

# Newsletter

May-June 2026



WSU EXTENSION  
**Garfield County**

## Welcome to the WSU Garfield County Extension Newsletter!

This is an electronic newsletter highlighting events and topics of interest to residents of Garfield County and the surrounding area. This newsletter can also be viewed on our website: <https://extension.wsu.edu/Garfield/>

Do you have an event or subject you would like added to our newsletter or website? Would you like to be removed from our Extension Newsletter email list?

Contact the Extension Office

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**Email: [mbartlow@co.garfield.wa.us](mailto:mbartlow@co.garfield.wa.us)**

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## The Challenge of ag Viability in Washington State Washington Wheat Foundation|wawheat.org|Wheat Life April|2026

Washington is widely recognized as one of the nation's most productive agricultural states. We are a local food haven, second only to California in the diversity of crops grown! The state consistently ranks among the top producers of many specialty crops, generating more than \$10 billion annually in agricultural value spanning across its 32,000 farms (94% family-owned). Agriculture makes up 10-13% of the state's annual gross domestic product, and our farmers and ranchers manage nearly 7.7 million acres of the state's lands. Yet behind those impressive production numbers, many farmers say the economics of agriculture in Washington are becoming increasingly unsustainable.

Recent data paints a troubling picture. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture, Washington lost more than 3,700 farms between 2017 and 2022, an average of more than two farms every day. The decline reflects mounting financial pressures on growers, particularly family farms that operate on thin margins and depend on stable markets and affordable production costs.

The financial outlook has become even more concerning. In 2024, Washington ranked last in the nation for returns to farm operators, with overall returns estimated at negative \$295 million. While farmers in other major agricultural states saw billions in positive returns, Washington growers collectively spent more on inputs and operations than they earned. Analysts point to a strong U.S. dollar, which reduces export competitiveness, as one contributing factor. But our export dependence is only one contributing factor.

Rising costs are another major driver. The increase in labor, fuel, fertilizer, and regulatory compliance expenses have all increased sharply in recent years, especially in our state. In fact, labor costs alone have been reported far above national averages in Washington, reflecting both higher wages and regulatory requirements. For farmers producing globally traded crops, those higher costs can be difficult to recover in the marketplace. For example, in 1986, the Chicago Board of Trade wheat futures were roughly \$2.40-\$2.60 per bushel. Adjusting for inflation, today that would be \$7-\$7.50 per bushel. As of March 4, 2026, Chicago wheat futures were listed at roughly \$5.69-\$5.90 per bushel.

Another way to think of it is to compare fuel prices. In 1986, wheat prices were at \$2.50 per bushel and diesel was about \$1 per gallon. Today wheat prices are \$5.70 per bushel and diesel is \$4-5 per gallon. Wheat prices have not kept pace with input inflation, which is part of why many grain growers argue margins are tighter today despite higher nominal prices. A Washington wheat farmer today may harvest 60-70 bushels per acre, compared to about 40 bushels in the 1980s, but their real profit per acre is often similar or lower. Today, our farmers produce higher yields at higher costs, and profit margins suffer.

Wheat farmers are not alone in this struggle. Potato fields, apple orchards, grape vineyards, and others are feeling the impact. Many growers say these pressures are creating a cycle that threatens the long-term viability of farming across crops. When production costs rise faster than commodity prices, farmers often take on additional debt or

defer investments in equipment and infrastructure. Over time, those financial strains can push farms to consolidate, sell land, or shut down entirely. The result is fewer farms, fewer opportunities for the next generation, and a gradual loss of agricultural capacity.

The stress is not only economic. It is personal. Studies and reports tied to the agricultural sector in Washington have highlighted growing mental health concerns among farmers, driven largely by financial uncertainty, unpredictable weather, and the responsibility of maintaining multigenerational operations.

Despite the challenges, many industry leaders believe solutions are possible. Policies that improve labor availability, support export competitiveness, reduce regulatory burdens, and stabilize production costs could help improve profitability and keep farms in operation. Investments in infrastructure, research, and workforce development may also strengthen the long-term outlook for the industry.

Washington agriculture remains a cornerstone of the state's economy and rural communities, but the loss of thousands of farms and declining farm income highlight an urgent reality: the loss of locally grown food can happen here. Ensuring agricultural viability will require coordinated efforts from policymakers, industry leaders, and communities alike. Without those efforts, the state risks losing not only farms, but also the locally grown food we all appreciate.



# 2026 PNW Crop Tour Schedule

The 2026 crop tour season will begin soon and provides opportunities to view field trials and interact with WSU personnel. The list below provides an outline of the time and location of each tour. Please check with the contact listed prior to the tour to verify the time, location, and agenda or reach out to your local county wheat growers association or other co-sponsor. Location maps for the WSU Extension Cereal Variety Trials are available online at <https://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/>.

Thank you to the Washington Grain Commission for funding to support the trials and tours as well as the county wheat growers associations and co-sponsors for programs and meals associated with the field days. Finally, a big thank you to all the grower cooperators for their time and resources to host the variety trials. We truly appreciate all the continued support.

## -The WSU Cereal Variety Testing Program

Date	Start Time	Tour	Starting Location	GPS	Contact
29-May	4:00pm	Wilbur (WSU/PNWCA) Canola Tour	WC VT: 47°47'54.5"N 118°54'58.4"W	47°47'54.5"N 118°54'58.4"W	Jesse Ford, 509-990-6316
4-Jun	8am	Western Wheat Workers Meeting Field Tour	Holiday Inn Express 1433 West Pine Street Walla Walla, WA	46°04'03.3"N 118°22'04.6"W	Kim Campbell, 208-310-9876
4-Jun	8am	Horse Heaven	Horse Heaven Community Hall 37301 County Well Rd, Prosser, WA	46°11'12.2"N 119°34'29.6"W	Mike Pumphrey, 509-592-5234
5-Jun	10am	Walla Walla* with Western Wheat Workers	VT Winter Wheat Site: 46°06'56.3"N 118°14'14.2"W	46°06'56.3"N 118°14'14.2"W	Rachel Wieme, 320-250-7224
5-Jun	1:30pm	Eureka*	VT Winter Wheat Site: 46°19'31.2"N 118°35'58.0"W	46°19'31.2"N 118°35'58.0"W	Rachel Wieme, 320-250-7224
9-Jun	7:45am	Pendleton, OR (OSU/ARS)	CBARC Station 48037 Tubbs Ranch Rd, Adams, OR 97810	45°43'06.0"N 118°37'31.6"W	Debbie Sutor, 541-278-4405
10-Jun	7:45am	Moro, OR (OSU/ARS)	Sherman Station 66365 Lone Rock Rd, Moro, OR 97039	45°28'56.6"N 120°43'34.3"W	Debbie Sutor, 541-278-4405
10-Jun	7:45am	U of I Weed Science Field Day	Parker Farm 1025 Plant Science Rd, Moscow, ID 83843	46°43'23.5"N 116°57'32.7"W	Joan Campbell, 208-885-7730
11-Jun	8:30am	Lind Field Day	Lind Research Station 781 E. Experiment Station Road, Lind, WA	47°00'04.3"N 118°34'05.0"W	Samantha Crow, 509-677-3671
12-Jun	10am	Harrington*	VT Winter Site: 47°23'57.6"N 118°24'02.7"W	47°23'57.6"N 118°24'02.7"W	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
16-Jun	10am	Douglas County*	VT Winter Site: 47°35'04.2"N 119°37'07.3"W	47°35'04.2"N 119°37'07.3"W	Kim Campbell, 208-310-9876
17-Jun	8:30am	Mayview: Spring Canola	SC VT Plots: 46°37'04.0"N 117°24'40.7"W	46°37'04.0"N 117°24'40.7"W	Jesse Ford, 509-990-6316
17-Jun	9:30am	Mayview (WSU/NWGG): Spring and Winter Cereals*	NWGG Spring Wheat Plots: 46°37'05.6"N 117°26'31.7"W	46°32'26.2"N 117°22'24.5"W	Morgan Menaker, 704-989-3752
18-Jun	9am	Dayton	VT Winter Site 46°23'00.6"N 117°51'02.0"W	46°23'00.6"N 117°51'02.0"W	Rachel Wieme, 320-250-7224
18-Jun	7:30am	Fairfield	Harvest Moon Restaurant, 20 S 1 <sup>st</sup> St Rockford, WA	47°23'27.4"N 117°02'24.0"W	Ken Fuchs, 509-220-0891
22-Jun	8:30am	Spillman Farm Field Day*	Spillman Research Farm 1452 Johnson Road Pullman, WA	46°41'44.0"N 117°07'44.4"W	Morgan Menaker, 704-989-3752
23-Jun	8:30am	Wilke Farm Field Day	Wilke Research Farm 39440 State Hwy 2 E, Davenport, WA 99122	47°39'23.1"N 118°07'54.4"W	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
23-Jun	1:30pm	Reardan*	VT Winter Site: 47°41'22.0"N 117°55'34.0"W	47°41'22.0"N 117°55'34.0"W	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
TBD	TBD	Almira*	McKay Seed Almira 39355 Sorensen Rd. N, Almira, WA 99103	47°45'46.7"N 118°56'18.9"W	Aaron Esser, 509-659-3210
25-Jun	8:30am	WSU Potato Field Day	Othello Research Station 1471 W. Cox Rd Othello, WA	46°47'42.7"N 119°02'52.5"W	Mark Pavek, 509-335-6861
3-Jul	10am	Bickleton Spring Wheat	VT Spring Site: 46°01'07.9"N 120°17'17.0"W	46°01'07.9"N 120°17'17.0"W	Mike Pumphrey, 509-592-5234

\*Includes Falling Numbers presentation from Dr. Alison Thompson and Dr. Amber Hauvermale

Dates and agendas are subject to change. Please check with event contact or [smallgrains.wsu.edu](https://smallgrains.wsu.edu) for final schedule



## Right Seed, Right Soil, Right Conditions

Wheat Life|May 2026

By Trista Crossley

The ultimate success of a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract is whether or not the grower meets their contract's stand density and count requirements, and that all starts with planting the seed mix that's right for local conditions.

Ultimately, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for telling growers what they are required to plant. Those requirements come out of soil surveys mostly done in the early 1920s and 30s, said Todd Harris, part owner of Western Reclamation, a native reclamation and forage seed company that provides CRP seed mixes.

"NRCS has been studying this for years, and so they know the precipitation zone. They know the soil type. They know the likelihood of rains, and when they come. With all that at hand, they then pick the species that are going to go into their mixes," Harris explained.

"Basically, NRCS comes up with an applicable mix that fits the precipitation zone and the soil type, and it usually has done that very, very well."

Harris, who has sold CRP seed mixes for 20 years and, prior to

that, helped produce the seed, said the seed mixes for Eastern Washington have gradually moved to include more native species. In fact, he said CRP was a driving force in stimulating the native seed industry, as was the need to replant wildfire-stricken rangelands.

The seeds that Harris sells are mainly grown in Eastern Washington under irrigation. He said if you put a native species under irrigation and manage it properly, it's kind of like a native plant on steroids.

"It does not look the same (as a plant grown under dryland conditions). I mean, they have the same botanical characteristics, the same panicle, the same leaf structure, everything else, but you do raise a big plant in comparison when you have water," he said, adding that growers have to be careful not to give the plants too much water; they are dryland plants, after all. "When you grow native dryland plants on irrigation, you have to manage that, and it takes years to actually understand what works and what doesn't work."

The cost of the seed mix is one of CRP's main input expenses. Many growers say the seed mixes are becoming more expensive overall, but Harris said in his experience, the price has stayed quite consistent, within a \$20 range, with prices in the fall of 2025 falling

slightly below 2024's prices. Market demand is the main factor impacting seed prices. In years with heavy wildfire activity or an increase in the CRP cap, seed becomes scarcer and more costly. In addition, certain seed mixes are just more expensive—the higher the number of species and different type of species in the mix, the higher cost. However, the more plant species present, the higher the environmental benefit (and, potentially, a higher CRP rental rate).

How the seeds are planted can very much impact the overall stand density and variety. For example, a grower may have a seed mix that incorporates some wheatgrass, Snake River wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, and maybe a Basin wildrye, but also has Sherman big bluegrass in it. If the soil is a little bit dry and the grower seeds a little too deep the Sherman can't emerge from more than a half inch deep, so it would be a lesser percentage on the landscape than the grower's wheat grasses.

"I've seen other growers who seed on the very surface. They get beautiful stands of Sherman, but because the larger seed didn't have good seed to soil contact, they have lesser percentage of those larger seeded species," Harris explained. "It's all about seed bed preparation."



Save the date and  
Join us for the Dairy  
cattle field day at  
the **WSU** Knott Dairy  
farm  
June 20<sup>th</sup> 2026  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Limited spots  
More information and  
registration to come



## I'M SO STRESSED OUT!

From the **NATIONAL INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH**

Feeling overwhelmed? Read this fact sheet to learn whether it's stress or anxiety, and what you can do to cope.

### Is it stress or anxiety?

Life can be stressful—you may feel stressed about performance at school, traumatic events (such as a pandemic, a natural disaster, or an act of violence), or a life change. Everyone feels stress from time to time.

What is stress? Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having a lot of homework or having an illness. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time.

What is anxiety? Anxiety is your body's reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat.

If that anxiety doesn't go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems. You also may be at higher risk for developing a mental illness such as an anxiety disorder or depression. More information about anxiety disorders is available at [www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders).

### So, how do you know when to seek help?

### Stress vs. Anxiety

#### Stress

- Generally is a response to an external cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend..
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

#### Both Stress and Anxiety

Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep

#### Anxiety

- Generally is internal, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
- Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.



## It's important to manage your stress.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that stress can feel overwhelming. You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.



## Coping With Stress and Anxiety

Learning what causes or triggers your stress and what coping techniques work for you can help reduce your anxiety and improve your daily life. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. Here are some activities you can try when you start to feel overwhelmed:

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app that provides relaxation exercises (such as deep breathing or visualization) or tips for practicing mindfulness, which is a psychological process of actively paying attention to the present moment.
- Exercise, and make sure you are eating healthy, regular meals.
- Stick to a sleep routine, and make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Avoid drinking excess caffeine such as soft drinks or coffee.
- Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family members who help you cope in a positive way.

## Recognize When You Need More Help

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety won't go away, it may be time to talk to a professional. Psychotherapy (also called talk therapy) and medication are the two main treatments for anxiety, and many people benefit from a combination of the two.

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Find more information on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website at [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at **988** or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

## More Resources

- NIMH: Anxiety Disorders ([www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders))
- NIMH: Caring for Your Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov/mymentalhealth](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/mymentalhealth))
- NIMH: Child and Adolescent Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov/children](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/children))
- NIMH: Tips for Talking With a Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips))
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Anxiety and Depression in Children ([www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html](http://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html))



NIH Publication No. 20-MH-8125

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The 2025-2026 3rd grade gardening program with the Master Gardeners and the Garfield County Public Health's "Farm to School" coordinator, Jessica Nelson, has a couple more classes before the kids will be out for the summer. It has been a great year, where the kids have enjoyed learning about gardening, where their food comes from and making healthier eating choices.





GARFIELD  
COUNTY  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH



# SUMMER



# GARDEN CLUB

GET READY FOR SUNSHINE, GARDENING, CRAFTS & SNACKS!



**1:00-2:00 pm**

**@ Pomeroy  
School Garden**

**June 24**

Pollinators  
& Flowers

**July 8**

Garden  
Health

**July 22**

“What’s  
that smell? -  
Herbs

**Aug 5**

Garden  
Chemistry

**Aug 19**

Water Wise  
Planting

**FREE**



**AGES 8 YEARS OLD AND UP!**

**JESSICA NELSON 509-843-3412**



The Pomeroy FFA had a great day at the Asotin County Fair Livestock Evaluation contest, tying for 1st place as a team. Jack Baser was 4th overall, Grayson Slaybaugh was 5th, and Treyton Kimble was 7th.



Jr Livestock Show of Spokane was a great one for the Pomeroy FFA.

2026 Seabeck Award for the Outstanding FFA Chapter.

Tyler Dixon -- Reserve Champion Market Steer

Chance Savage -- Reserve Champion Beef Fitting and Showing

Ladd Baser -- Reserve Champion Lamb Fitting and Showing

Grayson Slaybaugh received a \$2000 scholarship

And many more members that were top 5 and/or made the final drives in their respective barns. Overall, a great week for all our exhibitors.



Pomeroy FFA had a great day sorting and talking livestock at the State FFA Livestock Contest placing 2nd out of 49 teams. Grayson Slaybaugh was 6th high individual.



1st place AgriScience finish at State.



2nd place finish in Livestock judging at State FFA

# 2026 Washington State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest



**WHEN:** June 27, 2026

**WHERE:** Registration - Huck Fuller Building  
Contest - Ardell Pavilion at the Grant County Fair Grounds, Moses Lake, WA

**PURPOSE:** Identify senior teams that will represent Washington 4-H at the Big 3 National Contests:

- \*North American International Livestock Exposition, Louisville, KY
- \*American Royal, Kansas City, MO; and
- \*National Western , Denver, CO

Register for 4-H by April 1 in your home county to be eligible for the 2026 state contest...

Early registration closes end-of-day May 29, 2026, at which time fees will increase.

Late registration closes end-of-day June 12, 2026.

**NO REGISTRATION DAY of CONTEST**

For more information (Registration, Guidelines, etc.) and the day of schedule, use this QR Code -



**4-H Livestock Event Support**



Please consider supporting 4-H state livestock judging online at <http://bitly.ws/spxe> or scan the QR code.





Spring Farming Days was a success, even though there was predicted rain for the weekend. We only had one 5-minute shower! There were 43 animals on the grounds working, and 2 even pulled a carriage for the delivery of the Lt. Governor Denny Heck to the flour mill! We had many new people come for the festivities and received many positive comments. Mi Pueblito served the lunches both days, and BMAG had an art display in the Dick Brown building. A big thank you to all of our sponsors that helped put on the show! The guys grinding the flour were kept busy. They sold over 50 bags of freshly ground grain!! Thank you to the Cup of Hope coffee trailer for serving up hot and cold drinks on Saturday!! Thank you to Gene Taylor for bringing tractors, Roy Wold for bringing his pump demonstrations, Robert McKinney for bringing his 203 Int Combine, Jacob Forsman for bringing his tractors, Rod Sangster for his player piano, and Jerry Wilsey for bringing several of his JD Tractors.





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### **Did you know 10 Interesting Facts About Practically Everything?**

BY Elizabeth Yuko, FACT-CHECKED BY Marcy Lovitch, UPDATED ON Apr. 20, 2025  
For more interesting facts visit <https://www.rd.com/list/interesting-facts/>

- **The bumblebee bat is the world's smallest flying mammal**—Weighing in at 0.05 to 0.07 ounces, with a head-to-body length of 1.14 to 1.29 inches and a wingspan of 5.1 to 5.7 inches, the bumblebee bat—also known as Kitti's hog-nosed bat—is the smallest flying mammal
- **The circulatory system is more than 60,000 miles long**—If your entire circulatory system—we're talking veins, arteries and capillaries—were laid out flat, it would stretch for more than 60,000 miles. That's long enough to go around the Earth almost two and a half times!
- **Lemons float, but limes sink**—Try this easy science experiment, and you'll find that lime slices drop to the bottom of a glass, while lemon slices float at the top. But why? Limes are denser than lemons.
- **Peanuts aren't technically nuts**—They're legumes. According to *Merriam-Webster*, a nut is only a nut if it's "a hard-shelled dry fruit or seed with a separable rind or shell and interior kernel." Other nuts that are really legumes are soy nuts (soybeans) and carob nuts. On the other hand, walnuts, hazelnuts and pecans fit the true definition of a nut, according to the USDA.
- **Giraffe tongues can be 20 inches long**—Their dark, bluish-black color is probably to prevent sunburn.
- **Your eye can see a million different colors**—Our bodies are made up of some **bizarre features!** According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, humans can distinguish approximately 10 million colors. That's thanks to the cone cells in your retina, the back part of your eye that senses light and sends signals to your brain. These alerts allow you to perceive different colors. Some people who have a rare condition called tetrachromacy have an extra eye cone that enables them to see *hundreds of millions* of colors.
- **The Philippines consists of 7,641 islands**—The Philippines is an archipelago, which means it's made up of a group of islands—7,641 islands, to be exact. That figure does not include the thousands of sandbars and other landforms that emerge during low tide.
- **It takes a drop of water 90 days to travel the entire Mississippi River**—Flowing approximately 2,340 miles, the Mississippi River is the fourth largest in the world, behind the Yangtze, Amazon and Nile rivers (when combined with its tributary, the Missouri River). That's one long stretch of water. With speeds varying from 1.2 mph to 3 mph, one drop of water takes approximately 90 days to travel its entire length, as estimated by the National Park Service.
- **Armadillo shells are bulletproof**—Talk about a hard shell to crack! In fact, one Texas man was hospitalized when a bullet he shot at an armadillo ricocheted off the animal and hit him in the jaw.
- **The first oranges weren't orange**—**Oranges** have a pretty interesting origin story. The first oranges from Southeast Asia were actually green. In fact, oranges in tropical regions, such as Vietnam and Thailand, still stay green through maturity.

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**Helping You Put Knowledge To Work**