

Growers Take to Portland

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Annually the Oregon Wheat Commission (OWC) conducts a Grower Workshop for wheat growers interested in learning more about what happens to their wheat once it leaves their farm and how their wheat assessment dollars are used. This is an opportunity for growers to see firsthand the shipping, grading, product development, research, and customer relations as well as gain a better understanding of topics like supply and demand, transportation, sanitary/phyto-sanitary issues and global conditions affecting the price of wheat here at home.

The 2019 Grower Workshop was held in February and had 13 participants. As the new kid on the block I was excited to take on the adventure. The group started with a sit down with OWC CEO Rowe to get a better understanding of how assessment dollars are used on growers' behalf. Our next stop was Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) where we learned more about how our wheat is used in products by watching both noodles and



crackers being made (yes, even some taste testing!), conducting Falling Numbers tests to learn about what makes a quality dough, and talking with the scientists about the impacts of variations in grain class, variety and environment on products. However, the highlight for me at the WMC was making our own tortillas, although mine turned out more like a flapjack.

Next, we were off to the Little T American Bakery, where we toured his small facility and sampled products. The owner Tim Healea has built his operation with an emphasis on quality. He sets himself apart by identifying and sourcing varieties and classes of wheat that optimize his products and they are delicious!



Next stop was a cold but educational tour of the TEMCO grain export facility. Many were intrigued to climb to the top and take in the scenery. It was interesting to learn about how grain is loaded on vessels to meet the specifications of our buyers. Right next door at the Federal Grain Inspection Service we were able to see the process of how samples are inspected in their facility. Interesting side note, FGIS inspectors endure years of training and part time work to build enough seniority to be full time inspectors. Between presentations and tours, it was great to visit with those in the industry and hear what part they have in wheat production.

Day two started off with added layers as we made our way to Shaver Transportation. We were told this would be a highlight and it did not disappoint! Walking through and riding a tug boat was not on my bucket list, but I would suggest you put it on yours as this was an experience to remember. Not only did we get the whole tour including a walk through the engine room (any gearheads dream), it was a ride around Portland not many will ever get. Our final tour on day two was at the Overseas Merchandise Inspection Co. (OMIC) where they do pesticide residue and GMO testing on export shipments among other things. The tour of the facility included a great deal of scientific equipment and an entertaining tour guide!

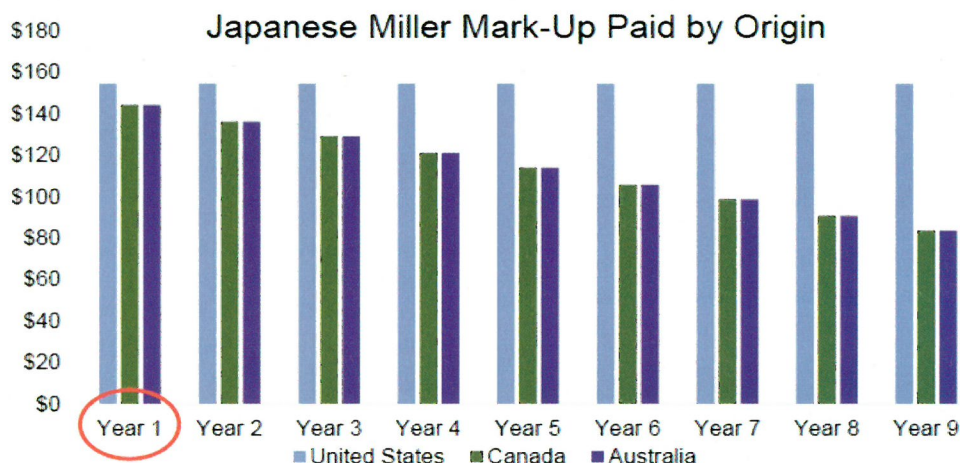
In addition to the tours the group was also able to receive presentations Janice Cooper of the Wheat Marketing Center, Michael Anderson, Assistant Deputy Director of US Wheat Associates, and Robert Zemetra of the Oregon State University Wheat Breeding and Genetics program.

See the gallery online at <http://www.owgl.org/wheat-producers/grower-workshop/> and more information on how to sign up for the 2020 Workshop!



Japan at Risk Under CPTPP

- Canada, Mexico, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia have all ratified
- CPTPP will take effect end Dec., then this:



The best chance US wheat producers have at heading off a major loss of our market share in Japan, as much as 45% or 1.35 million metric tons of sales by some estimates, is probably through the bilateral talks between the US and Japan announced back in September 2018. The talks were expected to start in February, but delays caused by the recent government shutdown and the extension of negotiations between the US and China may delay the start of talks into April or later.

The Administration has acknowledged the importance of addressing agricultural issues like the wheat tariffs early in the discussions. Japan has indicated that concessions for agricultural trade, beyond what is in the CPTPP, are unlikely.

So here we are, not quite spectators, but not really in control of what happens either. We press the Administration and Congress at every opportunity to get a deal done. Hopefully before we hear any more clicks on the tariff ratchet.

To find the most current US Wheat information on trade agreements visit the US Wheat Associates website, <https://www.uswheat.org/policy/trade-negotiations/>

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