

# Annual Report to Producers 2020-2021



Nebraska wheat producers experienced a drier than normal growing season in 2020-2021. The fall of 2020 had most of the state in great need for moisture. A majority of the wheat was seeded into dusty soil and received minimal rain or snowfall going into the dormant season. Despite the outlook, planted acres remained equivalent to the prior year, with 920,000 being seeded throughout the state.

As winter wore on, eastern regions of Nebraska experienced record snowfall in a one-day timeframe. The total amount of snowfall throughout the 20-21 winter averaged 49.4 inches across the state. There was also a record setting cold week in February where the temperature never exceeded -1° Fahrenheit. It became the second coldest February on record, with the average temperature for the month less than 10° Fahrenheit.

When spring emerged, most of western Nebraska remained abnormally dry or worse on the U.S. Drought Monitor, which had many producers expecting a poor crop. During the 2021 Hard Red Winter (HRW) Wheat Tour in Kansas, however, calculations estimated the crop to average 58.1 bushels per acre. This prediction does not take into account weed, disease or pest pressures. Many fields examined had rust present but were also treated with fungicide. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated the Nebraska wheat crop to yield 36.7 million bushels, just under 1.0 MMT, which was an 8% increase from the previous year.

Producers in southwest and the southern panhandle of Nebraska have been experimenting with a spring wheat crop over the past few years. Unfortunately, the southern panhandle was unable to plant a majority of their spring wheat crop due to the dry ground. Overall, there was close to 15,000 acres of spring wheat seeded. Many producers near the Colorado border also contract Hard White (HW) wheat production for Ardent Mills. On

average, Nebraska plants approximately 32,000 acres each year.

As the growing season progressed, varying regions of the state caught timely rains while others experienced more drought. Minimal disease and pest pressures were noted. Wheat steam sawfly continued to be an issue in the panhandle, as producers reported an average of 5 bushels per acre loss in their fields.

The general demeanor among producers going into harvest was the expectation of a less than average wheat crop. Most were surprised to see record yields within their fields. According to the USDA, the total harvested acres in Nebraska was 840,000 out of 920,000 planted. The average yield was 49 bushels per acre, an increase of 8 bushels from the previous year. Total production was estimated at 41.2 million bushels harvested, a 21% increase from the 2020 harvest season.

Pleasantly surprised, a good quality crop aligned with higher-than-average cash prices. Wheat continues to be a valuable crop in many farm rotations. With continued concern of drought, wheat proves to be a player and performer in the field and market.

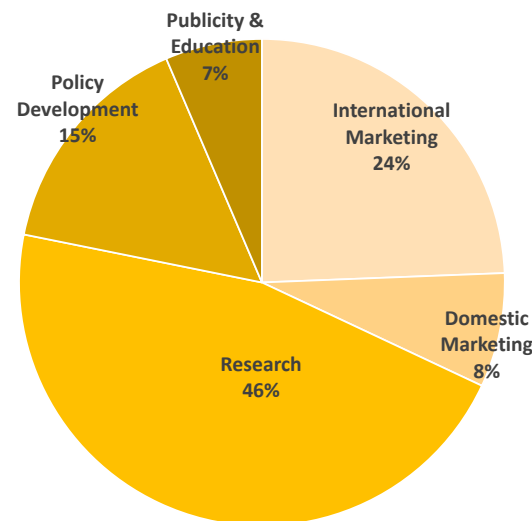
The Nebraska Wheat Development, Utilization and Marketing Board continues to invest the check-off funds to advance the wheat industry within the state. Primary investments help develop wheat varieties that will benefit the Nebraska producer, create and maintain markets both domestically and internationally, and promote and educate about wheat to the consumer.

Sincerely,

Bob Delsing, 2020-2021 Chair

Royce Schaneman, Executive Director

## 2020-2021 Budgeted Funding Summary



International Marketing.....	\$118,000.00 (24%)
Domestic Marketing.....	\$36,704.00 (8%)
Research.....	\$223,500.00 (46%)
Policy Development.....	\$74,500.00 (15%)
Publicity & Education.....	\$31,178.00 (7%)
<b>Total investment 2020-2021.....</b>	<b>\$483,882.00</b>

## Mission

The mission of the Nebraska Wheat Board is to increase both domestic and foreign consumption of wheat and wheat food products through marketing and research, as well as to help develop and maintain both domestic and international export markets for the Nebraska wheat producer. The Nebraska Wheat Board will accomplish this by investing the wheat check-off in the areas of research, international and domestic marketing, policy development and publicity and education.

### Publicity & Education

After a four-year break, the Nebraska Wheat Board reinstated the Ambassador Program. Two University of Nebraska-Lincoln students, Emma Goosic and Jennifer Howsden, were selected to serve as ambassadors during the nine-month program that ran in accordance with the school year. Over the course of the year, the ambassadors promoted Nebraska wheat by creating podcasts, writing blogs, educating students across the state, doing a noodle making presentation, and much more. At the conclusion of the program each ambassador was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for the upcoming school year.

While many events had to take place virtually during COVID-19 shutdowns, the NWB continued to have a presence at key events such as Nebraska State FFA Convention, the Nebraska Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics and Husker Harvest Days. The office also mailed out education information to schools and county fairs throughout the year.

### Federal Policy

The Nebraska Wheat Board invests money each year to support the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association (NWGA) and the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG). These organizations take action to support wheat producers and their interests on Capitol Hill. Funds help send members of NWGA to visit Washington D.C. each winter to meet with Nebraska Senators and Congressmen to discuss issues affecting the state's agriculture industry.

NAWG's headquarters, located in Washington D.C., work year around to ensure that wheat growers are represented at the federal level. The NAWG staff also monitors trade, the Farm Bill, and the federal budget among other issues.

### Research

The wheat industry lacks private investment in developing new varieties, which is why Nebraska producers rely so heavily on variety development from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL). Dr. Stephen Baenziger served as the UNL Small Grains Breeder for just shy of 35 years, before retiring in May 2021. Prior to his retirement, the University hired Dr. Katherine Frels who started in her new position on March 1, 2021. The overlap between Dr. Baenziger and Dr. Frels allowed for a smooth transition of the program. Nebraska Wheat would like to thank Dr. Baenziger for his tireless devotion he gave to the industry over his tenure. Likewise, Nebraska Wheat is excited to welcome Dr. Frels to the team, knowing she will bring new energy and outlook to an already successful program. Nebraska has led wheat breeding for many years and there is great confidence that we will continue for years to come.

Dr. Katherine Frels, Dr. Amanda Easterly, Dr. Cody Creech and Dr. Jeff Bradshaw held a successful wheat variety tour in June as well. This was a wonderful opportunity for the Nebraska producers to meet Dr. Frels, learn about her direction for the wheat program, and catch a glimpse of what is to come from the Small Grains Breeding Program. Dr.'s Easterly, Creech and Bradshaw visited with producers about drought tolerance, wheat stem sawfly, herbicide treatments and so much more. These well attended events offer producers a firsthand look at research being conducted that will have a direct impact on their operations. The University has an outstanding team of individuals dedicated to helping the Nebraska wheat farmer. The NWB looks forward to continued partnership to help advancing these programs.

### International Marketing

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel and most national travel was put on hold. Adapting to the circumstances, Nebraska wheat attended teleconference calls with countries around the world to continue promoting Hard Red Winter wheat. Though the luxury of in-person communication was unable to take place, the audience that was able to be reached grew significantly. If a trade team were to visit Nebraska, producers would be visiting with approximately fifteen delegates. With the capabilities of teleconference, Nebraska wheat was able to be promoted to hundreds of international buyers in a matter of minutes. Altogether, US Wheat Associates hosted over 150 webinars/teleconference visiting with over 100 countries. Nebraska is looking forward to hosting international visitors again in the future but is grateful for the technology that makes connecting across the globe so effortless.

### Domestic Marketing

The Wheat Foods Council (WFC) serves as the US wheat industries domestic marketing arm. When in-person functions were all shifted to a virtual format, the WFC programming went online. Creating short videos and online educational courses, over 1 million people were reached over the course of the year.

The industry also was able to capitalize on the sudden surge of in-home baking. With many people in quarantine or working-from-home, there was a large increase in baking and trying new recipes. One trend in particular was creating sourdough starters and bread baking. Over the course of the year baking and cooking as a family saw a sharp increase, flour was hard to come by on the grocery shelves, and wheat made a big comeback into the family home.

## Nebraska Wheat Board of Directors

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- District 2: Tyson Narjes.....Sidney, NE
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- District 5: Jared Sayer.....Cambridge, NE
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- District 7: Rick Dunbar, *At Large*.....Eustis, NE

## Nebraska Wheat Board Staff

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