

# News from the Potato Lab



December, 2009

## Montana Seed Potato Seminar

The 44th annual Montana Seed Potato Seminar was held in Helena on November 3 and 4, 2009. On Tuesday November 3, growers had a productive morning session that concluded with an informative update on the workings of the National Potato Council by John Keeling. This was followed by an excellent lunch and program hosted by the United Potato Partners. United Potato Partner speakers were followed by talks from Jeannie Debons on the status of the PVMI program, David Fraser on current National Potato Board promotions, and Roger Bruckner, from USDA Risk Management Programs who gave a synopsis of relevant crop insurance programs. Tuesday night, everyone enjoyed a generous reception at the Montana Historical Society. Guests were allowed to peruse the entire museum, the highlight of which was a special exhibit on the history of potato production in Montana.



Susie Siems, Art Mangels and Don Bradshaw reviewing Montana Potato History

The Wednesday morning program featured University of Idaho professors Juan Alvarez and Phil Nolte talking on PVY vector and disease management. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Lyle Knight, CEO of First Interstate Bank. Mr.

Knight gave an enlightening synopsis of current economic trends, indicating that while we are technically pulling out of the recession, we won't see improvement in job numbers and economic growth for at least another year. The afternoon program focused on the timely subject of potato storage. Dr. Rick Knowles from Washington State University spoke on "Physiological Aging of Seed Potatoes". Vaughn Hopkins, IVI presented "Storage Solutions for Potatoes". Dr. Barry Jacobsen finished off this section with "Integrated Management of Storage Diseases". At the end of the formal talks, the growers had the opportunity to engage all of the speakers in a discussion session on management of potato storage.

The banquet featured entertainment by Mr. Ken Overcast, a traditional cowboy singer, poet and humorist.

This year's seminar was hosted by the Gallatin Valley Seed Potato Growers with Larry Van Dyke providing the primary coordination for the conference center and reception arrangements.

## More ways to earn Pesticide Applicator Credits

At the 2009 Montana State Seed Potato Seminar, attendees were able to earn 3 pesticide applicator credits. The same opportunity will be provided at the Washington/Oregon conference which will be held in Kennewick, WA on January 27 and 28. The sign-up sheets will be at the Montana booth. Please bring your pesticide applicator number and we will make sure you receive the appropriate credits.

## PCN Update

Eileen Carpenter have finished processing almost half of soil samples for PCN. The rest of the samples will be processed in the spring. All samples from fields where the crop may be exported to Canada have been processed and will be evaluated first.

## Hawaii Post-Harvest Planting



### The new planter getting loaded and ready to plant potatoes

After the seminar concluded, Nina Zidack and Susie Siemsen headed to Hawaii for the post harvest growout. The plantings were moved to Twin Bridge Farms on the North Shore near Waialua on Oahu, Hawaii. The potatoes were planted November 17-19 using a new planter that was built by John Venhuizen and Bill Roesener, a fabricator from Manhattan. John Venhuizen did the final assembly at the farm with the assistance of the excellent staff at Twin Bridge Farms. The planter is equipped with a Kverneland planting unit and is configured to plant two rows of the same sample at one time. The rows within the sample are spaced 24" apart, and the space between each sample is 48". This should enhance the pickers ability to pick each sample accurately, make evaluations

easier, and reduce the touching between plots as the plants grow. Since planting, the potatoes



have received some light showers and are being drip irrigated. As of December 1, some of the potatoes were starting to emerge. I will look at the plots on December 21, and on December 30, Eileen Carpenter and I will begin working with the leaf pickers and start evaluations. Please give me a call if you would like to visit your plots in Hawaii. My cell phone number is (406)451-3097.

## Late Blight Testing

If you will be shipping potatoes to Colorado in the spring, tubers need to be submitted to the lab a minimum of 4 weeks before shipping.

## 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 right after the New Year, so let Susie Siemsen know if you want GMO testing. Bringing in 400 tubers later will result in a significant increase in cost. Talk to your buyers to see if they require this test.

**Please call the lab at 994-3150 and leave a message if you want GMO testing and on which samples.**

Susie Siemsen will call you back and get the details after December 11 since she will attend the Potato Association of America Certification Section meeting and the NPC Seed subcommittee meeting in Detroit from December 8-10.

## Holiday greetings from Elaine

Invoices for plants/microtubers were due October 30, and invoices for summer testing are due December 15, 2009. Order forms for plants for Spring 2010 will be mailed soon and are due back to the lab by December 31, 2009. The yield for microtubers is low, so some of the orders will have to be replaced with plants.

## Kim Prosek

We are happy to welcome Kim Prosek to the Potato Lab staff. Kim formerly worked at the MSU Seed Lab, and assisted Susie Siemsen in the Potato Lab last winter. Kim will continue to work with Susie in the lab during the winter, and will start field inspecting this summer. Kim lives in Manhattan, likes to fish, hike, collect orchids. She also keeps finches, and has a canary and a fish.

