



**Oregon Potato Commission**

**NEWSLETTER**



**OPC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

Part of the OPC’s mission has always been to represent the Oregon Potato Industry at the legislative level of state and federal governments. Two of the activities OPC has participated in, for several years, is the NPC DC Fly-in and the sponsorship of a participant to the Potato Industry Leadership Institute (PILI) . At these events, Oregon growers and handlers attend NPC meetings and OPC meetings scheduled with House and Senate members and their staff in Washington DC.

This year the OPC has created the Legislative Committee, a new committee that focuses even more on the political issues. Spearhead by Chairman Marty Myers, this committee has increased the amount of discussion over agricultural issues and includes educating representatives who represent non-agricultural regions. The goal is to help the politician understand more fully the impact of their vote on agriculture.

The newest development with the Legislative Committee is the active pursuit of meetings with the Oregon State legislators about issues and policies that are being created within the state that directly effect the Oregon potato industry.

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**2013-2014 Budget Hearing Notice**  
**Oregon Potatoes in Vietnam**



**WIC PROGRAM UPDATE**

A Potato Industry topic that has been rattling around Washington DC for more than six years now—Why has the USDA specifically excluded fresh “white potatoes” from the supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)?

In 2007 the USDA revised the WIC program to make fruits and vegetables eligible for purchase using WIC vouchers. Unfortunately, the USDA based their program heavily on recommendations made in a 2005 Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee report that specifically recommends excluding potatoes. The IOM justified the potato restriction based on the starchy vegetable consumption recommendations in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). The 2005 DGA recommends that women consumer three cups of starchy vegetables per week.

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*Legislative Committee continued*

“Conversations in person, always leave more of an impact than say, a letter or an email.” The Legislative Committee has already met with several legislative offices and is ready to meet with more.

“Because OPC has taken an active role in the state legislative issues, it was natural to establish a committee,” explained Bill Brewer, OPC President, CEO. Bill Brewer distributes hot topic information to the committee, testifies at public hearings and corresponds with legislative members and staff.

March 7, 2013 was Potato Day at the state’s capitol



*Chairman Marty Myers was caught chatting with Paulette Pyle from Oregonians for Food and Shelter while he was serving potatoes at the State Capitol.*

where commissioners, grower volunteers and OPC staff dished up some steaming hot, chili stuffed bakers in the capitol’s lobby.

Immediately following the free baked potato lunch Bill Brewer, the Commissioners and volunteer servers broke up into groups and visited state house and senate members to present the agricultural perspective on bio-technology, pesticide regulation and statewide research funding.

Overall, the committee was pleased with the Salem Potato Bar event. After meeting with the Executive Director of Oregonians for Food and Shelter, Scott Dahlman and Grassroots Director, Paulette Pyle, they were even more motivated to meet with legislators who were “on the fence” regarding potato industry issues.

*By Jennifer Fletcher*

## **FRESH OREGON POTATOES IN VIETNAM**



Last fall, the OPC hosted a Reverse trade mission. The second contact made with Vietnamese potato purchasers that resulted in several container orders and new business relationships.

This spring the OPC followed up with a Vietnamese focused marketing campaign. The OPC hired United Base Company Ltd. to conduct samplings in supermarkets from January 2013 through April 2013. They talked about Oregon potatoes and provided recipe ideas, as customers tasted red, yellow, purple and russet potatoes. Point of sale displays were set up at eleven stores where several tasting events took place.

The locally grown potatoes are not enough to supply the market in Vietnam all year. China is the largest supplier of imported potatoes but consumers have a higher degree of trust for US product.



Vietnamese consumers prefer the food products from the US for its quality, food safety and they like the look of the new varieties. The prices of the Oregon potatoes are not very competitive with local or Chinese potatoes, however with the appeal of the new varieties and from the samplings many consumers purchased Oregon potatoes.

Through these displays and samplings Vietnamese



consumers are beginning to distinguish “Oregon Potatoes” from “US Potatoes.” The more Oregon displays are out there, the more identity loyalty will develop.

The biggest obstacle are peeps and sprouts. There was a lot of negative publicity about sprouts from the Vietnamese government. So some retailer educating and innovative shipping techniques could prove to be a profitable endeavor.

Vietnam is one of the current Trans-Pacific Partnership members with the US. Once this agreement is implemented tariffs are sure to be reduced.

*By Jennifer Fletcher*

WIC continued

Since then, the DGA has been revised and the 2010 DGA now recommends that women consume five cups of starchy vegetables per week.

The slow moving correction plods along and the USDA refuses to change it. They stated that the rule did not need to be revised because women already consume more white potatoes than other vegetables. Statistics reveal that WIC program participants eat almost 24% fewer vegetables than their non-WIC counterparts and that there has been a steady decline in fresh white potato consumption in the overall population since 1996. There are no data to support the notion that potatoes are crowding out other vegetables.

Based on the 2010 DGA, the WIC program should be encouraging the consumption of all vegetables and not excluding the nutrient-dense potato.

Studies show that only two to three percent of the US population achieve an adequate intake of potassium and dietary fiber. Additionally, since six to eight percent of all pregnancies are affected by high blood pressure, it is critically important that pregnant women get adequate potassium in their diet.

Since potatoes are less expensive than most other vegetables per unit of nutrition delivered, WIC participants should be allowed to supply nutrients to themselves and their young children in a way that maximizes their WIC vouchers.

USDA Secretary Vilsack can finalize the WIC rule at any time, but the NPC and groups like the OPC Legislative committee are still persuading legislators, like Suzanne Bonamici, that the WIC program rule still needs to be revisited.

*Excerpts from "Restoring Science to the WIC Program" document published by the NPC.*

## **The Oregon California Potato Committee Marketing Order**

The Oregon California Potato Committee Marketing Order 947 held a meeting March 7, 2013 in Salem Oregon. The handling regulations, reporting requirements and assessments were all suspended March 31, 2000. With more than a decade of inactivity and a dwindling bank account the Potato Committee voted ten in favor, with one abstaining, to terminate Federal Marketing Order 947.

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Oregon Potato Commission will hold a public budget hearing at 10:00 a.m. on Friday June 14, 2013. The regular quarterly Commission meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. These meetings will be held at The Eagle Crest Resort, 1522 Cline Falls Highway, Redmond, Oregon.

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, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

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.

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A copy of the proposed budget is posted under News—Publications on the Oregon Potato Commission website [www.oregonspuds.com](http://www.oregonspuds.com) and may be obtained by contacting to the Commission office.

## **China Export Training—Sign Up NOW**

Register by May 10, 2013 to hear the latest from respected market experts. The speakers will highlight trends and successful market strategies for introducing Oregon Specialty Crop products to the dynamic Chinese market. Lunch with local exporters, who will answer questions and provide additional insights on doing business in the Greater China marketplace.

**When**—May 17, 2013 9:00 am–1:30pm

**Where**—Courtyard Marriott Portland City Center

**Cost**—\$27 (includes lunch)

**Questions**—Contact Patrick Mayer or Theresa Yoshioka at the Oregon Department of Agriculture: 503.872.6600

**Register**—

[www.oregon.gov/ODA/ADMD/docs/pdf/china\\_seminar\\_fillable\\_regisform.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/ADMD/docs/pdf/china_seminar_fillable_regisform.pdf)



**Phone: (503) 239-4763**

**Fax: (503) 245-5524**

Upcoming Events

May 15, 2013 1-3 & May 24, 2013 9-12	Zebra Chip and Potato Psyllid Workshops HAREC. Cost \$30/person Contact Annette Teraberry 541-567-8321
June 4, 2013	APTA Meeting—Washington DC
June 14, 2013	OPC 4th Quarterly Meeting & 2013-2014 Budget Hearing—Bend, OR
June 25-27, 2013	NPC Summer Meeting—Walla Walla, WA
June 26, 2013	Potato Day—HAREC
July 10, 2013	Malheur Extension Services Field Day— Ontario, OR
July 12, 2013	PVMI Meeting—Portland, OR
August 6-8, 2013	USPB Meeting—Coeur D'alene, ID

**Oregon Potato Commission**

**Members:**

*Chairman Marty Myers, Boardman*  
*Vice Chairman Dan Chin, Klamath Falls*  
*Tony Amstad, Hermiston*  
*Lon Baley, Malin*  
*Leif Eric Benson, Public Member*  
*Jim Carlson, Culver*  
*Nels Iverson, Jefferson*  
*Jerry Strickland, Huntington*  
*Dan Walchli, Hermiston*  
*One Malheur Position Currently Vacant*

**Staff:**

*Bill Brewer, President and CEO*  
*Jennifer Fletcher, Administrative Director*  
*Judy Schwartz, Administrative Assistant*

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