

A WHOLE NEW WORLD



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

2021-2022 WSPC COMMISSIONERS

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Ignacio Marquez
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Chris Voigt

**Director of Government Affairs,
Assistant Exec. Director:**
Matt Harris

**Director of Research
& Industry Outreach:**
Matthew Blua, Ph.D.

**Director of Marketing
& Operations:**
Brandy Tucker

**Accounts Receivables
& Trade Show Coordinator:**
Angie Griffith

**Accounts Payable
& Executive Assistant:**
Tressa Radach

Administrative Assistant:
Katy Dray (retired), Suzy Johnson



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A LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR

It has been my great pleasure to serve as Chair of the Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC) this past year. I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners and the growers in the great state of Washington for allowing me to be the Chairman. I would encourage all growers and grower personnel who are interested to become more actively involved in WSPC or other industry committees.

My time on the Commission has allowed me to see how participation at all levels is very helpful in delivering the message and telling the story the American farmer has to tell. It is especially rewarding to me to tell the great story of the Washington potato industry.

“A Whole New World” is the theme of this year’s annual report, and it couldn’t be more fitting. With all of the challenges that Washington potato farmers have faced in the wake of the pandemic, inflation, supply chain issues, legislative impacts, and more, we truly are dealing with changes on a global scale. In this annual report, we strive to tell the story of how these and other issues have affected our industry, but also how the efforts of the Commission have sought to support potato farmers in our state.

We have made significant progress this year, yet there is always much more to do. If you’ve not yet served on a Commission committee, I highly encourage you to do so. I know you’ll find it rewarding.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve as your Chair.

Heath Gimmestad
2021-2022 Chair



MARKETING & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

Trade Shows and Events Back Open for Business

Though trade shows were off to a slow start in 2021, we were finally able to start promoting Washington potatoes and fries again. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, we attended the Northwest Foodservice Show in Portland in both August 2021 and June 2022. The National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago in May, with a full house of 64,500 attendees, marked our 54th year with this organization. The St. Patty’s Day Dash with the Fry Van, held in March in downtown Seattle, attracted 2,500 race runners, while Bloomsday in Spokane (May) drew 22,300 participants. And last, but certainly not least, we saw a full house of friends and colleagues at the 2022 WA OR Potato Conference in January in Kennewick. It’s great to be back!



TEAM POTATO

We kicked off Team Potato in 2019 but unfortunately the program came to a grinding halt in 2020 just as it began to gain momentum. Now that events have returned, interest in Team Potato is growing. To educate and promote the health benefits of potatoes and being Powered by Potatoes before, during and after short runs, long bike rides and marathons, WSPC will partner with folks willing to show their support for Team Potato. WSPC will provide a custom running or biking jersey of athletes’ choice (all sizes available) and pay up to \$500 of entry fees for events annually as long as participants wear the jersey at the event, post pictures on WSPC’s social media of themselves wearing the jersey and participating in the event, and also provide the images for use on our social media. In just a few short months, Team Potato has grown from 38 to 84 members, one of whom even represented Washington potatoes in the Boston Marathon this year. Team Potato is a fun way for athletes and families to be involved, be healthy and eat more potatoes. Contact office@potatoes.com for additional information and to sign up.

INFLUENCER EVENT

POTATO FARM TOUR AND EXPERIENCE

The Potato Farm Tour and Experience was a single-day event focused on everything Washington potatoes, designed to introduce influencers to the folks who grow them, reach consumers and share information about sustainability practices.

The day began with a self-guided tour of the Quincy Valley Historical Society and Museum featuring entertaining and informative displays of the region’s farming history. Next, guests enjoyed a meal prepared with potatoes in almost every dish (including a pumpkin spice cookie made with potatoes) and a mocktail prepared by two influencer attendees who have a line of cocktail syrups. Each mocktail was garnished with a homemade potato chip and a sprig of rosemary from their farm. Influencer groups were paired with a grower during lunch to engage in insightful discussions that offered growers the opportunity to share their personal experiences. From the moment the influencers arrived, they enthusiastically recorded and photographed everything.

After lunch, the group boarded a bus for a trip to Weber Farms, where they met grower Adam Weber and discussed the growing process, sustainable growing practices, water and labor challenges, and Washington food safety. The group enjoyed watching a harvester in action and even dug up a few spuds themselves. Next, they toured a storage shed to learn how potatoes are unloaded and stored. The particular shed they visited contained enough potatoes to feed the city of San Francisco for a year! This serves as an important example of the significance of conventional farming in feeding the mass population. Instead of rushing to convene, attendees all stayed longer than anticipated due to their excitement, continued interest and questions about the growing process. Luckily, WSPC’s Fry Van was onsite to provide road snacks for their drives home. Everyone genuinely enjoyed the day!

Our Influencers
in attendance!

Paid content started to arrive over the next several weeks which included Facebook and Instagram posts, TikTok videos and blog posts on influencers’ personal pages. All day-of content generated during the event was considered “bonus” content not included in the contract, (resulting in 75 total pieces with more than 450,000 impressions in less than 24 hours. The information they posted received positive follower feedback. The next step from several influencers was another push of content that has already been reported by other sources. The results are impressive. More than 233 social media posts generated more than four million impressions. Guests took our small, informal event, embraced it as a personal experience and conveyed strong, positive sentiments in their writings. Considering the influencers’ enthusiasm and the extra time spent with growers as the event concluded, future events should allow for more time for group and one-on-one discussions.

For more information, or to view the influencers’ posts, please contact Brandy at btucker@potatoes.com.



- | | |
|---|---|
| Alison Steck
@alisonsteck | Kimberly Tate
@stuffedsuitcase |
| Annie Jenson
@annniegirl | Lesly Birkland
@birklandboutique |
| Ashley Phipps
@simplydesigning | Melissa Berry
@everydayspokane |
| Belinda Kelly
@simplegoodnesssisters | Rachel Teodoro
@msrachelteodoro |
| Chandler Baird
@spokaneeats | Rylea Foehl
@familieswhofarm |
| Erin Peterson
@spokane.guild | Ryley Siclair
@spokaneeats |
| Eryn Whalen
@eryn_whalen_online | Tammilee Tillison
@tammileetips |
| Halley Sherwood
@wanderwithhalley | Tash Haynes
@itstashhaynes |
| John Tillison
@parkrangerjohn | Terumi Pong
@helloterumi |
| Kena Peay
@kenapeay | Venise Cunningham
@simplegoodnesssisters |



OTT ADVERTISING

Over the Top Advertising (OTT) is advertising conducted on internet-connected platforms rather than basic cable television. Our OTT campaign started with a target audience of the Greater Seattle/Tacoma area with three advertisements focusing on Washington potato growers and their long history of sustainable practices. The message was meant to draw a contrast to other large corporations that promise to become sustainable, or “green,” within the next five to 10 years. Our advertising campaign #alreadythere has been running for nine months and has been viewed more than six million times with a completion rate average of 97.8%. To view the ads, visit potatoes.com.

CHEF BRENDA AT WSNA

While we did see many events return, the Washington School Nutrition Association (WSNA) Annual Conference was still held virtually. We worked together with Chef Brenda Wattles, RDN, to create a 45-minute presentation for school foodservice directors to earn Continuing Education Units (CEU) and learn more about proper handling, storage and cooking of Washington potatoes. Chef Brenda also created easy and versatile recipes for attendees to incorporate into everyday menus. We have continued our relationship with Chef Brenda, who provided additional recipes and tutorial videos for our foodservice recipe page. Her content is available on the new WSNA page at potatoes.com/wsna-info.



WA GROWN CONTINUES TO GROW

The popular television show Washington Grown recently received a \$3.8 million Specialty Crop Block Grant from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to expand its education efforts. The expansion includes a partnership with QFC grocery stores in western Washington and Harvest Foods in eastern Washington.

“While the trend to eat locally grown food is increasingly popular, there are still a lot of misconceptions about how farmers grow and raise the food on our plates,” explained Chris Voigt, one of the program’s executive producers. Voigt also serves as the executive director of WSPC, which is one of the founders of the project. “We are excited to partner with QFC and other venues to share stories about Washington’s farmers and how the state’s food system works.”

The expansion, launched in May, included a free magazine, promotions and other educational tools that complement the Emmy award-winning show. The project centers on the food grown in Washington, farmers, local restaurants and chefs, the supply chain, food manufacturers, and other behind-the-scenes stories. Now in its 10th season, Washington Grown has been funded by food and farm organizations within the state, as well as the WSDA. This year, the WSDA announced it would be award an expanded four-year grant to the program.

“Over the past several years, Washington Grown has done an exceptional job promoting our state’s agriculture, informing consumers about where their food comes from, and sharing the diversity of our agriculture, our farming regions, and the people who grow and produce our food,” said WSDA Director Derek Sandison. “The \$3.8 million Specialty Crop Block Grant WSDA is providing to the Washington Grown project is a welcome, worthwhile investment to support our state’s agriculture community and spotlight our extraordinary food and agriculture industries.”

The End of an Era – Tim’s Chips



WSPC sadly acknowledges the end of its decades-long partnership with Tim’s Cascade Chips, which provided iconic private-labeled potato chips to groups across Washington State. Tim’s Cascade was purchased in 2019 by Utz Brands, Inc., more commonly known as Utz, a large American snack food company based in Hanover, Pennsylvania and will no longer sell the private labeled chip bag to the Commission.

The iconic Tim’s Cascade chip was donated under WSPC private label to many service groups and organizations, resulting in countless smiles across the United States.

“Partnering with Tim’s Cascade has been a blessing. We understand change happens and the Tim’s Cascade team has been a great partner providing our potato growers with an outlet to educate consumers about potato farming in our great state,” said Brandy Tucker.

WSPC is searching for a new partner that purchases great Washington State chipping potatoes to continue this long-standing tradition of education and joy with every chip consumed.

MARKET & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2021-2022:

Mark Hammer, Chair | Kraig Knutzen, Vice Chair | Hector Castro
Heath Gimmestad | Roger Hawley | Jordan Reed
Josh Bunker | Scott Galbreath | Jerry Heilig* | Frank Martinez*
Suzy Schaapman* | Mel Calloway* | Kristi Gunderson*
Shelley Olsen* | Randi Hammer* | Staff: Brandy Tucker
**at large industry position*

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

WA LEGISLATIVE FARM TOUR, WALLA WALLA



The popular Washington State Legislative Food and Farm Tour was “live” in Walla Walla, WA. The Commission was the lead organization for the event, which kicked off the evening reception with guest speaker Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck. More than 66 attendees, mostly legislative members and staff, spent one and a half days with hands-on education, touring some of the most fertile agricultural lands in the state, including dairy, wheat, apple, blueberry, vineyard, asparagus, and potato farms. Participants gained knowledge regarding labor, precision agriculture, enhanced pollinator habitat, development of conservation practices for regenerative agriculture, and sprayer technology solutions to reduce pesticide drift exposure risk. The program concluded with open dialogue regarding the vitality of the Snake and Columbia River systems and how these resources are used to reduce farm families’ carbon footprint by shipping grain, as well as the use of renewable energy and irrigation to provide wholesome food to the region. This annual program remains critical for the Commission to reach members in legislative districts outside the potato production region to educate and address the policy concerns of family farms.

COLUMBIA RIVER SYSTEM OPERATIONS INJUNCTIVE RELIEF SETTLEMENT

Several litigants sued the federal government over the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement and the accompanying Biological Opinion. They asked for injunctive relief from the U.S. District Court overseeing the case. By limiting the amount of electricity the dams would be allowed to produce, the injunctive relief motion threatened to deplete the region’s hydropower capabilities and increase the threat of regional blackouts while increasing the region’s carbon footprint caused by the increased demand to burn additional fossil fuels. This outcome would have created higher electricity costs, resulting in tremendous financial hardships for vulnerable communities across the Pacific Northwest. The agreed-upon settlement removes many of the most extreme risks to public safety and energy equity, and therefore represents a win for the region.

OVERTIME FOR WASHINGTON WORKERS

Most employees working in Washington State are entitled to overtime pay if working more than 40 hours in a seven-day work week. Since this is a protected right under the law, workers cannot waive their right to overtime.

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries’ (L&I) Employment Standards Program enforces the overtime law and provides resources for employers and employees to understand the regulations.

Employees entitled to overtime

- » Most hourly, piece-rate and commissioned employees
- » Some salaried employees. Contrary to popular belief, some salaried employees are entitled to overtime unless they meet a specific exemption under state law
- » Employees working on prevailing wage jobs
- » Employees working in agriculture and dairy industries

Employees not entitled to overtime

- » Workers who do not meet the definition of “employee” under the Minimum Wage Act
- » White-collar workers who meet the executive, administrative and professional exemptions, as well as computer professionals and outside salespeople
- » Other workers as defined by law

Calculating overtime

Overtime pay must be at least 1.5 times the employee’s regular hourly rate for all hours worked over 40 hours in a work week. This regular hourly rate cannot be less than state’s minimum wage. There are two steps to calculate overtime:

- » Determine an employee’s regular hourly rate
- » Multiply the regular hourly rate by 1.5 for every hour worked over 40 hours in a work week
- » An employee’s regular hourly rate is calculated by:
 - » Adding together the employee’s weekly compensation (not including overtime premiums and regardless of the method of payment e.g., hourly rate, piece-rate, commission, etc.)
 - » Dividing this figure by the total number of hours worked during the work week

Changes in overtime for agricultural workers

There was a significant change in overtime eligibility for agricultural and dairy workers. The 2021 legislative session resulted in the passage of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5172, which expands overtime protections to all agricultural workers, including agricultural piece-rate workers. This new law went into effect on July 25, 2021. The Commission will continue to educate the legislature regarding the need for harvest flexibility in the law, and/or additional tax preferences to help defray labor costs. Effective November 5, 2020, dairy workers were entitled to receive overtime pay for all hours worked over 40 in a work week.

For all other agricultural workers, the law establishes a three-year phase-in schedule which gradually reduces the number of hours agricultural workers need to work in a work week before they are entitled to overtime pay:

- » Beginning Jan. 1, 2022: 55 hours
- » Beginning Jan. 1, 2023: 48 hours
- » Beginning Jan. 1, 2024: 40 hours

BILLS SIGNED TO DELAY WA CARES LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAM

The delayed WA Cares payroll tax (0.58% tax on employees in Washington, which amounts to \$290 per year for someone making \$50,000 annually) was set to begin January 1.

The tax is now delayed until July 2023. Any premiums collected to date by private and public employers are to be refunded within 120 days. The delay also means that approximately 450,000 Washington residents who opted out of WA Cares by securing long-term care insurance through their employers or the private market are now making payments they were told were necessary to avoid the payroll tax and the state program. Passed by Democratic lawmakers and Gov. Inslee in 2019, WA Cares is designed as a social insurance program to help people pay for needs in sickness and old age, including transportation, meal preparation, nursing care, assisted living and respite for family caregivers.

Under the bills, eligible beneficiaries in July 2026 could begin claiming up to \$36,500 to pay for those needs. The benefits were originally designed to start in January 2025. As the program got underway, numerous concerns emerged from people who would have paid into the program but would never be eligible to receive benefits or get care under other programs, including approximately 150,000 people who work in Washington but reside in another state, military families rotating through Washington and some disabled veterans.

Under the signed legislation, people in those categories will have the opportunity to get a permanent exemption from the program. Meanwhile, about 477,000 Washingtonians are near retirement age and may not become fully vested in the program (as it is currently structured) and claim full benefits. Residents born before 1968 who won’t be fully vested can receive partial benefits calculated by the number of years they financially contribute to WA Cares.

WA WORKERS’ COMP INSURANCE INCREASE IN 2022

On November 30 the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries announced a 3.1 percent increase in the average worker’s compensation premium rate for hours worked in 2022. In 2022, the average rate per \$100 of payroll is \$1.53, a 1.4 percent increase over 2021. Individual employers may see their rates increase or decrease, depending on their recent claims history, as well as changes in the frequency and cost of claims in their industry risk classes. Workers will continue to pay, on average, about a quarter of the premium, a similar percentage to that paid in 2021. The Commission will continue to work with the legislature in communicating the needs of family potato farms and fatigue regarding turbulent worker’s compensation premium rates.

“BUFFER BILL MANDATE” DEBATED IN OLYMPIA

Legislation advanced by Governor Jay Inslee and Washington tribes calls for mandatory riparian buffers with \$10,000 daily fines for landowners who don’t plant trees along creeks and rivers crossing their property. The intent of this legislation is to improve salmon habitat. The House bill directs the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to set and enforce “riparian management zones.” The “Buffer Bill” could have substantial deleterious effects on the region’s potato farms by potentially removing thousands of acres from production— 11,000 acres of farmland in Skagit County alone —and could also result in significant land management expenses for family farms and all public and private landowners. The Commission will continue its public education efforts regarding current voluntary salmon recovery programs in conjunction with family farms.

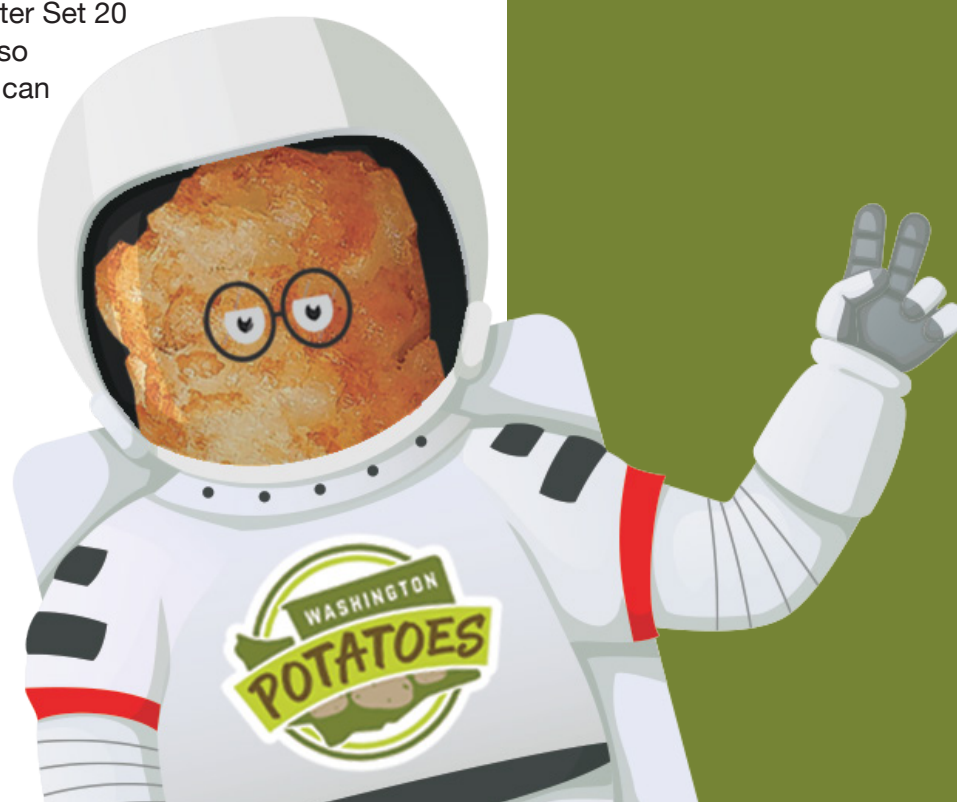


OLYMPIA POTATO DAY 2022

After a two-year hiatus, potato farmers gathered in Olympia to meet with state legislators, staff members and agency personnel. Family potato farm perspectives were shared, various challenges were communicated, and voluntary stewardship conservation programs were supported. In addition to discussing the importance of the Snake River dams, attendees also expressed the importance of natural gas to family farms and production practices, the need for seasonal flexibility from overtime requirements and the continued development of sound tax policy. According to an independent evaluation commissioned by the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, breaching the lower Snake River dams would result in U.S. losses exceeding \$2.3 billion over the next 30 years, leading to significant carbon emissions which contribute to climate change and jeopardize health, safety, and livelihoods in economically fragile local and regional economies. Significant additional impacts could also occur due to the loss of hydropower and irrigation (not captured in this report). Potato production has a major economic impact in our state, contributing not only \$7.4 billion to the economy but also providing 36,000 jobs. Olympia Potato Day, during which potato farmers proudly served 500 baked potatoes, was the first activity on campus; it continues to be one of the legislative session's most popular days during legislative session.

WA MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE TO \$14.49/HR IN 2022

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) announced the state's minimum wage increase to \$14.49 per hour starting January 1, 2022. State law mandates L&I calculate the minimum wage for the coming year based on the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). L&I compares the CPI-W from August of the previous year to the index for August of the current year to determine the calculation. As a result, the state's previous minimum wage of \$13.69 will increase by 5.83 percent. BLS attributed the price index increase to more expensive gas, housing, household furnishings and food. The state minimum wage applies to workers age 16 and older. Under state law, employers can pay 85 percent of the minimum wage to workers ages 14-15. For 2022, the wage for this younger group will be \$12.32 per hour. The minimum wage applies to most jobs, including those in agriculture. In addition, agricultural workers are eligible to earn overtime after working more than 55 hours per week, beginning Jan. 1, 2022. The Commission will continue to monitor future minimum wage announcements reporting to growers after Set 20 of each year so farm families can appropriately plan for new wage increases.



OCEAN SHIPPING REFORM ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act (S. 3580) received applause upon becoming law. This legislation regulates increasing ocean shipping costs and eases supply chain backlogs which are raising consumer prices and creating obstacles for U.S. farmers and exporters to transport goods to global markets.

The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) is charged with protecting the interests of U.S. businesses that rely on ocean transportation under the Shipping Act, which was last amended in 1998. The bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022 levels the playing field for American exporters and importers by giving the FMC the tools it needs for effective oversight of international ocean carriers. These oversight and enforcement tools will help the FMC eliminate unfair charges, prevent unreasonable denial of American exports, and crack down on other unfair practices harming American businesses, farmers and consumers. The commission applauds the swift legislative action taken to address exorbitant charges while exporting perishable food.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act:

- » Stops international ocean carriers from unreasonably declining American cargo, as determined by the FMC in new required rulemaking.
- » Directs the FMC to self-initiate investigations of ocean carrier business practices and apply enforcement measures.
- » Shifts the burden of proof regarding overcharging certain "demurrage and detention" fees from the complainant to the international ocean carriers to help improve the FMC's enforcement capacity.
- » Improves the transparency of movement of U.S. agricultural and other exports by requiring international ocean carriers to report to the FMC regarding how many empty containers are being transported.
- » Stops retaliation by international shipping companies against exporters and importers.
- » Formally establishes the FMC Office of Consumer Affairs and Dispute Resolution Services to improve the complaint and investigation process for American businesses seeking assistance from the FMC.
- » Improves management of chassis, the specialized trailer used to transport ocean containers over the road, by authorizing the Bureau of Transportation Statistics to collect data on dwell times for chassis; and initiates a National Academy of Sciences study on best practices of chassis management.
- » Provides the FMC with temporary emergency authority to collect data during times of emergency congestion, among other improvements.



CLEAN BUILDINGS BILL

The Clean Buildings Bill (Chapter 285, Laws of 2019) was signed into law on May 7, 2019 to help reduce energy costs and pollution from fossil fuel consumption in the state's existing buildings, especially large commercial buildings. The standard and incentive program is administered by the Washington State Department of Commerce.

The standard applies to large non-residential, hotel, motel and dormitory buildings greater than 50,000 gross square feet, excluding parking garage areas. Large multifamily residential buildings are exempt from mandatory requirements of the standard but are eligible for the Early Adopter Incentive Program. Mandatory compliance dates are based on building size. The Commission has identified and communicated about exemption language that would help those growers with agricultural buildings greater than 50,000 gross square feet. There are proposals to reduce the square footage of a building for compliance purposes. The Commission will continue to monitor and report any changes to the Clean Build Law.

FIRST SHIPMENT OF U.S. FRESH POTATOES TO MEXICO IN 25-PLUS YEARS

Potato growers welcomed news that the first shipment of U.S. fresh potatoes successfully crossed into Mexico. This signals the start of Mexico's process to restore full market access for U.S. fresh potatoes after decades of disputes and legal obstructions. The shipment comes after more than 25 years of regulatory and legal obstructions by Mexico, and one year after the Mexican Supreme Court ruled unanimously that U.S. fresh potatoes were legally authorized to be imported. Mexico is the largest export market for U.S. potatoes and products, valued at \$394 million in 2021. Despite the previous restriction to the 26-kilometer border region, Mexico was the second largest market for fresh potato exports in 2021, accounting for 124,449 metric tons valued at \$60 million. The U.S. potato industry estimates that, in five years, access to fresh U.S. potatoes for the entire country will provide a market potential of \$250 million per year.

WASHINGTON INCREASES HEAT, WILDFIRE SMOKE PROTECTIONS FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS



Each year, from June 15 through the end of September, employers in Washington will be required to monitor temperature and air quality, implement heat and smoke hazard protections for workers, and provide related training and information.

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) filed emergency outdoor heat exposure and wildfire smoke rules to protect farm and construction workers, roofers, road crews, and others whose jobs are performed outdoors. These rules are designed to help keep workers safe in the summer as L&I develops permanent regulations to address serious hazards posed by extreme heat and exposure to wildfire smoke.

When workers show signs of injury or illness related to smoke, employers must monitor those workers to determine if medical care is needed.

Outdoor heat exposure rules

When temperatures are at or above 89 degrees Fahrenheit, emergency heat rules require employers to:

- » Provide sufficient cool water for each employee to drink at least one quart an hour
- » Provide sufficient large, close shade for workers
- » Require a 10-minute, paid cool-down break every two hours
- » Allow and encourage workers to take additional paid, preventative cool-down breaks as needed

Existing rules require ready access to at least one quart of drinking water per worker per hour, an outdoor heat exposure safety program with training, and an appropriate response to workers who are experiencing symptoms of heat-related illness. If employees experience signs of illness, employers must relieve them from duty, provide shade or other means of cooling down, and determine if additional medical attention is needed.

Wildfire smoke rules

Smoke from wildfires contains fine particles that can reach the deepest parts of the lungs, causing serious health problems. L&I's emergency rule requires employers to monitor air quality and act when outdoor workers are exposed to wildfire smoke and the Air Quality Index (AQI) is at 101 or higher. Some actions are required at an AQI of 69.

When workers show signs of injury or illness related to smoke, employers must monitor those workers to determine if medical care is needed. Employers cannot prevent workers from seeking medical treatment.

If the AQI is at 69 or higher, employers are encouraged to limit their workers' exposure to smoke by:

- » Reducing, rescheduling or relocating work
- » Providing enclosed buildings or vehicles where the air is filtered
- » Reducing the work intensity or increasing rest periods

New Survey Finds Majority of Pacific Northwest Residents Support Lower Snake River Dams and Hydroelectric Power

Amid the regional debate over hydropower, new survey data indicates a strong majority of Pacific Northwest residents support hydropower and the carbon-free energy provided by the lower Snake River dams in eastern Washington. Conversely, Washington Governor Jay Inslee recently issued a policy directive aimed at potentially “replacing the benefits of the four lower Snake River dams.”

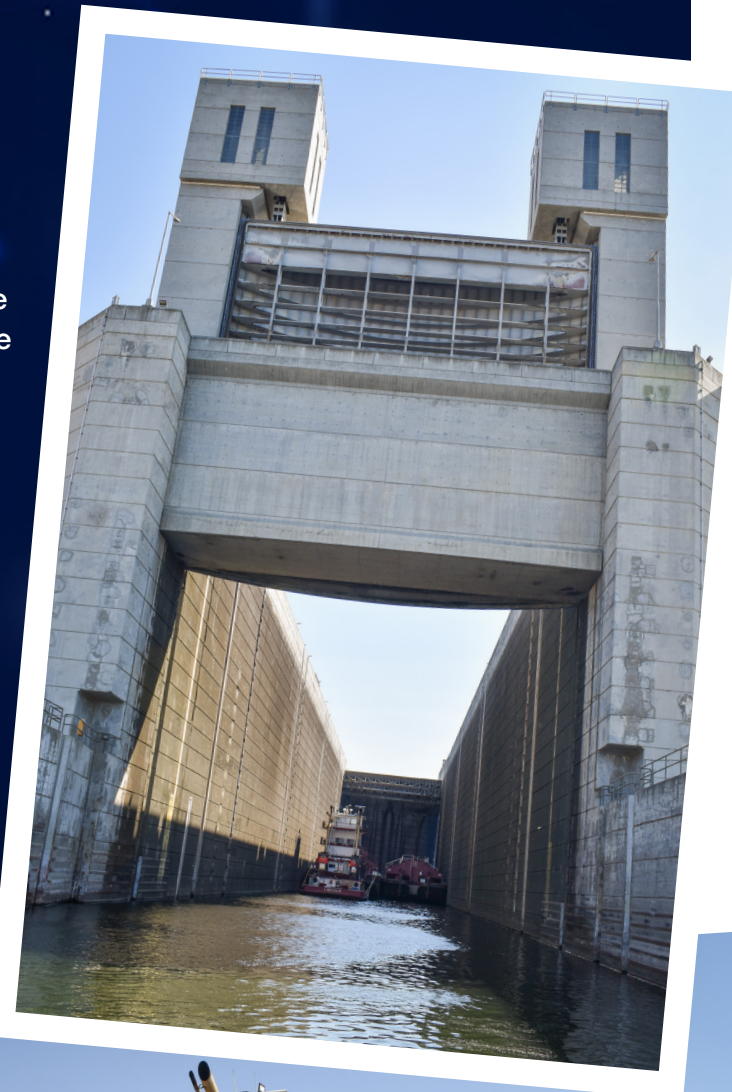
This directive coincides with an effort by Inslee and U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) to explore dam breaching. Such a move is counter to the 60 percent of regional poll participants who indicated direct support for the use of these hydroelectric dams.

Only 17 percent of participants oppose the dams, while 23 percent remain undecided. When asked directly about plans to breach the lower Snake River dams, only a minority (29%) said they would support breaching the dams.

The survey, produced by independent and nonpartisan research firm DHM Research, was conducted from July 26 to August 3, 2021. A diverse range of 1,200 residents from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho was polled, with a likely margin of error of +/- 2.8% overall and +/- 5.0% when broken down by state. To ensure an inclusive and accurate data pool, the poll targeted residents of all backgrounds and accounted for differences in age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and geographical location.

The analyzed data reflects residents are mainly concerned about increased electricity costs, loss of a carbon-free energy source and the agricultural impacts associated with dam removal.

Other key findings from the survey suggest support for the lower Snake River dams is bipartisan and geographically diverse, with both urban and rural residents indicating high levels of support. Overall, the data reflects positive regional attitudes toward the lower Snake River dams. The Commission will continue its advocacy of the benefits of clean renewable hydropower linked to beneficial salmon recovery efforts. Irrigation and affordable energy are vital to growing potatoes in Washington State.



SNAKE RIVER, ICE HARBOR DAM TOUR

The future health of the Snake and Columbia River systems is important for communities in the Pacific Northwest. As with any important issue the Washington State legislature considers, developing a thorough understanding of our shared natural resources will help guide more productive policy discussions. This annual program, managed by the Commission, hosted more than 56 persons, including legislative officers who participated, in a tour of the Columbia and Snake River systems including locking through Ice Harbor Dam. Key discussions provided by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers included the Pasco levee system and Recreation site management; Ice Harbor turbine replacement project; and operations to optimize fish passage and navigation lock. Other presentations included meeting mandates, recovering salmon, and protecting disadvantaged communities; Clean Energy Policy consequences and the increasingly fragile Northwest power grid; irrigation to potato farms, with the need for food security; and river transportation – a gateway for regional growth and carbon reduction. The successful program helped legislators understand the complexity of the river system, and the importance of generating clean, renewable hydroelectric energy.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2021-2022:

Heath Gimmestad, Chair

Adam Weber, Vice Chair

Grant Morris | Mike Dodds | Mark Hammer

Chris Olsen | Roger Hawley | Ted Tschirky*

Stacy Kniveton* | Darrin Morrison* | Kees Wyens*

Randy Mullen* | Lynn Olsen* | Ben Harris*

Blaine Meek* | Jake Henke* | Ken Luke*

Staff: Matt Harris

**at large industry position*

FINANCIALS

APPROVED 2021-22



Government
Affairs
\$807,310

Research &
Outreach
\$1,148,372

Marketing &
Industry Affairs
\$1,233,790

Office &
Operations
\$1,117,000

Assessment
Revenue
\$3,300,000

Reserve
Account
Transfer
\$868,767

TRI State
Research
MOU
\$102,705

Interest
Income
\$35,000

APPROVED PROGRAM BUDGETS
SUBTOTAL: \$4,306,472

APPROVED BUDGET REVENUE
SUBTOTAL: \$4,306,472

SERVING THE POTATO COMMUNITY

WSPC is dedicated to making Washington a great place to grow potatoes profitably and sustainably. To that end, the research and outreach arm of WSPC engages in a diversity of ways with the agricultural community, state and federal agencies, and private industry. Here are a few of our focal points:

- » We are board members on the Potato Variety Management Institute (PVMI), a nonprofit group that markets potato varieties generated by the Tri-State Potato Breeding Program that includes Washington State University, Idaho State University, Oregon State University and the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. PVMI also collects royalties and licensing fees. In turn, PVMI uses funds generated to enhance potato breeding efforts.
- » We are represented on the board of the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration that provides grant funding for pest management projects that impact potatoes.
- » We are involved with the Potato Sustainability Alliance in support of the identification and adoption of sustainable production practices.
- » We engage the Environmental Protection Agency and provide commentary when they review agri-chemicals that are important to Washington-grown potatoes.
- » We keep abreast of new technology, including crop rotations benefiting potato, spectral imaging, drone scouting and artificial intelligence detection of potato pathogens and pests.
- » We fund and play an active role in the WSU Potato Field Day.
- » We provide guest lectures to institutes of higher education and other groups
- » We regularly serve on hiring committees for Washington State University (WSU) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service.



GIVING WASHINGTON POTATO GROWERS A HAND

The Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC) is proud to support Washington potato growers by providing materials to enhance farm safety, food safety, and pest monitoring. Among the provisions we supply are:

- » Integrated Pest Management supplies: yellow sticky cards and stands, delta traps with stands, sticky delta trap liners, and pheromone caps to monitor tuber moth. Starting in 2022, we reimburse growers for these supplies they purchase.
- » PVY test kits.
- » Potato pest identification books, and instructions on how to use insect monitoring supplies.
- » The annually updated Integrated Pest Management Guidelines for Insects and Mites in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington Potatoes by A. Schreiber, A. Jensen, S.I. Rondon, E.J. Wenninger, S. Reitz, and T. Waters.
- » Good Agricultural Practices potato-oriented notebooks for USDA GAP, USDA Harmonized GAP, Global GAP, and Primus GAP.
- » The WSPC Agricultural Safety DVD Library with most videos available in both English and Spanish.
- » Plant disease diagnostics from Washington State University.

WSPC PROVIDES TEMPORARY REFRIGERATED STORAGE FOR POTATO RESEARCH

Washington State University will soon demolish and replace Johnson Hall at their Pullman campus. This hall contains laboratories and facilities used by some of our scientists including Dr. Mark Pavek and Dr. Jacob Blauer. Also located in Johnson Hall are potato storage facilities and a potato processing laboratory that are important to our efforts to generate new potato varieties that grow and store well and meet industry needs. To accommodate our researchers' needs while Johnson Hall is being demolished and its replacement built, the WSPC purchased four used refrigerated shipping containers to be placed on the WSU Pullman campus with an agreement that WSU will install and maintain them while the new building with laboratories and storage facilities are constructed. WSU will outfit another building to provide temporary laboratories for our scientists.



MEET DR. STEVE CULMAN, WSU ENDOWED CHAIR IN SOIL HEALTH FOR POTATO CROPPING SYSTEMS

Through the efforts of the Columbia Basin Potato Soil Health Workgroup, an alliance of Washington potato growers, processors, and registrants, we are pleased to announce that Dr. Steve Culman was hired by Washington State University to be the Distinguished Endowed Chair in Soil Health for Potato Cropping Systems as of August 2022. Since 2013, Dr. Culman was a faculty member in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University. He has a wide range of interests in soil science and agronomy including soil fertility and nutrient management, soil food webs, and soil health and agroecology. In his new role, he is expected to provide leadership and manage research on the single most important resource to Washington potato growers, our soil. The Columbia Basin Potato Soil Health Workgroup generated \$3.4 million in support of the Distinguished Endowed Chair. Of these funds, \$3 million will go into an interest bearing account under the control of WSU to generate approximately \$120,000.00 annually in support of Dr. Culman's research. The remaining \$400,000.00 will outfit his laboratory. The Columbia Basin Potato Soil Health Workgroup will provide guidance for Dr. Culman's research endeavors.

NEW DIRECTION: EXTENSION OUTREACH

By popular demand, WSPC has teamed up with WSU extension faculty to provide extension workshops with plans to expand them into the future. Thus far, we have teamed up with Dr. Tim Waters and Dr. Carrie Wohleb to provide two three-hour Integrated Pest Management workshops that included informative presentations, an opportunity to see pest and beneficial insects up close and personal through microscopes and provided growers the chance to learn monitoring techniques. More than 40 field scouts, crop advisors, and growers have attended these workshops. WSPC and our WSU extension partners are determined to step up our extension outreach presence and provide other educational opportunities for the potato community.

FEDERAL RESEARCH GRANTS BENEFIT WA GROWERS

The Northwest Potato Research Consortium is an alliance composed of WSPC and potato commissions in Oregon and Idaho to put substantial effort into funding approximately \$1.5 million in research annually. We regularly review and edit research proposals targeting various research funding agencies and write letters of support. Research that we fund frequently acts as a catalyst leading to other research projects funded by state and federal agencies. Below are grants received by our scientists from other research funding agencies in 2022 to study issues that are important to Washington potato production:

Angelella, G.

Exploring Alternatives to Neonicotinoids for Insect-Vectored Virus Management in Potatoes. Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration. \$20,373.

Angelella, G. and Waters, T.

Identifying the Sources of Aphids and Aphid-Vectored Viruses Afflicting Potato Fields. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$36,517.

Angelella, G., Tamborindoguy, C., Levy, J.

Integrative Approaches to Understanding How Vector Proteins Affect Plant Defenses and Plant-Insect Interactions. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$45,104.

Cooper, W.R., and Karasev, A.

Characterization of Novel Viruses Pathogenic to Potato Psyllid. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$39,000.

Cooper, W.R., Crowder, D., Frost, K., Swisher Grimm, K, Angelella, G., and others.

Areawide Management of Insect Vectors in Columbia Basin Vegetable and Seed Crops. ARS Areawide Pest Management Project. \$503,818.

Blauer, J.M., M.J. Pavak, M.J., and Banerjee, S.

Preemptive Cultural Management Strategies to Maximize Potato Production Under Extreme Heat and Water Stress. WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program. \$249,98.

Feldman, M., and Sathuvalli, V.

Characterization of Soil Health Parameters from Nematode Infested Potato Fields in the Columbia Basin. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$40,000.

Feldman, M., Karkee, M., and Blauer, J.M.

Application of Image Analysis Techniques to Quantify Potato Processing Quality and Disease Symptomology. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$30,671.

Horton, D., Waters, T., Cooper, W.R.

Identifying Important Parasites and Predators of Potato Psyllid in Noncrop Habitats of the Columbia Basin. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$39,000.

Jayanty, S., Sathuvalli, V., Blauer, J.M., and

Thornton, M. A Systems Approach Towards Identifying Sensory Quality Parameters in French Fry Processing Potatoes. USDA-AFRI. \$499,370.

Navarre, R., and Blauer J.M.

Managing Tuber Maturation for Improved Postharvest Quality and Retention. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$38,386.

Navarre, R., and Vales I.

Effect of Heat Stress on Glycoalkaloid Amounts in Potato Tubers. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$35,000.

Pappu, H., Sathuvalli, V., and Jayanty, S.

Fast-Tracking the Development of Management Strategies for Powdery Scab-Potato Mop Top Virus Complex. WSDA Multi-State Block Grant Program. \$559,788.

Serrano, J. Williams, L., Millar, J. and others.

Discovery and Application of Click Beetle Attractants for IPM of Wireworms in Potatoes. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$122,322.

Schreiber, A.

Nematode Management in Columbia Basin Potatoes. Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration. \$22,460.

Swisher Grimm, K.

Assessment of Beet Leafhopper and BLTVA Phytoplasma Impact on Potato Tuber Yield and Quality. Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration. \$35,000.

Swisher Grimm, K. and Yan, G.

Exploring Differences in Paratrachogorus Allius Populations Through Whole-Genome Sequencing and The Effect of Different Potato Cultivars on Population Fecundity. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$40,651.

Swisher Grimm, K. and Zhang, D.

Profiling Pathogenic Genome Variations in Novel Haplotypes of 'Candidatus Liberibacter Solanacearum' Isolated From Psyllid Species Collected From Potato. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$25,388.

Waters, T.

Quantifying Crop Safety and Efficacy When Tank Mixing Insecticides and Fungicides. Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration. \$15,000.

Yang, T., Blauer, J.M., Fonseca, J.M., Collins, P., and Kumar, G.N.M.

Evaluation of Carboxamide Derivatives to Suppress Potato Sprouting as an Alternative to Current Dormancy Promoting Chemicals. ARS/State Partnership Program. \$10,954.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Northwest Potato Research Consortium Projects FY2022-23

The following projects were selected for funding by Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC) through the Northwest Potato Research Consortium, which includes our partners the Idaho Potato Commission and the Oregon Potato Commission. The total of the projects to be funded in FY2022-23 is \$709,869, with a payment from the Idaho Potato Commission of \$105,780 to WSPC to cover part of its commitment to the Consortium.

Plant Pathology/Soil Health

Support for the Investigation of Emerging and Persistent Potato Diseases in the Northwest: Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$12,000

Comparison of Potato Yields, Soil Health and Pathogen Loads in Virgin and Non-Virgin Soils: Tim Paulitz, Deirdre Griffin Lahue, Cynthia Gleason, Ken Frost, \$61,111

Development of Off-Field Methods for Screening Resistance to Powdery Scab, Potato Mop-Top Virus and Silver Scurf: Chakradhar Mattupalli, Kiwamu Tanaka, \$18,000

Exploring Germination-Stimulating Factors for Resting Spores of the Powdery Scab Pathogen and Testing Their Potential to Diminish Soil Inoculum: Kiwamu Tanaka, Roy Navarre, \$30,000

Nematology

Harnessing the Natural Resistance of Solanum Sisymbriifolium for Generating Root-Knot Nematode Resistance in Potato: Cynthia Gleason, Joe Kuhl, Allan Caplan, \$15,550

Mimicking Enhanced Calcium Signaling for Potato Resistance Against M. Chitwoodi: Cynthia Gleason, \$30,000

Functional Genomics of Solanum Sisymbriifolium (Litchi Tomato) Immunity for PCN Eradication: Louise-Marie Dandurand, Joe Kuhl, Allan Caplan, Fangming Xiao, Inga Zasada, \$5,000

Automated Identification of Plant-Parasitic Nematodes of Potato at Genus and Species Level: Cynthia Gleason, Sam Chavoshi, Inga Zasada, \$67,784

Development of Nematicides for Potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$27,500

Entomology

Identifying Biological Controls of Insect Vectors in Non-Crop Habitats of the Columbia Basin: Rodney Cooper, Dave Horton, Tim Waters, \$32,082

RNA-Based Pesticides to Manage Insect-Vectored Plant Pathogens in Potato: Rodney Cooper, Gina Angelella, \$62,904

Exploring Alternatives to Neonicotinoids for Insect-Vectored Virus Management in Potatoes: Gina Angelella, Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$29,116

Development of Insecticides for Pacific Northwest Potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$30,000

Quantifying Crop Safety and Efficacy When Tank Mixing Insecticides and Fungicides: Tim Waters, David Wheeler, \$18,500

Cropping Systems, Plant Physiology

Development of Better Methods to Determine Cultivar Resistance to Internal Discoloration from Heat Necrosis, After-Cooking Darkening, Blackheart and Hollow Heart: Roy Navarre, Mark Pavek, \$36,500

Breeding/Variety Development

Breeding and Selecting Russet and Specialty Varieties with Improved Tuber Qualities, Disease and Pest Resistance, and Sustainability: Rhett Spear, Rich Novy, Mike Thornton, \$15,000

In-Field Testing to Identify New Potato Varieties and Best Management Practices for Growers: Mark Pavek, \$72,377

Post-Harvest Quality of Clones in the Western Regional Potato Variety Development Program: Jacob Blauer, \$56,600

Pyramiding of Potato Virus Y and Columbia Root-Knot Nematode Resistances Using Greenhouse and Molecular Marker Screening: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Sagar Sathuvalli, \$19,500

Advancement of Disease Resistant Germplasm Using Quantitative Genetics and Marker-Assisted Selection: Max Feldman, Mark Pavek, Sagar Sathuvalli, \$29,500

WSPC-Specifically funded projects FY2022-23

The following research or service projects were selected for funding by WSPC for FY2022-23 in addition to Northwest Potato Research Consortium projects and totaled \$233,023

WSU Research Support – Othello Research Unit:
Mark Pavek, \$78,387

Washington Commercial Potato Seed Lot Trial:
Mark Pavek, \$39,045

Regional Sampling Network for Insect Pests of Potato in the Columbia Basin of WA:
Carrie Wohleb, Kylie Swisher-Grimm, \$43,366

Calculating the Impact of Insecticide Loss on the Washington Potato Industry:
Alan Schreiber, Tim Waters, \$40,000

Maintenance of Late Blight of Potato Forecasts:
Cynthia Gleason, \$12,892

Understanding Factors Involved in Disease Development and Monitoring Fungicide Resistance for Improved Silver Scurf Management:
\$19,333

RESEARCH & INDUSTRY OUTREACH COMMITTEE 2021-2022:

Grant Morris, Chair | Jordan Reed, Vice Chair | Ellie Charvet | Marvin Wollman | Matt Taylor*
Greg Harris* | Austin Ochoa* | Bob Halvorson (Emeritus) | Staff: Matthew Blua

**at large industry position*



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