

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Website: www.idahopotato.com

Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

This week USDA APHIS held talks in Portland, Oregon with their counterparts from Korea. IPC and the Oregon Potato Commission were available at the talks along with USPB/NPC and industry Representative Matt Lantz. We were available and able to provide technical assistance when needed. Good progress was made during the talks, and we anticipate Idaho fresh potatoes will soon be allowed back into Korea.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has issued the following press release concerning the Certified Seed Law. If you have any questions about what the law requires, please contact ISDA at 208-332-8620.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 11, 2010

Contact: Michael Cooper, Bureau Chief
208-332-8622

Purchasing Potatoes for Planting Certified Seed Guarantees Good Yield and a Healthy Crop

Boise - Enacted by the Idaho State Legislature in 1996, the Idaho Seed Potato Law requires that all potatoes for planting purposes offered for sale or distribution into or within Idaho be inspected and certified. Certification agencies such as the Idaho Crop Improvement Association provide inspection and certification services for a variety of seed types, including potatoes. Certifications help to ensure variety purity and health of the seed.

Potato plants can be plagued with many diseases – bacterial, viral and fungal – and some of these are passed on through potato tubers. Potatoes seen in the supermarket should not be used for seed. They may contain levels of disease that will ultimately affect yield and quality. They also may have been treated to prevent sprouting, which will cause the plant to not produce a viable potato yield.

Certified seed potatoes are tested for major potato diseases, and have been selected to provide the best results with the highest yield potential. Producers of seed potatoes rigorously clean and protect their premises and do a rigorous selection to increase seed over a few generations from isolated nuclear stocks. The first leaf meristem is used in tissue culture because it has a far lower risk of containing virus particles.

An exception to the law allows for potato growers to plant back potato “eliminators” grown by them on their farm, provided they are no more than one generation removed from Certified Seed planted by them and that it has been tested by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and found substantially free from disease. Growers seeking this exemption need to get their samples in early as the test takes up to two weeks once the sampled potatoes have sprouted.

Penalties for a violation of this law can run as high as \$10 per hundredweight of potatoes in violation of the law.

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Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

Tim O'Connor addresses Industry Issues at the USPB Annual meeting

During the recent USPB Annual meeting, Tim O'Connor, President and CEO of the USPB, gave an update on what he considered were the most pressing issues confronting the USPB. Mr. O'Connor stated that “Industry Sector Competition” continues to be a problem. He defined this competition as infighting between fresh and process growers

as well as National and International programs which are all competing for limited USPB funds. Tim gave examples of how all programs help in all sectors. He described how the "fresh" sector does not just mean domestic marketing. He explained that we have multiple opportunities to increase process sales domestically through the use of frozen and dehydrated potato items. He further explained that International Marketing is not just exclusively process sales. He gave examples of International programs which enabled fresh potato sales to the Pacific Rim and seed potato sales to various Latin American countries. Mr. O'Connor urged the group to try to think of the programs as not competitive but rather cumulative in nature; they all build off one another to achieve a common goal, that goal is increasing total consumption. Tim went on to explain that our industry faces real challenges that need to be met with a united effort and sector competition just diminishes our ability to confront these issues. Some of the issues he referred to are: Declining demand in all areas of our industry, the continued pressure from low carb diets and changing consumer lifestyles and meal preferences.

IGSA Section 32 Purchase Training Webinar to be held March 24th

The IGSA is holding a Webinar to aid shippers in understanding how to take advantage of the recent USDA Section 32 purchase. The Webinar will be held on Wednesday, March 24th at 11 am MST. If you would like to attend the webinar, please provide your e-mail address to Travis Blacker at tblacker@idahoshippers.org or contact him at (208) 360-9560 with any questions.

Calendar

March

- 16-17 IPC Commission Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 18 USDA Portal Training Workshop, Pre-Registration Required University Place Campus in Idaho Falls, ID
1:00-5:00 p.m., Room 204, Center for Higher Education Building (CHE)
- 18 IGSA PTI Committee Meeting, IGSA Office, Idaho Falls, ID
- 25 IGSA Convention Committee Meeting 2:00 p.m., IGSA Office, Idaho Falls, ID
- 25 IGSA Board Meeting 3:00 p.m., Idaho Falls, ID

April

- 6 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 13-14 IPC Commission Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 20-23 United Fresh Produce Association Convention, Las Vegas, NV

May

- 4 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 13-14 IPC Commission Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 15 Idaho Potato Commission Marathon, Boise, ID
- 22-25 National Restaurant Association Show, Chicago, IL

June

- 8 Idaho Eastern Oregon Potato Committee Meeting, Twin Falls, ID
- 9 IGSA Board Meeting, Twin Falls, ID
- 15-17 NPC Summer Meeting, Alamosa, CO
- 22-23 IPC Commission Meeting, Eagle, ID