

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Website: www.idahopotato.com

Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

Tomorrow morning members of the Idaho Potato industry will again deliver 5 lb. bags of Idaho® potatoes and containers of instant potatoes to the Idaho Legislators and elected officials. This annual event helps the industry inform these officials about our industry and public policy issues that are of concern to us. It is important to let our voice be heard as they debate and decide matters that impact our industry. For copies of the industry letter outlining the major issues of concern, please contact either Travis Blacker of the Idaho Grower Shippers Association at tblacker@idahoshippers.org or Keith Esplin of Potato Growers of Idaho at pgike@ca.bleone.net.

Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

Excerpts from NPC (National Potato Council) Insider Report:

USDA Issues Final School Meal Rule

On Wednesday, January 25, USDA issued the final rule updating its menu requirements for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The department estimated the final rule will add \$3.2 billion to school meal costs over five years, or about half of what was estimated in the proposed rule.

As directed by Congress, USDA did not include maximum potato serving limits as it had originally proposed in the lunch program, and removed its proposed prohibition of potatoes in the breakfast program. However, NPC voiced concern that USDA's final rule still falls short of giving schools flexibility in the breakfast program to meet nutritional goals within their budgets.

NPC believes the rule's prescriptive nature in promoting certain groups of vegetables over others could increase costs while handcuffing local schools' abilities to meet USDA's nutrition, caloric, fat and sodium requirements. NPC looks forward to working with school food service professionals around the country as they evaluate and implement the final rule. The rule represents a tremendous victory for the potato industry when compared to the imposition of absolute limits on potatoes in schools that would have resulted if Congress had not forced modifications to the original proposed rule.

Stand Up for Potatoes at NPC's Potato D.C. Fly-In

The 2012 Potato D.C. Fly-In, February 27-March 1, is open to growers who wish to make a difference in the federal policy debates impacting the industry. Registration and more information about NPC's Potato D.C. Fly-In can be found online at www.nationalpotatocouncil.org. Registration includes the welcome reception, all scheduled breakfasts and lunches, grassroots training sessions, and the Congressional Potato Luncheon on Capitol Hill. Early bird registration and discounted hotel room rates end Thursday, February 2.

Calendar

February

- 1 IPC Legislative Potato Delivery, Boise - Volunteers Welcome Please RSVP Todd Cornelison
- 1-2 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Eagle
- 1 IPC Legislative Dinner, Boise - RSVP Required
- 7 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 14 Primus GFS GAP Certification for Produce Growers www.techhelp.org, Hilton Garden Inn, Idaho Falls

- 15 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, The Riverside, Boise
- 21 NASS Report, Stocks and Processing to February 1st.
- 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 IPCR&E Committee Meeting, IPC Office, Idaho Falls
- 12 NASS Report, Stocks and Processing to March 1st
- 13-16 USPB Annual Meeting, Colorado Springs, CO
- 20-21 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Eagle
- 22 IGSA Spring Meeting, Hilton Garden Inn, Idaho Falls

April

- 3 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls
- 11-13 IGSA Spring Swing, Mesquite NV. Contact Travis Blacker for Information.
- 13 NASS Reports, Stocks and Processing to April 1st, Winter and Spring Potato Acreage and Production
- 17-18 Idaho Potato Commission Meeting, Eagle
- 30-5 United Fresh Annual Convention, Dallas, TX