

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

This week marked the 15th Annual United Fresh Public Policy Conference. The Idaho Potato Industry was well represented at the conference, with Commissioner RJ Andrus, Kevin Searle (GPOD), Steve Ottum and Jamie Highham (Potandon Produce), Travis Blacker (IGSA) and myself attending. Briefings from USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg, two staffers from the White House and other food safety and energy experts took place. In a nutshell, the Obama administration is focused on increasing its regulatory authority to prevent food safety incidents; is committed to an energy/carbon foot print reduction; wants to see food nutrition standards serve as the basis of school lunch programs; and of course, health care reform. For the next several weeks, the health care issue will take priority over all other legislative issues.

At the conference, we served Dehy mashed potatoes at the opening reception. Several members of Congress came back for seconds, as did their staffers. There were over 800 attendees, and we were gratified at the positive response Dehy received. Our thanks to Idahoan Foods for their contribution of the product for this event.

Several Important Releases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOOD LAND STEWARDS REWARDED THROUGH USDA PROGRAM

BOISE, Idaho, (September 11, 2009) — Agriculture producers could be rewarded for conserving natural resources on their land. The Conservation Stewardship Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service encourages producers to maintain and initiate conservation practices with monetary incentives.

The program offers two payment types: an annual payment for maintaining existing conservation practices and adopting new ones and a supplemental payment for adopting resource conserving crop rotations. The per acre payments range from \$12 to \$22 for cropland, \$7 to \$14 for pasture, \$5 to \$10 for rangeland, and \$6 to \$12 for forestland. A supplemental payment, available only for cropland, adds an additional \$12 to \$16 for the cropland rotation.

"The Conservation Stewardship Program recognizes those who are already doing work to conserve their land and are willing to undertake additional activities," said Jeff Burwell. "We see this as a great opportunity for producers to get rewarded for their conservation efforts."

The program is voluntary and open to both agriculture and forestry producers. Approved applicants will develop a conservation stewardship plan outlining current conservation activities and new treatments for resource concerns on their land.

There is a continuous sign-up for this program however the first funding cycle closes on September 30.

“The benefit of getting in this first cycle is there is less competition because of the short sign up period. We have funding to sign up 164,000 acres in Idaho before Sept 30,” Burwell added.

The payment cap is \$40,000 per year with a \$200,000 maximum for the five year contract period.

The first step to apply is completing a self-screening checklist to determine if the Conservation Stewardship Program is suitable for you. The checklist is available at NRCS field offices and on the NRCS Web site at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/special_pdfs/CSP_Producer_Self-Screening_Checklist.pdf

The application process requires that you

- 1.) Have farm records established with USDA Farm Service Agency,
- 2.) Be the operator of the land,
- 3.) Provide evidence that they have control of the land for 5 years, and;
- 4.) Provide a map delineating their entire agriculture or forestry operation.

For information on the program in general, eligibility, or a list of conservation activities, visit your local NRCS office. To find the office nearest you, look for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the government pages of the phonebook. Or, on the “Find a Service Center” page on the NRCS Web page <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2009

NEW LIMITS ON PESTICIDE USES WILL PROTECT SALMON

WASHINGTON – EPA has announced plans to place additional limitations on the use of three organophosphate pesticides — chlorpyrifos, diazinon and malathion — to protect endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead in **California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington**.

Anticipated changes to product labels include the addition of pesticide buffer zones; application limitations based on wind speed, soil moisture and weather conditions; and fish mortality incident reporting requirements. New, enforceable labels could be available as early as the 2010 spring growing season.

“These limitations, developed as a result of the Endangered Species Act formal consultation process, will protect Pacific salmon and steelhead while providing for appropriate pesticide use,” said Steve Owens, assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances. “These new limits are especially significant because they mark the first time that EPA and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed the consultation process under the Endangered Species Act in more than 20 years. This is a major step forward for both EPA and NMFS in meeting the requirements of the law. This process has been broken for too long.”

The limitations will apply to surface waters encompassing each of 28 salmon and steelhead species in the four states. EPA plans to work with NMFS to design a monitoring study assessing the effectiveness of these protections. The agency also will seek to require manufacturers to fund and carry out the monitoring study.

Chlorpyrifos, diazinon and malathion – whose primary manufacturers are Dow Chemical Company, Cheminova, and Makhteshim Agan of North America, respectively – are currently registered for use on a number of agricultural and non-agricultural sites.

EPA is requesting the manufacturers to voluntarily adopt the new limitations on labeling for these pesticides. If the manufacturers decline this request, EPA will pursue regulatory action to impose the limitations.

The Endangered Species Act requires EPA to ensure that a pesticide is not likely to jeopardize endangered or threatened species, or to adversely affect the species’ habitat. If EPA determines that a pesticide may affect listed species or critical habitat, the agency must consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The new use limitations are the result of consultations that EPA initiated with the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2002, 2003, and 2004, and will replace interim limitations put in place by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington in 2004. Under the Obama Administration, EPA and NMFS are currently in discussions about ways to accelerate the consultation process and make it more efficient.

More information: <http://www.epa.gov/espp/>