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2702 W. Sunset Blvd. Ste. A
Spokane, Washington 99224
(509) 456-2481
FAX (509) 456-2812
www.wagrains.org



109 E First Ave.
Ritzville, WA 99169
(509) 659-0610
FAX (509) 659-4302
www.wawg.org

WASHINGTON WHEAT GROWERS DISAPPOINTED IN FARM BILL EXPIRATION

WAWG AND WGC CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE SHORT TERM EXTENSION, FARMERS NEED STABILITY AND CERTAINTY

SPOKANE, Washington (October 1, 2018) – Absent passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) and the Washington Grain Commission (WGC) are urging the Senate and House Agriculture Committees to immediately pass a short-term extension while continuing to work to pass a final bill as quickly as possible

“Dragging this process out only adds to the uncertainty farmers are already facing due to trade and tariff issues and low commodity prices,” said Marci Green, WAWG president and a wheat farmer from Fairfield, Wash. “Farmers’ livelihoods depend on the funding the farm bill provides. Without a new farm bill, conservation programs, crop insurance and disaster recovery programs are all in jeopardy.”

“It is critical that funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program is included in a short-term funding extension. Eastern Washington wheat growers export approximately 90 percent of their wheat and depend heavily on these market access programs to maintain and support those overseas markets” said Gary Bailey, WGC chairman and a St. John, Wash. Farmer. Without a farm bill, sign-ups for conservation programs may be halted, and commodity program payments for next year’s crops may be delayed or even suspended.

“MAP and FMD are instrumental in our industry’s ability to sell our wheat. Without a final farm bill, these programs are at risk of running out of funding, which will seriously cripple our overseas market development work. That uncertainty is unacceptable to our growers who are already seeding next year’s crops,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director of WAWG. “We urge the members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees to find a compromise as quickly as possible that permits farmers to continue to grow and sell the crops that feed the world.”

Recently, WAWG leaders have taken part in several fly-ins to Washington, D.C., meeting with most members of Washington State’s Congressional delegation to advocate for swift passage of the 2018 Farm Bill. WAWG thanks them for their time and urges them to continue voicing their support for this vital legislation.

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For more information contact:
Michelle Hennings, Executive Director, WAWG – (509) 659-0610
Glen Squires, CEO, WGC – (509) 456-2481