



NEWSLETTER

OPC delegation attends Public Policy meetings in Washington DC

Three OPC commissioners, Nels Iverson, Tony Amstad and Jim Carlson, along with Bill Brewer attended meetings with potato industry people from around the US from February 24 thru 29 to participate in the annual NPC Public Policy Meetings and also visit with all of the Oregon congressional offices. Jeremy Peterson, Malheur County and Christopher Matthews, Klamath County were also present for these meetings while attending the Potato Leadership Institute Program.

Potato Growers Call on Congress to Protect Agriculture and Specialty Crops.

As part of the 2008 NPC Public Policy Conference, over 100 potato growers and representatives from state potato organizations met with members of Congress, USDA, EPA and USTR on the potato industry's federal agricultural policy priorities. Growers asked Congress for quick action on the 2007 farm bill and for

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Getting Fresh Oregon Potatoes Into The Public School Lunch Programs

The Oregon Potato Commission has allocated \$10,000 in the 2008-2009 proposed budget for the ODA Farm to School Program, in an effort to increase utilization of Oregon potatoes in the state's school feeding programs.

Cory Schreiber, award-winning chef and author was hired as the Farm to School Program Manager in 2008 and is spearheading and managing the ODA's efforts to increase utilization of Oregon fresh and processed foods in the state's school feeding programs.

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Mexican Distributors Want More US Frozen Potatoes

Mexican importers and distributors of US frozen potatoes convened in Monterrey, Mexico, April 11-14, for an Importer/Distributor Convention to receive training on purchasing and handling. They were also given updates about the US potato industry and the availability of potatoes and potato products.

United States Potato Board (USPB) International Marketing Manager Susan Weller and Board Member Ritchey Toevs of Aberdeen, ID, both presented at the meeting, and were on hand to answer questions and provide details about US potatoes and marketing. Weller oversees development of international opportunities for US frozen potatoes

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appropriations for ARS and CSREES funding for research critical to potato production and breeding. Growers also voiced the potato industry's need for comprehensive immigration reform that responds to agriculture's unique labor needs.

Attendees heard from Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez who spoke on the importance of trade to America's future and how potatoes and potato products play an important role in the American economy. He said trade is an increasingly important segment of the U.S. economy, with 2007 being a record-breaking year with \$1.6 trillion in exports, up 12.2 percent over 2006. Gutierrez said that free trade agreements (FTAs) are the best way to help exporters break into new markets.

Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee Collin Peterson told potato growers at the conference that an agreement on the farm bill in the House and Senate was close. Chairman Peterson told the NPC that the farm bill might include a disaster aid program for farmers and ranchers. It would also offer the first program to protect farmer revenue against poor yields as well as low prices.

Congressman John Salazar, the only potato farmer serving in Congress, spoke to the group on the need for comprehensive immigration reform, the Columbia FTA and the need for increased fiscal responsibility by Congress.

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner also addressed the conference attendees stating that source of funding for the new farm bill is an important issue. He indicated that the White House would reject a bill that relied on tax increases or failed to reform crop subsidy rules. Connor also stated the administration would press Congress to add additional reforms to the 2007 farm bill.

Meetings were also held with the EPA on product registration and reregistration priorities, and with USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and Foreign Agriculture Service, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative on market access and phytosanitary trade issues.

Contributed by Bill Brewer

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Some of the funding will be used to support agriculture in the classroom materials, some to test and develop new potato recipes for scratch kitchens in schools and the remainder to purchase Oregon potatoes for use in public school cafeterias. This supported effort is intended to educate food service administrators and students about the nutritional benefits of fresh Oregon potatoes and how good they taste.

As founder, general manager, and executive chef of Wildwood Restaurant in Portland, Schreiber has long

promoted the use of Oregon food products, acting as a liaison between local farmers and the public marketplace.

Now, as Farm to School Program Manager, Schreiber is working with farmers, food processors, distributors, and school district food service staff as well as existing farm-to-school groups



and programs to help get more nutritious, locally produced foods into schools.

Schreiber has participated in ODA trade missions to promote Oregon products abroad and has a long history of showcasing local foods in his restaurant. Instead of working in front of a stove or oven, he will have a desk at the Food Innovation Center in Portland, which houses ODA's Agricultural Development and Marketing Division.

"I'm happy to be an advocate for Oregon's commitment to innovation with schools," he says. "My intent is to bring innovation into the way foods are sourced, processed, and distributed to school cafeterias around the state." Ultimately, the goal is to get kids' diets to reflect more fresh and local fare.

Contributed by Bruce Pokarney, ODA

Radio Disney and Oregon Commodities

The OPC has signed on with four other commodity groups (the Fryer Commission, the Blueberry Commission, the Dairy Farmers of Oregon and US Pears) to be part of a Radio Disney Program this summer. It is estimated that this campaign will have five grocery store events in the Willamette Valley area where the commodity products will be showcased. Combining with the Young Chef's Academy in Tualatin, Radio Disney is also putting together a series of five cooking classes for kids to participate in; each week a meal will be prepared using the featured commodity product. Finally there will be five Radio Disney Kids Club events. If everything goes as planned, that will be a total of 15 events this summer with Radio Disney.

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the Oregon Potato Commission will hold a public budget hearing at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, June 13, 2008. The regular quarterly Commission meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. These meetings will be held at

**The Riverhouse
Deschutes Room A
3075 North Business 97
Bend, OR 97701**

The purpose of the public budget hearing is to receive testimony and evidence on the proposed budget for operation of the Oregon Potato Commission during fiscal year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

Any person desiring to submit facts or data, orally or in writing, may do so by attending the public hearing or by contacting the Commission Executive Director before the hearing date.

Bill Brewer, Executive Director
Oregon Potato Commission
9320 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 130
Portland, OR 97219
Phone (503) 731-3300

Radio Disney Grocery Store Events

July 12, 2008 Wilsonville Albertsons 10:00 - 11:00 am	July 27, 2008 Oregon City Albertsons 1:00 - 2:00 pm
July 26, 2008 Beaverton Haggens 10:00 - 11:00 am	September 6, 2008 Young Chefs Academy 9:00am - 12:00 & 1:00 - 4:00 pm
July 26, 2008 Sherwood Albertsons 1:00 - 2:00 pm	September 20, 2008 Young Chefs Academy 9:00 am - 12:00 & 1:00 - 4:00 pm
July 27, 2008 Tualatin Haggens 10:00 - 11:00 am	

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The convention not only presented a great opportunity to relate the mission and programs of the USPB, but to also educate the importers and distributors about nutrition issues like transfat in foods, so this group could inform their retail and foodservice customers and answer questions they may have.



Weller presented trends and consumption information about specific frozen potato products in North America. One issue generally voiced by the importers was a concern about the continued availability of US product in Mexico. Addressing this concern, Weller stated, "Though US consumption is a big factor in the availability of US frozen potatoes, exports have actually been increasing, especially in the frozen segment." She also identified the United States potato growing regions and the capacity of these regions in growing quality processing potatoes.

In his presentation about how US growers decide what crops to plant, Toevs acknowledged there have been supply issues during the past several years in the United States and concerns about the supply and demand of frozen potato products, but he reassured the importers and distributors, "If the market and access are available, there is definitely not a problem in producing enough quality potatoes in the United States."

Contributed by David Fairbourn, US Potato Board

**Have you
Heard ?
The OPC Office
has moved!**



Our new address is

**9320 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 130
Portland, OR 97219**

Please update your records. Our phone number remained the same (503) 731-3300.

(Unfortunately the color newsletter shells were preprinted and will have the incorrect address until we use them all up.)

Oregon Potato Commission

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Upcoming Events

- June 5, 2008** American Potato Trade Alliance (APTA)
Meeting, Washington, DC
- June 13, 2008** OPC 4th Quarterly Meeting & Budget
Hearing, Bend, OR
- July 4, 2008** Office Closed
- July 28 – August 1, 2008** USPB Summer Meeting,
Richland, WA
- September 1, 2008** Office Closed Labor Day
- September 14-18, 2008** USPB State/National Workshop,
Key Largo, FL
- January 29-30, 2009** Oregon Potato Conference in
Tigard, OR

Oregon Potato Commission

Members:

Chairman Nels Iverson, Woodburn
Vice Chairman Lon Baley, Malin
Tony Amstad, Hermiston
Leif Eric Benson, Timberline
Jim Carleton, Merrill
Jim Carlson, Culver
Marty Myers, Boardman
Jerry Strickland, Huntington
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~Please email judy@oregonspuds.com for address updates or to be removed from this mailing.~