

2004 Conference Speakers



Don Anderson – Don Anderson is the third generation to farm their home place, which was originally purchased by his grandfather and great uncle in 1896. He grew up on the farm and at age eleven began driving a wheat truck in the field for his Dad's new custom harvesting business which he started after purchasing his first self-propelled combine. Don graduated with a degree in business from Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, ID and returned to the farm in 1971 after two years in the Army. The farm could not support two families, so in 1972 he bought a second combine and they more than tripled their custom harvesting acres. In the next few years they rented and purchased more land. Today they farm 1500 acres and harvest 2500.



Dr. Dan Ball - Dan Ball is a Professor of Weed Science with Oregon State University, Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center in Pendleton. He is in his 13th year as an OSU research and Extension weed scientist. His research focuses on management of weeds in dryland crops and irrigated grass seed production. He received a B.S. degree in Crop Protection from Kansas State University, an M.S. in Pest Management from University of California, Riverside, and a Ph.D. degree in 1987 in Weed Science from the University of Wyoming.



Dr. Jack Brown – This native of Scotland investigates breeding methodologies and the inheritance of important traits, and develops procedures to increase breeding efficiency and produce genetically superior rapeseed, Canola and mustard cultivars. His Brassica breeding program spans the Inland Northwest with a number of research collaborators. He leads several research projects on the selection and management of Brassica cultivars for direct seed systems. He also teaches plant breeding, quantitative genetics and biometrics.



R. James Cook - James Cook is the Interim Dean of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics at Washington State University. As a research plant pathologist with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service at Pullman, in 1988, Cook led the team of researchers who made the first field test of a genetically modified organism in the Pacific Northwest—a microorganism for control of root disease in wheat. Cook has held the Endowed Chair in Wheat Research at WSU for 5 years. For the past 10 years he has worked to integrate science and policy on biotechnology applied to food and agriculture. He served on the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology. He chaired an international working group, producing a report on Safety Considerations for Biotechnology, and has published on biotechnology issues through

international and U.S. academies of science. Cook received bachelor's and master's degrees from North Dakota State University, and a doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley in 1961.



Mike Ensley - Mike Ensley is a fourth generation farmer. He farms with his father Jack and son Jeremy on their family farm in the Colfax area of Whitman County. He has been farming since 1974. Mike is a graduate of Washington State University where he studied Agricultural Economics.

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Craig Evans - Craig Evans is an incorporating board member and president of Stewardship America, Inc. a charitable, nonprofit organization founded in 1995 as the Florida Stewardship Foundation. Evans has initiated projects to improve cooperation between private landowners and government agencies in protecting essential habitat of endangered species, and in creating market-based incentives to encourage and reward private landowners in maintaining these natural resources. He has developed legislation at the local, state and national levels and policy recommendations aimed at maintaining the economic and environmental viability of the nation's rural lands. Recent efforts influenced portions of the 2002 U.S. Farm Bill and Oregon's Conservation Incentives Bill of 2003. Evans is part of a fourth-generation ranching and farming family

that settled in the Klamath Basin of California and Oregon in the late 1800s. The family still operates a 3,000-acre hay, grain, cow-calf and horticulture operation on the California-Oregon border.



Allen Ford - Alan Ford grows winter and spring wheat and some barley near Prescott, Washington, on the Brown and Ford Farm, where annual precipitation is an intermediate 16 inches. Alan has been direct seeding for about 12 years, beginning with leased equipment or custom farming. He purchased a Conservapak hoe-type drill in 1990. Alan now direct seeds about 80 percent of his winter wheat and 60 percent of spring wheat and spring barley.



Dr. David Huggins – David Huggins is involved in managing the 200-acre USDA-ARS Palouse Conservation Field Station and the 140-acre WSU Cunningham Agronomy Farm near Pullman, where research is directed toward the development of viable direct seed cropping systems. His research focus is on crop and soil management including conservation tillage systems, crop rotation design, site-specific nutrient management, soil and water quality, carbon and nutrient cycling, soil fertility and plant nutrition.



Ron Jirava - Ron Jirava started farming on his own on the family farm in 1986. The farm has been in the family since 1884. In 1996 he started direct seeding with the Monsanto's Fields of Tomorrow. By 1999, he had the entire 940 acre family farm in direct seeding. He is a graduate of Spokane Community College with an associate degree in Ag. Business. He also participated and graduated from the Washington Agriculture, Forestry Education Foundation program. Ron has served on several boards and committees including the Washington Rapeseed/Canola Commission, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, Lincoln/Adams County Crop Improvement, the Pacific Northwest Oilseed Association and the Washington Ag. Presidents Group. He represents the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association on the Washington State Technical Advisory Committee for NRCS and serves as Research Chair.

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Colby Johnson – Colby Johnson comes from a rich history of family farming. He is a twenty five year old fifth generation farmer who works closely with his parents at Conley Farms. The farm has been family run for five generations and over 100 years. Colby is a graduate of Blue Mountain Community College and has an Associates Degree in Applied Science for Production Agriculture and Production Livestock. He and his family began direct seeding 4000 acres in 1996 and are still direct seeding today. Their major crops are fall wheat and alfalfa and minor crops include barley, triticale, oats, spring wheats, grass seed, grass hay, canola, safflower, sunflowers, forage mixes, and forage corn. All of their seeding is done with a Case Concord 4010 Air Drill.



Dr. Kimberlee Kidwell - Kimberlee Kidwell is the Associate Professor of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University. As a Spring Wheat Breeder and Geneticist, her research responsibilities include using traditional breeding methods and molecular marker technologies to develop adapted spring wheat cultivars and to address basic questions related to polyploid genetics. She received a B.S. from the University of Illinois for Genetics and Development, a B.S. from the University of Illinois, for Agriculture Science, an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics.



Karl Kupers – Karl Kupers has been involved with K & J Farms, Inc. since 1972. He is the Farm Manager of a 4400 acre dryland diversified farm that was converted from a traditional dryland wheat operation to a diversified no-till, sustainable operation over a 7 year period. He is also a Farm Manager for Treadwise, Inc. and a Co-owner and sales manager of Shepherd's Grain Products at Columbia Plateau Producers. He graduated from Washington State University with a Bachelor of Pharmacy. He is also a graduate of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Leadership Foundation and Canadian Grains Commission Leadership Program. Karl has served on several committees and boards including the Washington Governor's Advisory Council on Sustainability, Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources

Advisory Committee and the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association to name a few. He is also the Co-founder of Spectrum Crop Management and developed standards and legislation for the Washington state canola and rapeseed industry.



Doug Lustig – Doug Lustig was born and raised on the same place that he is farming now, about 5 miles north of Cottonwood, Idaho. His Grandfather bought part of the homeplace in 1909 and then added over the years. His Dad farmed and lived there all of his life, and now Doug is the third generation farmer. He attended college in Twin Falls, ID and worked on a cattle ranch while in school. Prior to taking over the farm, he spent a few years working in the woods. He has now been farming for 19 years. Doug, his wife Karen, and their five children

work closely together on the farm. They use the Farmworks program to track profit and loss on each field, and to manage the accounting. Doug is an Idaho State Commissioner for the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council, a commissioner on the rural fire district, a member of the Clearwater Direct Seeders, and a member of the PNW Direct Seed Association.

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Rich Olson - Rich Olson and his wife Judy, farm 3600 acres in Eastern Whitman County, north and south of Garfield on Highway 27. They have ten landlords and raise winter wheat, lentils, spring wheat, and spring barley in a 20 inch precipitation zone. They have used modified JD-455 grain drills to direct seed both spring and fall crops for the past 5 years.



Dr. Timothy Paulitz - Timothy Paulitz is a Research Plant Pathologist with the USDA-ARS Root Disease and Biological Control Unit in Pullman, WA. His research focuses on root diseases of wheat and barley, with an emphasis on *Rhizoctonia*, *Pythium*, and *Fusarium*. In his 20-year career, he has specialized in soilborne fungal pathogens and their biological control, and has worked with a number of crops, including wheat, corn, lupines, apples and vegetable crops. He was a research associate at Colorado State University and USDA-ARS, Corvallis, OR and a professor at McGill University in Quebec, Canada before coming to Pullman in 2000.



Francis Pierce - Francis J. Pierce is the Director of the Center for Precision Agricultural Systems at Washington State University located at the WSU Prosser Irrigated Agriculture Research & Extension Center (IAREC). The Center was funded by the Washington Legislature as part of the University's Advanced Technology Initiative in 1999. As Center Director, Pierce has the mission to advance the science and practice of precision agriculture in Washington. The Center's efforts support the competitive production of Washington's agricultural commodities, stimulate the state's economic development, and protect the region's environmental and natural resources.

Pierce received his Ph.D. in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota in 1984. His expertise is in soil management. He has been involved in the development and evaluation of precision agriculture since 1991, coming to WSU from Michigan State University.

Jerald Sanders – Jerald Sanders is a Farm Unit Manager for Agri-Northwest, Prior East Farms. The Farm consists of about 60,000 acres of irrigated cropland. The farm is divided into smaller units which are managed by individual managers with area wide equipment, planting and harvesting responsibilities. He direct manages about 4600 acres, of which 2000 of that was direct seeded corn this past year. Jerald received his Bachelors degree in Agriculture at Utah State University and has been with AgriNorthwest for almost 7 years now. He has a passion for growing profitable corn and looks to the industry for better ideas and improvements, which can be adopted into his program.



Bill Schillinger - Bill Schillinger is a research agronomist and extension specialist in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University. He is based at the WSU Dryland Research Station at Lind. Bill holds a Ph.D. in crop science from Oregon State University. Raised on his family's dryland wheat farm in eastern Washington, Bill worked in agricultural research projects for 10 years in Nepal and West Africa with the U.S. Peace Corps and the U.S. Agency for International Development. For the past 11 years, he has led WSU's cropping systems research effort in the low-precipitation (less than 12 inch annual) region. Research is focused on best management practices to reduce wind erosion, improve winter wheat stand establishment, reduce water runoff from frozen soils, intensify

cropping, evaluation of alternative crops, and development of technologies for direct-seed cropping systems. Bill also serves as director of the WSU Dryland Research Station at Lind and as co-leader of the Columbia Plateau PM-10 Project.

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Roland Schirman - Roland Schirman has served as the Washington State University Cooperative Extension educator for Columbia County since 1979. During this period of time he has assisted producers in developing and evaluating direct-seed cropping systems and equipment. The implementation of these practices has resulted in a significant improvement in resource conservation. Roland earned degrees in Farm Crops from Oregon State University and in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin.

Paul Shanno – Paul Schanno is with Schanno Ranch, a family farm operation. It was started by his father and has now grown to approximately 6500 acres of wheat, 250 acres of sweet cherries, and a small herd of commercial cattle. Paul has been a past president of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, member of the Oregon Grains Commission, member of the Oregon State University Alumni Association board of directors, member of the National Association Wheat Growers board of directors and served on the local FSA committee. Paul and his partner Dixie have been married for forty years. They have three children involved in the operation and five wonderful grandchildren.



Steve Swannack - Steve Swannack lives on a family farm near Lamont in the northwest corner of Whitman County. Precipitation has been considerably less than the anticipated 14.5 inches per year for the last several years. Steve has been using direct seed principals for more than 15 years but feels he still has much to learn. He has gradually increased direct seeding acreage each year. During the last 10 to 12 years he has moved spring crops from full tillage to full direct seeding. He seeds fall crops on a mix of chemical assist minimum till ground and full chemical fallow. He has grown wheats of all kinds, barley, triticale, peas, mustard, canola (both spring and fall), sudan grass for hay and even corn. Steve works with modified conventional equipment, using several different direct seed drills, both disc and hoe. He has served on the

Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District for 9 years. A member of Northwest Crops Project, he has test plots for that project on the ranch. He has participated in a fertility study on placement and timing of fertilizer application in a direct seed program for the last 3 years.



Jim Thorn - Jim Thorn was born and raised on the family wheat farm a few miles southeast of Dayton, Washington. Jim was employed by the United States Navy for 21 years as a physicist in a research laboratory. In 1991, Jim and his wife decided their three children would benefit from a rural environment, and so returned to Dayton to help Jim's father and brother on the family farm. Jim finds the farm work both fascinating and challenging, and hopes to pass on to his audience some of his enthusiasm for finding ways to preserve the land as a valuable natural resource. Jim is a graduate of Whitman College with a degree in mathematical physics.

Eric Williamson - Eric Williamson farms with his father, an aunt, and uncle in the Columbia Basin of Washington near George. All of their acreage is irrigated. Water applications average 30 inches per year, ranging from 24 to 42 inches, depending on the crop. They grow sweet corn, alfalfa hay, green peas, mint, and pasture. They partner with neighbors in growing potatoes. For the last 2 years they have used a strip tillage unit, built mostly on the farm, to plant sweet corn into existing crop residues in a single pass. Eric also employs a GPS unit in direct seeding.