



## Who We Are – What We Do

Kay Meyer, Executive Director

- PNDSA Mission and Major Initiatives
- Farmed Smart Certification & Partnership with Dept of Ecology
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Voluntary Conservation Ag Programs
- Q&A

# What is Direct Seeding?

- Direct seed farming systems place seed and fertilizer in one – two passes directly into the crop residue and root structure from last year's crop.
- Specialized equipment opens a narrow seed row in largely undisturbed soil and the plants grow up through that seed row.





# Advancing Direct Seeding in PNW

“Provide information exchange, advocacy on conversation policy issues, and research coordination that supports the adoption of environmentally sustainable and economically viable direct seed cropping systems.”

SAVING  
the **Family**  
FARM

Direct seeding is more economical because it saves time and money and ensures family farms can be passed down to the next generation. “Saving time, saving money, saving the farm.”



**DAVID AND MARGARET BREWER**  
Emerson Dell Farm : The Dalles Oregon : Direct Seeders since 1997





# 2014 Board of Directors



Front Row: David Brewer - Vice President, The Dalles, OR; John McNabb - President, Inkom, ID; Rick Jones, Wilbur, WA; Ty Meyer, Colton, WA; Rob Dewald, Ritzville, WA; Jason Huntley - Past President, Endicott, WA; Dan Harwood - Secretary, St. John, WA.

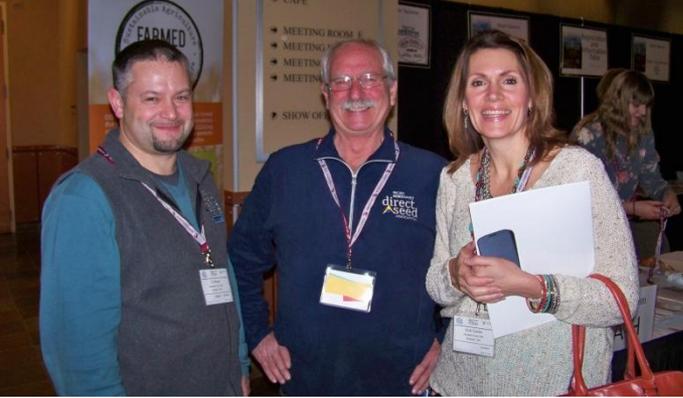
Back Row: Derek Schaefer, Ritzville, WA; Mark Green, Asotin, WA; Douglas Poole, Mansfield, WA; Mark Richter, Endicott, WA; Tim Spratling, Pendleton, OR; Lee Hawley, Moscow, ID; Eric Odberg - Treasurer, Moscow, ID; Pat McGourin, Spangle, WA; Darrel Uhlorn, Cottonwood, ID.

Not Pictured: Chuck Schmidt, Rosalia, WA; Bill Pan, Pullman, WA; Don Wysocki, Adams, OR; Dave Huggins, Pullman, WA.

# Major Initiatives

- **Outreach and Training**

- Annual Conference - Jan 20-22, 2015, Kennewick, WA
- Direct Seed Field Days, Demos and Breakfasts
- Monthly Electronic Newsletters and Direct Link Newsletter – 3x/year



## DIRECT SEED LINK

Take-out into canola, J.E.A. Farms

### Take on CRP Take-Out

Growers share their experience with CRP take-out this year

### Upcoming Field Tours

**Douglas County Winter Canola Crop Tour**

**Tuesday, May 13, 9:00 - 1:00, Free BBQ Lunch**

WSU and USDA will hold their canola variety field tour on May 13, touring farms with their canola plots starting at



- **Advocacy on Policy affecting Direct Seed Producers**
  - NRCS STAC – Practice Standards
  - Department of Ecology - Water Quality & Ag Advisory Committee
  - Other State and National Conservation and Ag Policies



- **Support Research needed for Direct Seeding**

- Relationships with WSU, UI, OSU universities and extension
- NRCS
- REACCH Grant (REgional Approaches to Climate Change)
- Private Agri-businesses



# Major Initiatives



- Development of Farmed SMART Sustainable Ag certification program

# About the Program

**Offers** farmers a promotable consumer brand

for their adherence to defined conservation standards,

certifies that they are utilizing sustainable practices,

and develops markets for certified sustainable product



# Certification Objectives



- Transition more farmers to a direct seed cropping system.
- Recognize & differentiate certified producers by adding value to their crops and farms.
- Defines results-based auditable standards that provides regulatory predictability
- Using this program as a platform to educate stakeholders on the social, sustainable and environmental benefits of direct seed farming practices.

# Certification Benefits

## Regulatory

- Proactive approach to managing regulatory expectations

## Environmental

- Soil Erosion
- Soil Health
- Reduced Chemicals through Precision Placement & Cover/Rotations
- Water Quality
- Air Quality

## Marketing

- Financial Incentives
- Market Premium and/or Access
- Sought after by land-lords, retailers, certification partners

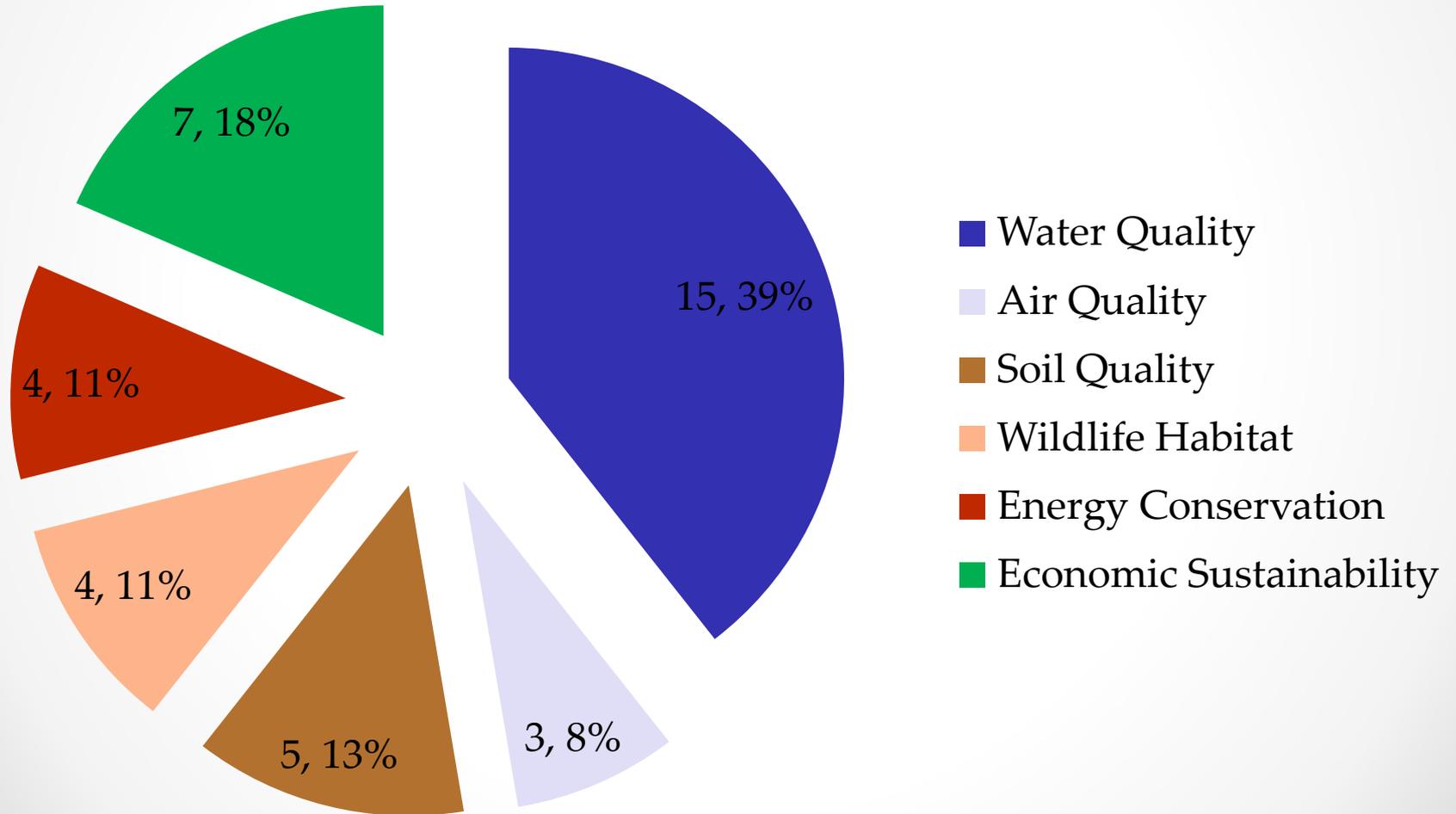
# Certification Development Team



- Funding provided through two DOE grants
  - 1 - Development of Certification
  - 2 – Implementation of Certification
- Criteria Development Committee
  - Conservation Producers – Food Alliance Certified
    - Rick Jones, Mark Sheffels, Jason Huntley
  - Conservation District Managers:
    - Ty Meyer and Dan Harwood
  - Washington State Department of Ecology:
    - Chad Atkins
  - WSU Extension and NRCS Representative:
    - Dennis Roe
- Vetted by SureHarvest
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Sustainable Ag Certification Development Company, Modesto CA

# Certification Criteria Overview

## 38 Criteria Evaluated in 6 Categories



# Criteria Development

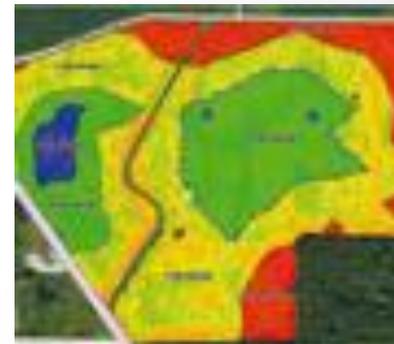


- Points are awarded on a best management practices rating scale that allows for a variety of management methods and equipment to be used – a results-oriented approach
- Criteria ratings support a variety of direct seed equipment and cropping systems
- Cumulative score must be met with no disqualifying criteria
- Focus is dry-land commodity production ag:
  - Grains
  - Legumes
  - Oilseeds
  - Grass

# Certification Criteria Overview

## 1) Improve water quality

- Direct seed systems approach keeps water, soil, and chemicals in the field, reducing runoff into waterways as much as 95%
  - STIR, Residue Management
- Precision placement of fertilizer with reduced overlap through GPS and auto shut-off, prescription maps, integrated pest and nutrient management plans
- Implementing of buffer strips along water sources
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# Certification Criteria Overview

## 2) Improve air quality

- Leaving crop residue on the field eliminates wind erosion
- Reduction of fuel emissions from



equipment because fewer passes are needed

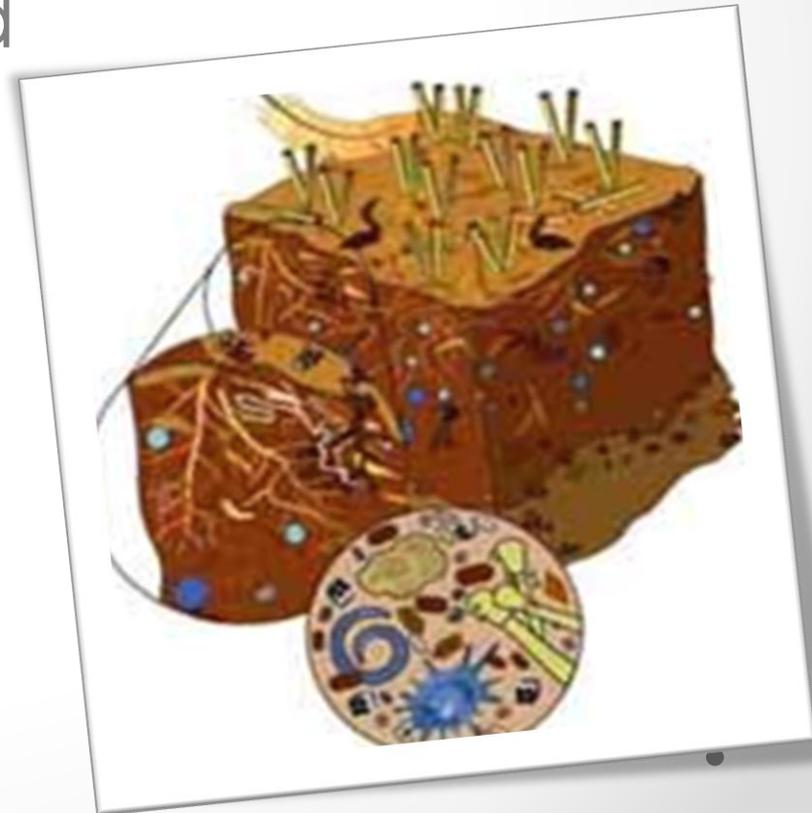
- No whole field burning for residue mgt practices



## 3) Improve soil quality

Reduced tillage increases organic matter, micro-organisms, earthworm count and activity, and water infiltration

Crop rotation, cover crops, SCI, soil tests



## 4) Improve wildlife habitat

- High residue fields provide food and cover for wildlife, increase water infiltration, and decrease sedimentation into streams and waterways, improving fish habitat
  - Direct seed fields, windbreaks, wetland preservation, bird houses, pollinators, etc.



## 5) Conserve energy and reduce carbon footprint

- planting in 1 – 2 passes provides a minimum 50% reduction in fossil fuel usage
- Diesel usage, renewable sources of energy, biofuels



# Certification Criteria Overview

## 6) Economic viability & sustainability

- Reducing input costs of fuel (by 50%\*), labor (by 50%\*), maintenance costs (by 40%\*), and better utilization of chemicals
- Production of safe and sustainable food supply for the growing
- Family farm can in the family
- Monitoring budgets, monitoring yields, monitoring input costs, bottom line, attending training
- \*data based on direct seed mentoring program study conduct by Kate Painter, PhD 2010



# Water Quality Criteria

<p>STIR Rate: What is the cumulative STIR (Soil Tillage Intensity Rating) for the annual crop interval?</p>	<p>The less the soil is disturbed the less likelihood water and wind erosion will occur because greater amount of residue, better water infiltration, and soil structure.</p>
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**>31  
(0 Points)**

≤ 30  
(3 points)

≤ 20  
(6 points)

≤ 15  
(9 points)

≤ 10  
(12 points)

# Certification Next Steps

- Launch certification program with our Board of Directors as a pilot group
- Begin developing markets and partnership for certification program and products
- Develop new videos and PSA's and continue awareness and outreach campaign on the benefits of direct seeding



# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Bring partners together in WA, OR, ID to increase conservation practices to approximately 400,000 acres by implementing the Farmed Smart Certification program



- 4 Areas of RCPP Focus

- 1- Farmed Smart Certified – Foundation of program
- 2 - Providing targeted Technical and Financial Assistance funding to implement conservation improvements to achieve and/or maintain Farmed Smart certification
- 3 - Develop markets and distribution channels for certified Farmed Smart products and farms
- 4 - Monitoring Water, Soil, and Plant quality on certified Farmed Smart farms



- Innovative ways for accomplishing resource concern goals and conservation
- Assisting producers in meeting or avoiding the need for resource regulatory requirements
- Utilize environmental markets or other innovative methods of conservation delivery
- Bring a diverse group of stakeholders into a project to capitalize on unique capabilities to help make the project successful
- Display collaboration with producers and land-owners
- 



# PNDSA RCPP Partners



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington



- Lead Partners: Spokane CD, Palouse Rock Lake CD, Umatilla County SWCD
- Palouse CD, Pine Creek CD, Lincoln CD, Adams CD, Walla Walla CD\*
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Morrow County CD
- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Washington DOE
- Oregon Department of Ag – Water Quality Program
- WA, OR, and ID State NRCS Soil Conservationists
- Washington Association of Wheat Growers
- PNW Farmers Co-operative (marketing certified products)
- Salmon Safe
- Region 10 EPA
- \*Real-time monitoring analysis (water, soil, plant)
- \*Idaho CD's



# Other Potential Partners

- Community Partners
  - Cities, watershed stakeholders
  - Promote this effort beyond Ag industry
- Outreach and Education Partners
  - Producers and Land-Lords adoption
- Funding Partners
  - through in-kind match, TA, FA
- Monitoring Partners
- Marketing Partners
  - Market development of Sustainable Ag Product to meet Fortune 500 Sustainability Initiatives
  - Identity Preservation & Distribution channel development
  - Environmental Market Development
  - Financial incentives or market access

# Successful Voluntary Programs

- Just 5 PNDSA Members have provided custom direct seeding for over 77,000 acres
  - Over last 5 years
- 2014 Umatilla County 95 CSP programs implemented
- 17,000 acres participating in Direct Seed Cost Share Programs
  - Spokane, Lincoln, Adams, and Whitman Counties
  - PNDSA and PNDSA Partner CD's funded by State of WA and Department of Ecology
- 37 miles of riparian buffer implementation + 15 more miles planned
  - Palouse Rock-Lake CD, PNDSA and DOE grants over past 5 years
- Over \$23 million loaned out for direct seed & precision ag equipment
  - Reducing erosion on approx 500,000 acres in WA and ID
  - Spokane CD Direct Seed Loan Program with DOE and Internal Funds past 11 years

# Final Thoughts

Partnership between  
PNDSA and DOE has:

- 
- enabled PNDSA to move forward with direct seed initiatives that would have been difficult to achieve without the grants from DOE
  - enabled both entities to work together to identify and achieve common conservation practices and goals
  - elevated awareness of each entities mission and
  - benefits

# Thank You

# www.directseed.org



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