

News from the Potato Lab



Summer 2015

Jessica Rupp from Kansas State University hired as Potato Disease specialist. She will be stepping into Barry Jacobsen's position with a start date of September 1. Jessica was born and raised in Pittsburg, Kansas, which is located in the southeast corner of the state. Pittsburg, KS, is famous for its coal mining days and fried chicken. She completed a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Biology in 2009 at Pittsburg State University. PSU boasts the largest Division II Football stadium in the US, complete with a Jumbotron and arguably the most unique DII mascot, Gus the Gorilla.



Jessica then moved to Manhattan, KS, where she attended Kansas State University. She received a graduate certificate in Applied Statistics in 2014, and will be completing her PhD in July in Plant Pathology. Her PhD work has been focused on host gene silencing to induce resistance to viruses infecting wheat. While at K State, Jessica developed her interest in Extension. She has always had a passion for potatoes, and can tell you a complete ranking of restaurants in Manhattan, KS, based solely on French fries. She is looking forward to applying this passion further upstream in working with Montana growers to produce the world's' best seed potatoes. Her expertise in working with Potyvirus, such as PVY, and other pathogens will certainly come in handy. In all seriousness, Jessica is committed to providing top level extension and research to address the needs of the industry.

Jessica will be relocating to Montana with her 10 year old daughter Hailey, a future member of 4-H, her mother, who is ready for a new adventure, and her beloved 14 year old dog, Emma. This move will also bring her closer to family that resides in Great Falls, MT. Jessica will be arriving at Montana State University by mid-September and looks forward to meeting everyone. Please don't hesitate to contact her.

2015 Seed Potato Acreage Report

Acreage is holding very steady across the state and is also very consistent within the counties. Gallatin County is showing a slight increase in acreage and Broadwater and Beaverhead counties are showing small reductions.

County	2013 Acres	2014 Acres	2015 Acres
Beaverhead	778	785	725
Broadwater	1636	1488	1331
Cascade	5	7	6
Custer	90	87	90
Deer Lodge	336	283	270
Flathead	256	266	262
Gallatin	4068	4271	4484
Jefferson	40	130	137
Lake	1727	1641	1712
Madison	1223	1237	1190
Sanders	0	0	4
Total	10,159	10,195	10,211

Sales of 2015 Crop Breaks Record

At the June Board meeting, Larry Krum from the Montana Department of Agriculture reported that Montana sold the most seed potatoes in our history. There were 3 Million cwt of potatoes documented

through shipping point inspection. The second highest year was 2011 with 2.83 million cwt. The lowest amount sold in the last 10 years was in 2010 after the 2009 frost with a total of 2.5 million cwt.

Barry Jacobsen accepts new position

While Barry Jacobsen had an extremely successful career as a Plant Pathologist and administrator, he has not been as successful in his attempts at retirement. He has been appointed Associate Director of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and Department Head of Research Centers. While he no longer has responsibilities for Potato Pathology, he would like you all to know that he is still just a phone call or e-mail away.

He can be reached at 406-994-5161 or bjacobsen@montana.edu.

Montana has another good year at Washington Commercial Seed Potato Trials

Montana certified seed potatoes continue to show the highest degree of quality in the seed trials conducted by Washington State. Overall, the level of virus (primarily PVY) increased compared to the previous years but Montana had very little mosaic compared to other states. Montana inspectors worked with staff from Washington State, Oregon State and the University of Idaho to perform the disease ratings on June 23. The results were revealed at the field day on June 25. There were a number of Montana growers in attendance. One surprise at this year's field day was the presence of leaf roll in lots from 2 other states. This is a reminder that while this disease has been under control for many years through the use of systemic neonicotinoid insecticides, it can still emerge if there is any gap in protection.

Disease forecasts will be reported a new program developed by SureHarvest of Soquel, CA. For many years, the Potato Lab has been using the Wisdom Program developed at University of Wisconsin to forecast Late Blight and Early Blight. Unfortunately, the software has not been updated in 20 years and there is no longer technical support. In communications with University of Wisconsin, we learned that they contracted with SureHarvest, an agricultural consulting firm in California, to develop new software for disease forecasting. Nina will send out weekly reports every Monday or Tuesday. **This year disease forecast reports will only be sent via e-mail. Please check your e-mail for the reports!**

Anna Jespersen joins Potato Lab



Kim Prosek has moved on to pursue other opportunities and we are pleased to announce that Anna Jespersen will be serving as a laboratory technician helping Susie Siemsen with summer and winter testing, and assisting with research

projects. Part of her responsibilities will be supervising an evening shift during the peak summer testing season. Anna has a B.S. in Environmental Horticulture from MSU. She is an avid equestrian, reads constantly, and is always on the lookout for something good to bake.

Nominations sought for Montana representative to US Potato Board and for service on Montana Potato Advisory Committee

If you or someone you might recommend has a desire to serve the industry there are two opportunities available. First is with the USPB. Steve Cottom has been serving in this position and will complete his term in 2016. There is one 2-day meeting per year and it is held in March. If you are interested, visit with Steve about the multiple promotional activities conducted by the board. The other service opportunity is with the Montana Potato Advisory Committee. Roger Starkel (previous chair), Dennis Day and Sid Schutter have all termed out of their appointments so there are three positions available. The Advisory Committee meets once a year before the Montana Seed Seminar and advises the Montana Department of Agriculture on which projects to fund for research and which promotional activities will benefit the Montana potato industry. If you are interested call Nina for more information.



Inspectors at the Washington Seed Trials