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Wheat Letter

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U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is the industry's market development organization working in more than 100 countries. Its mission is to "develop, maintain and expand international markets to enhance the profitability of U.S. wheat producers and their customers." USW activities are funded by producer checkoff dollars managed by 19 state wheat commissions and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service cost-share programs. For more information, visit www.uswheat.org or contact your state wheat commission. Stakeholders may reprint original articles from *Wheat Letter* with source attribution. Click [here](#) to subscribe or unsubscribe to *Wheat Letter*.

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USW Crop Quality Reports: <http://www.uswheat.org/cropQuality>

4. Overseas Buyers Have a Voice in the U.S. Wheat Supply Chain

The U.S. wheat industry takes pride in its products and position as the world's most reliable choice. It is very important that both our domestic and export customers can depend on the integrity of our supply chain, the quality of U.S. wheat and our unmatched reliability as a supplier. One of the critical foundations is the unique inspection and certification available to importers from the [Federal Grain Inspection Service](#)

(FGIS), an agency that is part of the USDA Grain Inspection, Stockyards and Packers Administration (GIPSA). Forty years ago this year, an act of Congress established FGIS and required either federal or state agency grain inspections for export. Read more here: "[U.S. Wheat Industry Helps Celebrate 100 Years of Grain Standards.](#)"

"No other wheat exporter comes close in terms of the neutral, detailed, federally supervised quality assurance of the U.S. commercial transaction itself," USW Regional Technical Director Peter Lloyd has often told customers. "As far as commercially possible, FGIS inspection and certification ensures that what the buyer specifies, the buyer gets."

Even more reassuring is the fact that organizations focused on helping overseas wheat buyers get the most value from U.S. wheat are actively involved in advising the federal agencies responsible for grain inspection. To help GIPSA and FGIS better meet the needs of “customers who operate in a dynamic and changing marketplace,” representatives from all segments of the U.S. grain industry are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to serve on a Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.

USW Vice President and West Coast Office Director Steve Wirsching has served on the Advisory Committee for several years and for the past year has served as its chairperson. Another friend of world wheat buyers, Janice Cooper, managing director of the [Wheat Marketing Center](#) in Portland OR, also serves on the Advisory Committee and, like Wirsching, was elected by committee members to serve as its chairperson. Cooper first joined the committee while she served as executive director of the California Wheat Commission.

“With a focus on providing the highest level of service in the most cost effective way, each committee member can bring issues or opportunities to the table,” Wirsching said. “If the committee agrees that action is needed, they pass resolutions that FGIS acts on and then shares progress with the committee. So we really do have the chance to represent the interests of our customers as members of the Advisory Committee.”

For example, Wirsching said FGIS now uses more precise, quantitative detection tests to measure mycotoxin levels because USW brought evidence to the committee that some overseas wheat buyers needed more accurate data. Based on another idea USW shared in the Advisory Committee, FGIS now places FGIS personnel on regular overseas assignments to help USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service and organizations like USW provide technical training for grain buyers.

“This is my last meeting and before Janice Cooper takes over as chairperson in May 2017,” Wirsching said. “Janice is well respected and her judgement is trusted to help guide the committee on its mission to help ensure the quality and integrity of the grain marketing system.”

“This committee helps the grain export industry fully engage in the inspection and certification process that is so important to buyers,” Cooper said. “We have planned the Advisory Committee’s fall meeting here in Portland specifically to do that. The committee members will tour an export elevator and watch how wheat is inspected first hand, and they will have a chance to meet with the Wheat Marketing Center board of directors. This will also provide a better understanding of the depth of FGIS’s work, including how much effort is made to maintain integrity in its operations.”

USW believes that it is important to stay actively involved in all phases of the U.S. wheat supply chain to provide a voice representing the interests of the world’s wheat buyers. This helps increase the buyers’ confidence in the export system and adds value to the high quality wheat our farmers produce.