

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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President's Report

By Frank Muir

The '08 harvest is fully underway. All early indications point to a good quality crop for Idaho. Demand is strong as customers anxiously await this year's new crop. The IPC's advertising and promotion programs are ready to launch the new season.

We had very productive meetings in Sun Valley as part of IGSA's annual meeting including our annual marketing plan presentation to the industry, as well as business meetings for two of our committees: Marketing and Ag Affairs. We have appreciated the work done thus far by the members of these committees. Todd reports on the Ag Affairs committee meeting in this newsletter.

We will also be conducting our annual industry Whistlestop tour in November; so if you missed our presentation in Sun Valley, you can see it in a city near you. The schedule is as follows (please RSVP to Alyse 334-2350, abest@potato.idaho.gov so we can plan for the meals):

November 11	Pocatello - Red Lion (tentative): (In conjunction with United/SIPCO meeting)	Noon (lunch served)
November 12	Idaho Falls - Hilton Garden Inn: (In conjunction with IGSA fall meeting)	6:00 pm (dinner served)
November 13	Burley - Fairfield Inn: Boise - Ameritel Inn - Boise Spectrum:	Noon (lunch served) 6:00 pm (dinner served)

I look forward to seeing you at one of these cities and receiving your feedback and suggestions.

Government Affairs Report

By Pat Kole

Next week, Commissioner RJ Andrus and I will attend the United Fresh Public Policy Conference in DC. We will meet with other key agriculture leaders from several different commodity groups, agency and congressional staff, as well as our Idaho delegation to discuss issues from fumigant use to reauthorization of the Federal Nutrition Act. IPC is a sponsor of this event, and this year we will be distributing prepared dehy product at the United Fresh Festival Reception on Capitol Hill to over 200 congressional staffers and agency personnel as part of the joint effort with USPB to get dehy into more Food Aid and School Lunch programs. John Keeling and I will also be meeting with APHIS, other potato industry members and representatives from the National Plant Health Board to discuss our views on the latest version of the US Canada Agreement on Potato Cyst Nematode. On September 16, members of the Minor Crop Alliance will meet to discuss strategies on responding to the EPA rule on fumigants. IPC is a member of the Board of Directors of this Alliance.

Industry Relations Report

By Todd Cornelison

The Ag Affairs Committee of the IPC recently met in Sun Valley during the IGSA convention. There were two topics that took the bulk of the meeting to discuss:

The first topic was, the continuing concern over the new EPA rules regarding fumigant usage. This has been an issue for several months, but we are now starting to get a good idea of just how large the buffer zones need to be and how different types of applications affect those buffer zones. Suffice to say, if the EPA gets the buffer zones they are requesting, 95% of the farmers in the state of Idaho will not be able to fumigate. They simply will not be able to meet the required buffer zones. In addition to the buffer zones, other concerns include:

- A. Written permission from neighbors if buffer zone extends onto their property.
- B. Neighbor must agree to keep all persons out of buffer zone.
- C. Vacate all homes and offices inside of buffer zone for 48 hours.
- D. Sample air quality in home/office before re-entering.
- E. Cannot fumigate within 0.25 miles of sensitive sites: school, hospital, day care, etc.
- F. Must get written permission from appropriate authority if buffer zone crosses publicly owned areas: rights of way, parks, walking trails, athletic fields, etc.
- G. Cannot have workers in adjacent fields if in the buffer zone.

You don't have to be a farmer to see just how rigorous these new rules are. If you are asking yourself, what can I do? The answer is to help us help you. First and foremost become familiar with the proposed changes. You can do this by attending a Vapam/K-Pam Stewardship meeting. These are currently being held in western Idaho and they are going to be held in the Eastern part of the state and the Magic Valley very soon. Second, if you haven't already done so, fill out a fumigation survey that we can use to provide useful data to the EPA to show just how much they are affecting us. For a copy of the survey, please send a request to the following e-mail tcornelison@potato.idaho.gov.

The second issue we discussed in the meeting was the unannounced audit page that farmers are forced to sign to pass a GAP audit. The FDA is forcing the USDA to include this page in the audit, even though there WILL BE NO UNANNOUNCED AUDITS THIS YEAR. To date, the USDA does not have any regulations governing an unannounced audit; therefore, the state auditors will not do them, but the page is still a part of the audit process this year. Many farmers would like to see the page completely left out of future GAP audits. While that is the goal, it might be a hard one to reach. We propose to use a multi-state approach and join with Washington, Oregon and the NPC to tackle the issue. As it sits now, Washington and Oregon are signing the same page with the same reservations. We need to form a coalition and approach the powers that be in the USDA as a group to see if we can change their minds on the issue.

I thank you for your time and hope that your harvest is going well.

Calendar

September

- 9th – 11th United Fresh Public Policy Meeting, Washington, DC
- 10th – 11th United of America Crop Transition Conference, Pocatello, ID
- 11th – 13th National Female Press Writers Conference, Idaho Falls, ID
- 16th Minor Crop Farm Alliance, Washington, DC
- 14th – 18th USBP State / National Workshops, Key Largo, FL

October

- 7th – 8th Potato Commission Meeting, Boise, ID
- 11th – 22nd Governor's Trade Mission (Asia)
- 20th – 24th NAPPO 2008, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 24th – 27th PMA, Orlando, FL

November

- 4th – 6th US Canada meeting, Washington, DC
- 11th – 13th Whistlestop Tour (see details above)