



HAY NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON STATE HAY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A review of the 2005 WSHGA Conference shows the most successful event in the recent past. We had the largest and most enthusiastic conference because of your attendance, the exhibitors, speakers (and subjects) and the diligent work of your Board of Directors and the team from Ag Management. The 2006 Conference is scheduled for January 18 & 19 at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick. This is an excellent facility and we were well attended to by the staff there.

The Idaho Hay and Forage

Conference was held in Twin Falls on February 7th & 8th. They had a well-organized conference with many good speakers.

The Grant-Adams County held their chapter conference in Moses Lake on Friday, February 18th also with a very good program and speakers.

The common theme being echoed at these conferences this winter is the severe lack of winter moisture in the entire northwest. The most recent report for Washington outside of the Columbia Basin is for only 14% to 34% of normal water. The south Columbia Basin is very

dry with the expectation that some farms with wells or river water may start to irrigate shortly after the 1st of March. A report from Idaho estimates that only 60% of the water for irrigation will be available statewide, with the possibility that 100,000 to 200,000 acres may not receive any water at all. A report from Klamath Falls has the possibility of 20,000 to 30,000 acres of water right being bought out.

The current market shows most of the good alfalfa has been moved or at least committed. There have been reports of contacts from

California about new crop alfalfa.

We as growers have many new challenges this year. Fuel has increased 43% or \$.77/gallon since February 2004. Twine prices have increased and are expected to have another increase this summer.

Each grower has a unique budget and income structure but I would encourage everyone to analyze their situation to get a fair price for their product and an adequate down payment.

Chep Gauntt, President WSHGA

USDA ANNOUNCES DISASTER AID PROGRAM SIGN-UP

IMPORTANT STEPS TO BE TAKEN BY GROWERS

The Washington State Farm Service Agency recent announcement related to disaster assistance states, in part: "(Spokane, WA) - Sign-up begins March 14, 2005 for the Crop Disaster Program (CDP) which reimburses farmers for crop losses and prevented plantings due to damaging weather or related conditions. The damages must be in excess of 35 percent for either the 2003 or 2004 crop for production losses or 20 percent for quality losses", according to James F. Fitzgerald, Farm Service Agency State Director in Spokane, WA. Program applications will be accepted at county Farm Service Agency offices. The agency has not set an end date for the sign-up.

Payments will be for 2003 or 2004 losses, based on which year had the greatest loss. Farmers who had crop insurance or those raising non-insurable crops will receive 65 percent of the

established price. Those for whom crop insurance was available but chose not to obtain it will only get 60 percent of the established price. CDP payments will be capped at 95 percent of the value of the remaining crop plus all insurance and disaster program payments. The program has an \$80,000 payment limitation per person." For more information on the announcement, go to www.fsa.usda.gov.

For Washington hay growers, this program relates mostly to rain damage suffered in the 2004 crop year and, in some cases, drought in the 2003 crop year. It is important to note that the criteria and regulations for signup and qualifying for loss are the same in all offices. Growers must be informed regarding what they need in order for their process to move forward smoothly. Interest in this disaster program is higher than ever so **FSA is highly encouraging all interested irrigated and diversified producers to attend the informational meetings listed.**

Crop Disaster Program – Informational Meetings

WHERE	DAY/DATE	TIME
Basin City Fire Hall	Monday, March 28, 2005	8:30-10:30 a.m.
Connell Community Center	Monday, March 28, 2005	1:00-3:00 p.m.
Pasco School District	Thursday, March 31, 2005	10:00-12:00 p.m.
Booth Education Center, 1215 West Lewis Room 201 (2nd level)–Park/Enter on North Side		

The information given there and the application packet material available there will make the process for both growers and FSA go much smoother. Those in Stevens County (509) 685-0858 and Yakima County (509-454-5746 Ext.2) are asked to call their FSA office for information on this program at which time appointments can be set up to discuss your individual situation.

**FREE PESTICIDE DISPOSAL OPPORTUNITIES
IN EASTERN WASHINGTON**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
AND WSHGA

ALFALFA FIELD DAY &
DELICIOUS MEXICAN BBQ LUNCH
TUESDAY, APRIL 5
GAUNTT FARMS
10: 00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

SEE ENCLOSED FLYER FOR
DETAILED INFORMATION

2005 WSHGA MEMBERSHIP

Included with this newsletter is your 2005 Membership Application/Renewal Form (green) or your Directory Information Update request form for those that have already renewed their membership (blue).

Please take a moment to fill out and return these forms. By being a member, you will be helping the WSHGA provide a unified voice for the hay industry in Washington, speaking out on issues

important to the growers. You will also be listed in the 2005 Membership Directory which will be published and distributed in April. The listing is a proven way to get your name in front of the right people to get your hay sold.

The Association also works closely with Washington State University Extension specialists so members can get the most current research and production information.

Don't forget - you may also go online to www.wa-hay.org to renew your membership.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

**WSHGA MEMBERSHIP!
A SMART MOVE!!!**

**WASHINGTON STATE HAY
GROWERS ASSOCIATION
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