



Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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WHEAT FARMERS CALL FOR STABLE AND PREDICTABLE FARM PROGRAMS IN CURRENT FARM ECONOMY

WASHINGTON WHEAT SPEAKS OUT AGAINST FARBILL CRITICS

(May 23, 2018, Ritzville, WA) In a pivotal time for American agricultural producers, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) continues to urge Congress for swift passage of a bipartisan farm bill. And as the debate continues across the nation, WAWG calls for the focus to be on the facts, particularly with critical programs like crop insurance and commodity programs.

In response to the upcoming Washington Policy Center event with a discussion on the 2018 Farm Bill, Marci Green, President of WAWG and Fairfield, Wash. farmer, made the following statement:

“Contrary to the belief of certain individuals and groups in favor of dismantling federal farm programs, the U.S. agricultural sector is experiencing a financial crisis. Wheat growers are proven to be highly leveraged, and the simple fact that the wheat price recently triggered Market Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments is an indicator of the bad economic conditions in rural America.”

The federal crop insurance program is often targeted by groups like The Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute and others. According to National Crop Insurance Services, “The federal program came to prominence following years of costly, inefficient ad hoc disaster bills as a way to speed assistance to farmers when they need it most, while reducing taxpayer risk exposure. Forty-two emergency disaster bills in agriculture cost taxpayers \$70 billion from 1989 to 2012, according to the Congressional Research Service. Today, crop insurance is the cornerstone of U.S. farm policy.”

Randy Suess, past chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates added, “By many measures, the farm economy is struggling. Adding to farm economy stress is the uncertainty in the growth of our international markets. Wheat farmers need the security and certainty of programs in the farm bill to be able to farm another year. Now is not the time for distracting, and often misleading, rhetoric that could ultimately harm the farming community and rural America.”

Brett Blankenship, past president of the National Association of Wheat Growers concluded, “Having been part of previous farm bill discussions and implementation, one thing is perfectly clear—we are experiencing historically low commodity prices and I wholeheartedly agree with Senate Agriculture Committee Leader Pat Roberts in saying that stability and predictability are the two key points to the 2018 Farm Bill. Additionally, a bipartisan farm bill helps family farms manage the risks of volatile markets and unpredictable weather. Without an adequate safety net, many farmers will not be able to obtain credit from their bankers to operate.”

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers does not endorse the beliefs of Dr. Vincent Smith, or the Washington Policy Center Farm Bill event.

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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. For more information on this or other related issues, please contact Michelle Hennings, Executive Director of Washington Association of Wheat Growers at, 509-659-0610, michelle@wawg.org Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Washington-Association-of-Wheat-Growers-194847140538562> Twitter: @WAWheatGrowers