



Retiring Idaho Barley Commissioner Scott Brown Reflects on Service; Urges Grower Involvement

BY LAURA WILDER

As he wraps up two terms and six years of service at the end of June, Idaho Barley Commissioner Scott Brown of Soda Springs reflects on accomplishments of the Commission during his tenure on the board as well as the essential role growers play in leadership for the Commission and other grain industry organizations.



Retiring Idaho Barley Commissioner Scott Brown of Soda Springs.

“The Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) provides crucial services to growers that they can’t do alone including working to develop domestic and foreign markets, funding critical research to address Idaho barley industry needs and improve barley production in the state, as well as providing important and education programs for growers,” said Brown who represents District 3. “We are stronger collectively than individually,” he added. “I have seen first-hand the positive impact that growers can have on moving our industry forward as vocal, outspoken, progressive individuals who are willing to get involved and engage in leadership on boards and through organizations – involvement over complacency always pays off.”

Brown said he put his name up for the Commission seat initially because of his passion for the industry and desire to help, but through serving has also found he has become a better farmer and gained a deeper understanding of ag issues beyond the farm level including a broader perspective on the size and scope of Idaho and U.S. agriculture.

As Idaho has taken the lead in U.S. barley production over the past several years, producing 32 percent of the nation’s total barley crop in 2019, Brown explained the additional important role of the Commission in representing the industry to provide vital information to partner organizations and policy makers to be sure barley is included correctly in programs that help



IBC Barley Commissioner Scott Brown discussing Idaho barley issues with Senator Mike Crapo’s staff in Washington D.C., February 2020.

growers be more successful. For example, Brown represented IBC and Idaho growers through his board seat with National Barley Growers Association at a meeting with USDA in May 2019 to provide information on how barley pricing works and to ask for barley to be included in USDA’s Market Facilitation Program (MFP) as an eligible commodity for payments under the Department’s trade assistance program. As a result of information provided by Brown and other industry representatives, barley was included in the MFP payments and many Idaho growers benefitted.

Brown is also proud of the efforts of the Commission in improving collaboration with other Idaho grain organizations for the greater good of the industry overall, along with strong accomplishments to help barley growers through programs and partnerships in market development and research. The Commission has been able to extend reach and benefit to Idaho through involvement in the U.S. Grains Council, National Barley Growers Association and National Barley Improvement Committee. Brown helped host the first U.S. Grains Council Chinese Barley Malt Trade Team to the U.S. and Idaho last October, educating



IBC Commissioner Scott Brown hosted USGC Chinese Barley Malt Team at his farm, October 2019.

the delegation on Idaho markets and Idaho's ability to produce a consistent, reliable supply of high quality malt. During April, we started to see malt purchases from China because of efforts with this trade team. He also represented the industry on a trade mission to Morocco which he found very rewarding.

IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder said, "Scott Brown has been hard-working and dedicated in representing the interests of Idaho barley growers and advancing the Idaho barley industry overall. He has been a leader and mentor on the board, besides always encouraging younger growers to get involved and step up to leadership roles in industry organizations. He's made a real difference through his energy and passion for the industry and we thank him for his outstanding service."

Brown served two years as IBC Chairman and previously served as President for Idaho Grain Producers Association and President for National Barley Growers Association. He was presented with the Idaho Icon Award jointly by the Idaho Barley Commission and Idaho Grain Producers Association at the Tri-State Grain Convention last November. "Scott has truly left a permanent mark on the Idaho grain industry and beyond," said Wilder.



IBC Commissioner Scott Brown, second from left, presented information on barley market prices to USDA for 2019 MFP payments in his role as a board member for National Barley Growers Association representing IBC.

The Idaho Barley Commission (IBC) is a self-governing state government agency established by the Idaho legislature in 1988 and is funded through the \$0.03 per hundredweight barley assessment. A four-member board of commissioners made up of three barley growers who are appointed by the Governor, and one barley industry representative appointed by the grower commissioners, set the annual budget and program priorities for the commission which are implemented by IBC staff under board oversight. ■

Idaho Barley Well Represented with National Barley Improvement Committee in Washington, D.C.

Idaho barley industry representatives traveled to Washington D.C. March 8-11 as part of the National Barley Improvement Committee (NBIC) to provide information to congressional offices and government officials about the US barley industry and important research initiatives and work to be needed for the growth and success of the industry.

Idaho Barley Commissioners Mike Wilkins of Rupert, Scott Brown of Soda Springs and IBC Industry Representative Jason Boose of MolsonCoors, Burley, joined with Dr. Juliet Marshall of Idaho Falls, Endowed Research Professor of Cereals Pathology and Agronomy, University of Idaho Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology; and Chris Swersey of Salmon, Supply Chain Specialist for the Brewer's Association, for this important information and education activity for federal programs benefiting the U.S. barley industry.

NBIC represents the US barley community of growers; researchers; malting, brewing, distilling, and food end-users; and allied industries. Barley production, and the manufacture and sale of value-added barley products (malt, beer, distilled products, food, livestock, fish & biofuels) have a significant impact on the US economy as a \$685 million/year crop with 64 percent used in beer, 27 percent for feed, 4 percent for food, 3 percent for whisky and 2 percent for seed. Barley is a critical and primary raw material for beer with a \$328 billion/year brewing industry that generates 2.2 million jobs and \$59 billion in business, personal, and consumption taxes



2020 Idaho National Barley Improvement Committee participants (L to R) were Scott Brown, Idaho Barley Commission; Dr. Juliet Marshall, University of Idaho; Mike Wilkins, Idaho Barley Commission, Jason Boose, Idaho Barley Commission and Chris Swersey, Brewer's Association, joined in this photo by a craft brewing representative from Maine.

annually. Large brewers, maltsters, and distillers make a significant contribution to the economy and employ a substantial workforce. In addition, there are now over 8,000 craft breweries, 142 malt plants operating or under construction and 823 whiskey distillers in the US.

Funding agricultural research is an important federal expenditure and needed to maintain and enhance the agricultural economy and job creation. Federal investment in barley research is needed to keep barley a viable option for US growers and to maintain and enhance value-added job generating enterprises in the US. A big thanks to our Idaho delegation in this important effort! ■

Idaho Barley Industry Mourns Loss of Long-Time Industry Partner Dr. Phil Bregitzer

Dr. Phil Bregitzer who worked at the USDA Small Grains and Potato Research Unit in Aberdeen, for 30 years, died in an avalanche while skiing near the Pebble Creek Ski Area on March 15. He was a brilliant scientist and was recognized by the global scientific community for his excellent communication skills and outstanding research accomplishments. His work using cutting-edge scientific techniques and advanced breeding led to improved barley cultivars for Idaho, the US, and agriculture worldwide. The new barley varieties



Dr. Phil Bregitzer

Dr. Bregitzer released included those with enhanced resistance to barley stripe rust and Fusarium head blight, improved Russian Wheat Aphid resistance, and lower phytic acid to reduce phosphorus waste from barley fed to swine. Genetic tools he created, including methods of plant regeneration from culture, have been widely used by scientists working to increase the understanding of barley genetics. Phil was an excellent mentor to graduate students and post-doctoral researchers, and his influence helped each to advance their careers in science. Phil loved life, cared about people, and was a dear friend to many, including his colleagues at the USDA-ARS in Aberdeen. His upbeat personality, laughter, and leadership will be missed dearly. Phil is survived by his wife, Edee. ■