



Annual Report to Producers 2023-2024

The past year brought both challenges and triumphs for the Nebraska wheat industry. While planted acres saw a slight decrease from the previous year, with 1,000,000 acres seeded across the state, producers faced persistent drought and freeze events during critical crop development stages. This created uncertainty about the quality of the 2024 crop. However, after a cold and dry winter, western Nebraska benefited from timely moisture and above-average temperatures as wheat emerged from dormancy. The wheat that withstood winterkill responded well to these favorable conditions, thriving with the increased moisture. Timely rains provided a much-needed boost, resulting in a high-quality crop.

Consistent moisture through spring and summer led to a later-than-usual harvest. However, the delay did not bring significant disease or weed concerns. Nebraska producers were rewarded with stronger-than-expected yields despite the season's climatic challenges. Final harvest figures highlight the resilience of Nebraska wheat farmers, with 920,000 acres harvested, an average yield of 52 bushels per acre, and a total production of 47,840,000 bushels. Test weights averaged 60 pounds per bushel, while protein content held strong at 12 percent. The 2024 Nebraska wheat crop stands as a testament to the strength of American wheat farming, reaffirming Nebraska's vital role in the global wheat market.

The Nebraska Wheat Board (NWB) continues to drive progress within the industry. The board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor, supported by a dedicated team, including an executive director, marketing specialist, ag promotions coordinator, and a three-quarter-time staff assistant. This year, NWB welcomed a new At-Large board

member, Mark Spurgin of Paxton, Nebraska. Additionally, the team expanded with the hiring of Samantha Oborny as Ag Promotions Coordinator in May.

The Nebraska Wheat Development, Utilization, and Marketing Board remains committed to advancing the wheat industry through strategic investments of excise tax funds. Key priorities include supporting research to develop wheat varieties that benefit Nebraska producers, strengthening domestic and international markets, and educating consumers about the value and versatility of wheat. Through innovation, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, Nebraska wheat continues to thrive. The future remains bright for our producers, our markets, and our industry.

Sincerely,

Kent Lorens 2023-2024 Chair

Royce Schaneman, Executive Director

2023-2024 Budgeted Funding Summary



NWB Board Members and Staff Meet With Senator Ricketts (pictured left to right) Mark Knobel, Royce Schaneman, Bob Delsing, Mark Spurgin, Senator Pete Ricketts, Kent Lorens, Tyson Narjes, Jady Heckenlively

Research

Investing in research that enhances wheat quality and yield is essential for the future of Nebraska wheat production. The Nebraska Wheat Board (NWB) focuses on key areas such as variety development, disease resistance, stem sawfly management, and viral disease control to support producer profitability.

Collaborations with USDA-ARS and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) drive innovation in wheat research. Dr. Jeffrey Boehm and Dr. Xiwen Cai, wheat geneticists at USDA-ARS, lead projects on improving winter wheat disease resistance and advancing genome research. Additionally, NWB supports the UNL Small Grains Breeding Program, working with Dr. Katherine Frels and other breeders to develop improved wheat varieties suited for Nebraska's growing conditions.

International Marketing

Nebraska wheat made a strong global impact this year through key international marketing efforts. Participation in events like the Latin American Buyers Conference in Mexico, the U.S. Wheat Sub-Saharan Africa Crop Quality Seminar, and the UES Multi-Region Meeting in Italy allowed Nebraska wheat producers to showcase the state's high-quality wheat to international buyers.

In addition, Nebraska wheat hosted a South African trade team in June 2024, providing wheat professionals an opportunity to tour farms and industry locations. These engagements strengthened relationships, highlighted Nebraska wheat's superior quality, and reinforced its value in global markets.

Federal Policy

Supporting strong federal policy efforts is a priority for the Nebraska Wheat Board (NWB). Each year, NWB allocates funding to the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association (NWGA) and the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) to ensure wheat producers have a voice on Capitol Hill.

These funds help send NWGA members to Washington, D.C., each winter to meet with Nebraska's congressional delegation and discuss key agricultural issues. Top priorities included transportation and input costs, enhancing the safety net, farm bill provisions, and ensuring food remains a key component of food aid programs. Additionally, NAWG's Washington, D.C., headquarters works year-round to represent wheat growers in federal policy discussions, ensuring their interests are heard at the national level.

Domestic Marketing

Maintaining wheat quality is a top priority for the NWB. In partnership with Plains Grains, Inc., NWB supports the collection and analysis of Hard Red Winter wheat samples throughout the harvest season. These samples are tested for milling, dough, and baking characteristics, with results published in weekly harvest reports and a final regional report. This data provides valuable insights into the quality of the year's HRW wheat crop, helping producers and buyers make informed decisions.

NWB also invests in producer education through events such as the Wheat Export and Marketing Workshop, hosted in collaboration with the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland, OR. This program gives Nebraska wheat

growers and industry partners an in-depth understanding of the Pacific Northwest's export and marketing systems. Participants receive market and trade updates from industry experts, tour key facilities, and engage in hands-on learning experiences to strengthen their knowledge of wheat marketing and trade. Additionally, NWB partners with the Wheat Foods Council, Home Baking Association, and Wheat Quality Council to support wheat promotion, consumer education, and industry research. These efforts ensure Nebraska wheat remains a high-quality, trusted product in domestic markets.

Publicity & Education

Educating the public on the importance of wheat and wheat-based products remains a key focus. The Nebraska Wheat Board (NWB) collaborates with various organizations to share information through radio, social media, and print and digital marketing efforts.

Attending events such as the Nebraska State FFA Convention, Nebraska Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Husker Harvest Days, and school visits provides valuable opportunities to engage with consumers and industry leaders. Youth education is also a priority, with NWB partnering with 4-H and the Ag Sack Lunch program to promote agricultural awareness.

By informing both producers and consumers, NWB highlights the essential role of wheat in Nebraska's economy and food system.



NWB Board Members and Staff in Washington, D.C. (pictured left to right) Kent Lorens, Bob Delsing, Mark Spurgin, Tyson Narjes, Mark Knobel

Nebraska Wheat Board of Directors FY 2023-2024

- District 1:** Bob Delsing - Hemingford, NE
- District 2:** Tyson Narjes - Sidney, NE
- District 3:** Mary Eisenzimmer - Big Springs, NE
- District 4:** Kent Lorens, *Vice Chair* - Stratton, NE
- District 5:** Jared Sayer - Cambridge, NE
- District 6:** Mark Knobel, *Chair* - Fairbury, NE
- District 7:** Mark Spurgin, *At large* - Paxton, NE

Nebraska Wheat Board Staff

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