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## Idaho wheat industry hosts young flour miller trade team

By MATTHEW WEAVER Capital Press

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The trade team representing Oman, Algeria, Morocco and Egypt at Flory Farms near Winchester, Idaho.  
Idaho Wheat Commission

LEWISTON, Idaho — A trade team of flour millers from Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Oman began their tour of the U.S. last week in Idaho.

"These are young flour millers, a young generation (representing) their family businesses," said Tarik Gahi, assistant technical director for U.S. Wheat Associates in the Middle East and North Africa region, based in Casablanca, Morocco. "They are 22, 24, 25 years old, just out of

the university and they are supposed to take the lead in the coming years."

The tour will allow the millers to become familiar with U.S. wheat classes, marketing and the entire wheat system compared to wheat from other origins, Gahi said.



One trade team member is a soft white wheat buyer, and some are dark northern spring wheat customers, Gahi said.

During the 12-day tour, the team planned to visit Idaho, Kansas and North Dakota.

The team visited the USDA Western Wheat Quality Lab on the Washington State University campus in Pullman, Wash.; the Lewis Clark Terminal in Lewiston, Idaho; a grain elevator and Bill Flory's farm near Winchester, Idaho.

The millers experienced the different maturities of fall and spring wheat, pulses and canola in a diversity of environments, soil health and see the major equipment Flory uses in the field — and then get a chance to drive it, with one of Flory's crew members along for the ride.

"This has been a raging success before with other trade teams," Flory said. We intend to show them a good time, but also show them what we're doing and why. ... It's just about as much fun as you can have to see millers who are very successful international businessmen get behind the wheel of a half-million dollar piece of equipment and just have the time of their life."

It's the first trade team visit to Idaho since 2019, said Casey Chumrau, executive director of the Idaho Wheat Commission.

"The relationship with our customers is very important," she said. "It's something we've built over the years and have a lot of trust and goodwill between wheat farmers and customers. The in-person handshake just can't be replaced."

Gahi, with U.S. Wheat Associates, said the visit lets the flour millers witness in person the effort that goes into producing quality wheat, from the farm to the ship to the fork on the table.

"I'm sure U.S. Wheat did the same thing with their parents years ago," Gahi said. "That's how you build a relationship — with access and flexibility. That trust is really important."

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I have been covering wheat and other topics for Capital Press since 2008. Recent stories include radicchio, emus, aphids and a Q&A with Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. If you have a news tip, please contact me at 509-688-9923 or [mweaver@capitalpress.com](mailto:mweaver@capitalpress.com)