

# IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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## Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

Just as the Legislature was beginning to look at drastic spending cuts, the federal stimulus package passed and is being signed into law. This will probably lengthen the session as it will take some time to sort through the ramifications of this massive federal law. The legislature has several other pending pieces of legislation that impact agriculture but not potatoes. The easy way to stay up on what's being considered is to use the state web site: <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/>. There you can see most of what the Legislature is up to.

On the federal level, there has been a comprehensive food safety bill introduced. With what's happened on peanuts, this bill, or something like it, is going to get serious consideration. We continue to work for a safe, practical and non-bureaucratic food safety program that will keep food affordable for consumers. It's going to be tough to do this in the current environment. This will be one of the major topics for the upcoming NPCPPC meeting starting in just a week.

## Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

Each week as I fulfill my ever expanding role as your Industry Relations Director, I find myself attending more and more meetings and I begin to wonder if the average potato grower realizes how many organizations are looking out for his/her best interests. As an example, last week I was in the IGSA (Idaho Grower Shippers Association) Board meeting and listened while Travis Blacker updated his board on a recent program they were helping to develop, due to the intermittent shortages of refrigerated rail cars that Idaho endures:

“CH Robinson and the IGSA are pleased to announce an intermodal program to help member's better serve their customers in the states of NY, PA, MD and NJ. CH Robinson, in conjunction with Alliance Shippers, has discovered a unique opportunity with specific trains leaving from North Utah to PA about 5 times per week. By utilizing these trains, IGSA members will be able to take advantage of this “blue streak” service and ship these intermodal loads to areas of the US that are tough and expensive to ship to. Transit times for these loads are 5-7 days and they are able to hit this about 99% of the time. Early indications suggest that the pricing for this service will be around 10% below the truck market. This program kicked off during the week of January 12<sup>th</sup> with 7 trailers that were loaded with potatoes, taken down to Utah and placed on flatbed rail cars. These cars then headed to Northeast PA where they were unloaded and delivered to the customers. When the program is up to full steam, 32 trailers per week will be offered to the IGSA members.”

Travis went on to explain that this program could alleviate a small part of the freight disadvantage that Idaho deals with every day, allowing us to be more competitive in the market place. While I realize not all growers are members of the IGSA, I do feel it's important to keep them informed of new events.

## Calendar

### February

- 17 IGSA Sun Valley Convention Committee Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 19 Miller Research Crop Pest Management Seminar, Burley Best Western, Burley, ID  
(9:00 am – 12:00 pm RSVP required)
- 23 Ag Shippers Workshop, Boise ID, in conjunction with Ag Summit  
8:30 am – 12:30 pm, Double Tree Riverside.
- 23 Ag Summit Strolling Dinner (DoubleTree Riverside - Boise, 5:30pm) Contact Rick Waitley, 208-888-0988
- 23-24 Idaho Ag Summit (DoubleTree Riverside - Boise) Contact Rick Waitley, 208-888-0988 or [www.idahoagsummit.org](http://www.idahoagsummit.org)
- 24 Foreign Animal Disease Response Course, Farmer's Mutual Telephone Company,

- Community Room 319 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Fruitland, ID
- 25 Foreign Animal Disease Response Course, Idaho State Department of Agriculture,  
Conference Rooms A & B, 2270 Old Penitentiary Road, Boise, ID
- 24-25 United Fresh Produce GAPs Meeting, Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, Washington, D.C.
- 23-26 NPC 2009 Public Policy Conference, L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- 25 Food Producers of Idaho Weekly Legislative Meeting (Idaho Ag & Grain Ctr - Boise: 9:00 am)  
Contact Rick Waitley, 208-888-0988
- 19-26 Potato Industry Leadership Institute

### March

- 3 United Potato Growers of Idaho Board meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 4 Food Producers Weekly Legislative Meeting, Idaho Ag & Grain Center, Boise, ID
- 4 United Potato Growers of Idaho Potato Partners Meeting, Shilo Inn  
9:00 am – 2:00 pm, Idaho Falls, ID
- 4 IPC nomination meeting, Shilo Inn, Idaho Falls, ID
- 5 United Potato Growers of Idaho Potato Partners Meeting, Burley Inn  
9:00 am – 1:30 pm, Burley, ID
- 5 R&E Committee meeting, Shilo Inn, Twin Falls, ID
- 10-13 USPB Annual Meeting, Denver, Co
- 11 Food Producers Weekly Legislative Meeting, Idaho Ag & Grain Center, Boise, ID
- 17-18 IPC Commission Meeting, Boise, ID
- 18 Food Producers Weekly Legislative Meeting, Idaho Ag & Grain Center, Boise, ID
- 19 IGSA Board Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 22-27 World Potato Congress, New Zealand

### April

- 7 United Potato Growers of Idaho Board meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 14-15 IPC Commission Meeting, Boise, ID

### May

- 5 United Potato Growers of Idaho Board meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 14-15 IPC Commission Meeting, Boise, ID
- 16 IPC Marathon, Boise, ID
- 15-19 NRA Show, Chicago, IL