

IMPACT



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Latah County Extension Cereal School Brings Resources Together for Growers

The Situation

At times, growers are facing near crisis situations on the Palouse. They can produce numerous crops with good quality and yields, but often only at an economic loss. Latah County's largest crops are cereal grains—over 115,000 acres of wheat and barley are grown in Latah County, with 70% of those acres being winter-crop. Growers continually seek additional information to fine-tune their production systems in order to maintain or increase profitability. Even though many large-scale farmers rely on private ag-chemical and fertilizer companies to assist with the day-to-day management of their farms, growers also state there is need for a source of information that comes without a retail sales bias. Extension plays a vital role in getting research-based, proven production and management information to the local farmers.

Our Response

Since 1999 Latah County Extension, in cooperation with the North Central Idaho Area (NCIA) Extension crops team, has annually conducted the Latah County Extension Cereal School. With grassroots input and guidance from local farmers, knowledgeable speakers have been recruited to address timely issues related to cereal grain cropping systems. The Cereal School has been co-sponsored by the Latah County Grain Producers Association (LCGPA) and the Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA) who provided funding to pay for facilities, breaks and meals. The school has also

been supported by the Idaho Barley Commission and the Idaho Wheat Commission.

Program Outcomes

The Extension Cereal School has proven to be very successful! Comments over the years indicated growers value and support the program. Examples of comments from participants include: "Good program, well focused on subjects,...thanks for your work," "A very good meeting," and "Great to get unbiased data."

In a recent formal survey, 100% of respondents indicated they increased their knowledge about hard white wheat production, and they found value in the Extension Cereal School. Growers stated that they had increased their knowledge by 45%.

Over 90% of surveyed growers indicated that information they gained would be useful in their operation, and that it would affect their management in the upcoming season.

Nearly 75% indicated they have used information from previous schools in their operations.

The Future

The NCIA Extension crops team (UI Extension Educators David Barton, Ken Hart and Larry Smith, and UI Crop Management Specialist, Stephen Guy) has plans to continue the crops school to address topics of interest to producers such as rotational crops, enterprise budgeting, state water issues, precision ag technology and herbicides.

For More Information

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