



**National  
Barley  
Growers  
Association**

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# WELCOME TO

## National Barley Growers Association



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### Summer Meeting Recap

NBGA held its annual summer meeting June 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> in Billings, Montana. Joining in-person were about thirty-five barley growers and industry representatives who shared crop reports and regional updates while staff provided updates and outlook on policy priorities. Board Members enjoyed hearing research updates from Jamie Sherman and Hanna Turner from the Barley, Malt, and Brewing Lab at Montana State University. Laura Wood Peterson spoke about the trending issues of climate and carbon markets and Taylor Brown from Northern Ag Network provided a lively discussion on the state of U.S. agriculture. About twenty virtual participants were able to join the discussions via Zoom, including remarks from FSA Acting Montana State Director, Leslie Ripens and a freight rail update from Lochiel Edwards. NBGA approved a new sustainability statement with plans to build on our work to communicate the beneficial role that barley growers and our industry play. On the final day of the meeting, the group held officer elections. Greg Kessel of North Dakota now serves as President and Chris Engelstad of Minnesota is the new Vice President. NBGA is excited to have Greg and Chris leading the organization!

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## NASS Acreage Report Shows Barley Acres Holding Steady

On June 30th, the National Ag Statistics Service released its acreage report, which you can find at: <https://release.nass.usda.gov/reports/acrg0621.pdf>

The report shows barley acreage holding steady with U.S. producers planting 2.603 million acres of barley in 2021, down 18,000 acres or (0.7%) from 2020. Acreage in the NBGA member states increased 13,000 collectively, to 2.284 million acres, or 0.6% from 2020. North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Maryland are seeing increases while Idaho, Washington, Minnesota, and Colorado saw declines.

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## Infrastructure Package Continues Roller Coaster Ride

Prospects for a bipartisan infrastructure investment package have been on-again, off-again and as of this writing seem to be on-again. President Biden clarified and reiterated his commitment to a bipartisan agreement. The bipartisan package would total \$973 billion over 5 years and over \$1.2 billion over 8 years, including current baseline spending levels. The package would include \$312 billion for transportation with \$16 billion of that for ports and waterways, \$65 billion for broadband, \$73 billion for power and grid upgrades, \$55 billion for water and sewer, and \$5 billion for western water storage. The funding offsets to partially pay for the bipartisan package include using leftover COVID relief funds, revenues from spectrum auctions and do not include any tax code changes. The package still has a lot of hurdles to clear and it remains to be seen if it will attract enough votes to pass the Senate.

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## Meanwhile Highway Bill Reauthorization Work Proceeds; NBGA Reiterates Trucking Policy Priorities

While negotiations continue on a large infrastructure package, the House and Senate transportation committees are moving forward on their highway bill reauthorizations. NBGA joined dozens of organizations on a letter in support of the Fischer-Tester Amendment to the Surface Transportation Investment Act of 2021 which would modernize the agricultural exemption to the hours-of-service rules and provide regulatory relief for farmers, ranchers and agricultural haulers. The Fischer-Tester amendment includes bipartisan language from S. 792, the Haulers of Agriculture and Livestock Safety (HAULS) Act of 2021 to eliminate the “planting and harvesting periods” requirements to ensure uniformity within all states, provides a 150-air-mile exemption from hours-of-service regulations on the backend of hauls, and updates the definition of an agricultural commodity for purposes of determining eligible freight for the agricultural exemption.

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## House Takes First Step on FY2022 Ag Appropriations Bill; Barley Pest Initiative Gets \$1.5 Million Increase

The House Appropriations Committee advanced the FY2022 Ag Appropriations

bill out of committee with an increase of \$1.5 million for the Barley Pest Initiative. The Report also includes NBGA's other funding priorities for the Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative and the Small Grains Genomic Initiative. Overall, the House proposal would increase annual discretionary funding for farm, food and rural programs by more than 10 percent. The measure totals \$26.55 billion, an increase of \$2.85 billion compared to current levels. Notable funding levels include \$4.4 billion for rural development, including \$907 million for broadband deployment; \$3.3 billion for agricultural research; \$1.06 billion for conservation programs; and \$347.4 million to address the impacts of climate change and support climate-friendly farm practices. The bill will move to consideration by the full House in July. The Senate has not yet begun to move on appropriations bills. Congress is not expected to pass a final appropriations bill before the Sept. 30 fiscal year deadline and instead will pass a continuing resolution with hopes of enacting new FY22 bills by the end of the calendar year.

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### **Senate Passes Ag Climate Bill with Large Bipartisan Vote**

On June 24<sup>th</sup> the U.S Senate voted 92-8 to pass the Growing Climate Solutions Act, a bill intended to help facilitate farmer participation in private agriculture and forestry carbon markets. The bill is a rare example of bipartisan action on climate change related issues. If enacted into law it would enable USDA to create a certification program to help farmers, ranchers and foresters navigate private-sector carbon programs and sell carbon credits. The increasing number of private sector carbon offset markets creates an opportunity for landowners to generate revenue for activities that cut emissions or pull carbon dioxide from the air into soil or trees.

The legislation is backed by a broad coalition of groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation as well as major environmental groups like the Environmental Defense Fund and the Nature Conservancy. While the bill has broad support, it has been criticized by some climate change activists who prefer mandatory emissions cuts rather than offset or carbon credit trading programs and opposed by others who do not believe the government should play a role in carbon markets. The Growing Climate Solutions Act still has significant hurdles to clear before becoming law. There is a companion bill in the House, but it has not received any action.

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### **USDA Announces WHIP+ and Quality Loss Payments**

On June 11<sup>th</sup> USDA announced the release of payments for agricultural producers with approved applications for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program and for producers who have already received payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+). These programs provide disaster assistance to producers who suffered losses to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters. NBGA and state barley groups worked with USDA to revise the documentation requirements for barley sold for feed and improve assistance to barley growers.

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### **USDA Tries Out Cover Crop Premium Subsidies**

The Biden administration is testing an idea for promoting cover crop adoption by

offering farmers a subsidy on their crop insurance premiums. The USDA program will give farmers a one-time premium subsidy of up to \$5 an acre. The subsidies will complement popular programs that now exist in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. Advocates of the program hope it will prove successful and be expanded with long-term funding in the future.

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