

News from the Potato Lab

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December, 2014

Planting the Postharvest Test

On November 17, Nina Zidack and Susie Siemsen headed to Oahu to plant the postharvest test for the 2014 crop. We were joined at Twin Bridge Farms by John Venhuizen and also received assistance from Walt Zidack and Susie's son Josh Siemsen.

John had arrived in Oahu early and completed some much-needed modifications to the planter. We started planting the morning of November 18 and completed the job in record time by late afternoon of the 19th. This year tubers were extremely healthy. There was virtually no soft rot and any minor frost injury was completely healed. The farm had done an excellent job of soil prep and the planter functioned the best it ever has, thanks to the fine tuning by John.



The potato crew before starting planting. Susie, Walt, Josh, Nina and John

Reports from Hawaii indicate that the potatoes are emerging more slowly than usual due to cooler weather the past two weeks. The temperatures look warmer for the coming 10 days so I am sure they will catch up fast. Eileen Carpenter and Nina Zidack will return to the plots

December 28 to begin readings and coordinate the leaf picking. If you plan to visit your plots in Hawaii, please call Nina at 406-451-3097.



The potato crew at the end of planting along with employees of Twin Bridge Farms

Montana Seed Potato Seminar by Susie Siemsen

The 49th Annual Montana Seed Potato Seminar was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula, Montana on November 12 and 13, 2014. The seminar brings Montana growers and families and out-of-state growers and families together to discuss the issues of the industry. The National Potato Council and the United States Potato Promotions Board representatives updated the audience on legislative and consumer matters. Exhibitors showed the latest farm equipment, chemical technologies, potato varieties, and financial products. Participants were treated to great food which, of course, included potatoes, and an evening of entertainment before plant bacteriologists, virologists, entomologists, and economists, shared information about research, potato disease epidemiology and management, and family financial education. Dr. Nina Zidack of MSU Seed Potato Certification Lab, presented an overview of the 2014 Montana seed potato growing season and crop. Dr. Barry Jacobsen of MSU department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology,

informed participants on perspectives from 20 years of potato disease management research in Montana and integrated management of PVY using roguing, BmJ induced resistance, stylet oils and no-gap insecticides. Barry was thanked by the Montana Growers and the Potato Lab for his years of dedicated service.



Dr. Barry Jacobsen with Don and Bernadine Lake

Dr. Neil Gudmestad of North Dakota State University discussed the reemergence of bacterial ring rot disease. Dr. Erik Wenninger of University of Idaho, Kimberly Research & Extension Center spoke about contribution of non-colonizing aphids to Potato Virus Y incidence in potato in southern Idaho. The keynote address was given by Mr. John Youngberg, Executive Vice President of Montana Farm Bureau Federation. He encouraged applying for research funding with Montana Board of Research and Commercialization which awards \$2.4 million annually for research in Montana. Dr. Phil Hamm of Oregon State University, Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center relayed information about Zebra Chip, caused by a psyllid-borne bacterium, Purple Top, caused by phytoplasma, and bacterial ring rot caused by *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *sepedonicus*. Dr. Marsha A. Goetting of MSU department of Agricultural Economics and Economics informed all on Montana's laws of property rights when planning an estate. The seminar was hosted by the Northwest Montana Seed Potato Growers in cooperation with Montana State University Extension Services.



NPC Update by Dan Lake

Greetings Montana Seed Potato Growers, The National Potato Council and all potato growers in the country can chalk up another successful endeavor with the passage of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, which is just a long winded way to say that

parts of the government will continue to be funded. Deep inside this bill was NPC language that allowed WIC participants to use their vouchers to purchase fresh white potatoes. This was not allowed before and in fact white potatoes were the only fresh vegetable NOT allowed in the WIC purchase program. It didn't make sense and was an incredible challenge to change. Congratulations to all NPC staff and members that worked with Congress to push this issue through.

Bee Health, now referred to as Pollinator Protection, will be the grassroots policy issue of focus this year at the EXPO. NPC is allied with many other agriculture groups and chemical companies in an effort to promote sound, science based research that identifies the real issues affecting bee health. Currently, environmentalists and others are placing the blame on agriculture's use of EPA approved pesticides and they are trying to ban their use. To date there has been no scientifically proven link connecting responsible pesticide use with bee decline. So far the main issues affecting bee health are Varroa Mites, nutrition, genetics, stress and pathogens with Varroa Mites being the most damaging. Neonicotinoids were developed in the mid-1990's largely because they showed less toxicity to honey bees, compared to the previously used organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. This is still true today and there is even safer technology in development.

The Tax Extenders Bill, Section 179, which was passed on December 16, 2014 allows you to write off up to \$500,000 for equipment purchases and reinstates the 50% Bonus Depreciation for the 2014 tax year. Only the 2014 tax year is included so it is a good business decision to buy/finance equipment immediately to make the December 31, 2014 cutoff for the write-off provisions. Make sure your accountant is aware of this latest piece of legislation.

Upcoming Meetings: The Potato EXPO 2015 (January 7-9) and NPC annual meeting (January 9-10) will be in Orlando, Florida this year. This is the largest potato industry gathering in North America where all potato industry people are included. The speakers are top shelf and the issues are relevant to the industry. This year will be no less engaging and there will be close to 2000 participants.

The Potato D.C. Fly-In will be February 23-26 in Washington D.C. This continues to be the flagship meeting of the NPC where we as growers can really have an impact on the direction our Congressmen choose to take as they engage in various public policy legislation affecting agriculture issues. All of you have heard from our Leadership Candidates about their experience while attending this event and it is always positive. It is a

chance to expose yourself to the regulatory side of our industry which has become as important as the production side that we are all so used to. Please go to the NPC website at www.nationalpotatocouncil.org for more information and to register for any of the events. You WILL make a difference!!

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support you have given to the NPC through the Grower Supporter Program and your feedback to Sid and I on issues the NPC can address. As I assume the role of 2015 NPC President in January, I feel honored to represent all of you as your Montana Delegate. It will be a busy and exciting year as there are always so many issues that need a voice of reason and leadership in our industry, which is what the NPC provides on behalf of the potato industry.

I wish each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dan Lake

Bridgette Lake Cheff selected as candidate for 2015 Potato Industry Leadership Institute.

Dan and Jan Lake's daughter Bridgette of Lake Seed was selected as the 2014 participant in the NPC Leadership Institute. This year's leadership and industry training will occur in the state of Washington and will include farm and processing tours as well as a visit to the John Keys Pump Plant at Coulee Dam, part of the Columbia Basin Project. From Washington State, the group will head to Washington D.C. for NPC's DC Fly-In. Bridgette will be joined there by her father Dan who will be starting his term as the President of NPC, Sid Schutter, and Tim Droge, last year's Leadership Institute attendee.

Tissue Culture and Microtuber Updates and Reminders from Elaine:

Plantlet order forms for the 2015 crop year were mailed on December 5.

Attention to those who buy microtubers:

Confirmations for the 2015 crop year were mailed, and microtuber order forms for the 2016 crop year were included in the packet. If you did not receive a 2016 microtuber form and would like one please call the office and I will send you the forms.

Deadlines for returning the 2015 plantlet order and the 2016 microtuber forms to the lab is December 31, 2014.

****If you are planning on growing any new lines that we do not have, please request them soon. It takes 3-4 months to test and increase new lines for spring planting.***

Shipping to Colorado and Exporting to Canada

Please prepare for any shipments to the San Luis Valley of Colorado by having a late blight test performed. This test requires a minimum of 3 weeks before shipment. Colorado is also requesting a PVY strain test which can be performed on winter test samples. **Please inform the lab if you are shipping anything to Colorado.** Also remember that all potato seed exported to Canada must be PCN tested. Seed going to Prince Edward Island needs to have a leaf roll test from the winter grow-out. If you are sending seed to Prince Edward Island, please **contact Susie to arrange for leaf roll testing by December 31.**

GMO Test

You must call the lab and request GMO testing. The MSU Potato Lab will provide GMO testing services. The lab can use the leaves from the Hawaii test, or you can submit tuber samples. The cost of testing tubers is much higher. Take advantage of the cost by testing the leaves from Hawaii. Costs of GMO tests will be as follows:

Leaves - GMO test is \$45 per sample.

Tubers - GMO test is \$220 per sample.

The leaves will be here before the New Year, so let Susie know now if you want GMO testing. Talk to your buyers to see if they require this test.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 30, 2014 - Summer Testing fees due

December 31, 2014 - Plantlet and microtuber orders due

February 11, 2015 - MPIA Directors Mtg, Bozeman