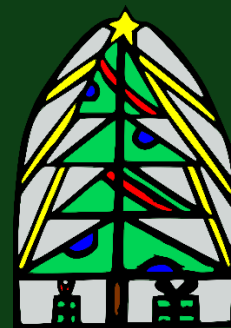


News from the Potato Lab

www.montanaspud.org



December, 2015

Montana Seed Potato Seminar by Susie Siemsen

From the first Montana Seed Potato Seminar in Deer Lodge in 1965, to celebrating the 50th seminar on Nov. 4 & 5, 2015 in Missoula, families of Montana seed potato growers, seed buyers, and industry representatives gathered together to acquire information, conduct business, mingle at a trade show, and have a good time. Bill Cottom, Herb Koenig, Don Lake, and Roy Lake, with their families, were privileged to have attended the 1st seminar as well as this 50th seminar. A book titled "A History of Montana Potato Farms" compiled by Erika Kimm



Mike Sun, Bob Thornton and Don Lake

recounted times past and present of 20 farms.

Starting off with industry news, Nina Zidack, Director, discussed the growth and harvest of the 2015 seed potatoes. Dan Lake, the 2015

National Potato Council President, updated the attendees with national issues. Dan was able to host the summer meeting of the NPC in Kalispell, as well as provide a tour of his farm in Ronan, complete with pitch fork fondue.

The Potato Industry Leadership representative from Montana, Bridgett Cheff, thanked the growers for electing her to participate in the program, where future leaders are trained and educated with tours of farms, processing plants, storage and fresh pack facilities with new technologies, and finally with public policy meetings in Washington D.C. with Montana representatives. Blaire Richardson of the United States Potato Promotions Board as well as Mike Telford of the United Potato Growers of America discussed the supply and demand for potatoes and consumer trends. For the first year there was an option for companies to make sponsored presentations.

The afternoon of session was comprised of talks by various chemical and equipment companies and the US Potato Board.

The keynote speaker, Jolene Brown, is a "true Farmer Brown". The co-owner and active partner of an Eastern Iowa corn and soybean farm, she humorously presented "The Positives of Passing It On", as well as the "Wrinkles of Wit and Wisdom". Between laughing at farm humor involving spouses going to town to pick up parts, and driving big equipment with modified gas pedals or brakes, Jolene emphasized the serious side of running a business with family and passing the farm on. Mike Sun, retired Director, recalled the prominence of past certification staff, first generation growers in Montana, and veterans from the industry or research professions who were instrumental in developing Montana's excellent seed potato industry. Nina Zidack; Mel Martin of Martin Potato Consulting in Moses Lake, Washington; Rich Novy of USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Aberdeen, Idaho; Robert Thornton, Professor Emeritus at Washington State University in Pullman; Mark Pavek, Washington State University at Pullman; Walt Stevenson, Emeritus Professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison and Amy Charkowski, Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification administrator at University of Wisconsin-Madison presented past and future perspectives in facing the new challenges in the industry involving certification, potato varieties and breeding, history of improvements, problem solving in the past, research to improve industry, as well as how to keep on top of plant diseases. The overall take home message was that production and disease problems in the past couldn't have been solved without growers working hand in hand with land grant universities, crop improvement associations, research stations, industry, and certification agencies.

Planting the Postharvest Test

On November 17, Nina Zidack and Elaine Nichols headed to Oahu to plant the postharvest test for the 2015 crop. We were joined at Twin Bridge Farms by Martin and Sue Kimm and also received assistance from Walt Zidack and

Elaine's niece Danielle Irwin. With a very rainy forecast, we planted from sunup to sundown on November 18th and started at sunrise on November 19th finishing by 2PM at which time it started to sprinkle. The following days were very rainy so the plots were in just in time and reports indicate they are growing very well. 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

Karl DeJonge selected for 2016 NPC Leadership School

Karl DeJonge of Dan Kimm Certified Seed Potatoes will be the 2016 participant of the NPC Leadership Institute. This year's leadership and industry training will occur in Grand Forks, North Dakota and will include tours of Case IH, NDSU and then on to Washington DC for the NPC Fly-In. Bridgette Cheff, last year's candidate was chosen by her 2015 class to be the 2016 grower leader. She will assist the NPC staff to make this a valuable learning experience for the new class.

Tissue Culture and Microtuber Updates and Reminders from Elaine:

Plantlet order forms for the 2016 crop year were mailed on December 8. **Attention to those who buy microtubers:** Confirmations for the 2016 crop year were mailed, and microtuber order forms for the 2017 crop year were included in the packet. If you did not receive a 2017 microtuber form and would like one please call the office and I will send you the forms. **Deadlines for returning the 2016 plantlet order and the 2017 microtuber forms to the lab is December 31, 2015.**

**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

Seed potato shipments to the San Luis Valley of Colorado require a late blight test. Potatoes must be submitted 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.

Nina Zidack elected by NPC Seed Committee to serve as US UNECE Seed Potato representative. UNECE stands for United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. UNECE's major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. To do so, it brings together 56 countries located in the European Union, non-EU Western and Eastern Europe, South-East Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and North America. The function of the seed potato group is to standardize certification standards between European nations and other countries within the United Nations to enhance trade. Willem Schrage from North Dakota served on the committee for 20 years and was instrumental in attaining acceptance of cut potato seed as certified seed and in the preparation of field manuals for diagnosis of potato diseases. The United States currently commands a relatively small market share in the world seed potato market and US representation on the committee is important for improving export opportunities.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 15, 2015 - Summer Testing fees due
December 31, 2015 - Plantlet and microtuber orders due
February 11, 2016 - MPIA Directors Mtg, Bozeman