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Many of you are probably wondering what in the world this title means. Well to tell the truth, I stole most of it from a book written by Charles Rust. The only addition I made to the title was “= success.” This book is an early history of the Montana Grain Growers Association and the Montana Wheat Research and Marketing Committee, now known as the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. Many of the articles I have previously written include a link to past history, but I hadn’t connected MGGA’s past history with its current business.

As I read through this book it is striking to me how often some of the same things they strived for in the late 1950’s are nearly the exact same things we are talking about some fifty odd years later. Not that there was failure to achieve these goals; some goals are just not meant to be achieved. I suspect that fifty years from now we will still have a goal to increase the yield and milling quality of small grains in some form or fashion. I believe the same can be said for farm programs. With our ever changing budgetary and political climate in Washington DC it’s not an achievable goal to maintain the perfect farm program, but it’s one we continue to work toward.

Because I started this article by stealing a title, I will continue down the same path by stealing an excerpt out of the Wheat Scoop publication, matriarch to our current Montana Grain News, that is as meaningful today as it was in 1958. It’s entitled “To Thine Own Self be True.”
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MGGA Elects Officers and Sets Policy Direction for 2013

At the conclusion of this year’s annual convention in Great Falls, the Montana Grain Growers Association elected officers, installed new board members and set the organization’s policy for 2013. These actions put the finishing touches on a successful 57th Annual MGGA Convention attended by over 800 farmers, agribusiness representatives and guests.

Ryan McCormick, a grain producer from Kremlin, was installed as MGGA President for the coming year. Elected Vice President was Matt Flikkema of Manhattan; Treasurer Charlie Bumgarner of Great Falls; and Secretary Rob Davis of Richland. Brian Eggebrecht, Malta, will serve as Past President.

Directors re-elected to serve a second term on the board are Ryan Fast, Glasgow, District 2, Tom Horpestad, Lavina, District 10, and Randy Wolenetz, Baker, District 14. Newly elected to a four year term are Lyle Benjamin, Sunburst, District 6; Tryg Koch, Kalispell, District 7; Carl Malessich, Dillon, District 8; Ben Toeckes, Townsend, District 8; and Michelle Erickson, Broadview, District 12.

A primary focus of the convention is approval by the membership of the organization’s policy positions for the coming year. These resolutions guide MGGA, its leadership and staff on issues that directly affect the livelihood of wheat and barley producers. The approved 2013 resolutions can be found on the MGGA website at http://www.mgga.org/About/resolutions.html

** Winner of this year’s drawing for a free convention registration was Lynnette Nelson from Richland, MT.

2013 MGGA Officer Team: l-r back row: Brian Eggebrecht, Rob Davis and Charlie Bumgarner; front: Matt Flikkema and Ryan McCormick.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

December is a good time to review your fall (winter wheat, forage production and/or PRF Rainfall) Summary of Coverage (or Schedule of Insurance) to verify for accuracy and completeness.

As you determine what you are going to seed for spring crops, review with your agent the crops insurable, rates for coverage and premiums for renewing the budget. FCIC is now filing those spring changes; rates & premiums should be available after January 1. The Spring Wheat price will be calculated the month of February average on MGE; and Barley using the CBOT Corn prices; both will be announced March 1.

March 15 is the deadline to add or change coverage for SPRING crops (spring wheat keeps the same coverage as winter wheat; except in Sheridan and Daniels Counties OR if no winter wheat was seeded, coverage can be changed).
Join Young Grain Growers “Following the Grain” to Portland

The MGGA’s Young Grain Growers is once again “Following the Grain” to Portland. Please join us, January 30-February 2, 2013, as we follow Montana wheat to the State Grain Lab, the Wheat Marketing Center, the EGT Export Terminal, and much more. Cost is $200/person, which includes bus transport, lodging, entrance into facilities, and some meals. For more information on how to join our tour, contact Megan Mattson-Hedges at 541-760-3452 or email megan@mattsonfarms.com

“Follow the Grain” 2013 Travel Agenda

January 30 – Wednesday
9:00am – Group meets at State Grain Lab in Great Falls, MT to tour their new facility
10:00am – Load bus for departure to Lewiston, ID with a lunch stop along the way
6:00pm – Arrive in Lewiston for dinner and one night’s stay

January 31 – Thursday
8:00am – Depart for tour of the Pacific NW Farmer’s Coop Facility, Genesee, ID
11:00am – Tour the Pataha Flour Mill Museum and have lunch, Pomeroy, WA
2:30pm – Winery tour, Benton City, WA
7:00pm – Arrive in Portland for night’s stay

February 1 – Friday
8:00am – Tour the Wheat Marketing Center, Portland, OR
11:00am – Meet with representatives from U.S. Wheat to discuss wheat exports
12:00pm – Bakery tour (tentative)
3:00pm – Tour EGT, LLC export facility in Longview, WA
5:30pm – Dinner and meeting with EGT representatives, provided by EGT, LLC
10:30pm – Arrive in Ellensburg, WA for night’s lodging

Thank you to the Montana Wheat & Barley Committee, MGGA, Northwest Farm Credit Services, and EGT for your help in making this trip possible.

Thank You to our Fall Customers, we look forward to serving your needs with spring crop seeds.

You’re Invited
Customer Appreciation Holiday Get Together
Friday, December 21st
1:00pm to 6:00pm

Thank you to the Montana Wheat & Barley Committee, MGGA, Northwest Farm Credit Services, and EGT for your help in making this trip possible.
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Our Neighbor’s Daily Bread Receives Hunger’s Hope Award

The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) has recognized Our Neighbor’s Daily Bread, a program of the Montana Grains Foundation, to receive their Hunger’s Hope Award.

The Hunger’s Hope Award is MFBN’s most prestigious award provided to individuals, donors, corporations, and organizations that have demonstrated excellence in their efforts and have made significant impacts to assist in ending hunger in Montana. The Montana Grains Foundation was nominated and unanimously selected to receive this award for the incredible contributions made and tremendous impact obtained through their generous donations and flour provided by Our Neighbor’s Daily Bread. The program is unique and vital to the MFBN as it provides a valuable staple food product that is available to them whenever they need it.

To celebrate and honor this wonderful achievement, MFBN invited Montana Grains Foundation president Dale Schuler and his wife Margie to attend their annual Chef’s Affair Gala in Missoula. Pictured above from left are Brent Weisgram (Director of Operations for the Montana Food Bank Network) and his wife Jennifer and Dale and Margie Schuler.

To donate to Our Neighbor’s Daily Bread simply visit with your local elevator manager and inform him of your gifting intentions. Donated bushels will be sold when the farmer sells his share and a check for the donated amount will be sent by the elevator at the time of settlement to “Our Neighbor’s Daily Bread” in care of the Montana Grains Foundation, a not-for-profit arm of the MGGA. For more information visit www.mgga.org.

2012 MGGA Convention

Mark Gaede, NAWG Director of Government Affairs on Environmental Policy, addresses convention attendees.

Dr. Gary Brester, MSU economist, presents a Beginning Farmer workshop to an overflow crowd of young farmers.

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USDA Announces Crop Insurance Rate Changes

Crop insurance premium rates for grain sorghum, spring wheat, rice and cotton will go up in some states and down in others in 2013, according to new rates announced by the US Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency. RMA noted that it has revised the rates in line with an independent study that recommended the agency give more weight to recent years, rather than the traditional approach of giving equal weight to all years back to 1975.

RMA is required by law to set actuarially sound premium rates in a timely manner for the federal crop insurance program. RMA conducts periodic reviews of its rates and methodology. These periodic reviews assure that the Federal crop insurance program does not place an unnecessary financial burden on growers or on the American taxpayer through unsound premium rates. Last year premium rate revisions on corn and soybeans resulted in overall decreases in premium collected through much of the country.

For spring wheat, there will be an overall national increase of around 4 percent. In general, premium is more likely to decrease in core growing areas and increase elsewhere driven largely by loss experience in recent years. There will be varying impacts by crop and county driven largely by loss experience in more recent years.

RMA estimates Montana spring wheat premiums will decrease an average of 14%. However, only Sheridan and Daniels Counties are designated by RMA as ‘spring wheat’ counties with a final contract change date of November 30. RMA expects the spring wheat premium adjustment will only apply to those two counties in Montana for crop year 2013. The remaining 54 Montana counties are designated ‘dual’ counties (both winter and spring wheat coverage is available) with a final contract change date of June 30. RMA anticipates a comparable adjustment to spring wheat premiums in those counties, but not until the 2014 crop year.
“Sentinels of the Prairie”

This beautiful limited-edition print (limited run of 200) by artist Jeff Walker was commissioned to honor the retirement of Jim Christianson, long-time executive vice president of the Montana Wheat & Barley Committee. The print is 21” x 29” on solid backing ready for framing. These numbered prints will go fast, so get yours today. Price - $225.

“No Money, No Postage, No Secretary: An Early History of the Montana Grain Growers Association and the Montana Wheat Research & Marketing Committee”

Published in 2005 by retired MSU agricultural economics professor Charlie Rust, this book chronicles the impetus and establishment of both the MGGA and the MWBC. Complete with pictures and historical documents, the events and people come alive as Dr. Rust describes how dedicated individuals organized, developed and launched a plan to serve the needs of the Montana grain grower.

*Organized through the Montana Grains Foundation, all proceeds from both the print and the book will be used for scholarships for Montana students. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization.

Name _______________________________________
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“Sentinels of the Prairie” Print $225 each plus $15 shipping $ ________
“No Money, No Postage, No Secretary” Book $15 each plus $3 shipping $ ________

Total: $ __________

Make check payable and mail to: Montana Grains Foundation, P.O. Box 1165, Great Falls, MT 59403-1165
RMA’s Murphy to Retire: Willis Named Acting Administrator

Administrator of USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) Bill Murphy will retire at the end of this year and Brandon Willis, senior adviser to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, has been named acting administrator.

Bill Murphy  Brandon Willis

Murphy spent more than 30 years in federal service. Before his post as RMA Administrator, he served as RMA Acting Administrator during the transition to the first Obama term, Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services, Director of the Regional Office in Davis, Calif., overseeing crop insurance operations in California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and Hawaii; and Director of the Western Region Compliance Office.

Brandon Willis, currently serving as Senior Advisor to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, has been named Acting Administrator of RMA in the interim period. In making the announcement, Agriculture Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Michael Scuse said, “Brandon brings tremendous knowledge from his years as Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs at FSA and as an advisor to Senator Max Baucus during the 2008 Farm Bill process. Most important to me, Brandon is a family farmer – he grew up on a third generation sheep ranch in northern Utah and managed his family’s raspberry farm – and he knows firsthand the importance of Federal risk management policy for rural America. I know he will serve RMA well.”
AC21 Report Released with Insights on Biotech and Organic Crop Coexistence

The final report for the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (AC21) was submitted to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on Nov 19. Keith Kisling, a farmer from Burlington, Okla., who represents wheat growers on AC21, emphasized during the AC21 process that farmers have been engaged locally on agriculture production issues for years and, following the report’s release, said that “the AC21 dialogue has confirmed the value of diversity in U.S. agriculture and the history of successful coexistence among different production methods.” In his formal comments on the report, Kisling urged the Secretary to consider the ramifications from the implementation of any new programs, especially the impact to trade. The full AC21 report is available online at http://www.usda.gov.

Value of Agricultural Trade Continues to Rise

US Wheat Associates

According to recently released trade statistics from the World Trade Organization, global agricultural exports reached $1.66 trillion in 2011, accounting for just over 9 percent of total world goods trade. The report also emphasized how fast the agriculture sector is growing, with the value of agricultural trade increase 20 percent from 2010 to 2011.

Roughly 20 years ago, world agricultural exports totaled just $415 billion and rose slowly during the 1990s to $551 billion by 2000. The next decade saw exports jump dramatically to $1.37 trillion in 2010.

With such a substantial rise, what will the future hold for agricultural trade in the next 40 years as population and incomes continue to grow? Specifically for wheat, a 2011 internal USW study conservatively estimated that world wheat trade would double by 2050 to meet demand as much of the consumption growth will be in countries that are already net importers. For all of agriculture, good trade policies will be even more important to foster exports to meet additional demand and feed a growing world population.
“Within certain circles there seems to be increasing confusion and concern on the “position” of the Montana Grain Growers Association on various agricultural issues.

The confusion is perhaps understandable in that MGGA has always insisted on judging farm programs, both Republican and Democratic, in the light of their effect on Montana’s grain producers.

This insistence on evaluating issues on merit and above politics is based on the thought that no program conceived by mortal man is perfect... but, by the same token, no program is Disaster reincarnated.

But we freely confess to a bias - we are for the Montana grain producer. This is the reason for our existence.”

I have taken to carrying a copy of “No Money, No Postage, No Secretary” in my briefcase, not to show other people, but at those times when I am feeling overwhelmed with my duties as an MGGA officer or when I am nearly ready to explode over the speed of our legislative process or partisan b.s., I will notice this weathered copy in my briefcase and remember all the struggles those individuals went through when this was a fledgling organization. It took those early leaders one month in the fall of 1956 to organize MGGA from three regional organizations around the state. This gave them a full head of steam going into the 1957 state legislative session where they proposed legislation to create a check-off to fund wheat research. They were eventually successful in getting a wheat check-off passed, ten years later in the 1967 legislative session, which is the check-off that funds our current Montana Wheat and Barley Committee.

I who grew up in this era of instant gratification am upset at the speed of our legislative process regarding the farm bill after only a few months when these diligent farmers stayed the course with virtually the same legislation for ten years. I also take note of those individuals who donated their own money and who were not only officers but also doubled as volunteer staff when a staff could not be afforded, going so far as to actually serve as editor of the Wheat Scoop. When I think of these things, my duties as an MGGA officer look pretty limited when I have a wonderful staff that works hard in and day out and it doesn’t appear there will be any financial strain that will cause me to become editor of the Grain News in the near future. In short, things are great in Montana agriculture. The future is bright and limitless and I believe the same goes for the Montana Grain Growers Association and its membership.

Now, once again, I will leave you with a quote from history. Not just some random historical quote but a quote from our own history, which comes from the first MGGA presidential address.

“We need wide participation and understanding of what we are attempting to do. Understanding and adequate finances are the twin needs necessary for achievement. Simply, membership is our most important first in this organization.” Norris E. Hanford, MGGA Past President 1956

Editors Note: The book No Money, No Postage, No Secretary is available at the MGGA office. See the ad in this issue.
Scientists Announce Strides Toward Wheat Genome Sequence

The recent announcement of a “shotgun sequence” of the wheat genome inspired excitement about the possibilities for breakthrough science based on increased understanding of the crop’s complex genetic make-up.

Sequencing the wheat genome has been a long-term goal of many leading wheat researchers and wheat farmers. The large size of the wheat genome, more than five times the size of the human genome, poses a huge and expensive scientific challenge and creates hurdles for crop improvement for wheat. Unlocking the wheat genome will have a global impact since one-fifth of calories consumed by the earth’s people come from wheat.

An article published in *Nature* described the results of a large, international collaboration to further understand the wheat genome using a “shotgun sequencing approach”.

The “shotgun sequencing approach” involved first identifying millions of DNA fragments and then piecing them together to identify nearly 100,000 genes in common wheat. Two-thirds of the genes identified were able to be assigned to the three component genomes of hexaploid wheat.

However, gaps remain in the sequence, and it is not anchored to a genetic map of agronomic traits. The project to create a complete sequence anchored to a map has been underway for some time by an international team of scientists but is not fully funded, which has delayed progress.

Researchers are searching for genetic keys that will help them breed better, higher-yielding varieties. This potential could be realized by identifying sources of genetic diversity within wheat ancestors and relatives or by mapping additional landmarks for important traits within today’s wheat. The research announced in November, 2012, identified expanded gene families that could be associated with higher yield.

“This is an excellent piece of research to identify most of the genes in wheat,” said P. Stephen Baenziger, a wheat breeder at the University of Nebraska and the chair of the National Wheat Genomics Committee.

“It is a major step forward but also highlights how much further we need to go to fully utilize the wheat genome for crop improvement. The full sequence is needed so we can know the location of the key genes and how the sequence relates to the genome function.”

The effort included researchers from the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. U.S. collaborators included researchers at USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, University of California-Davis, Kansas State University and North Dakota State University.

Jan Dvorak of UC-Davis and a study co-author, noted in a release that “this work moves us one step closer to a comprehensive and highly detailed genome sequence for bread wheat.”

Another of the study’s co-authors, Bikram Gill, who is the director of the Kansas State Wheat Genetics Resource Center, said, “Scientists now have a genetic blueprint of common wheat for many traits, although associating gene sequences with traits will take many more years of work.”

Study Says Monetization Offers Benefits, Doesn’t Disrupt Trade

A new report announced in November at a Capitol Hill briefing found that monetization of food aid generates multiple benefits for recipient countries and does not disrupt commercial trade when carried out properly.

The study was conducted by Informa Economics and commissioned by the Alliance for Global Food Security, which is made up of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and cooperatives that are engaged in food aid, agriculture, nutrition and food security programs in more than 100 developing countries.

About 85 percent of food aid commodities are directly distributed overseas, while the remaining 15 percent are “monetized,” or sold in food-deficit countries to generate funds that support development activities. All food aid
programs are planned in advance and approved by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or USDA.

Monetization has two major benefits to a food insecure country: it provides a commodity that is in short supply and generates funds to carry out programs that improve food security and economic development.

The Informa study found that this combination allows monetization to offer additional value. Monetization puts commodities into recipient countries’ marketing systems to generate economic activity and addresses constraints to imports presented by small volumes and lack of hard currency and credit.

Proper design and implementation of monetization programs can also avoid interfering with local commodity production or displacing commercial sales.

The report release was followed by a panel discussion about the implications of its findings and food aid policy more broadly.

Oklahoma Wheat Commission Executive Director Mike Schulte was one of the panelists available, speaking about food aid policy from a farmer’s perspective.

Wheat is one of the top commodities given as food aid, and monetization can increase availability of better quality wheat in recipient countries.

For instance, Informa studied programs in Uganda and Mozambique where millers were able to purchase wheat in their local currency at local prices, which would not be possible without monetization.

NAWG and U.S. Wheat Associates are committed to global food assistance and encourage policies that include the full range of options to help countries attain lasting and sustainable food security.
Price Protection

Crop input costs have a huge impact on your farm’s bottom-line. Buying fertilizer and fuel when the price is right can not only save your farm money, it can pay for your new on-farm storage. Our Meridian multi-purpose hopper bins and fuel tanks feature our premium powder coated finish and user-friendly safety features. Make sure you’re prepared and visit your authorized Meridian Dealer today to learn more about their full line of Meridian fertilizer bins and fuel tanks.

To learn more, visit your local Meridian Dealer or www.MeridianMFG.com