

## Nebraska Wheat Board Meeting

Open Range Bar & Grill  
1108 N Spruce St., Ogallala, NE 69153  
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM MT  
Thursday, June 2, 2022

### Board Members Present

Mark Knobel, District 6, Chairman  
Kent Lorens, District 4, Vice Chairman  
Bob Delsing, District 1  
Larry Flohr, District 3  
Tyson Narjes, District 2  
Rick Dunbar, District 7  
Jared Sayer, District 5

### Others Present

Royce Schaneman, NWB Executive Director  
Jeff Ruggles, NWGA  
Dr. Katherine Frels, UNL  
Dr. Amanda Easterly, UNL

### Proceedings

Chairman Knobel called the meeting to order at 8:36am MT.

### Roll Call

Roll Call was taken, crop progress reports given, and guests were introduced and welcomed. Overall crop conditions are dry, though cool, wet weather over Memorial Day weekend in many parts of the state helped. Recent weather events such as hail and cold temperatures cause for some concern. Wheat is thinner and shorter than average. Planted acres appear to be down across the state.

### Review of Agenda

**Delsing moved, Sayer seconded to approve the updated agenda with the addition of per diem discussion. Voice vote, motion carried.**

### Review of Minutes

**Flohr moved, Narjes seconded to approve the minutes. Voice vote, motion carried.**

### Review of Financial Reports

**Dunbar moved, Sayer seconded to approve the financial reports.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

#### Excise Tax Compliance Reports

Shelby Mikulak and Renee Dakota have both recently moved on from their positions, so two critical positions are currently open.

#### Domestic & International Marketing

- US Wheat Associates: The USW Summer Board Meeting will take place in Bend, Oregon from June 6-8, 2022. Lorens, Schaneman, and Husmann will be attending.
- Food Aid: Lorens reported that there have been discussions surrounding the upcoming Farm Bill, specifically an issue on cargo preference. The Biden administration announced funding for Food Aid and Lorens said care is being taken to make sure all wheat purchased with those funds is domestic.
- Wheat Marketing Center – Dunbar reported that Mike Moran’s transition to Executive Director is going well. There is an upcoming HR committee meeting regarding Janice Cooper’s transition out.
- Wheat Foods Council – Ahrens was the representative for the WFC, so no one will be attending their June meeting in Charleston, SC, celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Plains Grains Inc.: Flohr reported the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting was postponed. Mark Hodges’ retirement transition continues to be discussed and Schaneman said he had spoken with Hodges about Nebraska taking PGI over. Kansas is interesting in changing the way some USDA testing is done, which could get expensive. Continued discussions on how quality testing and management will look going forward. Knobel wants to avoid having multiple organizations doing the same work and would like to see PGI work streamlined into UWA. Flohrs shared harvest updates found on the [PGI website](#), which publishes those reports weekly.
- Wheat Quality Council: Lorens attended the first day of the tour in Colby, Kansas. He reported that the wheat in Nebraska was the best wheat they found and are predicting a 92% harvest rate for Nebraska. Acre-wise, Nebraska is up but the estimate on yield is down, with overall production forecasted to be lower than last year. A question was raised on the tour about Kansas wheat having absorption problems, which Dr. Frels explained is probably an outlier problem due to a combination of environmental factors.

#### Grain Fiber Presentation – Dr. Rod Wallace, Foundation for Innovation in Healthy Food, Coalition for Grain Fiber

Dr. Wallace presented on an initiative to increase the fiber content of wheat without impacting the quality or flavor, specifically of white flour. Dr. Frels explained that current research out of the United Kingdom has identified a natural gene that closes the “fiber gap” between white and

whole wheat by 25% and Dr. Frels feel optimistic they can find an additional gene to double that, which is what wheat breeders in Nebraska have signed on to research.

Dr. Wallace explained that the Trans-Atlantic partnership will be a big component of this project as well as robust commercialization. Corn has ethanol, beans have biodiesel, and wheat has grain fiber. His ask from the NWB was for \$43,000 as well as opening doors and fostering connections between the Coalition and the wheat industry.

Lorens asked about the Sarah Lee Whole Grain White Bread and Dr. Frels said she believes that that fiber is added after milling, and that the benefit of this wheat would be that it would require no change or additional effort during production. Knobel emphasized the need for this to not change the taste at all and Dr. Wallace said they are working closely with bakers who are monitoring those elements. Sayer asked about a timeline and Dr. Wallace said the UK technology will be ready in three years, for Nebraska maybe 6-8 years if they can get funding and cooperation for the initiative. Dr. Wallace is asking for funding from a variety of sources and so far, none of the wheat boards have committed.

#### University Report – Dr. Katherine Frels and Dr. Amanda Easterly, UNL

Dr. Easterly reported on big projects with dryland cropping systems and wheat projects all over the state. Maria Melo Scienza's yield estimation Masters project is finishing up. Dr. Easterly shared images of CoAXium and ClearField systems side-by-side and discussed a project looking at fallow replacement. Testing variety tours will begin the following week.

Dr. Frels gave an update on the breeding program—all trials look better than expected despite the dry winter. It was a good year for winter hardiness testing but not a great year for disease selection. A major change will include switching from F3 to F4 derived program and with that added year there should be more uniformity. New grad students will be starting soon to work on projects.

#### Nebraska Wheat Growers Association Report – Jeff Ruggles

Ruggles reported that it's been quiet, the open position from Ahern's departure will affect them and Schaneman reported that the position taking over NWGA administrative support has been posted and will close soon, hopefully someone will be hired by July. The NAG national board is working on the Farm Bill and Ruggles passed around a handout detailing a recent work session. Lorens asked if they've mentioned anything about the transportation act that passed in the House but is currently held up in the Senate, and Ruggles said he hasn't heard anything yet. Some discussion about who the new champions of agriculture are on Capitol Hill currently.

#### Executive Director Report

Schaneman reported that in a recent meeting with Sorghum and Soybean boards, they are also unhappy with UNL Research. The legislative bill passed with no opposition.

### Dean & Director of Nebraska Extension – Charles Stoltenow

The new Dean and Director of Nebraska Extension, Charles “Charlie” Stoltenow, introduced himself to the Nebraska Wheat Board. He has a background in veterinary sciences and has a diverse set of experiences in all kinds of production agriculture. He wants to “focus on relevance.” Dean Stoltenow asked what the top two opportunities and challenges are facing the wheat industry. Lorens said marketing has been a challenge and Knobel mentioned making wheat competitive with other crops from an economic standpoint. Schaneman said an opportunity would be becoming creative and inventive in finding value. Lorens mentioned the opportunity for Extension to help support FFA teachers/coordinators and Dean Stoltenow said he is working closely with Dean Heng-Moss at CASNR to find ways to support agricultural education across the state.

### First & Second Reading of Funding Proposals

**Lorens moved, Delsing seconded to waive the readings. Voice vote, motion carried.**

### Oklahoma State Wheat Breeder – Dr. Brett Carver

Dr. Brett Carver from Oklahoma State University presented on his team’s research on breeding cycle effects. They found that increase in yield is directly correlated with increase in breeding cycle with no yield plateau and no major decrease in protein. They are also researching FODMAPs or fructans in wheat, which are largely responsible for triggering gastrointestinal symptoms in people (not gluten). In addition, they are also researching wheat as a flavonoid-rich food and potential source of antioxidants (purple wheat), and the B-glucan and resistant starch genes in wheat (high amylose, low amylopectin).

### 2022-2023 Annual Budget and Biennium Budget Discussion & Approval

Jacob Leaver, a budget analyst with the State, reminded the board that this initial budget is a best guess that can be adjusted/corrected in later meetings. Discussion about the budget commenced, with a common theme being the difficulty in having a surplus this year, while being unable to carry over for than 30% into future years that will most likely be leaner. There has been a significant increase in rent this year as a result of the main office move to Fallbrook. Due to the surplus, increases to the Publicity & Education and Research budgets were approved. There was a lot of discussion around Dr. Wallace’s proposal, and ultimately the Wheat Board decided to partially fund the proposal, contingent upon use of funds.

**Narjes moved, Dunbar seconded to approve the 2022-2023 Annual Budget. Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. Motion carried.**

A majority of the Biennium Budget discussion revolved around the PSL (Salary Limit) and spending authority.

**Sayer moved, Narjes seconded to approve a budget seeking a 2% increase in spending authority for each of the two years.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

**Sayer moved, Lorens seconded to approve a 3% increase in PSL for each of the two years.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

**Sayer moved, Flohr seconded to approve the total biennium budget.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

*Executive Session on Performance Review of Executive Director and Staff Salary Adjustments*

**Delsing moved, Sayer seconded to go into a closed Executive Session.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

**Dunbar moved, Sayer seconded to exit Executive Session.** Voice vote, motion carried.

**Delsing moved, Flohr seconded to raise the Executive Director salary by \$25,000.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

*Budget & Salary Adjustments & Approval*

**Lorens moved, Delsing seconded to use unobligated funds to adjust the Meal Expense, Education Promotion Fund and Progressive Farmer budgets.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

There was discussion about creating a per diem above and beyond what the State provides to compensate board members for their time/expertise lost while fulfilling their duties at the Nebraska Wheat Board.

**Flohr moved, Dunbar seconded to create a board policy change to give board members a daily per diem when traveling on official board business.** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

**Flohr moved, Dunbar seconded amend the language in the previous motion from “per diem” to “daily compensation.”** Roll call vote, Flohr – yes, Delsing – yes, Dunbar – yes, Sayer – yes, Narjes – yes, Lorens – yes, Knobel – yes. **Motion carried.**

Flohr's time on the board (15 years) will expire July 1 and Schaneman is contacting potential board members, but they need time to think about it. The leading candidate appears to be Jon Holzfaster. Flohr will continue to serve until the new appointment is made.

The next meeting will take place August 30, 2022 in North Platte.

**Delsing moved, Sayer seconded to approve the next meeting time and place. Voice vote, motion carried.**

*Calendar & Travel Approval*

**Sayer moved, Delsing seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:15pm MT.**

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