



***By Jan Rahn***

### ***Managing Editor***

Local wheat farmers had a very enjoyable time during the Nebraska State Fair doing what they love doing best—talking about their crop.

As members of the Nebraska Wheat Growers and Nebraska Wheat Board, Grant, Elsie and Wallace farmers and their families manned an exhibit that educated the public on how to raise it, how to mill it, and what to make with it.

The popularity of the finished product from the exhibit drew lookers by the hoards—samples of cinnamon rolls awaited those who took the time to enter the mobile educational display in Grand Island during the state fair in early September.

Last week the mobile baking lab was in Washington, D.C., bringing the wheat fields of Nebraska to the nation's capitol to educate folks on a crop many know little to nothing about.

Dan Hughes and wife Josie of Grant joined Scott and Deb Osler and their daughters Tori, Josi and Amanda of Elsie, along with Shawn and Kim Sullivan of Wallace to demonstrate and educate the public on the role wheat plays in their diet.

The farmers were astounded at how little is known about the life cycle of wheat. They especially enjoyed talking to the public about the crop.

“It’s amazing what people DO NOT know,” said Hughes, telling how one gentleman made the comment, ‘You mean to tell me there’s wheat in this?’ Hughes assured him there was, and the man then said, ‘Well what are they (cinnamon rolls) normally made of?’

Participants were shown how to thrash a head in their hand, blow away the chaff then put the kernels in a grinder to obtain flour.

Hughes said it’s fun to engage kids in the conversation and demonstration. They get excited about seeing the berries, blowing away the chaff and grinding it.

“It’s satisfying to me for the kids to learn something,” he said.

A portion of the exhibit, which takes up about a 50x50 foot space, has one bushel of wheat on display explaining how it makes 64 loaves of bread or 64 pounds of pasta.

There was a “sandbox” of wheat for youngsters to play in, crayons to color with, and recipes for Playdough made with flour.

During the state fair, it took 10-12 people to run the exhibit—three in the kitchen and the rest talking to and educating the public, passing out recipes, etc. They felt being a part of the exhibit was very rewarding.

“We make really good cinnamon rolls!” said Hughes, past chairman of the Nebraska Wheat Board which uses checkoff dollars for market promotion.

Osler serves as chair of the Nebraska Wheat Growers, which is the farmers' grassroots organization. The Wheat Growers received the exhibit trailer as a gift from ConAgra who serves as the corporate sponsor and strong supporter of introducing whole grain products into the diet.