

**In this edition:**

- Food Aid Drives Wheat Sales Edges Out Competition
- Cultivating Curiosity With Wheat Education
- Farmer Feedback Drives Program Recommendations

**OUR VIEW: NEW PYRAMID,  
SAME NUTRITIOUS WHEAT**

Steele Fischbacher, Executive Director, Texas Wheat

In early January, the federal government released updated Dietary Guidelines with much fanfare and a new tagline: “Eat Real Foods.” It’s a simple message most folks can get behind, and honestly not too different from long-standing nutritional advice. We all know the typical American diet (including my own) could use some improvement, and balancing our plates is a goal I see gaining traction among many farmers I follow online. But as someone deeply devoted to the success of Texas wheat farmers, the details give me pause.

There’s a lot to like about the updated pyramid. It’s new and shiny, full of color and cute graphics, and the marketing mentioning real foods produced by **farmers and ranchers** feels like a win. Still, what’s almost lost in the conversation, or more accurately, at the bottom of the pyramid, is the miracle of wheat and everything it brings to the table.

As the current online nutritional conversation continues its shift toward maximizing protein, carbohydrates often get a black eye. In the world of come-and-go diets, this isn’t new, but nutritional science has long recognized that carbs fuel our brains and provide essential energy. There’s a reason carb-loading remains common practice for runners and fitness professionals.

And that brings us back to wheat. For centuries, wheat products have delivered basic nutritional components while offering a safe, affordable delivery system for other nutrient-dense foods. I could quote a stat or two showing that diets containing enriched and whole grains improve health outcomes, but I promise it wouldn’t get as much attention as the online trends of the carnivore or gluten-free diet.

In my own home, we TRY (operative word here) to balance our plates with plenty of protein and as many fruits and vegetables as I can convince my kids to eat. At the end of the day, wheat products help us deliver nutrition in a safe, tasty and affordable way.

This is why one major change in the guidelines caught my attention: the shift from “**make half your grains whole**” to whole grains being the only category recommended for the menu. Nutritional science has long touted the benefits of whole grains, but it feels short-sighted to ignore the value of enriched grains. I know, I know, white bread doesn’t have a reputation for being a premium nutrition item, but stick with me.

Enriched grains play a crucial role in our diets. In fact, folic acid fortification of enriched grains is estimated to prevent 1,300 neural tube defects annually in the United States alone, according to the CDC, which calls folic acid fortification one of the most successful public health interventions in American history.



During 2024 and 2025, two states passed legislation to expand folic acid fortification requirements to corn masa flour, recognizing that Latino families relying on tortillas were missing this critical nutrient. Yet now, just months later, new dietary guidelines recommend cutting grain servings overall and fully avoiding enriched grain products. Beyond minimizing grains on the pyramid, the supporting materials specifically advise avoiding tortillas. The timing is puzzling.

Most of us understand that while the pyramid shapes public perception, the real impact of new recommendations will show up in school meal requirements and government nutrition program regulations. For families managing tight budgets or limited food access, this matters. And it matters for wheat growers producing a nutritious product that depends on stable consumer demand.

I believe there’s a reason wheat exists on this planet. Like most edible plants, it sustains and nourishes and has done so for millennia. There’s also good reason for bread and grain products to remain on the nutrition pyramid, even as recommendations shift on which grain-based foods should be on the plate.

If you are a wheat grower, I hope you are proud of what you produce and recognize that it supports families and provides both comfort and nutrition across the globe. It’s a pride we share at the Texas Wheat Producers Association. While we appreciate guidelines that recognize whole grains as essential, dramatically reducing overall grain servings and diminishing the value of enrichment risks undermining proven public health programs and affordable nutrition for all. As nutrition policy evolves, we will continue working to ensure the voices of farmers who grow real, nutritious food remain part of the conversation.

# FOOD AID DRIVES WHEAT SALES EDGES OUT COMPETITION

*Food for Progress program creates a new market opportunity in Colombia.*

*Colombia purchases of U.S. wheat increased by 69% in the current marketing year.*

*Colombian bakers' are building a preference for U.S. wheat.*

Market development is typically a long game in international trade. It can take years of relationship building, quality demonstrations and patience to secure a long-standing trading partnership. But sometimes, with strategic timing and a little luck, a big swing in the right market can be the key to unlocking a new opportunity.

One such occurrence was facilitated in 2025, when complementary work facilitated by U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) staff, capitalized on a USDA Food for Progress wheat monetization project in Colombia to crack open a market long dominated by Canadian wheat. The effort generated multiple immediate follow-up commercial shipments for U.S. farmers. The win demonstrates how the Food for Progress program and USW outreach converts strategic aid into commercial revenue while displacing competitors in hard-fought export markets.



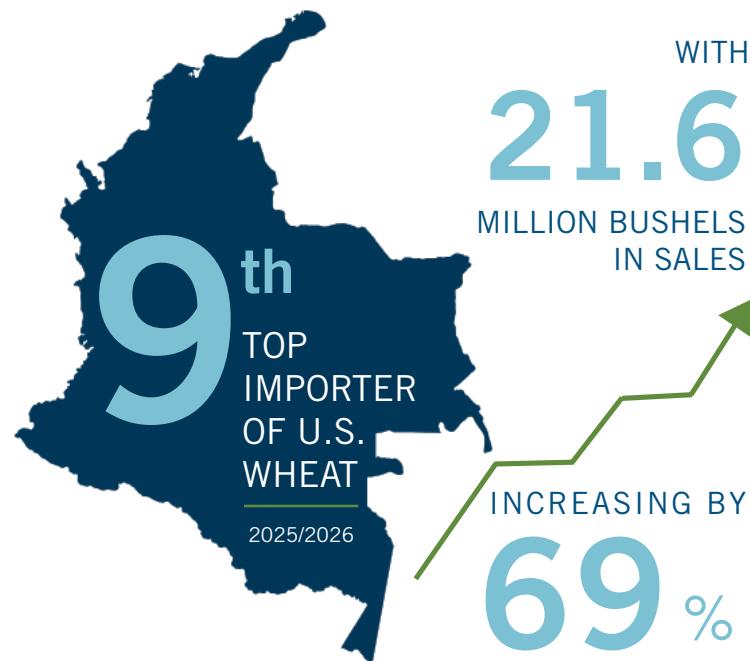
Colombia has the second-largest population in South America, creating the largest demand for imported wheat in the region. The country has negligible commercial wheat production, supporting demand, but 60 percent of wheat imports have historically been sourced from Canada. Breaking that preference required strategic partnership to introduce U.S. wheat to customers in a region of the country historically challenging for U.S. gulf exported wheat to compete.

The Food for Progress program provided that opening when a vessel departed the Gulf on March 15, 2025, loaded with a donation shipment of nearly 735,000 bushels of U.S. HRW wheat and 492,000 bushels of U.S. HRS wheat. When the wheat cargoes

arrived in Buenaventura, the Colombian companies that purchased the donated wheat were fully prepared to incorporate U.S. wheat into their bread and pasta flour blends, thanks to USW's technical assistance.

Following those initial Food for Progress shipments and coordinated training by USW staff, Colombian buyers booked four additional commercial vessels of U.S. wheat that moved through Buenaventura during the summer of 2025. The outcome was real sales, real income for farmers; and new success in a market that had long been hard to capitalize.

Since 1985, Food for Progress has addressed food insecurity in developing countries while creating export opportunities for U.S. agriculture. Wheat is one of the most frequently used commodities in Food for Progress monetization projects, reflecting global demand for staple grains and strong interest from developing-country millers.



**“The commercial sales of U.S. wheat to Colombia, following a successful monetization project, are a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of the Food for Progress program and USW’s commitment to expanding market access for U.S. wheat farmers,” Galdos said, noting that USW is tracking additional commercial sales of U.S. wheat expected to land in Colombian ports this fall. “USW will continue to build on these wins by providing additional trade and technical assistance to further cement trust with Colombian millers and create additional opportunities for importing U.S. wheat.”**

# CULTIVATING CURIOSITY WITH WHEAT EDUCATION

*Fields of Learning program brings wheat education to students.*

*Lessons aim to improve agricultural literacy and combat misinformation.*

*Resources are free to educators, extension leaders and parents.*

The Texas Wheat Producers Board recently launched Fields of Learning, an education initiative designed to strengthen long-term consumer demand and public support for the state's wheat industry. The program offers free, ready-to-use materials for teachers, extension leaders and parents with the goal of developing informed consumers who understand the value of wheat.

For Texas wheat farmers, the program addresses critical industry challenges: rampant nutrition misinformation, a lack of understanding of production agriculture and a need for enhanced domestic wheat use.

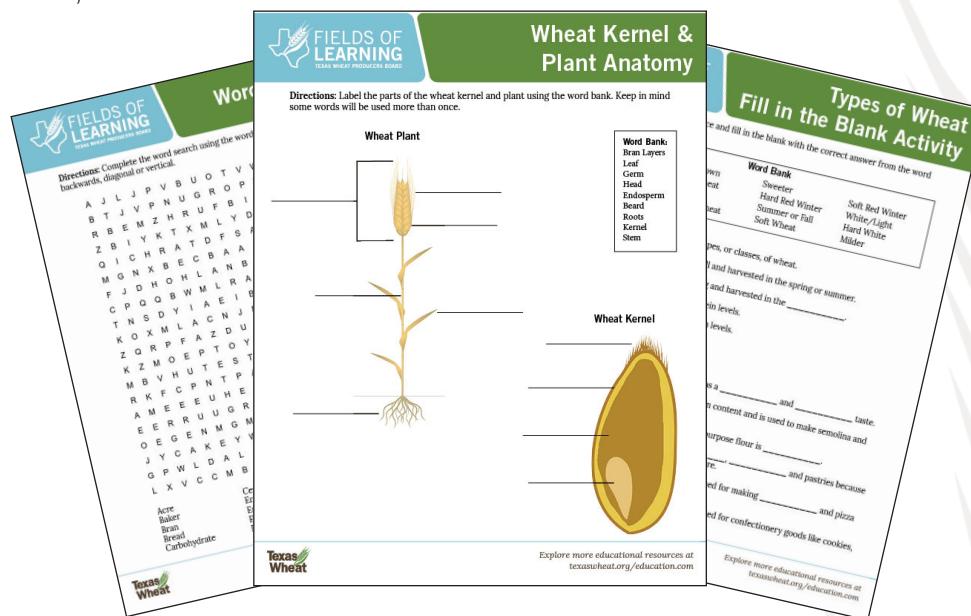
Recognizing the importance of youth education and the impact early education can have on shaping attitudes toward wheat, the board developed the Fields of Learning resources for grades 6–8, though the material is adaptable for a wide range of grade levels and subject areas. Each lesson includes slide decks, worksheets, activities and aligns to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards. Topics cover wheat anatomy and growth, production practices, uses and nutrition. In addition to the lessons, the Fields of Learning program offers posters, fact sheets and recipes to enhance the educational experience.

**“Education is central to the mission of the board,” said Scott Born, a Ferris, Texas farmer and board chairman. “By helping students understand where their food comes from, we’re not only teaching valuable life lessons but also inspiring the next generation to appreciate and support agriculture.”**

Five comprehensive lessons will launch this spring, with worksheets and activities already available online. The materials have been reviewed by Texas wheat producers, educators and industry professionals, including experts from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the milling industry.



**“Our goal with Fields of Learning is to provide accessible, engaging materials that fit seamlessly into existing classrooms,” said Kimberly Clark, director of outreach for the Texas Wheat Producers Board and Association. “By focusing on practical lessons about wheat, we’re helping educators connect agriculture to students’ everyday experiences.”**



**ALL MATERIALS ARE  
FREE AND AVAILABLE AT  
[TEXASWHEAT.ORG/EDUCATION](https://TEXASWHEAT.ORG/EDUCATION)**

# FARMER FEEDBACK DRIVES PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Texas Wheat Producers Association continues to relay producer concerns directly to federal agencies, focusing on practical improvements that better reflect the realities of growing and marketing wheat in Texas.

## Addressing Quality Loss Gaps

Texas wheat growers have consistently noted that current crop insurance rules do not match the discounts applied at the elevator when harvest weather reduces grain quality. During RMA's recent review of quality discount factors, Texas Wheat provided producer data and helped ensure farmers had opportunities to share their experiences. The review confirmed what many growers already know: when regional quality shocks occur, current policy does not adequately reflect the resulting market discounts.

To help close this gap, the association submitted two key recommendations:

### Realign Wheat Test Weight Thresholds

Current discount schedules begin below U.S. Grade 4 standards, leaving a gap between insurance coverage and real-world milling requirements. The standalone test weight table also begins at 51 lbs, offering inadequate protection for many quality-loss situations.

### Improve Options for In-Season Quality Losses

Reviewers suggested exploring an optional endorsement for sudden quality declines in a market region. Texas Wheat supported this direction but encouraged RMA to also consider existing policy improvements that could provide meaningful protection when quality loss is beyond a grower's control.

## Additional Crop Insurance Improvements

In December, the association also submitted comments on broader wheat insurance issues. Producer feedback highlighted several areas where small adjustments could improve usability and fairness, including:

- Enterprise Unit availability on Prevent Plant acres
- Broadcast seeding inspection requirements
- Lease reporting and paperwork burdens on Annual Forage policies
- Early-season coverage limitations on Annual Forage policies

## Farmers Bridge Assistance Program

USDA recently announced details for the Farmers Bridge Assistance (FBA) program, including a \$39.35 per-acre rate for wheat. Payments on FSA-certified acres are expected by February 28. While helpful for many growers facing high input costs and uncertain markets, the program currently excludes wheat acres certified as grazing-only. Texas Wheat has raised this concern with USDA and congressional offices to ensure all wheat producers are treated fairly.

## INDUSTRY PARTNERS



bacrop.com  
(806) 898-8930



More than Insurance  
cropandrange.com  
(254) 582-3888



bunge.com  
(817) 916-7280



texasfarmbureau.org/radio



plainslandbank.com



bnsf.com



AgTexas Farm Credit Services  
Southwest Agribusiness Consulting  
DeFoor Land & Cattle  
DBA South Shore Resources



5405 West Interstate 40  
Amarillo, TX 79106  
(806) 352-2191  
texaswheat.org  
info@texaswheat.org

## DIRECTORS

District I  
Collin Bowers..... Spearman  
Bryan Clift..... Stratford  
Jason Schickedanz.... Perryton

District II  
Landon Friemel..... Hereford  
Corby Shadid..... Panhandle  
Eddie Womack..... Tulia

District III  
Jody Bellah..... Throckmorton  
Chet Creel..... Newcastle  
Freddie Streit..... Vernon

District IV  
Scott Born..... Ferris  
Ken Davis..... Grandview  
Gary Murphy..... Dawson  
Tyler Norman..... Howe  
Cody Pruser..... Winters  
Ben Scholz..... Lavon

## STAFF

Steelee Fischbacher  
Executive Director

Kimberly Clark  
Director of Outreach

Bailey Sipes  
Director of Producer Relations



texaswheat



@texaswheat