



NEWSLETTER

OPC Holds Two Administrative Rule Hearings in Bend

At the 4th quarterly meeting in Bend, on June 22, public hearings were held on OAR 658 Division 10 (a proposed assessment increase) and OAR 658 Division 40 (commissioner stipend decrease).

There were three people that spoke in favor of OAR 658 Division 10 with no opposition. There are two changes to this rule; first the assessment amount will be increased to \$.05 per cwt and second potatoes utilized entirely for chipping or processing will be assessed at 90% of the net payable weight. The presiding officer recommended these changes be made.

There were no public comments made on OAR 658 Division 40. The presiding officer recommended the stipend be reduced to \$30 per day. Both of these rules were recommended to be effective as of July 1, 2007. For more information on either of these rule changes contact OPC at (503) 731-3300.

Bill Brewer Reports on the Cold Chain Seminars in Central America

Five seminars were conducted in the region, one each in San Salvador (El Salvador), Guatemala City (Guatemala), San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa (Honduras), and San José (Costa Rica). Seminar content included three main parts: 1) a detailed technical presentation on cold chain management; 2) general information on transportation and shipping logistics from the United States to the region; and 3) general information on grading and quality standards for frozen potatoes. Extensive time was allocated to questions and answers, and in two cities (Guatemala City and San José) short presentations were provided on export financing, with a focus on using USDA export credit programs.

The cold chain presentation was conducted in Spanish by Jesús Ponce from Sensitech. The presentation provided both a general overview to cold chain management as well as specific details on cold chain preservation during transportation and storage, with a special emphasis on potatoes.

The presentation was well-received by participants, with questions ranging from elaboration of basic principles of cold chain management to technical questions about concrete cold chain practices. It was clear that many participants recognized the benefits to cold chain management, but were finding good management practices difficult to implement. Areas of particular concern included protection during ocean transportation to Central America, treatment of frozen products at the ports, and cold chain management



Frozen potato products being loaded for distribution.

In this issue . . .

- NPC Comments on US-Korea Free Trade Agreement*
- Jaci Smith advances to the National FFA Public Speaking Contest*
- Required GAP Certification for Federal Procurement*
- Whole Food Market is looking for Northwest Growers and Suppliers*

(Continued on page 3)



FFA Advanced Public Speaking Contest

Jaci Smith advances to the National FFA Advanced Public Speaking Contest.



The Oregon Potato Commission (OPC) has awarded Jacqueline (Jaci) Smith from the Bend FFA Chapter \$850 to date for her Advanced Public Speaking potato speech. Jaci was presented with cash awards from OPC after advancing from her chapter, district, pre state and state competitions. Jaci is now preparing for the national contest in October. This is the first year OPC has participated in sponsoring FFA students that use a positive potato message in the prepared speech contest. The OPC award is available to all Oregon FFA Chapter winners. The amount of the award increases as the FFA participant advances through each competition. Jaci could be awarded an additional \$1,750 if she makes it all the way through the national contest.

OPC is very pleased to be able to help FFA students in this way. Bill Brewer, OPC Executive Director said "We were looking for a way to become involved with Oregon FFA and also promote Oregon potatoes. Our Consumer Education Committee thought this contest would be a good way to accomplish both." Jaci was the second chapter winner of this award. Matthew Hemshorn, Woodburn FFA Chapter, also won his chapter contest and received \$50. OPC is planning on continuing with its support of Oregon youth.

Contributed by Bill Brewer

NPC Comments on US-Korea Free Trade Agreement

NPC submitted comments to the International Trade Commission in support of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS). The U.S. potato industry stands to benefit greatly from the KORUS and the NPC has been actively engaged with the U.S. Trade Representative and USDA negotiators throughout the talks. The agreement will result in increased potato sales to Korea and will maintain U.S. potato market share. Korea is currently our fifth largest export market for frozen fries, with more than \$24 million exported in 2006. Korea is also a growing market for both dehydrated and fresh chipping potatoes.

Excerpt from NPC Insider Report

Oregon AgFest 2007

This last April the Oregon AgFest celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Oregon Potato Dig has been an established mainstay of this agricultural celebration for many years, in fact, the Ag Country and Farmland Play Area recommended digging for potatoes first on their list of highlighted activities. This is not surprising, considering, every year there are devoted potato fans who actively seek out the Oregon Potato booth.



This year the booth was moved away from its traditional location, next to the main entrance of Columbia Hall on the Oregon State Fair grounds. The festival attendees had to walk a little further and look a little harder before finding the potato digging trough in the northwest area of the hall. Directly across the aisle, sat the 1,000 friends of Oregon information booth, whose representative informed me, he specifically requested being next to the Oregon Potato Dig because of the high traffic flow it generated.



The Gervais High School FFA supplied volunteers to run the booth this year. Mike Williams, FFA Instructor, was very excited about his students representing Oregon Potatoes. His chapter has been a part of the AgFest tradition for many years as well. This year they handed out potato recipes, nutritional brochures, balloons and in addition to stickers being awarded to spud diggers, "Healthy MR. POTATO HEADTM" tattoos were a very popular give away item.

The entrance fee remained an affordable \$6.00 and children 12 years and younger were admitted free. The recorded number of festival attendees was 17,054; which is 2,000 more than last year and approximately 4,000 more than the year before that, so thanks to the Oregon AgFest, every year more and more people are learning about Oregon agriculture and about Oregon Potatoes.

Contributed by Jennifer Fletcher

The following publication is now available on the Extension website: PNW 594, Biology and Management of the Potato Tuberworm in the Pacific Northwest, new April 2007, 8 pages, \$2.00
Authors: S.I. Rondon, S.J. DeBano, G.H. Clough, P.B. Hamm, A. Jensen, A. Schreiber, J.M. Alvarez, M. Thornton, J. Barbour, and M. Dogramaci. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/pnw/pnw594.pdf>

of importers and distributors. A number of technical questions were addressed by the presentation and the follow-on questions and answers, including time frames for leaving product outside of refrigerated areas, time frames for leaving doors to trucks and coolers open, use of plastic curtains, optimal temperatures for potatoes and other products, temperature measurement methodologies, handling mixed loads of fresh/chilled/frozen products, infrastructural issues (e.g., delays in processing at the port), and remedies when the cold chain is broken.

The transportation logistics presentation was conducted by Matt Harris of the Washington State Potato Commission and José Carlos Sarmiento of Allen F. Johnson and Associates. The presentation identified possible shipping routes and shippers to the region from the production area in the Pacific Northwest, including information on the importance of backhauling to the region using vessels bringing produce to the Western United States. Areas of interest to the participants included comparisons between shippers, including freight rates; improved treatment from shippers; and opportunities to purchase directly from producers and processors instead of through middlemen, including interest in receiving price quotes.



*Marta Sota, BELCA food service, Costa Rica,
Matt Harris, WSPC and Nels Iverson, OPC.*

directly from producers and processors instead of through middlemen, including interest in receiving price quotes.

The quality and grading presentation was conducted by Matt Harris of the Washington State Potato Commission and José Carlos Sarmiento of Allen F. Johnson and Associates. The presentation described USDA grading standards and identified techniques

to maximize fry efficiency and minimize fry damage. Additional areas of interest to the participants included specifics on cooking oils and cooking practices; information on potato production and processing in the United States; the relationship between cold chain management and product quality, including remedies for maintaining product quality after the cold chain had been broken; prices and availability of U.S. frozen French fries; and benefits of purchasing U.S. frozen French fries.



Potential participants were identified by the potato commissions of Idaho, Oregon and Washington and their members, preliminary studies on transportation and market demand in the region contracted by the commissions, USDA/FAS officers in the region, and key market players identified by Allen F. Johnson and Associates (for example, Wal-Mart). Invitations were extended via phone and e-mail, and people who evidenced an interest were sent personalized invitations with seminar information through the mail and by email. Participants were then contacted by phone to encourage participation and to obtain estimates for number of participants in each location. Out of 429 people invited for the 5 cities, a total of 215 participants attended the seminars, or about half of the total.

Contributed by Bill Brewer

Whole Foods Market is Looking for Northwest Growers

Whole Foods Market has recently announced its intent to expand their grocery chain, and is looking for Northwest growers and ranchers to partner with.

On Monday, September 17, Whole Foods Market will be holding a "Local Grower and Supplier" seminar at EcoTrust in Northwest Portland. Whole Foods will be talking about their quality standards, core values they expect from their growers, technical systems and their new farmer and supplier loan program. Those who attend the seminar will also have the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one meeting with one of their regional buyers and also participate in panel discussions with Whole Foods Market regional team leaders.

September 4th is the deadline to register for this workshop.

Space is limited, so if you're interested act quickly.

To be considered for the seminar contact Whole Foods

Contact: Harvinder Singh cell 925-719-5922

Email: pn.or.local-vendors@wholefoods.com

This seminar is only open to growers and suppliers who do not currently sell to Whole Foods Market.

Contributed by Agri-Business Council of Oregon

Federal Procurement Programs Now Require GAP Certification

The *July/August Potato Country Magazine* outlines the USDA mandated GAP certification program. It states effective July 1, 2007 the U.S. Department of Agriculture is mandating that all commodities, including potatoes, intended for distribution through federal procurement programs be GAP certified. This means that both fresh market shippers and processors who want to sell potatoes to the federal government for distribution through USDA-sponsored programs must grow them under GAP standards.

All farms that will be producing potatoes that could be used in a USDA program must have their farm certified by an authorized agency.

The following link will take you to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Potato Program web site. There is a link called GAP self audits and documentation files. <http://www.umaine.edu/umext/potatoprogram/> This will take you to information that is being used by potato growers in Maine to pass the GAP audit. This training information was developed by Dr. Steve Johnson of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture to get your farm GAP certified.

Contributed by Bill Brewer

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Upcoming Events

August 8-10, 2007 USPB Summer Meeting in Madison, WI

September 6-7, 2007 OPC 1st Quarterly Meeting in Ontario, OR

September 17-20, 2007 USPB State/National South Carolina

September 28, 2007 Late Blight Trials Corvallis, OR

October 1, 2007 Tri State Single Hill Selection in Hermiston, OR

October 2, 2007 Tri State Single Hill Selection in Powell Butte, OR

October 15-16, 2007 Tri State Specialty Variety Selection in Klamath Falls., OR

January 31 & February 1, 2008 Oregon Potato Conference in Portland, OR

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