led by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, sent Administrator Willis their own letter supporting WAWG’s request. Washington State Department of Agriculture Director Derek Sandison also sent a letter to Administrator Willis expressing his support of waiving the reporting procedure when no claim is filed.

“This is unfortunate,” said Marci Green, a wheat farmer from Fairfield, Wash., and WAWG’s secretary/treasurer. “Some of the rules regarding this issue are causing confusion and are inconsistent, so I’m hopeful that maybe we’ve at least opened the door, and RMA will consider making some changes in how quality discounts are used as yield adjustments.”

We are aware of the hardship our Washington wheat farmers are facing, given record low prices following several years of drought. Many producers are at risk of losing their farms, and the impacts of low falling numbers are making the situation worse. WAWG is committed to finding a better way to handle falling number discounts and will continue to work with RMA to develop a feasible solution for growers. To read the letters sent to the RMA, visit WAWG’s website at wawg.org.

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About WAWG: Education and outreach are the heart of Washington Association of Wheat Growers activity, all of which is aimed at helping Washington wheat families. Since 1954, WAWG has been dedicated to the enrichment of the Washington wheat industry as a nonprofit trade association, which depends on volunteers, membership dues and donations to carry out activities as representatives on the state and national levels. WAWG monitors state, transportation, research and natural resources policy and partners with the National Association of Wheat Growers to monitor national farm policy. Visit wawg.org for more information.