

# IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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## Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

The three Pacific Northwest Potato Commissions, the Idaho Potato Commission (IPC), the Oregon Potato Commission (OPC) and the Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC) have entered into an agreement to hire a Pacific Northwest Potato Regional Research Director.

In a joint announcement made by Frank Muir, President and CEO of the IPC, Bill Brewer, President and CEO of the OPC and Chris Voigt, Executive Director of the WSPC, Dr. Andy Jensen was named to the newly created position.

“On behalf of all three commissions, Dr. Jensen will coordinate the planning and receipt of all research proposals, by communicating directly with researchers and administrators about the Commissions’ expectations, formats for submitting proposals, deadlines, research review meetings and presentations, funding decisions and progress reports,” the three stated. “Dr. Jensen will also monitor research projects that are funded to ensure that research objectives and timelines are met, work with the researchers and administrators to help transfer research results to the growers, shippers and processor members of the potato industry and gather input on needs for future research needed to help maintain the strength of the Pacific Northwest potato industry.

“For many years, the three states have cooperated in developing new potato varieties,” said Frank Muir. “This is a logical extension of that joint effort.” Chris Voigt added, “Funding sources are tightening up, and this has led to all three of the land grant universities we work with, Washington State, Oregon State and the University of Idaho to look at more closely aligning their efforts. We think there will be efficiencies realized so that industry dollars can be spent more effectively.” Bill Brewer said, “Many of the challenges faced by the industry here in the Pacific Northwest are similar such that a more coordinated effort will benefit each of our three states”.

Dr. Jensen assumed his new role on February 1, 2012.

For further information you may contact, Pat Kole, IPC, (208) 334-2350; Bill Brewer, OPC, (503) 731-3300; or Chris Voigt, (509) 765-8845.

## Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

### Truck Weight Update by Travis Blacker, Idaho Grower Shippers Association

Last week the issue of increasing truck weights was brought before the Transportation Committee for discussion. As you all know, the IGSA, IPC and many of other shippers around the state support the Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP) which is one of several groups that is leading the charge to ask congress to accept a change of increasing the GVW on trucks from 80,000lbs to 97,000lbs with the addition of a sixth axle. The CTP group has now over 200 supporting companies and associations, companies like Miller Coors, Nestle, Kraft Foods, International Paper and many others.

During the discussion in the transportation committee concerning truck weights, it came down to a vote to include increasing truck weights into the bill. After much discussion, a vote took place in which we lost by a count of 33-22. They have now deleted the truck weight provision and replaced it with having a 3 year federal study on the issue. The CTP group will now try to amend the issue on the floor arguing that these studies have been taking place for several years now. [CLICK HERE](#) for a full page of several studies that have been conducted by states, countries and even companies on what this could mean if changed. One study that the United Kingdom conducted stated that since their country has increased truck weights, highway deaths have dropped an amazing 35%.

This is a set back and a disappointment, however this CTP group continues to gain strength and the fact that this was even discussed in the Transportation Committee is a win.

Below is a link to the actual press release on this issue.

<http://www.transportationproductivity.org/press-releases-statements.php>

## Calendar

### February

15 IPC Ag Affairs Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 noon, IPC Office, Idaho Falls  
15 USPB Idaho Delegates Meeting, 1:00-3:00 p.m., IPC Office, Idaho Falls  
20-22 Larry Branen Idaho Ag Summit [www.idahoagsummit.org](http://www.idahoagsummit.org), The Riverside, Boise  
21 NASS Report, Stocks and Processing to February 1<sup>st</sup>  
23-1 Potato Industry Leadership Institute, Washington DC  
27-1 NPC Public Policy Fly In, Washington DC. Growers invited to attend. Contact Todd Cornelison

### March

6 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls  
7 IPC R&E Committee Meeting, IPC Office, Idaho Falls  
12 NASS Report, Stocks and Processing to March 1st  
13-16 USPB Annual Meeting, Colorado Springs, CO

### April

3 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls  
13 NASS Reports, Stocks and Processing to April 1<sup>st</sup>, Winter and Spring Potato Acreage and Production  
24-25 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Eagle - Tentative  
30-5 United Fresh Annual Convention, Dallas, TX