

*A legacy of*

# GENERATIONAL FARMING



Annual Report  
2022-2023





**2022 - 2023 WSPC  
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## A Letter from the Commission Chair

**A Legacy of Generational Farming** is the theme of this year's WSPC Annual Report, and I believe it could not be more fitting. Here in Washington State, we've got more than 155,000 acres of potatoes in production, and 99% of the farms that grow potatoes are family farms. Considering that Washington yields more potatoes per acre than any other state

in the nation, it's no stretch to say that our potato grower families feed our country, and the world, by growing nutritious, delicious food.

My passion for farming here in the lower Columbia Basin is fueled each day when I check on our fields. As many of you know, these crops are like an extension of our family. We nourish them and water them and watch them grow, like we do our own children. Many of us have known only farming and are raising our kids to do the same. It's a passion like no other with a hope and intention to pass our family farms down to the next generation.

On behalf of all the potato growing families here in our state, and the 15 commissioners of WSPC, I am humbled and honored to have served as Commission Chair this past year. I would like to thank the staff for their continued dedication to supporting our growers and educating our consumers against all the misinformation out there. The goal of WSPC is to maintain the integrity of the Washington potato industry and to assist potato growers through research and advocacy.

I invite you to peruse this annual report to meet some of our Washington potato families and to learn about their positive impact. I guarantee you'll never look at a humble spud the same way again.

Mark Hammer  
2022-2023 Chair



## [ MARKETING & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS ]

### WA GROWN BRINGS HOME ANOTHER EMMY – That Makes Three! - and Goes International

A big congratulations is in order for Washington Grown and its whole crew... again, as the tv show co-produced by WSPC brings home its third Emmy! Washington Grown was recognized for its quality storytelling and production viewing quality by winning the Emmy for Best "Informational Program in a Long Format." Our Washington Grown tv show and communication program is the product of discussions our potato growers had at an industry-wide Potato Summit the Commission hosted over 12 years ago. At the time, the potato industry was concerned that it would be regulated out of business if it didn't do a better job of telling the food and farming story to the public. Awards have never been the goal for our Washington Grown program but it's a validation to us that the work we are doing is judged to be of very high quality.



SEASON 10 IS CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV, AND WE ARE CURRENTLY SHOOTING  
VIDEO FOR SEASON 11, WHICH WILL BEGIN AIRING IN JANUARY 2024.

Washington Grown is funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) for the television show and magazine that is currently in QFC grocery stores, Harvest Fresh Markets, PCC Markets and a few smaller retailers. With a second SCBG that was secured by WSDA, we were able to take the program internationally this year for Season 11, traveling to Vietnam and Mexico to show the viewers the importance of exports for Washington ag products, and providing food for countries that can't produce enough for themselves. WSPC recently showcased Washington Grown at the Global Produce and Floral Show in Orlando, Florida. In the Washington Grown Pavilion, many Washington companies and a chef from WA, Chef Ben Leonard, allowed attendees to sample delicious Washington treats. Highlights of the event will also be featured in Season 11. Stay tuned!

### SEATTLE REFINED HIGHLIGHTS WA POTATOES

[SeattleRefined.com](https://SeattleRefined.com)

This year, WSPC partnered with Seattle-based KOMO-TV show Seattle Refined to run potato cooking and Skagit segments featuring Chef Ben Leonard of PCC Markets and Skagit Valley potato grower Darrin Morrison. In addition to being featured on the tv program, Seattle Refined also featured us on their social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Their most popular Instagram Reel this year featured their visit to the Morrison farm, which shows that viewers in the Seattle area are interested in where their food comes from. Host Gaard Swanson has a soft spot for potatoes, admitting he is not a great cook, but enjoys getting in the kitchen with Chef Ben, cooking alongside him and tasting the mouthwatering potato dishes Ben creates. One of his favorites, he says, is a breakfast potato taco. View the episodes on [SeattleRefined.com](https://SeattleRefined.com).





Tyler, Gicell, and Jack Tschirky  
*Tschirky Farms, Pasco, WA*

# Powered by Potatoes is Back in Action — Are you Powered by Potatoes?

The Washington State Potato Commission offers an exciting sponsorship opportunity to serious athletes and weekend warriors alike. Our one requirement? Athletes must carb up with Washington potatoes when they compete! A growing number of athletes choose potatoes as a powerful meal before, during and after major events. Studies show that the complex carbohydrates in potatoes provide energy and are an important fuel during exercise.

Whether it's a long-distance run, bike ride, or other athletic competition, WSPC works to encourage more people to add potatoes to their diet to fuel their bodies. Participants who power up with potatoes can join Team Potato. They receive a vibrant Team Potato jersey and fun Powered by Potatoes swag to show off at their next run or competition. WSPC reimburses team members for entry fees (restrictions apply, see website for details). Requirements are simple: wear the Team Potato jersey to the event, post pictures in your jersey on your own social media pages and send some photos to WSPC for us to share on ours! Team Potato started in 2019 and has grown to a dynamic community of more than 140 participants! For more information, visit [potatoes.com](http://potatoes.com).

# Digital Marketing Creates Huge Increase in Impressions & Website Traffic

In addition to the Influencer Event in Skagit Valley, WSPC also created some of our own social media content while we were there. Continuing with our messages containing the five pillars (generational farming, water, wildlife preservation, food shortages and supply chain issues), we created multiple 15- and 30-second ad spots that we can use on multiple social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc. With digital marketing, we can narrow down our audiences to target specific groups like athletes, Gen Z, main shoppers in the household, age groups, etc. We focused many of these videos in the greater Seattle and Tacoma area, but also used geo-targeting (a marketing tactic to deliver different content to visitors based on their geolocation) from January until March to target Olympia while legislature was in session. With this social media campaign, we have had over nine million impressions and 62K new visitors to our website, just from the campaign alone. It's clear that digital marketing is a sound strategy to reach WSPC's audiences!

# INFLUENCER EVENT IN SKAGIT COUNTY YIELDS 1 MILLION IMPRESSIONS

To stay current, WSPC, in conjunction with potato growers from Skagit Valley, hosted 10 influencers from the greater Seattle area. The goal of the event was to help the influencers educate consumers on today's farming practices and the difficulties farmers face with new regulations. We focused on five major topics that the influencers each tend to focus on in their platforms to help them inform their followers about the many benefits and truths surrounding our industry, rather than the false narratives often presented by other media outlets.

## THE FIVE PILLARS PRESENTED:

- 

Generational farming
- 

Water use & conservation
- 

Wildlife preservation
- 

Food shortages
- 

Supply chain issues

The group arrived mid-morning where we greeted and introduced the influencers to our team and growers while eating delicious potato breakfast burritos. We gave them a quick overview of the day and broke them up into smaller groups, so each grower had about three influencers with them. The growers were able to take the influencers to their farms and fields to talk a little about each of the five topics and answer questions from the guests. Prior to the event, the influencers had submitted questions for a roundtable discussion that followed the tours. Questions ranged from environmental to family stories and memories. Influencers took notes, snapped pictures, and absorbed a lot of information. When the roundtable wrapped up in the afternoon, the influencers continued to chat with the growers and snap more pictures before heading to dinner.

Dinner was at The Skagit Landing, a small farm-to-fork restaurant right on the runway of the region's small airport. Chef Josie Urbick created some delicious meals for our guests, and we had the place to ourselves to continue to get to know the influencers. Dinner options included a steak with cheddar scalloped potatoes, and chicken skewers with smashed red potatoes. The evening came to an end, but the next stage was just getting started.

Over the next few months, we received posts, blogs, and videos from the influencers about their experience at the event. Working with influencers in this manner is a strategic way for us to reach a group of consumers that we typically couldn't reach on our own to educate them about farming, and the challenges farmers face today. The subsequent posts will live on the influencers' pages, as well as our social media pages and our website's blog page.

The results were impressive. We received more than one million impressions from this event and the influencers posts, blogs and videos. We expect our relationships with these influencers will only continue to grow.







## Fry Van Makes First Appearance at STP

The 206-mile Kaiser Permanente Seattle to Portland (STP) Bicycle Classic was back in person for the first time since 2019 in July 2022. WSPC staff was at the 101-mile mark at Centralia College with the Fry Van to cheer on the riders and offer them free fries! At the near-middle mark of their journey athletes are ready for the carbs, potassium, and sodium our Washington fries have to offer. Some of the riders made the full ride in one day, while others camped in Centralia for the night and continued for the final 104 miles on day two.

This year the Cascade Bicycle Club still offered the option to ride virtually or in person. They had 5,500 riders show up in person, just short of their usual 8,000. We served a total of 1,350 servings of fries, the total capacity of fry storage we had in the Fry Van. Continuing with this event, we may look at working with Centralia Community College to use their food service facilities to store fries so we can serve more riders.

## WA Potatoes a Big Hit at Bloomsday

In July 2022 and 2023, WSPC participated in the Bloomsday Trade Show in Spokane. The event focuses on coming together as a community to support healthy lifestyles for our youth, families, and athletes. At the show we handed out free produce bags filled with high-quality spuds, cooling towels for the hot weather, recipe cards to try at home and backpacks for attendees to store all their goodies in. We gave away a total of 1,200 clear backpacks filled with 3,750 lbs. of a variety of red, yellow, and russet potatoes. Athletes

found our information of particular interest as they learned how potatoes can play a big role in their healthy lifestyles. Feedback from participants was extremely positive as we shared health information, encouraged them to carb up for the 7.5-mile run, and to sign up for Team Potato.

Nutritious Washington Potatoes have complex carbohydrates, potassium, fiber, protein, vitamin C and B6 which helps fuel the athletes. Plus, the significant amount of potassium and carbs in a potato allows for energy boosts and quick muscle recovery, making them the perfect superfood for athletes! Potatoes are easy and fast to cook, and they make a perfect side dish for meals or on the go. Check out the Nutrition and Lifestyle tab on our website to learn more about the many health benefits of potatoes!

### MARKETING & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2022-2023:

Josh Bunger, Chair  
Jordan Reed, Vice Chair  
Kraig Knutzen  
Scott Galbreath  
Ignacio Marquez  
Mike Madsen  
Roger Hawley  
Frank Martinez\*  
Rebecca Sterner\*  
Jerry Heilig\*  
Kristi Gundersen\*  
Shelley Olsen\*  
Randi Hammer\*  
Staff: Brandy Tucker

\*at large industry position



Josh, Elliot, Paige & Piper Bunger  
Bunger Farms, Pasco, WA



## Podcasts Promote WA Potatoes

Podcasts are a fast-growing form of entertainment around the world and with all age groups. Research has shown that ads run during a podcast create a deeper connection with listeners than those run during a radio program. So, WSPC has dipped our toes in the water of Podcast advertising. We started small with two local Washington podcasts produced in the Greater Seattle area. The Brock and Salk Show, a sports show podcast on ESPN, promotes our Powered by Potatoes campaign and how essential potatoes are for athletes as a source of fuel. Our second podcast is the Brooke and Jeffery Show, which is a nationally syndicated show based in the Seattle area, with over four million downloads monthly. The podcast has a family feel. Brooke voices all our ads. She is a mother with a lot of energy, and a large following on her personal social media pages. She delivers an engaging spin on our key messages, from sustainability, to buying locally and supporting our growers, to family and generational farming. As the episode downloads increase for both podcasts, we see the traffic to our website increase as well, and we are encouraged by the use of this new medium as we learn new ways to spread awareness about Washington potatoes to new audiences.



# FEDERAL AGENCIES ANNOUNCE TWO NEW REPORTS FOR SALMON RECOVERY AND ENERGY NEEDS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) released two reports resulting from a continued interagency initiative to restore salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin, while meeting state and federal clean energy goals. NOAA's report assesses breaching the Lower Snake River Dams to recover salmon and steelhead in the basin and BPA's study addresses the cost to replace clean renewable hydroelectric power for the Western Grid Group which includes business and communities from Southern Canada to Northern Mexico. NOAA's report, "Rebuilding Interior Columbia Basin Salmon and Steelhead," was prepared with input from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Nez Perce Tribe and the State of Oregon. Both the Nez Perce Tribe and the State of Oregon are plaintiffs in the litigation on the last federal bi-op. BPA's study on potential power portfolios presents a range of power production scenarios and costs associated with replacing the electrical power from four federal dams on the Lower Snake River in the event Congress were to authorize such an action. The study, titled "BPA Lower Snake River Dams Power Replacement Study," is intended to inform ongoing regional conversations about long-term strategies for providing affordable and carbon-free electricity in the region. The study finds that replacing the energy and grid services would cost \$11 billion to \$19 billion. The annual replacement cost would range from \$415 million to \$860 million by 2045. Households would bear a substantial energy cost as dam breaching will increase rates for public power ranging from \$100 – \$230 per year. Replacement becomes more costly over time due to increasingly stringent clean energy standards and electrification-driven load growth.

# Columbia Basin Project Creates Billions

A released 80-page report revealed that the Columbia Basin Project (CBP), the largest Bureau of Reclamation multi-purpose project in the United States, generates an annual crop value of \$2.66 billion to Washington State. The report, "Economic Contribution of Irrigated Agriculture Supported by the Columbia Basin Project," assessed the fiscal impact of irrigated agriculture on local, state, and national economies. Congress authorized the Columbia Basin Project to irrigate 1,029,000 acres located in the mid-Columbia Basin of Eastern Washington, but to date, infrastructure of reservoirs and canals irrigates about 700,000 acres in portions of Grant, Adams, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties, with some land in Lincoln authorized but not yet receiving water. The report, commissioned by the three irrigation districts in the CBP—Quincy, East, and South Columbia Basin Irrigation Districts—to update a 2010 study, was completed by Highland Economics of Portland. Primary CBP crops listed in the report include hay, potatoes, corn, wheat, beans, orchard fruits, grapes, herbs, onions, grass seed, and vegetables with an estimated value of \$3,800 per acre, annually. The report estimated an additional \$2.67 billion of animal and food processing production specifically tied to CBP crops, with over \$6 billion in animal and food processing production value. Over 40,000 area jobs (full and part-time) are created with nearly \$2.33 billion in income annually and 90% of all area jobs and income related to crop production or food processing.



# Washington Legislative Farm Tour, Skagit Valley

There were more than 60 participants in this year's Food & Farm Tour held in LaConner, WA. The program kicked off with a welcome and introduction to agriculture by WSDA Agriculture Director Derek Sandison. The one-and-a-half-day program covered shellfish, potato, vegetable, berry, beef and dairy family farms. Conversations focused on generational, small and minority farming. Ag research, fish recovery, habitation, and current farm practices with conservation of ag lands and riparian buffers were discussed. Keynote presenters Roylene Comes at Night, Conservationist for USDA/NRCS, and Deputy Director Heather Bartlett, Washington State Department of Ecology, gave informative presentations on partnerships in conservation and ag water quality.

# Labor Leaders Across the PNW Support Keeping the Dams on the Lower Snake River

From Pierce County, WA, to Idaho, union members back clean, affordable hydroelectricity. A growing movement of labor leaders and the organizations they represent took a stand to endorse clean, affordable hydroelectricity. Multiple labor leaders and organizations from around the region submitted letters of support for the lower Snake River dams to the Murray-Inslee process. Many of these labor organizations took votes on formal resolutions of support, as well. This effort builds on Labor's 100 years of supporting public hydropower and comes on the heels of multiple studies released this month that outline the prohibitive costs and negative social and environmental consequences of removing the lower Snake River dams.

A study by the Biden Administration's Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) conducted by E3 verifies previous analyses and conclusions by Northwest River Partners, including the recently released study by Energy GPS. The E3 and Energy GPS studies demonstrate that, given existing technologies, there is currently no viable way to remove the LSRD without burning more fossil fuels or jeopardizing grid reliability. The BPA-commissioned E3 study also states that Snake River dam removal could cost ratepayers as much as \$75B just to replace their electricity generation capacity.

The Idaho AFL-CIO takes this issue so seriously that it passed a resolution with amendments that no future candidates will be endorsed by the Idaho AFL-CIO if they are in favor of breaching dams.

Removal of the dams would also increase power costs by up to 25 percent which would disproportionately impact low-income communities. In 2022, the Snohomish County Public Utility District, the state's largest public utility, estimated it would get 84 percent of its electricity from the region's federal power system, which includes the Snake River dams.

These labor leaders and organizations represent tens of thousands of workers throughout the PNW and support the dams and the clean, affordable, and reliable electricity they generate:

- » Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council
- » Laborers' International Union of North America Local (LIUNA 335)
- » International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators Local 36
- » U.A. Plumbing & Pipefitters Local 32
- » Pierce County Building and Construction Trades Council
- » Northeast Washington and Northern Idaho Building and Construction Trades
- » Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council
- » Longview-Kelso Building Trades Council
- » North Central Washington Central Labor Council
- » Spokane Regional Labor Council
- » Southwest Washington Central Labor Council
- » Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council



# ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY ASSESSES VALUE OF WASHINGTON STATE POTATO FARMING

WSPC, in cooperation with the IMPACT Center located at Washington State University, measured the economic impact of potato production and subsequent potato processing in Washington State. The farm gate value of Washington potatoes in 2022 came in at approximately \$876.9 million. The total value of finished potato products exported amounted to \$3.24 billion. That money flowed through the sector supply chains within Washington, generating nearly \$2.58 billion in additional indirect business-to-business transactions. Wages and salaries from the Washington state potato sector resulted in \$1.5 billion. Total economic output dependent on the potato sector amounted to over \$7.35 billion. Those transactions supported roughly 31,613 jobs within the economy, 12,508 of which were directly supported in the production and processing sector.

The Washington State potato sector, supported by potato farming and processing resulted in \$69.1 million in property taxes, \$147.31 million in sales and excise taxes, and \$38.26 million in corporate and other miscellaneous taxes. Total state and local governments collected \$254.67 million in tax revenue directly dependent on the potato sector of the state. When compared to the associated gross state product, the potato sector pays 111% in taxes relative to the effective state tax rate. Washington's potato crop is valuable to the State because it brings new money into the economy via exporting products. Most of those exports, 78%, are sent to Asia (predominantly Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan). Another 12% are exported within North America. Australia and South/Central America receive the remaining 10%. Washington State continues to be a leader in national potato production, is the U.S. leader in potato processing, and is an important sector to the health of Washington State's economy.

## Senator Cantwell Tours Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell and her staff met with stakeholder groups and toured the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) project. The meeting was held in the Moses Lake City Council Chambers on October 24, 2022, and was coordinated by the Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL).

Stakeholders from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Ecology-Office of the Columbia River, the Columbia Basin Conservation District, the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition, Adams County, WSPC, and the Port of Warden joined staff and members of the CBDL Board of Directors to share progress to date regarding the Odessa Aquifer rescue mission, and identify next steps and innovative solutions to outline needs to transition deep well irrigators off of the rapidly declining aquifer.

After the hour-long meeting, the Senator joined stakeholders for a tour of ECBID's 47.5 pumping plant, which was opened in 2021, and visited other points along the canal system.

The Columbia Basin Project (CBP) is the water source for thousands of farmers and some municipalities and industrial stakeholders. While waiting for continued development of the CBP, decades ago, the Department of Ecology issued farmers temporary permits to use groundwater to irrigate over 100,000 acres. The Odessa aquifer declined and now threatens water availability for over 180,000 people and over a dozen rural communities including Lind, Odessa, Connell, Othello, Warden, Hatton, Wilson Creek, Moses Lake, and others. Multiple partners are working together to rescue the declining aquifer and preserve it for environmental and domestic water supply purposes.

## Olympia Potato Day is Back

Once again, potato farmers gathered in Olympia to meet with state legislators, staff members, and agency personnel. The Olympia campus was buzzing with excitement as 1,400 baked potatoes were served to potato lovers in Olympia. The event offers growers the one-on-one opportunity to share their perspectives, communicate various challenges, and express the need to fix the fee exemption on fuels used for agricultural purposes under the Climate Commitment Act. Growers also shared their support to find meaningful voluntary solutions to build riparian habitat under the guidance of Conservation Districts. Farmers discussed concerns regarding the cost of ag overtime and showed support for the four lower Snake River dams. Olympia Potato Day continues to be one of the most popular days during each year's legislative session.



Jordan, Addison, Mia, Breanna  
& Owen Reed  
JM Farms, Pasco, WA

## Snake River/ Ice Harbor Dam Tour

The future health of the Snake and Columbia River System is important for communities in the Pacific Northwest. As with any critical issue the legislature deals with, developing a thorough understanding of our shared natural resources will help guide better policy discussions. An opportunity had been put together for Legislators to tour Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake River. More than 40 participants toured the Ice Harbor facility. Key discussions included: The Growing Importance of the Lower Snake River Dams in a Carbon-free Future; Western Power Grid, Hydropower & Clean Energy Policies; Snake River Salmon Population Trends and Future Run Forecasting; Lower Snake River Dams: Benefits to the Nation; the Importance of Farming, River, & Rail.







## POTATO GROWERS SUPPORT NWSA HUSKY TERMINAL EXPANSION

WSPC sent a letter to Secretary Buttigieg expressing support for the 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant application submitted by The Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) for its Husky Terminal Expansion Part One Project. Husky Terminal, located in Tacoma's tideflats, is surrounded by a historically disadvantaged community that will benefit from both lower emissions and new jobs.

This project will support PIDP goals of improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement

of goods through the Port. The project will densify a busy international container terminal, adding capacity and optimizing storage. The project will also significantly lower carbon emissions by installing power infrastructure needed to support electrification and minimizing the time that vessels are required to stay at berth. Increased reefer capacity will also benefit agricultural exporters who have weathered several difficult years of supply chain upheaval. The Husky Terminal Expansion will allow NWSA to better compete in international markets while also meeting its goal of zero carbon emissions by 2050.



## *United States Realized a Record \$2.1 Billion in Potato Exports in 2022*

The record amount of \$2.1 billion in sales of potatoes exported in 2022 can be attributed to global price hikes and inflation. Overall, the volume of sales declined by 4.2% but the value of potato exports rose 11% since 2021. Potato export values rose across all potato types including fresh, frozen, dehydrated, seed and chips. Lower sales volumes can be attributed to the tight supply of potato products. The largest markets for U.S. potatoes were Mexico, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines.

In 2022, U.S. frozen potato exports increased 13.8% and volume sold decreased -2.5% from the previous year. Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and the Philippines were the largest markets for U.S. frozen potatoes.

Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Taiwan accounted for the top export markets for fresh potatoes but exports decreased in most markets except for Mexico, which realized a 10% increase in shipments due to expanded market access. Overall, U.S. potato sales in 2022 realized sales of \$287 million which represented a 9% increase from 2021. Shipment volumes, however, showed a decrease of 9.7% which included chipping and table stock potatoes.

Dehydrated potatoes accounted for \$217.6 million in sales for 2022, which represented a 1.1% increase in value from the previous year. Volume of dehydrated shipments declined 3.2% from 2021. Interestingly, exports to Canada and the United Kingdom increased from 2021, while exports to both Mexico and Japan decreased.

The biggest challenge for U.S. potato exports was maintaining a consistent supply, but the global demand for U.S. potatoes remained strong due to preference of the product by importers, food service operators, and retailers.

## WSPC SUPPORTS WSU STATE LEGISLATIVE FUNDING REQUEST

WSPC, along with other State Commissions and Associations, supported two Washington State University (WSU) requests in the 2023-25 capital budget:

- » **WSU's \$40 million request for minor works preservation funds to help it address a \$1.6 billion university-wide deferred maintenance backlog which afflicts many facilities important to agriculture**
- » **WSU's \$10 million request to begin renovation of the Knott Dairy in Pullman**

WSU is the research and development arm of our state's agricultural industry. The university provides an important service to producers that keeps Washington's agricultural products competitive and disease-free. The university's important work happens not just at facilities in Pullman but in the field at a statewide network of sites including its four research and extension centers in Puyallup, Mount Vernon, Prosser, and Wenatchee.

Most of these facilities are aging, some date back over 100 years. WSU's minor works preservation request will pay for small but important projects at all four of the research and extension centers and Pullman campus. Top priorities include the following:

- » **Roofing at Mount Vernon: \$100,000**
- » **Roofing at Wenatchee: \$100,000**
- » **Siding at Puyallup: \$500,000**
- » **Building automation at Prosser: \$130,000**
- » **Building automation at Puyallup: \$110,000**
- » **Chiller replacement at Prosser: \$800,000**
- » **Electrical and steam systems at Prosser: \$650,000**
- » **Lighting and safety systems at Puyallup: \$90,000**
- » **Lighting and safety systems at Mount Vernon: \$75,000**
- » **High voltage electric system at Knott Dairy: \$500,000**

## Washington State Potato Growers Ask Congress to Expand Fresh Potato Access in Japan

WSPC, along with other Potato Commissions and Associations, asked members of Congress to support the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture prioritization seeking table stock market access with Japan. This is a vital international trade issue and if successful, the U.S. potato industry estimates that this access will result in an additional \$150 million per year in exports.

Table stock access to Japan was first requested almost 30 years ago. It was elevated to a top priority in U.S./Japan plant health negotiations in September 2019. However, despite the efforts of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Japan continues to delay substantive negotiations on table stock access, including with respect to our most recent request for Japan to provide a Pest Risk Assessment (PRA).

Japan already conducted a thorough review of U.S. fresh potatoes in 2006 when the market was opened for U.S. potatoes for processing. During this review, the U.S. potato industry addressed all Japanese technical concerns with comprehensive mitigations. There is no valid phytosanitary justification for the market to remain closed or for the government's current refusal to negotiate.

The U.S. potato industry has a proud history of exporting fresh potatoes to markets in the Indo-Pacific, including: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand.





# WSPC Submits Concerns Over Proposed L&I Heat Rules

WSPC submitted concerns over the proposed changes to the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) Ambient Heat Exposure rules. The Commission called out that the proposed language is too complex and lacks the capacity to provide consistency and mirror other states’ outdoor heat rules. As the rules are drafted, they open the door for unnecessary legal actions against family farms that don’t have the financial capacity to always keep attorneys on staff to avoid frivolous lawsuits. The Commission noted that our workers are important, and the proposed rules should reflect that.

The rules need to focus on a set calendar time with less expectation that a high heat event will occur in fall, winter, or spring. In addition, they need to focus on action items when a high heat event occurs, not establishing a punitive pathway during normal calendar outdoor work temperatures. More thought is needed when applying shade standards. L&I needs to add pathways to partnerships for employer/employee high heat training. And lastly, more thought and consideration is needed regarding acclimatization. As proposed, acclimatization rules provide no pathway for a worker to self-attest their capacity to work during a high-heat event or those who may transfer their work skills from a neighboring farm within the acclimatization work window as drafted by L&I. The Commission will continue to monitor these proposed rules.

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2022-2023:

- Kraig Knutzen, Chair
- Adam Weber, Vice Chair
- Grant Morris
- Chris Olsen
- Ignacio Marquez
- Marvin Wollman
- Roger Hawley
- Damon Christensen\*
- Ted Tschirky\*
- Ken Luke\*
- Randy Mullen\*
- Lynn Olsen\*
- Mike Dodds\*
- Blaine Meek\*
- Jake Henke\*
- Darron Morrison\*
- Andrew Hyer\*
- Staff: Matt Harris

*\*at large industry position*

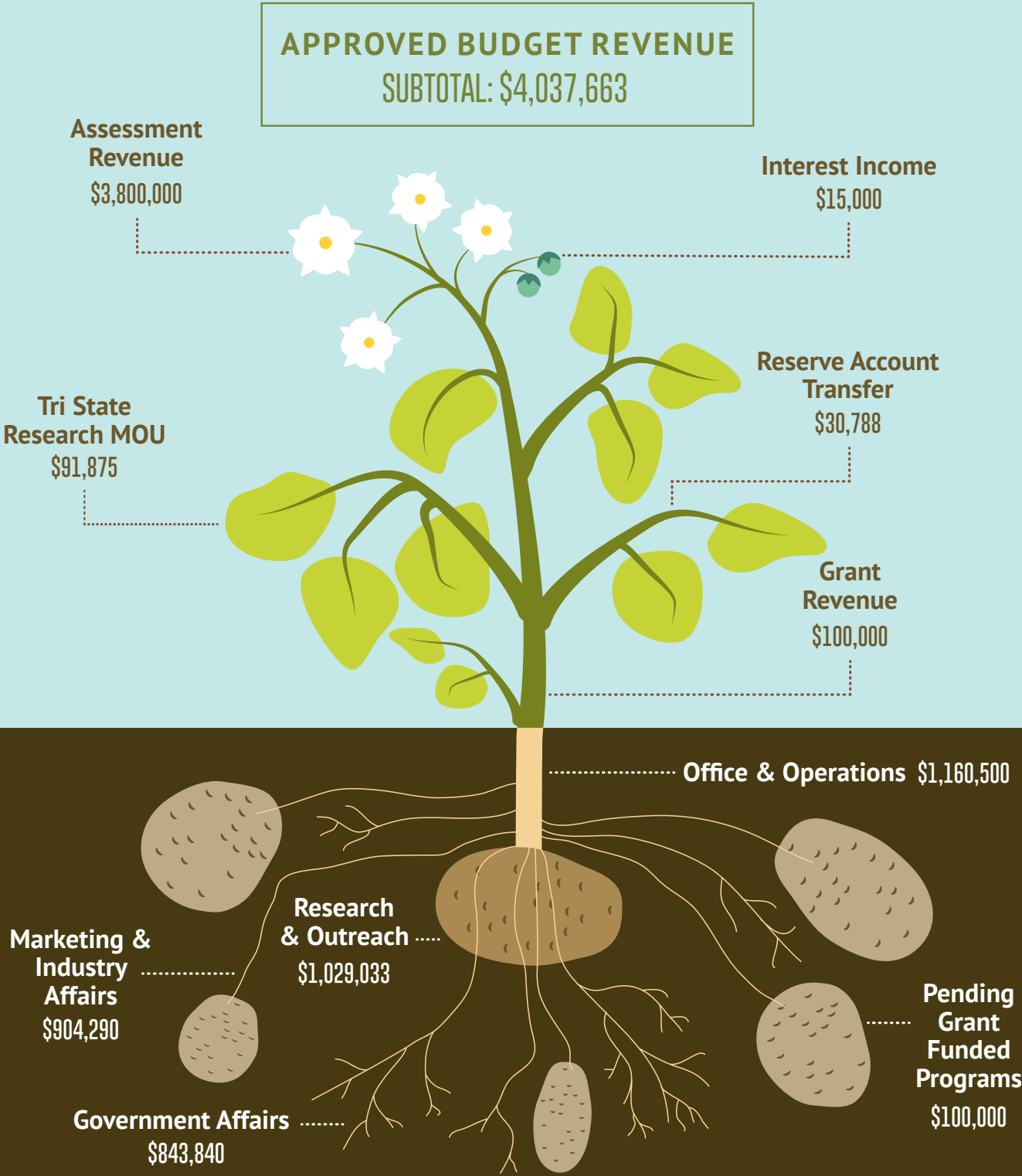
# POTATO GROWERS SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL OGWRP BRIDGE REPLACEMENT



Bridge improvement is a critical part of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP). As an aquifer rescue mission, OGWRP is transferring the source of irrigation water for up to 87,000 acres–137 square miles–of highly productive land from a depleting aquifer to a sustainable source of surface water. This will preserve over 85 billion gallons of water, annually, for rural environmental, municipal, and industrial purposes within the federally owned Columbia Basin Project (CBP) while maintaining the irrigated agricultural economy of an entire region.

The East Low Irrigation Canal has been widened to accommodate additional water deliveries to deep well irrigators awaiting surface water. Areas of the canal around existing bridges have not yet been widened and function as a bottleneck preventing OGWRP deliveries as intended and threatening water contracts. The Commission supported the replacement of identified bridges in Grant and Adams Countries for Congressionally directed spending.

## [ FINANCIALS ]



- FINANCE COMMITTEE 2022-2023:**
- Albert Stahl, Chair
  - Scott Galbreath, Vice Chair
  - Ellie Charvet
  - Adam Weber
  - Chris Olsen
  - Staff: Chris Voigt



## ANDY JENSEN, Manager of the Northwest Potato Research Consortium to Retire in FY2023-24



Dr. Andy Jensen

The Northwest Potato Research Consortium (NWPRC) began in 2012 with the aim of increasing cooperation and efficiency of the research programs funded by the potato commissions in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. Funds generated by the commissions for potato research are \$1.5 million annually. Since its beginning, Dr. Andy Jensen has been the manager of the NWPRC, which has proven to be a model for cooperation among state commodity commissions. Andy will retire officially at the end of FY2024, after spending three quarters of the year overlapping with the new manager. Andy's strength throughout his time with the NWPRC has been his leadership, integrity, organization skills, and ability to connect and communicate with people from differing groups including potato growers and industry personnel, commission staff, and scientists. Prior to his tenure with the NWPRC, Andy was one of the directors of the WSPC from 1999 to 2012. Andy is known as one of the world's most influential aphidologists and will spend his retirement years with his partner Gina in Colorado, working on aphid systematics, riding his bicycle, and gardening.

## WSPC to Enjoy Potato Variety Ownership

Negotiations with entities involved in the Tri-State Potato Breeding Program since 2018 have resulted in WSPC becoming one-seventh owner of new potato varieties generated going forward. The Tri-State Potato Breeding Program is world-renowned for the fabulous potato varieties produced including Clearwater Russet, Alturas, Castle Russet, Yukon Gem, and many others (<https://pvmi.org>). The seven partners/owners of varieties going forward will be the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the University of Idaho, Oregon State University, Washington State University, the Washington State Potato Commission, the Idaho Potato Commission, and the Oregon Potato Commission. The commissions have agreed to donate their receipt of licensing and royalty fees directly to their respective universities' and USDA ARS potato breeders to enhance future varieties.



Jenn, Josh, Piper, Paige & Elliot Bunger  
Bunger Farms, Pasco, WA

## *USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative Program Provides \$6.8 Million for Potato Nematode Research*

A particularly high-dollar (\$6.8M) Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant entitled "Potatoes and Pests – Actionable Science Against Nematodes" was awarded to Pacific Northwest researchers including Project Director Louise-Marie Dandurand (University of Idaho), and Co-Project Directors Joe Kuhl, Philip Watson (University of Idaho), Cynthia Gleason (Washington State University), Marisol Quintanilla (Michigan State University) and Inga Zasada (USDA-ARS, Corvallis OR). The project will focus on nematode detection and identification, an understanding of plant defenses, and management of Columbia root knot and potato cyst nematodes in potato fields. Project deliverables will include molecular diagnostics, an understanding of threshold population densities, decision support systems and the development of resistant varieties and novel nematocidal chemistries.



# Meet Dr. Rui Liu, Washington State University's New Weed Scientist



Dr. Rui Liu

The Washington State University Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser, WA, harbors the laboratory of the newest weed scientist in the system, Dr. Rui Liu. This is the second stint for Dr. Liu at WSU Prosser; her first was serving an internship with the USDA ARS weed scientist Dr. Rick Boydston in July and August of 2013. Although not hired specifically to serve potato production, Dr. Liu quickly embraced the potato community soon after her arrival by presenting “Current Status of Nutsedge Management Strategies in Potato Production” at the Washington-Oregon Potato Conference early this year. In addition, the Northwest Potato Research Consortium awarded her \$39,141 for her research proposal entitled “Yellow Nutsedge Management in Pacific Northwest Potato Production” with Drs. Joel Felix and Tim Waters.



Jenny Durrin Gentry

## Change in Leadership for The Potato Variety Management Institute

Since 2005, the state potato commissions of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho have cooperated in a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation called the Potato Variety Management Institute (PVMI) to handle the licensing and royalty collection for potato varieties generated by the Tri-State Potato Breeding program. PVMI was developed as a grower-controlled alternative to the universities' efforts to manage varieties and interact with industry in royalty collection, and is governed by a nine-member board of directors, three from each of the three potato commissions. Money generated by PVMI is used to support it and is disbursed to the universities in support of the potato breeding program. Dr. Jeanne Debons has been the executive director of PVMI since its inception until this year. Her excellent work ethic, initiative,

creativity, and communication skills made PVMI the success it is today. She was recently named “Spudwoman of the Year” by Spudman magazine. The new executive director of PVMI is Jenny Durrin Gentry. Ms Durrin Gentry was formerly the manager of the University of Idaho seed-potato germplasm program for six years and is intimately familiar with the Tri-State potato varieties and potato breeders. She is a self-starter, an innovator, and is extremely capable on many levels. PVMI is still in good hands!

# HELPING THE POTATO COMMUNITY THRIVE

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 various ways with potato growers, the agricultural community, and state and federal agencies.

- » We hold educational opportunities for growers, support staff and contractors
- » We reimburse potato growers for IPM supplies including yellow sticky cards, delta traps, sticky delta trap liners, and tuber moth pheromone caps
- » We provide potato pest identification books, and instructions on how to use insect monitoring supplies
- » We offer 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
- » We supply Good Agricultural Practices potato-oriented notebooks for USDA GAP, USDA Harmonized GAP, Global GAP, and Primus GAP
- » We pay for plant disease diagnostics from Washington State University
- » We are members of the Potato Variety Management Institute board
- » We are represented on the board of the Washington Commission on Integrated Pest Management that provides grant funding for pest management projects impacting 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 it reviews agri-chemicals important to WA 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 are in regular communication with potato researchers, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, but also throughout the U.S.
- » We fund and play an active role in the WSU Potato Field Day
- » We provide guest lecturers to institutes of higher education and other groups
- » We regularly serve on hiring committees for Washington State University and the USDA, Agricultural Research Service





# PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE NORTHWEST POTATO RESEARCH CONSORTIUM FY2023-24

WSPC funds research that enhances potato yield, quality, and profitability. Most of this research is funded through the Northwest Potato Research Consortium, an alliance of WSPC, the Oregon Potato Commission, and the Idaho Potato Commission which combines resources to provide \$1.5 million in research funding annually. Together the three states represented by these commissions produce 54% of the potatoes in the U.S. By category, the Consortium funded the following research projects.

## Weeds, Herbicides

Yellow nutsedge management in Pacific Northwest potato production: Rui Liu, Joel Felix, Tim Waters, \$39,141.

## Plant Pathology/Soil Health

Reduced fungicide applications for managing early blight/brown spot on disease resistant cultivars: Jeff Miller, \$12,880.

Improved management of soft rot in the field and post-harvest: Jeff Miller, Nora Olsen, Mike Thornton, \$40,000.

Comparison of potato yields, soil health, and microbiome in virgin, non-virgin, and native soils: Tim Paulitz, Cynthia Gleason, Deirdre Griffin LaHue, Ken Frost, \$62,134.

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.

Developing integrated management tactics for powdery scab: Ken Frost, Brian Charlton, \$30,058.

Development of off-field methods for screening resistance to powdery scab, potato mop-top virus, and silver scurf: Chakradhar Mattupalli, Kiwamu Tanaka, \$18,459.

Support for the investigation of emerging and persistent potato diseases in the Northwest: Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$12,000.

Understanding factors involved in the development of potato surface blemish diseases: Chakradhar Mattupalli, Ken Frost, \$40,000.

Advancing our understanding of drivers of soil health in potato fields in the Pacific Northwest: Steve Cullman, Deirdre Griffin LaHue, Chakradhar Mattupalli, Markus Kleber, Ken Frost, \$58,379.

Developing a fast and accurate assay to quantify Verticillium dahliae inoculum in soils: Ken Frost, \$21,500.

## Nematology

Mimicking enhanced calcium signaling for potato resistance against M. chitwoodi: Cynthia Gleason, \$29,913.

Harnessing the natural resistance of Solanum sisymbriifolium for generating root-knot nematode resistance in potato: Cynthia Gleason, Joe Kuhl, Allan Caplan, \$35,000.

Automated identification of plant-parasitic nematodes of potato at genus level: Tim Paulitz, Cynthia Gleason, Inga Zasada, Sam Chavoshi, \$73,863.

Development of Nematicides for Pacific Northwest Potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$32,000.

## Potato Virus

Hiding in plain sight: investigating the genetics that determine the (in-) visibility of PVY: Aymeric Goyer, \$41,208.

Developing RNA vaccines as bio-pesticides for managing potato virus Y and its strains: Hanu Pappu, \$39,187.

## 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, \$45,000.

Managing insect pests without neonicotinoids, pyrethroids and organophosphates: Stuart Reitz, Erik Wenninger, Tim Waters, Louis Nottingham, \$55,000.

Development of insecticides for Pacific Northwest potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$36,000.

Exploring alternatives to neonicotinoids for insect-vectored virus management in potatoes: Gina Angelella, \$23,963.

## Cropping Systems, Plant Physiology

Exploring phytosanitary methods to obtain zero plant emergence with sprout inhibitors: Nora Olsen, Gustavo Teixeira, \$41,447.

Can we increase potato yield by optimizing soil thiamin production?: Aymeric Goyer, \$30,945.

Ground penetrating radar (gpr) based non-destructive sensing of soil moisture and potato tuber growth: Johnny Li, Rhette Spear Xi Laing, \$10,000.

Alleviating the development of pressure bruise symptoms after unloading from bulk storage conditions: Gustavo Teixeira, Nora Olsen, \$42,470.

Can wound healing be enhanced at low curing temperature conditions and maintain potato quality during storage?: Gustavo Teixeira, Nora Olsen, \$41,309.

Developing better methods to determine cultivar resistance to internal discoloration from heat necrosis, after-cooking darkening, blackheart and hollow heart: Roy Navarre, \$8,000.

## Breeding/Genetics

Pyramiding of potato virus Y and Columbia root-knot nematode resistances using greenhouse and molecular marker screening: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Sagar Sathuvalli, \$23,000.

Identification of differentially expressed genes associated with corky ringspot disease resistance

in Castle Russet: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Sagar Sathuvalli, \$25,000.

## Variety Development Base Funding

University of Idaho and ARS base funding for variety development: Rhett Spear, Rich Novy, Mike Thornton, Nora Olsen, Gustavo Teixeira, \$140,000.

Washington State University base funding for variety development: Jacob Blauer, Mark Pavsek, \$140,000.

Oregon State University base funding for variety development: Sagar Sathuvalli, Brian Charlton, Clint Shock, \$140,000.

USDA-ARS Prosser base funding for variety development Max Feldman, \$50,000.

Total \$1,499,938

## RESEARCH & OUTREACH COMMITTEE 2022-2023:

Grant Morris, Chair  
Marvin Wollman, Vice Chair  
Ellie Charvet  
Mike Madsen  
Heath Gimmestad  
Austin Ochoa\*  
Paul Yamane\*  
Matt Taylor\*  
Greg Harris\*  
Greg Ebe\*  
Ubaldo Martinez  
Matt Funk\*  
Staff: Matthew Blua  
\*at large industry position



# OTHER RESEARCH AND SERVICE PROJECTS FUNDED BY WSPC

In addition to research funding WSPC provides through the Northwest Potato Consortium, we fund research and service projects that serve the Washington potato community. The following “Washington Specific” projects were funded for FY2023-24.

WSU research support – Othello research unit: Mark Pavék, \$78,387.

Washington commercial potato seed lot trial: Mark Pavék, \$39,045.

Regional sampling network for insect pests of potato in the Columbia Basin of WA: Carrie Wohleb, Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$55,366.

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: Chakradhar Mattupalli, \$19,333.

**Total \$233,023**

# Washington Researchers Garner Funds for Potato Research from State, Regional and Federal Agencies

One of the goals of WSPC is for our scientists to leverage the funds we provide for research to garner funding for potato research from other agencies. Frequently, we are asked to review proposals and/or write letters of support for potato research projects. Below are potato projects initiated in FY2022-23 by our scientists that were funded by other groups.

The whirligig mite and new biological control opportunities in potatoes: David R Horton, Rodney Cooper, Tim Waters, Bonnie Ohler, USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$39,000.

Application of cellulose nanofibers for managing potato diseases: Kiwamu Tanaka, Chakradhar Mattupalli, WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, \$249,507.

Semi-commercial trial of a carboxamide derivative as an alternative to current sprout inhibitors and its mechanics study: T. Yang, T., J.M. Blauer, J.M. Fonseca, P. Collins, G.N.M. Kumar, USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$48,000.

Controlling root-knot nematodes by targeting lipid metabolism: Cynthia Gleason, Jennifer Watts, USDA NIFA, \$741,631.

Integrative approaches to understanding how vector proteins affect plant defense and plant-insect interactions: Gina Angelella, Cecilia Tamborindeguy, Julien Levy, Rodney Cooper, USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$43,704.

Identifying the sources of aphids and aphid-vectored viruses afflicting potato fields: Gina Angelella (USDA-ARS), Rodney Cooper (USDA-ARS), Andy Jensen (California Academy of Sciences), Kylie Swisher Grimm (USDA-ARS), Carrie Wohleb (WSU), Erik Wenninger (UI), USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$36,517.

Tools for the accurate diagnosis of two tuber necrotic viruses, potato mop-top virus and tobacco rattle virus: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Vamsi Nalam, USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$70,062.

Exploring pathogenicity factors of phytoplasma causing potato purple top disease in the Northwestern U.S.: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Dapeng Zhang, USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$25,456.

Identification of cew ‘Ca. L. solanacearum’ plant pathogens and their psyllid vectors and plant hosts in the NW U.S: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Dave Horton, Rodney Cooper, Gina Angelella, Carrie Wohleb, Brian Charlton, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service USDA, Plant Protection Act Section 7721, \$64,000.

Nematode management in Columbia basin potatoes: Alan Schreiber, Washington State Commission for Pesticide Registration, \$22,460.

Exploring alternatives to neonicotinoids for insect-vectored virus management in potatoes: Gina Angelella, Washington State Commission for Pesticide Registration, \$19,424.

Managing insects of potato without neonicotinoids, pyrethroids and organophosphates: Tim Waters, Washington State Commission for Pesticide Registration, \$34,834.

Targeting core rxlr effectors of phytonematodes to control root knot nematodes: Cynthia Gleason, Sigal Brown Miyara, United States – Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund, \$100,000.

**Total \$1,493,995**





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