

# News from the Potato Lab



June, 2011

## 2011 Acreage slightly up from 2010

The 2011 crop is all planted and we are seeing a slight increase in acreage from 2010. Beaverhead and Gallatin counties are showing a 22% and 5% increase respectively, and Lake County is down 19%.

## MT Seed Potato Acres by County

County	Sum of Acres 2010	Sum Of Acres 2011
BEAVERHEAD	808	1042
BROADWATER	1385	1541
CHOUTEAU	160	225
CUSTER	47	57
DEERLODGE	368	420
FLATHEAD	254	254
GALLATIN	3852	4062
LAKE	1871	1570
MADISON	1092	1018
TOTAL	9,838	10,189

## Washington Commercial Seed Lot Trial

On June 20, the MSU seed potato inspection team traveled to Washington for a chance to get in the field and see the performance of Montana seed. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, we worked with folks from Washington, Idaho and Oregon to read the plots at Othello for mosaic and other disorders. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, we attended the field day where WSU's Mark Pavek distributed the results for the disease readings. Montana growers performed extremely well. We had 125 seed lots entered into the trial which was 38% of the total and the highest number of any state. That actually represented a reduction from last year where we had almost 50% of the seed lots. Of the 125 Montana lots, 78% had no mosaic. A number of growers attended the WA trials, taking the opportunity to

meet with customers and get updated on the latest potato research.

Between the WA field trials, we attended the Hermiston, OR field day on June 22nd. We also observed Montana seed lots in their field trial, and again, they showed superior performance.

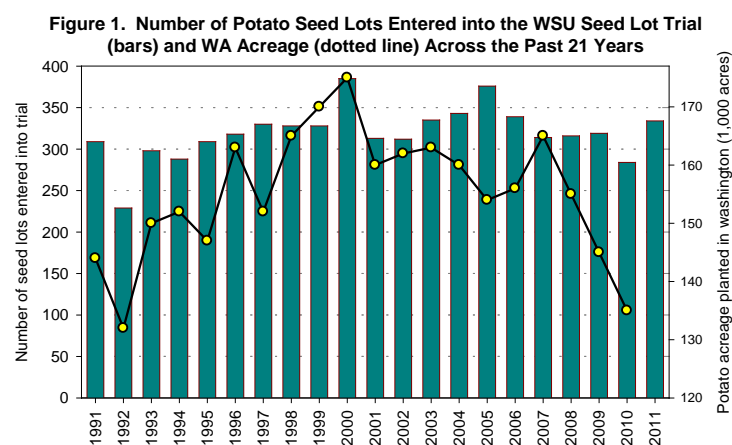


Bob Johnston, Lucy Cooke and Kim Prosek evaluating seed plots at the Othello trials

## 2011 WASHINGTON STATE COMMERCIAL SEED LOT PROFILE MJ PAVEK, ZJ HOLDEN, & CD HILES WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, PULLMAN, WA

In the past three years, 30,000 acres of Washington potatoes were removed from the global market (Figure 1, dotted line). The equivalent of 240 standard-sized center pivots were taken out of potato production in WA between 2007 and 2010. The acreage linearly declined 10,000 acres per year moving from 165,000 in 2007 to 135,000 in 2010. Despite this drop, the number of seed lot samples submitted this year increased significantly compared

to the previous 4 years. Three hundred thirty four samples were submitted during 2011, compared with 284 in 2010 (Figure 1, bars). Although seed lot entries were up, it is not yet clear whether the 2011 WA potato acreage will remain at 2010 levels or deviate. A decline in processed potato demand along with acreage restrictions encouraged by the United Potato cooperative likely contributed to the 2007-10 acreage reduction. Competition in the market place and a struggling economy may have also been wreaking havoc. Recent research highlighting the nutritional benefits of the potato is timely and will hopefully lead rogue consumers back to the nutritional powerhouse. We are optimistic that potato demand will rise again soon!



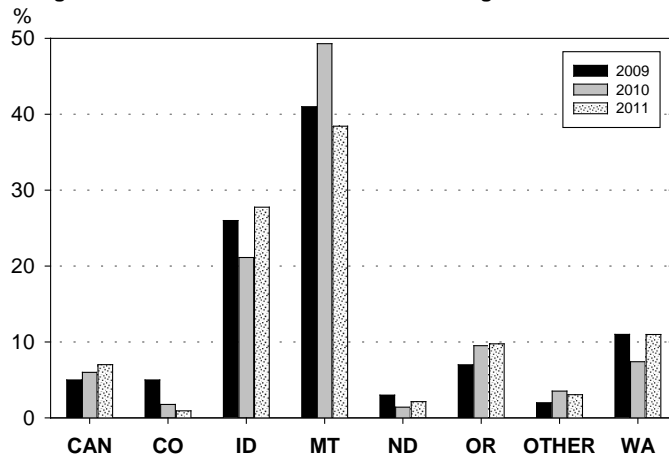
Montana-produced seed lots declined significantly from the previous 2 years relative to the other locations (Figure 2). Montana's loss appears to be Canada's, Idaho's, and Washington's gain. Canada supplied seed lots have continued to increase since the 2008 reopening of the US/Canadian border to Alberta-grown seed potatoes.

The composition of the 2011 Seed Lot Trial included 23% "Other" varieties, 21% Russet Burbank, 18% Russet Norkotah, 14% Ranger Russet, 13% Umatilla Russet, 8% Alturas, and 3% Premier Russet (Figure 3). The 2011 "Other" category was composed of 35 new, or non-mainstream varieties, ranging from numbered, non-released varieties to Yukon Gold (Figure 3). The "Other" category hit a record high in 2011 following a two-fold increase in the number of entries across the past 4 years. Ranger Russet seed lots ended a 4-year decline while Premier Russet seed lot numbers continue to trend downward.

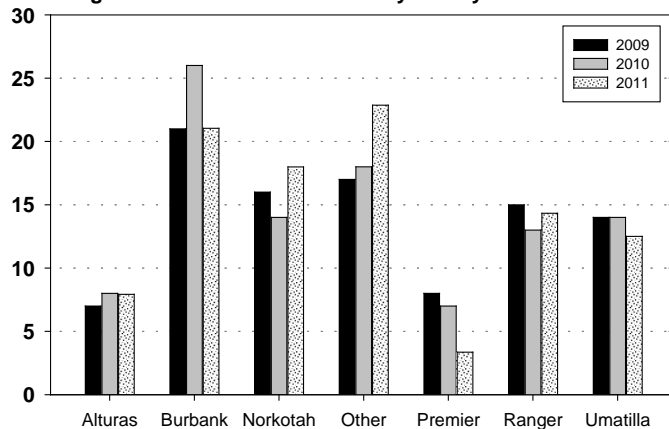
Varieties developed by the Northwest Potato Variety

Development Program/PVMI accounted for 42% of the seed lots entered into the 2010 trial and included: Premier Russet, Alpine Russet, Blazer Russet, Alturas, Ranger, Umatilla, and Gallatin Russet, Modoc, TerraRosa, Defender, PA00N14-2, AO96141-3, A01010-1, and A84180-8.

**Figure 2. Percent of Seed Lots from each Region between 2009-11**



**Figure 3. Percent of Seed Lots by Variety between 2009-11**



### Weather Stations up and running

We currently have 9 weather stations reporting data and generating disease forecasts for late blight and early blight. Len Coop from OSU is in the process of getting them online. In the meantime, we are running the data through the Wisdom program and will be reporting disease risk weekly. In addition to reports to growers, the general late blight forecast information is being published in the Lake County Leader and the Ronan Valley Journal along with recommendations for home gardeners on when to apply preventative fungicide sprays.

Included with the newsletter are recommendations for fungicide application for management of late blight by Dennis Johnson of WSU. The bulletin is 3-

hole punched so you can place it in your binder with pest management recommendations for 2011.

### **Field Inspections and Lab Testing**

The 2011 inspection team will be made up of Nina Zidack, Lucy Cooke, Eileen Carpenter, Don Bradshaw, Bob Johnston, and Kim Prosek. Billie and Leon Welty have retired from inspecting, but are on call if the need arises. First inspections are starting on June 30 in the Toston area and will run through July 15. Second inspection will be July 18-29 and third inspection will be August 16-26. The picking and lab crews are just getting started. Remember to return your G3 and G4 serotesting forms to the lab whether or not you want them tested!

### **Montana Seed Potato Certification Program now part of State National Harmonization Program**

In 2007, Montana signed a Memorandum of Understanding to participate in the State National Harmonization Program for seed potatoes. The purpose of this MOU is to establish, as part of the SNHP for seed potatoes, harmonized standards to control the spread of disease through state certification programs for seed potatoes. This SNHP for seed potatoes allows for uniform minimum phytosanitary standards. The objectives of the program are to: enhance uniformity and quality in seed potatoes shipped between states; lead to the enhanced marketing of high quality commercial potatoes grown in the United States; and enhance international marketing of quality seed potatoes exported from the United States. In order to be a full participant in the SNPH, each seed potato producing state has to produce a quality manual which contains all of the procedures for certification and the states procedures for shipping point inspections. Larry Krum and Nina Zidack completed the quality manual last winter. The quality manual and program were approved after a site visit by APHIS personnel in May where they audited our program and procedures.

### **Condolences to the Starkel Family**

Victor Starkel, father of Bob, Ed and Roger Starkel passed away on June 17<sup>th</sup>. His obituary can be found at:

<http://valleyjournal.net/index111.htm>

### **Dates to Remember:**

**November 10-11**      **Montana Seed Potato Seminar**  
**Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula**