



### Palouse Conservation District

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This month, PCD Research and Monitoring staff headed out to the Palouse Conservation Field Station (PCFS) to thresh and analyze wheat samples!

Over the past year, PCD has been working with local farmers to determine the effectiveness of using sap testing to inform fertilizer applications as part of a three-year Western SARE Sap Testing grant. Earlier this year, we collected leaves from plants that were sent in to have their sap tested for nutrients. The results of these tests were then used to inform fertilizer applications. The aim of this project is to assess whether sap tests can help us determine a crop's specific nutritional needs better than soil testing alone. Adding sap testing to our plant nutrition toolkit will hopefully allow us to use more targeted fertilizer applications that save farmers money, increase grain quality, and keep excess fertilizer out of our waterways.

The final step for this year's trials was to harvest small plots of wheat to test the grain for protein, moisture, starch, and gluten, as well as a number of other parameters. In order to get samples ready to be analyzed, PCD staff worked with staff at PCFS to thresh the grain using a small plot combine. After it was cleaned, the grain was run through an on-site grain analyzer, which uses near infrared spectrometry (NIR) to assess grain quality without crushing it.

Keep an eye out for updates as we progress through this three-year study.



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