

# IDAHO POTATO PULSE



Brought to you by the Idaho Potato Commission  
Website: [www.idahopotato.com](http://www.idahopotato.com)

## Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

Full access to the Mexican market for Idaho® and U.S. potatoes has been a long standing priority for the Idaho potato industry. Last week, our two U.S. Senators joined with their colleagues to urge the Executive branch of our government to remain firm in supporting our position. In addition, Governor Otter wrote directly to the President on this issue (see attached). Congressman Simpson has also been a champion in support of our cause. Their support is greatly appreciated, not only here in Idaho, but by the entire potato community.

### **SENATORS URGE BETTER ACCESS TO MEXICAN POTATO MARKET** *Cite Mexico's agreement to purchase fresh potatoes*

Washington, D.C. – Idaho Senators Mike Crapo and Jim Risch have joined a number of their colleagues in an effort to increase sales of U.S. potatoes to Mexico. The Mexican market for potatoes from Idaho and other U.S. states is estimated to be worth about \$30 million.

Mexico signed an accord in 2003, agreeing to lower import restrictions on potatoes from Idaho and other U.S. states. Since the agreement was signed, however, the Mexican government has not fulfilled its commitment, citing concerns with pest control and sanitary issues. In the letter, Crapo, Risch and seven others say those concerns are vastly overstated.

The Senators are calling on U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to intervene with the Mexican government to end the nine-year stalemate over U.S. exports to Mexico. Their letter follows:

Dear Ambassador Kirk and Secretary Vilsack:

As you are both aware, we have been very supportive of efforts to obtain access for U.S. potatoes to all of Mexico. In spite of these efforts, Mexico has failed to fulfill the requirements of the market access agreement signed by the United States and Mexico in 2003 that established a clear path for achieving better access for our nation's potato products. As Mexico's potential entry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations continues to be discussed, we urge your Agencies to work with Mexico to resolve the outstanding concerns on market access for U.S. fresh potatoes.

Recently, an international panel of experts was convened to review the technical issues associated with expanded market access. According to the panel of experts, only 6 of the 67 pests that Mexico raised issue with were found to be "of concern." During the mediation, it was initially agreed that mitigation measures would be taken for 3 of the pests. However, Mexico later insisted that mitigation be done for 33 pests, even though the panel of experts did not consider these a risk for spreading through fresh potatoes. This unnecessary requirement by the Mexican government has led to the deadlock that we currently face on this issue. These extra and unnecessary mitigation measures are an effective trade barrier that is not supported by science.

Further, in addition to the pest concerns, the panel examined and found that Mexico has not applied established principles for dealing with the sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues. We hope that the very limited set of remaining issues identified by the panel will be resolved quickly, and U.S. potatoes will gain fair and full

access to Mexican markets. Taking steps to address these outstanding market access issues would send a very positive signal that Mexico is willing to work on constructive solutions and create better trade policy.

The failure by Mexico to resolve the potato market access dispute is concerning, given the growing evidence that any risks associated with the movement of fresh potatoes from the United States to Mexico can be effectively mitigated. We strongly urge you to continue to push Mexico on resolving these technical issues and communicate to Mexico the importance of implementing the market access agreement for U.S. fresh potatoes.

Sincerely,

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Washington)

Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho)

Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington)

Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho)

Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon)

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon)

Senator Mark Udall (D-Colorado)

Senator Michael Bennett (D-Colorado)

Senator Herb Kohl (D-Wisconsin)

To directly link to this news release, please use the following address:

[http://www.crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release\\_full.cfm?id=336877](http://www.crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release_full.cfm?id=336877)

## Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

### 2013 United States Potato Board Idaho Delegates Election meeting:

Elections for the 2013 Idaho USBP Delegates will take place at the Idaho Falls IPC office on June 19th from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

There are 5 open positions and 1 delegate who is up for re-election.

District 1(Boise - Mtn. Home): 1 position open

District 2 (Mtn. Home - Burley): No positions open

District 3 (Burley - Pocatello): 1 position open

District 4 (Pocatello - Idaho Falls): 2 positions open, 1 position up for re-election

District 5 Idaho Falls - St. Anthony): 1 position open

District 6 (seed district): No positions open

Per protocol voted on by the delegates a few of years ago, if there are no interested candidates for an open position in a district, the position can be filled by a candidate from another district.

### USBP Diversity Statement

The US Department of Agriculture's programs are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or marital status, and it is the USBP's policy that membership on the Board and its committees reflect the diversity of individuals served by its programs. It is therefore the Board's policy to have the representation of producers from diverse backgrounds on its board and strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to seek nominations to the Board and to participate in the Board's activities.

For more information on the USBP as the nation's potato marketing organization, positioned as the "catalyst for positive change," and the central organizing force in implementing programs that will increase demand for potatoes, please visit [www.uspotatoes.com](http://www.uspotatoes.com).

## Calendar

## June

- 5 Idaho Eastern Oregon Potato Committee Meeting, Twin Falls
- 6 IGSA Board Meeting, Twin Falls
- 13 NASS Stocks and Processing Report to June 1
- 19 USPB Idaho Delegates Election meeting, Idaho Falls
- 19 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 19-20 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 27 University of Idaho Pest Management Research Tour 8:30 a.m., Aberdeen
- 28 University of Idaho Pest Management Research Tour 8:30 a.m., Kimberly

## July

- 3 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 11 Summer Potato Acreage and Production, Fall Potato Acreage, Certified Seed Potato Acreage, Percent of Fall Acreage Planted by Type
- 11-13 NPC Summer Meeting, Bar Harbor, ME
- 18 University of Idaho Twilight Pest Management Tour, Kimberly
- 19 IGSA Board Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 24-25 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Eagle