



NABC Lunch and Learn Q & A

Southwest WA Grains Project

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Resources:

- [Southwest WA Growers Cooperative](#) has two pools:
 - [SW WA Food Hub](#)
 - [SW WA Grain Project FAQ Sheet](#) (Port of Chehalis)
- For more information about the SW WA Grain Project contact Jake Fay: jake@agbizcenter.org.

Q&A

Q: Regarding feed security for dairies: As you build out grain storage at the Port of Chehalis, do you have the sense that you could tie into some of the secondary markets for dairy and poultry feed? Is there a feed market regionally that would offer a good price for growers and also help some of the livestock producers?

A: Yes. This summer we made cold calls to feed mills asking how much grain they could take and most don't have the capacity to store a year's worth of product. We anticipate having three larger bins at the new facility that that could each hold about six rail cars worth of grain, so it would be very easy for feed mill operations to order a rail car of grain sent to them. The facility will be located right on the rail spur with the ability to load into a rail car. For smaller facilities, we could fill a single-axle truck just as easily.

NABC works regionally and there are Co-op members in Skagit. We have been keeping an eye out for available rail sidings in that community.

The feed market operated with a just-in-time mentality, rather than having significant storage. When you are talking about thousands of bushels being sold at 'spot price', rather than being stored until more favorable market conditions; that could make a big difference. Insulating growers from the volatility of the commodities market creates some real opportunity regionally.

An example of the potential: When we had to take the product that didn't meet specifications because of damage from the weather, and sell it in the feed market, producers were receiving about 80% of the value they would have gotten in the malting market. The barley we didn't have any place to house, had to be loaded directly into rail cars. It brought about 40% of the value that it would have had in the malting market. In theory, if we had been able to store that grain and not immediately ship it somewhere else in rail cars, the producers could have made an extra 40% on that grain.

Q: Is the \$4.2 million funding received to build the facility enough to build it out as pictured? And when do you think it will be ready for use?

A: (Bill Teitzel, Port of Chehalis) We put the three large bins into the plans as alternate items, if there is enough money left over to include them. It depends on what bid we select. Right now, we don't have enough EDA funds to do all three of the bins because most of the funding will be dedicated to site development, the elevators, and the six small bins.

We are in discussion with the EDA now. We have let them know that we want to be efficient with government funding, and have additional funding that has been appropriated to us, and we are asking if we can utilize this additional funding with the same contract. They are reviewing that question now. If that goes in our favor, we will have the three big bins constructed at the same time as the rest of the site.

The goal is to have the site fully completed and running by the end of July 2025.

Q: What other types of crops could be stored in these bins?

A: Any dry grain. The large bins are for one very large bulk commodity. Often, you want to avoid commingling seed crops from different producers, so the six smaller bins would be most suitable for receiving and loading seed crops. The big bins would likely be for malting product or for wheat that is going for flour or export, or other feed type grains.

In the spirit of creating an ag service center, and listening to project stakeholders over the years, you might also imagine a facility that has cleaning and drying capacity. In Western WA there is always going to be the issue of wanting to reduce moisture content of finished grain for long-term storage, or export, or to meet specs.

And regarding seed crops, in Skagit and Southwest WA, there are still several active contracts in seed production for radishes, spinach, sunflowers, and some other crops, so there is the opportunity not only for storage, but also for adjacent facilities for cleaning and handling.