

Cabinet and Governor Appointed Agencies’ Performance Audit Action Item(s) & Status

Washington’s Agricultural Commodity Commissions: An assessment of effectiveness

(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor’s Office (SAO) [report](#), January 2023)

The Washington State Department of Agriculture and 21 agricultural commodity commissions were audited for this performance audit.

SAO Results Summary in brief:

1. Producers recognized that commodity commissions benefit the state’s agriculture industry, and more communication from commission boards could improve awareness of the benefits.
2. A coordinated and comprehensive approach to marketing the state’s agriculture industry could help ensure its future growth and success.
3. Additional WSDA support and assistance could help ensure commissions and their producers succeed.

SAO Recommendations (Rec) Summary:

1. Determine the resources it would need to provide further support for the commissions.
2. Create and publicize a website that contains consistent information about each commission, aimed at informing producers and the general public.
3. Work together with commissions to periodically survey producers.
4. Coordinate a statewide branding effort for Washington’s agricultural industry.
5. Assume a more targeted role in coordinating among the commissions to enhance marketing opportunities and other collaborative efforts.
6. Provide additional technical assistance and training to commissions to ensure they are in compliance with state laws and rules, and serve as a liaison between commissions and other state agencies such as the Department of Enterprise Services.
7. Provide updated contact information from nominations and elections processes to commissions to help them maintain and ensure more complete and accurate producer lists.
8. Measure and report on the results of their programs. To help commission boards develop approaches to doing so, the State Auditor’s Office Center for Government Innovation will offer a free, voluntary workshop, to be held in early 2023.

The table below shows the current status of action items the agency initiated to address issues identified in the performance audit report. Please see the [cabinet agency response](#) for additional context and any additional steps already taken.

For an explanation of the columns below, [see the legend](#).

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources ?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
Rec 1	Completed	Gather input from agricultural commodity commissions to assess the need for additional funding sources	WSDA	5/23	Yes	No	No	At this time the commodity commissions agreed to maintain the ½ FTE status that is included in RCW 43.23.033. They are not opposed to identifying additional resources, however, will look to WSDA to communicate

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								with them if and when an option comes available.
Rec 2	In Progress	Draft guidelines for commission websites	WSDA	5/23	Yes	No	No	The current commission administrator is working with WSDA IT on developing a best practices document for all commission websites.
Rec	Completed	WSDA distributes guidelines to all commissions and holds a Q&A session to obtain feedback at the 2023 all-commission meeting	WSDA	10/23	Yes	No	No	The commission administrator held the Q&A session during the 2023 all-commission meeting. The meeting was well attended by commissions.
Rec 3	In Progress	Consult with commodity commissions and work to develop a process and timeline for the ongoing surveying of assessment-paying producers	WSDA	10/23	Yes	No	No	This is an ongoing project as we are working to determine the best way to complete a survey with minimal fiscal impact and one that reaches all assessment-paying producers.
Rec 4	Completed	Provide education during the 2023 legislative session about the department's budget request to support a statewide branding effort	WSDA	4/23	Yes	No	No	WSDA's policy team along with the Commodity Commission administrator increased communication before, during and after the legislative session to be sure commission's were included in the departments legislative efforts, which included the statewide branding effort.
Rec 5	Completed	Work with the commodity commissions to identify a meeting date in the first six months of 2023. This meeting would be held virtually	WSDA	6/23	Yes	No	No	In the first six months of 2023, the commodity commission administrator held a virtual meeting for all-commissions. At this meeting all commissions were represented.
Rec 6	Completed	Work with commissions to identify appropriate training for the 2023 all-commission meeting	WSDA	7/23	Yes	No	No	At the 2023 all-commission meeting, the attendees discussed a best practices document for trainings for commission employees and board members. This

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								discussion included representatives from the Department of Enterprise Services and the Assistant Attorney General's office.
Rec 7	Completed	Identify and agree upon a process at the all-commission meeting in September 2023	WSDA	9/23	Yes	No	No	At the all-commission meeting a process was agreed upon for all returned mail received by WSDA for commission nominations and elections. This process requires that the commodity commission administrator notify the commission immediately by either scanning the returned envelope or if several are received, the administrator will send them directly to the commission office.
Rec 8	Completed	Commodity commission representatives attend the free, voluntary workshop in January 2023	Commodity Commissions	1/23	Yes	No	No	Commodity Commissions were in attendance at this free voluntary workshop and the information provided was both useful and timely.
Rec 8	In Progress	Commodity commissions present on their process to report results at the all-commission meeting in the first quarter of 2024	Commodity Commissions	3/24	Yes	No	No	The commissions are still working on complete their performance measures and identifying ways to ensure these are useful and appropriate for their stakeholders and the general public. This process has been deferred to a later date.