

## Cereal conference advances production through research and collaboration

### AT A GLANCE

The 2025 Cereal Conference provided producers with research-based strategies, promoting collaboration to improve sustainability, resilience and profitability in Idaho's cereal grain industry.

### The Situation

Cereal School is an educational program delivering the latest research, management strategies, and practical tools to improve cereal grain production and profitability. Previously held at multiple locations, attendance was declining, pesticide credit opportunities were limited and networking across regions was restricted. Producers requested a more centralized program offering expanded educational options, greater access to pesticide credits, and enhanced networking opportunities, connecting Idaho's cereal grain community while providing high-quality, research-based guidance for improved crop management and production decisions.

### Our Response

The Cereal Grains Team transformed the traditional multilocation cereal schools into the centralized 2025 Cereal Conference, offering a high-quality, one-day, research-driven educational experience. The conference emphasized excellence through expert-led sessions and interactive breakout discussions, ensuring that all content was grounded in the latest agronomic research and best management practices.

To meet producer needs, the program expanded pesticide credit opportunities, offered a wider variety of



A featured speaker discusses drone technology with growers at the 2025 Cereal Conference. Photo credit: Justin Hatch.

sessions — including variety trials, weed and disease management, nutrient optimization and emerging technologies — and facilitated regional networking. Vendor exhibits and panels, such as the multidisciplinary water curtailment panel, enhanced learning by providing practical applications, hands-on insights, and collaborative problem-solving opportunities for producers, researchers and industry partners.

### Program Outcomes

The 2025 Cereal Conference had a meaningful impact on participants by providing actionable knowledge, networking opportunities, and access to the latest research and technologies. The conference brought together 304 attendees, including farmers, agronomists, educators and industry representatives, creating a

dynamic environment for learning, collaboration and peer-to-peer exchange across regions in Idaho. Attendees valued the interactive format and networking opportunities, which facilitated collaboration and the exchange of ideas beyond the classroom.

Evaluation data showed that participants planned to implement changes in wild oat and spray drift management, seeding rates, herbicide applications, disease prevention and crop rotation practices. These adjustments are expected to improve both productivity and sustainability in cereal grain production. The following key statistics highlight the conference's measurable outputs and outcomes:

- 304 total attendees including producers, educators and industry representatives
- 244 pesticide recertification credits awarded (up from 80 in 2024)
- Attendees filled their eight-hour schedule by selecting from 18 different research-based sessions.
- Projected economic benefit of over \$443,000 across 36,920 acres
- Participants estimated \$12 per acre in cost savings or income increase

## The Future

The cereal conference will continue to evolve as a premier educational event for cereal grain producers, building on the success of the 2025 program. Future conferences will expand research-based sessions, incorporate emerging technologies, and strengthen industry partnerships, ensuring producers have ongoing access to actionable strategies that enhance productivity, sustainability, and resilience across Idaho's cereal grain industry.

## Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

The success of the 2025 Cereal Conference was made possible through strong partnerships with key industry organizations. The Idaho Grain Growers Association, Idaho Barley Commission and Idaho Wheat Commission provided critical guidance, resources and support in shaping the program to address the most pressing needs of cereal grain producers. Their collaboration ensured the conference remained relevant, research-driven and responsive to industry priorities, strengthening connections between producers, researchers and Extension specialists across the state.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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