

News from the Potato Lab



Fall 2015

Plans Set to Celebrate 50th Seed Seminar November 3-5 in Missoula. Montana seed potato growers, seed customers and agri-business representatives will meet for the 50th time to share information on our industry. Montana growers will gather for the annual growers meeting on November 3 at 4PM. On November 4, the program will start with updates from our industry and potato organizations. The second half of the morning a workshop on passing on the family farm will be conducted by Jolene Brown (see below). In the afternoon, the Trade Show will be open and we will also have sponsored presentations by agribusinesses. In the evening, a traditional banquet is planned with Jolene Brown as the keynote speaker. The program on November 5 will highlight milestones from the past and looking to the future of Seed Potato Certification (Mike Sun and Nina Zidack), Potato Agronomy (Bob Thornton and Mark Pavek – WSU), Plant Pathology (Walter Stevenson and Amy Charkowski – U of Wisconsin) and Variety Development (Mel Martin – Simplot and Rich Novy – USDA). The morning session will conclude with a luncheon.

Jolene Brown – Workshop Presenter and Keynote Speaker



Jolene Brown is a walking-talking spokesperson and champion for the people of agriculture. She's a farmer, author and professional speaker. Jolene's from West Branch, Iowa and her worldwide audiences appreciate her fun-filled spirit and valuable

information. She's on a mission to share leading-edge best practices, appreciation, laughter and celebration

to increase productivity, profitability and peace of mind. www.JoleneBrown.com

Workshop “The Positives of Passing It On”

If you want to honor the family while building and transitioning your business, you've important decisions to make and actions to take....starting today. In this upbeat, interactive workshop we'll learn lessons from successful leaders and managers of a legacy business. It becomes clear they do the work necessary to have a right and experienced leader, create and use specific and realistic management tools, and lay a solid foundation including legal documents to assure peace of mind.

During this session you will:

- learn that if you want to honor the family, you'd better do the business right. If not, at the end of the day, you may have neither family nor business.
- explore 10 specific and tested actions that build a legacy business.
- realize we are in the people business, not just production. Leaders and managers bring good will, good experience, good skills and a commitment to do the foundation work.
- receive 8 take home tools for transitioning labor, management, leadership and ownership.

Jessica Rupp, Extension Plant Pathologist, Reflections on My First Potato Harvest

In the past few weeks I had the privilege to visit many of you during harvest. It was a special occasion for me, as it was my first harvest. I was fortunate to meet so many of you, but there were

many more that I missed. Hopefully, I will be meeting the rest of you very soon!

I was so impressed with harvest; it is clear the pride you take in your seed potato production. I found harvest to be a unique blend of tradition and innovation. From seeing nuclear hills dug by hand, to the impressive air separators. It was an honor to stand beside some of you and throw rocks off the conveyor belt. Montanans are no strangers to hard work, and potato harvest is certainly hard work!

I come from a part of Kansas with soil that you might refer to as “gumbo.” I am still in awe over the incredible soils here in Montana. Digging potatoes with a trowel has never been possible for me before!



Another sight that surprised me was the sheer number of rocks! I now know that Clod hopper is not just a slang term, but an important machine.

I was fortunate to accompany Nina Zidack out to the field, where we dug

potatoes from some spots where late blight had been found in August in Gallatin County. Overall, most potatoes looked very good, but we located a few tubers with late blight. This has some important implications as potatoes move into the cellar for storage and going into next year.

I would really like to get to know each of you, so please feel free to give me a call at 406-404-0789 any time. We can get together, have a cup of coffee and discuss what is important to you. I may be the plant pathologist, but we don't need to wait for a problem to occur for a visit. I believe I am in Extension to serve, and that is my number one priority. You are also welcome to come visit the lab any time in 130 Plant BioScience Building on MSU campus. Thanks for a great first harvest!

Planting for Postharvest Test

Our postharvest test plot is scheduled to be planted November 18 at Twin Bridge Farms on Oahu. Elaine Nichols, Martin and Sue Kimm and Walt Zidack will be helping plant this year. I know many of you may have questioned why the pick-up for Postharvest test is earlier than usual (October 21 and 22). The past two years we have had problems with our container of potatoes being off-loaded in Oakland, CA to make

room for Christmas trees. Last year, the problem was compounded by the labor issues at the ports. Scheduling the shipment a week earlier should get us out of the Christmas traffic and reduce the chance that our potatoes are re-routed. Thankfully harvest has proceeded ahead of schedule!

Eileen and I will begin postharvest readings and picking on December 29. If you would like to visit the plots give me a call and we will plan on seeing you there!

BRR samples coming in

With harvest finishing early this year we are already receiving some BRR samples. As a reminder, if you contract with ConAgra/Lamb Weston you need to sample 10 tubers/acre of each lot you plan to ship to them. For Idaho recertification lots, you are required to test 400 tubers/seed lot. All samples should be divided into subunits of 200 cores and placed in plastic bags that are clearly marked with grower name, field number and acreage. If you need coring tools please call the lab at 994-3150.

Erika Kimm Collecting Farm Histories

As part of the 50th seminar celebration, a book with farm histories will be distributed to participants. If you haven't already, please submit your stories and pictures to Erika Kimm at e.kimm81@gmail.com. We will also use pictures you submit for a slide show that will run in the exhibit hall. If you have any additional pictures you would like to share please e-mail them to potatocert@montana.edu and we will include them for the seminar slide show. They will also be used as part of our LCD display at meetings where we have a booth. Your histories are important to all of us. Make sure to get your farm represented!

Dates to Remember:

November 3 – Meetings at Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, MT

10AM - Research Committee

11AM - MT Potato Advisory Committee

2PM - MPIA Board

4PM - Montana Seed Potato Growers

November 4

8AM – Seed Industry Session

10:30AM – Jolene Brown Workshop

1PM – Trade Show and Sponsored Talks

6:30 - Banquet

November 5

8AM – General Session

