

News from the Potato Lab



Spring 2016

GARDEN SEED DISTRIBUTION SETS ANOTHER RECORD

We are set to start delivery of 29,000 of Montana Certified Seed Potatoes for garden seed throughout the state of Montana. Eileen and Nina will start deliveries in Western Montana on March 23 and Eastern Montana on March 29. In 2014 the Potato Lab received funding from the Montana Specialty Crops Block Grant Program to market and distribute Montana Certified Seed Potatoes to wholesale outlets throughout Montana. While the original project was only 2 years we have been able to stretch the funding into 3 years of deliveries. The goal of this program is



to make sure that home gardens are planted with healthy seed that will not threaten our

certified seed crop. It is also providing an outlet for many of the specialty varieties being produced throughout the state. Through the funding, a website was developed for customers to place orders. A total of 25 varieties including standards like Dark Red Norland and Yukon Gold are available as well as new varieties such as Huckleberry Gold, Colorado Rose and a number of fingerlings. These potatoes will be delivered to 30 counties distributed throughout the state. We have demonstrated that the demand for Montana Seed Potatoes by home and market gardeners is very high and we have established a very loyal customer base. We are optimistic that this will be a viable business that can be transferred to a seed potato grower in Montana.

POTATO INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE by Karl DeJong

I was very fortunate to have been chosen to attend the 2016 Potato Industry Leadership Institute. It was both a learning and stretching experience. Rather than share a diary of all the things we did and learned, I thought I'd share some of the major themes.

We have a remarkable group of people working on our behalf in front of both government and the general public. Our group of people working through the US Potato Board, National Potato Council, and Montana Potato Improvement Association are professionals, enthusiastic, and dedicated to our passion of potatoes and agriculture.



Leadership Class 2016

Preparing for and meeting with our Montana Representatives was something completely new and intimidating to me. Being in their offices and talking one to one was actually easier than I thought it would be. They were receptive to our agricultural concerns and made all of us quite comfortable. Hats off to John Tester, Steve Daines, and Ryan Zinke for making this happen.



Sen. John Tester, Tim Venhuizen, Karl DeJong, Jan Lake, Ryan Zinke, Bridgett Cheff, Dan Lake and Sen. Steve Daines

Most importantly for me, I got to meet 22 other people new to me in our industry that share struggles, passions, and goals similar to mine. From how to balance family, work, and play; chemicals, fertilizer and equipment; customer-vendor relationships; our fishing is better than yours; to come visit anytime. This is a huge asset both in business and friendships.

I think all of us had a great time. We even learned that you can do doughnuts with a tour bus in North Dakota. Thanks so much to all those who make this opportunity possible and I look forward to sharing more details this fall.

CULL PILE MANAGEMENT HIGH PRIORITY

Effective cull pile management is of extremely high priority taking both PVY and Late Blight into consideration. Both of these diseases can spread from potatoes that emerge in cull piles. All culls need to be buried as quickly as possible after the completion of shipping and planting in the spring, and covered with a minimum of 2-3 feet of soil. Composting is very effective at eliminating the potatoes but special attention needs to be paid to potatoes that are being held in piles awaiting the composting process. This is also true for cull potatoes that are transferred to dairies for cattle feeding. In all cases, the piles should be effectively dealt with before emergence of foliage.

MPIA ELECTIONS

Dan Dyk has been re-elected to serve District 3 and Jack Lake was selected to serve District 1. Congratulations Directors and thank you for your service to your fellow Montana Seed Potato Growers!

PEST MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Jessica Rupp has updated fungicide recommendations for 2016 and has also developed a fact sheet on Late Blight complete with disease control recommendations. A copy of both of these bulletins are included with this mailing and will also be posted on Jessica's website at www.msuextension.org/pspp and the Potato Lab website www.montanaspud.org. Jessica is currently working on a PVY factsheet and one for Late Blight that is suitable for home gardeners.

POSTHARVEST TEST SUMMARY

Nina Zidack has prepared a postharvest test summary and it is included in this packet.

PASSINGS

Grace Schutter passed away on March 16 and services were held in Manhattan on March 22. Grace was the wife of John Schutter, Sr. and mother to members our potato community Sid, John, Carl, Nick and Cliff Schutter, and Marian Kimm.

Charles Mangels passed away in Polson on February 9, 2016 and was buried with military honors on February 11. A memorial service was held at his brothers "Miracle of America Museum" on February 18th.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 29 – Postharvest Fees Due
June 14 – MPIA Board Meeting, Missoula