

Newsletter



Oregon Potato Commission

OPC Recommends Assessment Increase

During the third quarterly OPC meeting held in Portland on March 28, 2007 the commissioners voted to propose an assessment increase. This decision was reached after hearing from, and discussion with, the Oregon State Potato Research Committee of the need for additional funds for research projects. Current State statute reads as follows:

ORS 576.325 (2) (a) states: A commodity commission may assess, levy and collect an assessment.

OAR 658-010-0006: Potatoes grown in Oregon, when utilized entirely for chipping or processing, shall be assessed at 80 percent of the net payable weight.

OAR 658-010-007 (1): any first purchaser or handler will deduct and withhold an assessment of \$.04 per cwt from the price paid to the producer for potatoes

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Oregon Potato Commission members attend Public Policy Meeting in Washington DC

The OPC delegation included: Nels Iverson, Patti Iverson, Dan Walchli, Renee Brewer and Bill Brewer. Two Klamath area young potato growers, Jonathon Unruh and Weston Walker, were also attending a Leadership Conference that was concluding in conjunction with the National Potato Council sponsored event and were able to attend many of the meetings.



From the left; Bill Brewer, Renee Brewer, Patti Iverson, Nels Iverson, Congressman Greg Walden, Jonathon Unruh and Daniel Walchli

Attendees were

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Oregon Potato Commission Applauds Completion of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement

Washington, D.C. (April 3rd)—The Oregon Potato Commission (OPC) welcomes the conclusion of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement and would like to thank the dedicated efforts of the U.S. Trade Representative's office (USTR) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in achieving this historic agreement. The Republic of Korea is the fifth largest export market for U.S. frozen fries with \$23 million in annual sales. Korea is also a significant market for U.S. dehydrated potato exports with over \$1.6 million in sales in 2006. Additionally, in recent years, U.S. potato farmers have shipped large amounts of fresh potatoes to Korea both for consumption and processing into potato chips.

Although a strong and growing market, U.S. potato exports to Korea have been hindered by high tariffs and quotas. The U.S. potato industry considers the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement as the best opportunity to overcome these barriers, expand trade, and ensure continued dominant market share for U.S. potato products in the market.

Although specific details of potato market access in the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement have not been released, USTR and USDA consulted frequently with the U.S. potato industry in the final weeks of the talks in order to obtain the best possible deal for U.S. potatoes.

The OPC sincerely appreciates the dedication of the U.S. negotiators and looks forward to the release of the agreement's details, and to supporting the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement's implementation to the benefit of U.S. potato farmers.

OPC Recommends Assessment Increase Continued

grown in Oregon.

The OPC proposal will increase the assessment to \$.05 per cwt and change the chipping or processing calculation to 90 percent of the net payable weight.

The Administrative Procedures Act will be followed for this requested change in fees. An open hearing will be held June 22, at 8:30 am at the AmeriTel Inn, 425 SW Bluff Drive, Bend OR (in the Old Mill District) to discuss this assessment change.

All growers are encouraged to contact Bill Brewer at the OPC office at (503) 731-3300, or talk with your local commissioner for information about the proposal and Administrative Rule Process.

Preparing for the CCA with Mexico

A week after the Government of Mexico reinstated fresh potato shipments from Idaho, USDA and the US potato industry are beginning to prepare for the newly reestablished Consultative Committee on Agriculture (CCA) between the US and Mexico. The CCA will be a forum for senior agriculture officials to discuss agricultural trade between the two countries. Expanded market access into Mexico for US potatoes will be part of the US agenda. The CCA is expected to meet in mid-May.

Contributed by Bryant Christie Inc. April 13, 2007

The Commission wants to know who the active listeners in your district are. Most of our commissioners participate in more than one potato organization on a state or national level and have shown a great deal of dedication, but as they take on other responsibilities they may need to pass their Oregon Potato Commission commitment to another leader in their district. Please let us know if you are willing to step up to the challenge or if you know someone who has demonstrated the leadership qualities necessary to be a potato industry representative. (503) 731-3300

OPC offers Cash Awards to Oregon FFA Advanced Public Speakers



Jacquelyn Smith (aka Jaci) receives award from Bill Brewer

Nominations for the Oregon Potato Commission Are Being Requested

The following Commissioners' terms are expiring June 30, 2007: Robert Mueller—Producer Position 4 (Blue Mountain District), who is still eligible for reappointment and Leif Benson—Public Member, who is also eligible for reappointment.

Nominations for either position need to be submitted by May 10, 2007 to the Oregon Potato Commission office. All nominees must be a US citizen, a bona fide resident of Oregon and have an active interest in the positive development and economic growth of the commodity industry in Oregon. A producer member must have paid an assessment on potatoes in each of the preceding three calendar years.

Each nominee is required to complete and sign the Application & Qualification Form. This form enables the Oregon Department of Agriculture to determine if each applicant meets the minimum qualifications.

Specific qualifications can be found on line at http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/alpha_index.html under the Agriculture heading. Copies of the form are also available on the ODA website under commodity commissions: www.oregon.gov/ODA.

If you have any questions, please give the office a call (503)731-3300.

OPC established a new award to any Advanced FFA Speech winner that uses a positive potato message for their speech. This year the Promotion and Education Committee offered \$50 for any FFA Chapter winner and additional cash awards as they advanced. There were two chapter winners this year, congratulations go out to: **Mathew Hemshorn** from the Woodburn Chapter and **Jaci Smith** from the Bend Chapter.

Special recognition is also extended to Jaci Smith for winning at the State level speaking contest. She will soon be presenting her speech, "I'm Addicted to Spuds" at the National FFA Convention. **Good Luck Jaci!**

Public Policy Meeting in Washington DC Continued

able to meet with potato growers from all over the United States to discuss perspectives on many issues including: 2007 Farm Bill, Immigration, Environmental Affairs, Legislative and Government Affairs and Trade Affairs. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns spoke to the group about all of these issues. Charlie Cook, Publisher of *The Cook Political Report* and a political analyst for the National Group, presented his views of the upcoming national elections. (You may find his report interesting reading,)

Our delegation was able to meet with Senator's Wyden and Smith and Representative Walden and Wu. They also met with staff from Representative Hooley, DeFazio and Blumenauer offices. Presentations on Appropriation Priorities, including Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), Foreign Market Development, Food Aid, Pest and Disease Management and Agriculture Statistics along with Immigration Reform, 2007 Farm Bill, Trade and Transportation were discussed.

The delegates were very well received in all of the Capitol Hill offices. Since returning back to Oregon we have had communications with several of the offices regarding our meetings.

Upcoming Events

April 28-29, 2007 Ag Fest State Fair Grounds
Salem, OR

May 8-10, 2007 NPC Public Policy Conference,
Washington DC

June 22, 2007 4th Quarterly OPC Meeting and
Administrative Rule Hearing and Budget Hearing
in Bend, OR

July 10-14, 2007 NPC Summer Meeting in
Gaylord, MI

August 7-10, 2007 USPB Summer Meeting in
Madison, WI

January 24-25, 2008 Oregon Potato Conference
in Portland, OR

Oregon Potato Commission

Members:

Chairman Jim Carlson, Culver
Vice Chairman Nels Iverson, Woodburn
Tony Amstad, Hermiston
Lon Baley, Malin
Leif Eric Benson, Timberline
Jim Carleton, Merrill
Bob Mueller, Boardman
Jerry Strickland, Huntington
Richard Wagstaff, Nyssa
Dan Walchli, Hermiston

Staff:

Bill Brewer, Executive Director
Jennifer Fletcher, Administrative Director

~Please email jennifer@oregonspuds.com for address updates or to be removed from this mailing.~
