



# Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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## **PNW states' congressional request for falling numbers funding passes appropriations committee markups**

Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a Pacific Northwest request for \$1 million in falling numbers research funding. The request was also approved by the House Appropriations Committee earlier this month. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) thanks Congress for recognizing the devastating impacts falling numbers has had on the region's wheat industry and the need for more research to understand and combat falling numbers.

"We are fortunate to have congressional leaders from both sides of the aisles who stepped up and supported our request," said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. "A successful appropriations request often takes years, but we were able to move the request along within a very short time frame. We still have a lot of work to do during conference, but this is a successful start, and we are hoping to end with a huge victory for the wheat industry. This funding will allow for advances in breeding and testing for falling numbers that will benefit growers across the nation."

"Research is vital to our success in growing a high quality crop that meets the expectations of our overseas buyers," said Ben Adams, president of WAWG and a grower from Coulee City, Wash. "Falling numbers cost Pacific Northwest wheat growers millions of dollars last year, and we are thankful for the efforts of our Pacific Northwest grower associations and the National Association of Wheat Growers in moving this request along."

In Washington State, the request was supported by the Washington Grain Commission, 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. The collaboration efforts between these groups was instrumental in advancing this important issue. The next step for the appropriations request is for it to go to conference where any differences between the House and Senate versions will be hammered out.

The need for research funding crystallized in the wake of last year's Pacific Northwest wheat harvest when low falling numbers hit a large part of the region's crop and cost growers between \$30 million and \$130 million in discounts. Even though many growers saw huge monetary losses, they were unable to qualify for crop insurance because of record yields. In addition, those growers' production history may be adjusted, impacting their ability to fully insure future crops.

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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](http://wawg.org) for more information.