



Washington State
Potato Commission
2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024 WSPC COMMISSIONERS:

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Mike Madsen
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Marvin Wollman
At Large

Roger Hawley
At Large

Ignacio Marquez
WSDA

STAFF:

Chris Voigt
Executive Director

Matt Harris
Director of Government Affairs and Assistant Executive Director

Brandy Tucker
Director of Operations and Marketing & Industry Affairs

Matthew Blua
Director of Research and Outreach

Tressa Radach
Office Manager

Suzy Johnson
Administrative Assistant

Cassidy Karas
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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 of WSPC. 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 especially the great story of the growing Washington potato industry.

Water and sustainability are the theme of this year's annual report, and it couldn't be more fitting. We have been educating consumers on our efforts to change with the times while maintaining the best sustainable practices possible. With all 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, and we are sharing our stories with consumers. 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.

I ask if you would join me in a special thank you to the WSPC staff. If there is one thing I have learned in the past year as Chair, it's that we would be nowhere without the people who do the work for the Commission. Farming is a lifestyle, not a job, and I have learned that being an employee of WSPC is no different. Countless hours, stress, and personal sacrifices go into the work they do in legislative & marketing issues, research, and the day-to-day operation of the Commission. There is no better group in the country than the group we have working at WSPC. From all the growers and our families, thank you Chris, Matt, Brandy, Matthew, Tressa, Cassidy, Suzy, and all past employees of WSPC.

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

Grant Morris



MARKETING & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

Continuing Education on Social Media and Beyond for Consumers Through the Five Pillars

At the Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC), our commitment to excellence extends beyond the fields to the digital landscape, where our social media following continues to grow at an impressive rate. We attribute this success to our unwavering focus on the five key pillars that define our mission.

In this issue of our Annual Report, we highlight water issues. However, we have found that all of these topics resonate deeply with our audience, fostering a community that values the importance of sustainable agriculture.

Throughout the year, we have made significant strides in our online presence. Our website has undergone numerous updates to ensure it serves as a comprehensive resource for consumers eager to learn more about our growers' sustainable practices. These updates have been met with positive feedback, further solidifying our position as a leader in sustainable farming education.

Our content strategy has successfully spotlighted each of the five pillars, with a particular emphasis on the challenges and opportunities within the farming industry. We have discussed the rising costs of farming, the innovative research being conducted to keep Washington at the forefront of sustainable agriculture, and practical ways consumers can support their local growers.

Among our various initiatives, the spotlight on Generational Farming has garnered the most attention, becoming our top-performing video of the year. This content not only celebrates the rich heritage of Washington's farming families but also underscores the importance of preserving this legacy for future generations. By sharing these stories, we connect our audience with the human side of farming, fostering a deeper appreciation for the work that goes into producing the food on their tables.

As we move forward, WSPC remains committed to advancing our mission through these five pillars. We will continue to innovate, educate, and engage with our community, ensuring that our message of sustainable, responsible farming practices reaches an even wider audience. Together, with the support of our consumers, we can help secure the future of farming in Washington, protect the environment, supporting our farmers, and feed the world sustainably.



JOIN TEAM POTATO



WSPC's Team Potato program continues to experience significant growth, attracting 350 riders and runners who are eager to join a community that celebrates both fitness and nutrition. What began as a unique initiative to promote the health benefits of potatoes has evolved into a dynamic and inclusive community of athletes from across the state and beyond.

As it grows in participation and influence, it remains a shining example of how community and education can come together to make a positive impact on health and wellness. For more information on how you can join WSPC's Team Potato, please reach out to Brandy Tucker at btucker@potatoes.com or go to our website at potatoes.com.

Powered by Potatoes *at the* Seattle to Portland Ride

Each summer since 2019, WSPC staff have rolled up in the Fry Van to serve nutrient-packed french fries to riders at the halfway mark at Centralia Community College of the 206-mile Kaiser Permanente Seattle to Portland (STP) Bicycle Classic. The ride begins at the University of Washington’s Husky Stadium in Seattle, Washington, and concludes at Holladay Park in the heart of Portland, Oregon.

While some riders push on to complete the full race in one day, many of the riders make the trek in 2 days. Our very own Executive Director Chris Voigt gathered a crew together and they all sported our Team Potato Powered by Potatoes biking jerseys on the ride. The STP had 8,000 riders this year and WSPC served nearly 2,000 servings of fries to help riders stay energized.



Chris Voigt, Executive Director of WSPC

Chris Voigt, Executive Director of WSPC put together a Team Potato for STP

Riders enjoying WA Fries at Centralia Community College

BLOOMSDAY

To help spread the word about the nutritional value of potatoes for athletes, WSPC once again sponsored the Bloomsday Trade Show, an integral part of the annual Lilac Bloomsday Run held each year in Spokane, Washington. We distributed 1,200 bags of potatoes (nearly 4,000 lbs. of reds, russets and yellows!) as well as lots of potato-themed swag to promote potato consumption to the 35,000 event participants

This was also our first year participating in Jr. Bloomsday, a race that has 2,500 students ranging from 3rd grade to 7th grade run a little more than one mile at Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) to prepare to participate in the big 12km Bloomsday run. The entry fee is \$20, and WSPC sponsored 20 students through a youth program. We are excited to see children getting excited about being active as they’re Powered by Potatoes.



Commissioner Marvin Wollman Participates in Bloomsday



WA Grown WINS 4th Emmy!

WSPC is thrilled to announce that WA Grown has secured its fourth Emmy Award, this time for Season 11, Episode 1: “The Journey” in the category of Informational/Instructional Long Form Content. This award-winning episode meticulously highlights the fascinating journey of Washington-grown food from the fertile fields of our state to international markets, such as Vietnam.

“The Journey” provides an insightful look into the complex and remarkable process of how our local produce reaches global consumers. The episode features interviews with dedicated farmers, logistics experts, and industry professionals who ensure that Washington’s high-quality crops are efficiently exported and enjoyed worldwide.

This prestigious recognition underscores the excellence and educational value of WA Grown, a program dedicated to showcasing the rich agricultural heritage of Washington State. Currently funded by a WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, WA Grown continues to educate and inspire viewers with compelling stories about the people and processes behind our food. The current grant is secured through September 2025.

Congratulations to the entire WA Grown team for this remarkable achievement and for their ongoing commitment to highlighting the incredible journey of Washington-grown food from field to table, both locally and internationally. Scan the QR Code to watch the episode.

Potato Summit Long Range Planning Meeting

In December 2023, WSPC hosted a Potato Summit in Spokane, WA. Every 4-5 years, WSPC invites members of the Washington potato industry to explore trends and challenges impacting our industry. This year, the format included speakers from the industry discussing research, weather trends, labor issues, and more. Breakout round table discussions resulted in an outline of priorities that will drive the association’s activities for years to come.



watch



CB Tech Potato Days is Back

After a three-year hiatus (due to COVID), Columbia Basin Technical Skills Center (CBTech) once again held its Annual Potato Days event. More than 1,000 5th graders from Moses Lake Elementary schools toured CB Tech following a curriculum based around our humble spud. Each group was led by CB Tech students dressed in potato costumes. The welding and engineering programs demonstrated a new potato launcher they constructed this year, in addition to making some adjustments to the two existing launchers. The Launcher that cuts a potato into french fries in the air was a fan favorite! The computer programming class created potato games with our Potato Pal characters and other fun games where potatoes were the star. The cosmetology class made a sugar scrub utilizing potato starch. The students get to choose their scent, mix it up, and use the scrub to wash their hands prior to the culinary students' program which began with a visit to the Simplot Fry Trailer. The kids grabbed fries from the trailer outside and headed into the kitchen, where they were greeted by the culinary students and an array of dipping sauces that they created to go with the fries. The kids voted on their favorite. This program allows the students from CB Tech to use the skills that they have learned in each field they are studying, offered them the opportunity to be role models, and interact with younger students. The 5th graders get an opportunity to see what CB Tech has to offer and become exposed to career opportunities that are out there for them. Together, they all learned about our vibrant Washington Potato Industry.



NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

WSPC proudly marked its 55th year of participation at the prestigious National Restaurant Show held May 18 - 21, 2024, in Chicago, IL. This year's event was a monumental gathering, featuring 2,240 exhibitors sprawled across an expansive 720,000 square feet—an impressive 10% increase in show space compared to last year. Totalling about 68,000 attendees, the show also saw a significant rise in international participation, with a 22% increase in attendees from 124 countries.

Over 2,000 exhibitors, the WSPC booth stood out as a crowd favorite, serving up nearly 6,000 delicious servings of fries. Our team showcased the quality and versatility of Washington State potatoes, highlighting their unmatched taste and texture that make them a staple in kitchens around the world.

Empanadas with Purple Potatoes and Beef



New Potato Recipes with Globally-Inspired Flavors

At WSPC, we're always exploring new and exciting ways to bring the world's flavors to your table while encouraging the use of Washington potatoes for delicious, nutritious meals. Our latest website updates include a collection of recipes that take your taste buds on a culinary journey across the globe. From the fiery spices of Asia to the hearty traditions of Latin America and the Mediterranean, we've crafted dishes that celebrate the versatility of Washington potatoes. Our new recipes are designed to inspire and delight, combining the familiar comfort of potatoes with bold international flavors.

Here are just a few highlights:



Spicy Kimchi Potato Salad

This vibrant dish combines the tangy, spicy flavors of kimchi with tender Washington potatoes, creating a unique salad that's perfect for any occasion.



Smashed Potatoes with Thai-Style Chili and Herb Sauce

Crispy, smashed potatoes are drizzled with a zesty sauce inspired by Thai cuisine, blending fresh herbs, chili, and lime for a dish that's bursting with flavor.

And these are just the beginning! We've developed a variety of recipes that cater to different tastes and preferences, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy. We invite you to explore the full collection of recipes on our newly updated website. Scan the QR code to check out all of our recipes at potatoes.com and start your Washington potato culinary adventure today!



Washington School Nutrition Association

WSPC has long been a supporter of the Washington School Nutrition Association (WSNA). The Association knows the importance of potatoes, the health benefits, and that they can keep the kids fuller for longer. This year's WSNA Conference was held in Tacoma, WA. Three hundred School Nutrition Directors and staff from around the state gathered for educational sessions and the trade show. We partnered with Chef Brenda Wattles, RDN, who is well-known in school nutrition circles. She has created multiple school recipes for us in the past that meet all the USDA requirements. This year, she hit it out of the park with three exceptional new recipes: A Spicy Thai Waffle Fry as the Asian flavors have been very popular in the schools; a tasty Bacon and Egg Tachos dish for a savory breakfast alternative; and a garlic parmesan French fry as an homage to the Mariners garlic fries. Chef Brenda also taught two classes at the event for the attendees to earn CEU's on Weights and Measures and demonstrated her garlic parmesan fries to those in attendance.

Many people made it to our booth to swipe the new recipes created by Chef Brenda. Over the years, we created a Resource Guide full of USDA-approved recipe information on potatoes, and where they can purchase the products made for schools. We also continue to collaborate with Chef Brenda and update our school nutrition page on our website as a reference guide they can use all year long.



GLOBAL PRODUCE & FLORAL SHOW WA GROWN PAVILION

The Global Produce and Floral Show in Anaheim, CA, provided the perfect stage for showcasing the rich bounty of Washington State's agricultural offerings within the WA Grown Pavilion, a collaborative space that brought together some of the region's finest producers, including WSPC, Chelan Ranch, Fosters Asparagus, Sunset Onion, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

This year marked the second consecutive year that the WA Grown Pavilion was made possible, thanks to a generous grant secured through WSDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. A highlight of the pavilion was the live cooking demonstrations by Chef Ben Leonard, who crafted custom recipes using the fresh produce from each participating organization and transformed them into mouth-watering dishes. These demonstrations not only showcased the quality of Washington's produce but also provided a direct connection between growers and consumers, highlighting the culinary potential of these crops.

With the continued support of the WSDA and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, the WA Grown Pavilion is poised to return next year, this time in Atlanta, GA, further solidifying its place as a key feature of The Global Produce and Floral Show. The success of this year's pavilion underscores the importance of collaboration and innovation in promoting Washington's specialty crops on a global stage.

MARKETING & INDUSTRY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE 2023-2024:

Josh Bunger, Chair

Mark Hammer, Vice Chair

Kraig Knutzen

Jordan Reed

Ignacio Marquez

Marvin Wollman

Roger Hawley

Frank Martinez*

Rebecca Sterner*

Kristi Gundersen*

Shelley Olsen*

Randi Hammer*

Staff: Brandy Tucker

* at large industry position

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

2024 OLYMPIA LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

The Legislature adjourned Sine Die as scheduled on the 60th day of the 2024 Legislative Session on March 7, 2024. Critical to the potato industry, a bill not included was seasonal flexibility for ag overtime that would benefit both workers and employers.

Maintaining Snake River Dams - The Lower Snake River Dams are critical to Washington's agriculture economy and transportation infrastructure. Removal of the four lower Snake River dams would significantly increase carbon emissions that contribute to climate change, increase regional energy costs, disrupt efficient river transportation, and substantially change irrigation for food security. It's imperative that Washington State defends the Lower Snake River Dams.

Operating & Capital Budget Items of Note:

Ag Fuel Refunds - \$30M, funding is provided for payments to support farm fuel users and transporters who purchased fuel for agricultural purposes exempt from the requirements of the climate commitment act, as described in RCW 70A.65.080(7)(e). Refunds will come through the Department of Licensing and will be in tiers based on the amount of fuel purchased: Under 1,000 gallons, \$600; 1,000 to 4,000 gallons, \$2,300; 4,000 to 10,000 gallons, \$3,400; and over 10,000 gallons, \$4,500.

Snake River Recreation Study - \$600K, State matching funds are provided for a federal plan of investments to replace and enhance recreation opportunities associated with the drawdown of reservoirs if the lower Snake River dams are removed.

Riparian Task Force - \$824K, Funding is provided to extend the work of the Riparian Task Force to develop implementation proposals based on the recommendations in the report due November 15, 2024.

Ag Mental Health - \$250K, Funding is provided for a workgroup to provide recommendations on mental health and suicide prevention for agricultural producers, farm workers, and their families, including whether an agricultural mental health hotline should be established.

Local Farm, Workers, and Food - \$250K, Funding is provided for grants to local farmers who hand-harvest vegetables with local labor and sell to local markets or schools. The funding is for the cost of up to four weeks of overtime pay, up to \$20,000.

Climate Position - \$131K, Funding is provided to WSDA for a climate lead position, funding cannot be expended or obligated prior to January 2025.

Odessa Pipeline Turnouts Project - \$5.5M, Funding to begin phased construction of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program Delivery System and begin design of additional distribution systems.

Water Resources - \$206K, Funding is provided solely to initiate the development of a statewide web map tool to integrate the Department of Ecology's water resources management databases.

Water Mapping - \$3.3M, Funding is provided to update surface water maps across the state, develop geospatial integration tools, and support the use, accuracy, and adoption of the state's hydrography dataset (funding lapses if initiative to repeal CCA passes).

Green Fertilizer - \$250K, Funding is provided in both budgets for a comprehensive report with recommendations on a grant program to support farmers purchasing green fertilizer, (funding lapses if initiative to repeal CCA passes).

Organic Certification - \$400K, Funding is provided to WSDA for grants to farmers to help offset the costs of gaining organic certification and the associated inspection fees.

Carbon Sequestration - \$2.5M for grants to improve carbon storage and sequestration on agricultural lands.

Transportation Budget Items of Note:

\$100 million for highway preservation for the remainder of this biennium and \$80 million in each of the subsequent two biennia.

Updates on Legislation of Note That Passed the Legislature:

HB 1752 - Modifying the application of the annual consumptive quantity calculation to change applications related to certain water rights held by the United States Bureau of Reclamation.

HB 2454 - Extending an existing hazardous substance tax exemption for certain agricultural crop protection products for two years.

SB 5972 - Restricting the use of Neonicotinoids to agricultural purposes where the applicator has a license.

SB 5793 - Expands eligibility for paid sick leave.

SB 6058 - Governor’s legislation: establishes the linkage of Washington’s Carbon Markets with California and Quebec Markets to potentially broaden the market and lower fuel prices.

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2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Supporting the Specialty Crop Farm Bill-Alliance’s Farm Bill priorities, who represents the U.S. specialty crop industry. The organization has completed a two year-long process to develop comprehensive priorities across all relevant titles of the Farm Bill, consistent with industry-wide recommendations including enhancing the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) currently funded at \$80 million annually under the Farm Bill. This program has been heavily utilized by the U.S. potato industry to fund beneficial research in the areas of soil health, potato breeding, nematode control and data generation for science-based pesticide evaluation. The Alliance is asking to increase SCRI funding \$50 million annually and restore matching fund waiver authority at the Secretary’s discretion.

Increase Funding for the Trade Title of the Farm Bill
The U.S. potato industry is highly export-dependent and has used USDA’s export programs to open and develop significant overseas markets. The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program was used by the potato industry to open the Mexican market to U.S. fresh potatoes. It’s asked that an additional \$200 million per year be added to the Market Access Program (MAP). MAP has been essential in building markets for U.S. potato exports such as Japan, Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan, and other valuable countries.

Strengthen Resources to Prevent or Eradicate Pest and Disease Threats
USDA’s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service

(APHIS) has administered the Plant Pest and Disease Management/Disaster Prevention Program for over a decade. This program seeks to analyze the pathways that phytosanitary threats may take to enter the U.S., enhance the oversight of those pathways thereby reducing risks, and devote resources to eradicating threats should they become established in the U.S. With the recent APHIS report detailing the high risk of potato wart entering the U.S. from Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, and the devastating impact this could have on the industry, this program is even more essential in the future to U.S. potato growers. Funding has been requested for \$90M per year.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CIFA) and USDA must reduce the risk of potato wart being transmitted to the U.S. The province of Prince Edward Island (PEI) in Canada has been dealing with a virulent disease called potato wart for over 20 years. This disease is not present in the U.S., but if it were allowed to become established in production areas, it would cause immediate impact to U.S. growers of over \$300 million in damage and billions of dollars more in indirect harm to the communities the U.S. potato industry supports.

Japan Fresh Market Access
Although the U.S. has market access to Japan for chipping potatoes since 2006 (and that market has grown considerably), the U.S. is seeking market access for all fresh potatoes, including table stock potatoes. Once opened, Japan will become a economically important market for U.S. fresh potato

exports estimated at \$150 million to \$200 million annually (a 10-15% increase in global U.S. fresh potato exports). Continued conversations with USDA are occurring to open access to this important export market.

Fresh Potato Access to Mexico
Due in part to significant pressure by members of Congress, in May of 2022, after years of disputes with the U.S government over fresh potato market access, Mexico finally opened their entire country to fresh potatoes from the United States. This action occurred following a Mexican Supreme Court decision in March 2021 that rejected lawsuits from Mexico’s potato cartel (CONPAPA) against their own government intended to prevent U.S. fresh potato imports. Since that time, U.S. fresh potato shipments have been interrupted with obstruction and continued USDA support is needed to resolve these border issues.

Restoration of Tariff Benefits Lost Under TPP Withdrawal
In early 2020, the U.S. and Japan announced the completion of a new Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The U.S.-Japan FTA restored tariff benefits lost after the U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). While this news was welcomed in the most important TPP market, the U.S. is losing market share in Vietnam and other SE Asian markets to competitors due to higher tariffs. Vietnam is an important and dynamic market. Interest in additional markets joining TPP, such as Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, and even the UK, demonstrate the importance of rejoining the group.

Request \$4.5 Million in NIFA Potato Research Special Grants in the FY25 Budget
For more than 30 years, the US potato industry has worked with Congressional members to secure funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Potato Research Special Grants, which supports the future of the U.S. potato industry through the funding of competitive potato breeding projects across the country. Each of these peer-reviewed research projects addresses actual challenges impacting potato production, utilizes the expertise of USDA scientists and independent plant breeders, and delivers measurable improvements in the efficiency and quality of potato production.

Maintain Report Language that Recognizes the Value of the ARS Potato Collaborative Research Program for FY24

Agricultural Research Services (ARS) funding for the potato research projects under this program is typically around \$1.12 million. The potato industry requested the following language regarding NIFA Integrated Activities on Pest Management Programs be included in the FY25 Agriculture Appropriations Bill Potato Research. Such programs help scientists track potential pest outbreaks and provide growers and industry professionals with current information on specific and timely treatments. Additionally, the programs help identify serious diseases, such as late blight, in their early stages, allowing for preventive measures to be put into place quickly to avoid crop losses.

The 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans must recognize what we all know: potatoes are a vegetable. As the 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) process has begun, the Administration posed a question to the Advisory Committee whether potatoes should be a vegetable or a grain. The Committee must reflect the overwhelming science-based determination that potatoes are vegetables and consumption should be encouraged as they are nutritionally valuable, flexible and low cost.

Congress must continue to allow equal access for potatoes in federal school meals regulations through the appropriations process. For seven years, a bipartisan provision has been included in every fiscal year’s enacted Agriculture Appropriations Bill that prevents USDA from enforcing limitations on potatoes in accessing the school breakfast program.

Support Endangered Species Act (ESA) Reform
The negative impact that environmental activist lawsuits and adverse regulatory decisions have generated under ESA are substantial and constraining reasonable activities by the agriculture industry in managing its natural resources. Productive agricultural land is being taken out of production and access to essential water resources is being reduced or eliminated. The results are generational competitive losses and negative economic impacts. To correct this broken system, a two-pronged effort is necessary that will involve:

- » Regulatory reform primarily within “the Services” (National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).
- » Legislative reforms undertaken by Congress to restore reasonable economic considerations in the regulatory process.

Congress should enact necessary reforms and press the Services to reform processes to minimize these unnecessary economic impacts. Oppose Efforts to Reduce Science-Based Decision-Making in the Regulation of Pesticides. Thoroughly reviewed and well-regulated pesticides are essential to maintaining a competitive agriculture industry and keeping pace with pests and diseases that are constantly evolving and causing damage to valuable crops

Labor Issues

The agriculture industry is experiencing a critical shortage of labor to plant and harvest crops. Estimates are that upwards of 70% of the overall agriculture labor in the U.S. is provided by an improperly documented immigrant workforce. This highly vulnerable workforce creates uncertainty for the workers and the farms and ranches that employ them. The sole agricultural guest worker program (H-2A) supplies only 10% of the necessary agricultural workforce, in part because it operates in a cumbersome and unresponsive manner. In particular, the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) that is required for the H-2A program has skyrocketed recently by over 20% annually in certain states. This unworkable structure drives employers away from the program and harms investment in rural America that would otherwise occur. The passage of the bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act in the 116th Congress was the first time the House of Representatives had successfully acted upon agricultural labor reform in over 20 years. In the 117th Congress, the House passed this bipartisan compromise for the second time. Unfortunately, the Senate failed both times to provide improvements and both efforts died.

Congress must create a secure and long-term fix to this crisis through the following actions:

- » Predictable market-based wage rate
- » Administration by the Dept. of Agriculture instead of the Dept. of Labor
- » Responsive visa terms and no “hard caps” on participation
- » Preventing predatory lawsuits against employers
- » Reducing costs of program participation

Stabilize the current improperly documented workforce through a program with the following goals:

- » Incentivize workers to remain in American agriculture
- » Respect that some of these workers may have lost their ties to their home countries and may be unable to self-deport or “touchback”
- » Consider that workers may have family members (either American or foreign) that will factor into their decision to participate in the program.

These pieces must be in place before any additional enforcement measures can be implemented. Mandatory E-Verify (alone or with an “agriculture exemption”) would be extremely destructive to our industry before an ag labor solution has been fully implemented. Additionally, the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) increases are unreasonable and harm producers using the H-2A program. The unpredictability of a wage that can fluctuate by over 15% drives employers away from the program and harms investment in rural America that would otherwise occur.

OLYMPIA POTATO DAY

Potato farmers gathered in Olympia to meet with the Lieutenant Governor, State Legislators, staff members, and agency personnel. The Olympia campus was buzzing with excitement as 1,600 baked potatoes were served to potato lovers in Olympia, WA. Grower perspectives were shared, communicating various challenges, and expressing the need to fix the fee exemption on fuels used for agricultural purposes under the Climate Commitment Act. Farmers discussed concerns regarding the cost of ag overtime, proposed regulations managing refrigerants, 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.



REMEMBERING
Mike Madsen



Our Washington potato community suffered a great loss this year with the sudden passing of current Potato Commissioner, Mike Madsen. Mike was a dedicated servant to the Washington State potato industry. As a past Chair of the Potato Commission, Mike was a thoughtful leader, always reaching out to others for their opinions and ideas. He led with vision and optimism, always thinking about the future. Our conversations with Mike often focused on “What can we be doing today that will help our growers be better prepared for what might be on the horizon.” Mike was passionate about potatoes, and it showed! He was a staunch supporter of potato research. He believed investing in new variety development was critical in helping us solve today and tomorrow’s production issues. Mike was part of a small team of people who literally looked at hundreds of thousands of genetically different potato plants in search of new varieties that were high-yielding, high-quality, and resistant to the pests and diseases we face today. Mike was also a Board Member of the Potato Variety Management Institute (PVMI), promoting those new varieties that help our growers maintain their sustainability. Mike was also an active member of the Northwest Potato Research Consortium. He enjoyed reading stacks of research proposals, evaluating which ones would directly benefit our potato growers. Though the loss of Mike leaves a void that can’t be filled, he leaves us a legacy of what giving back to the potato industry really means.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2023-2024:

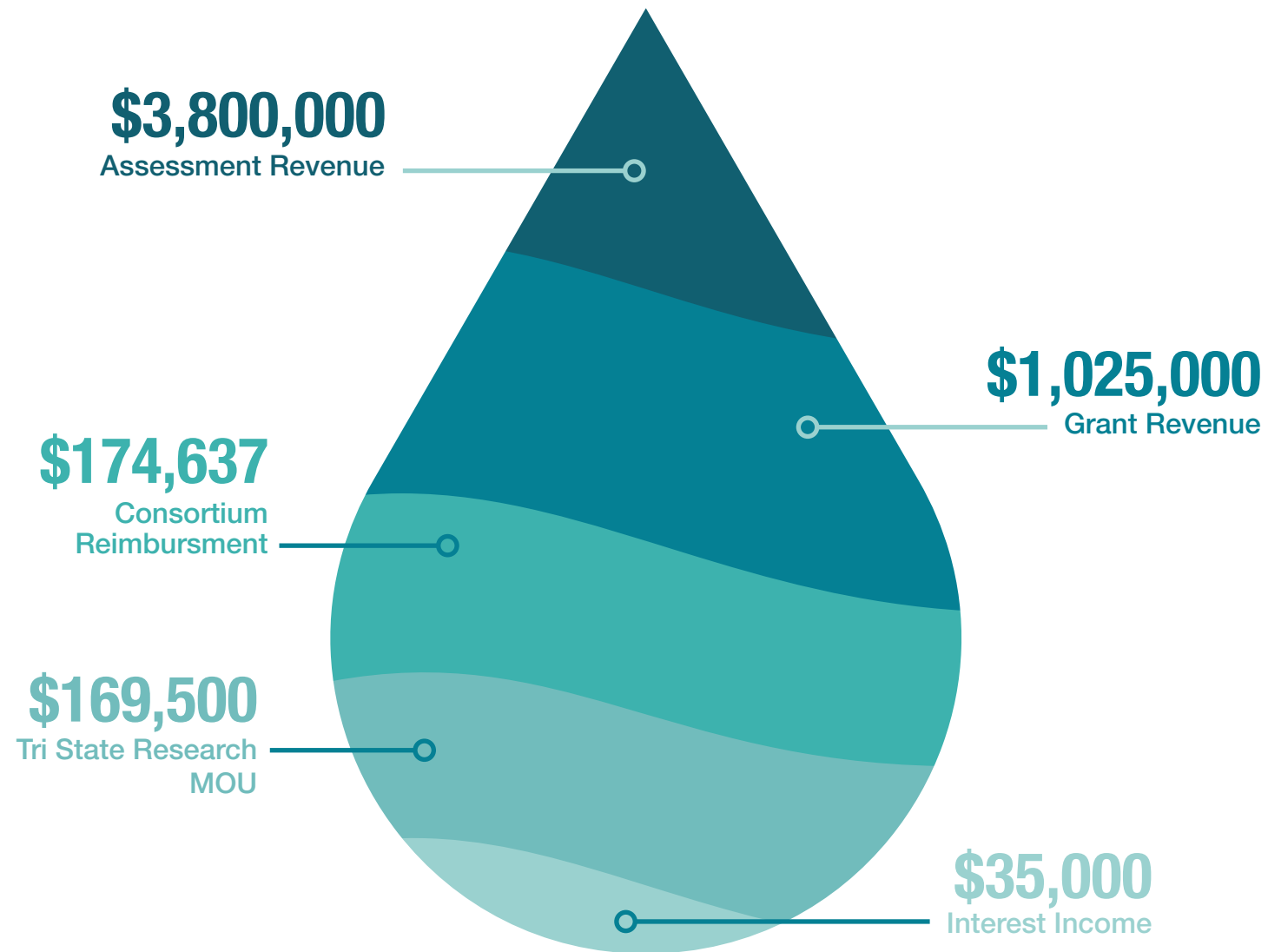
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| Kraig Knutzen, Chair | Adam Weber | Mike Dodds* | Ben Harris* |
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| Ignacio Marquez | Lynn Olsen* | Damon Christensen* | |

* at large industry position

FINANCIALS

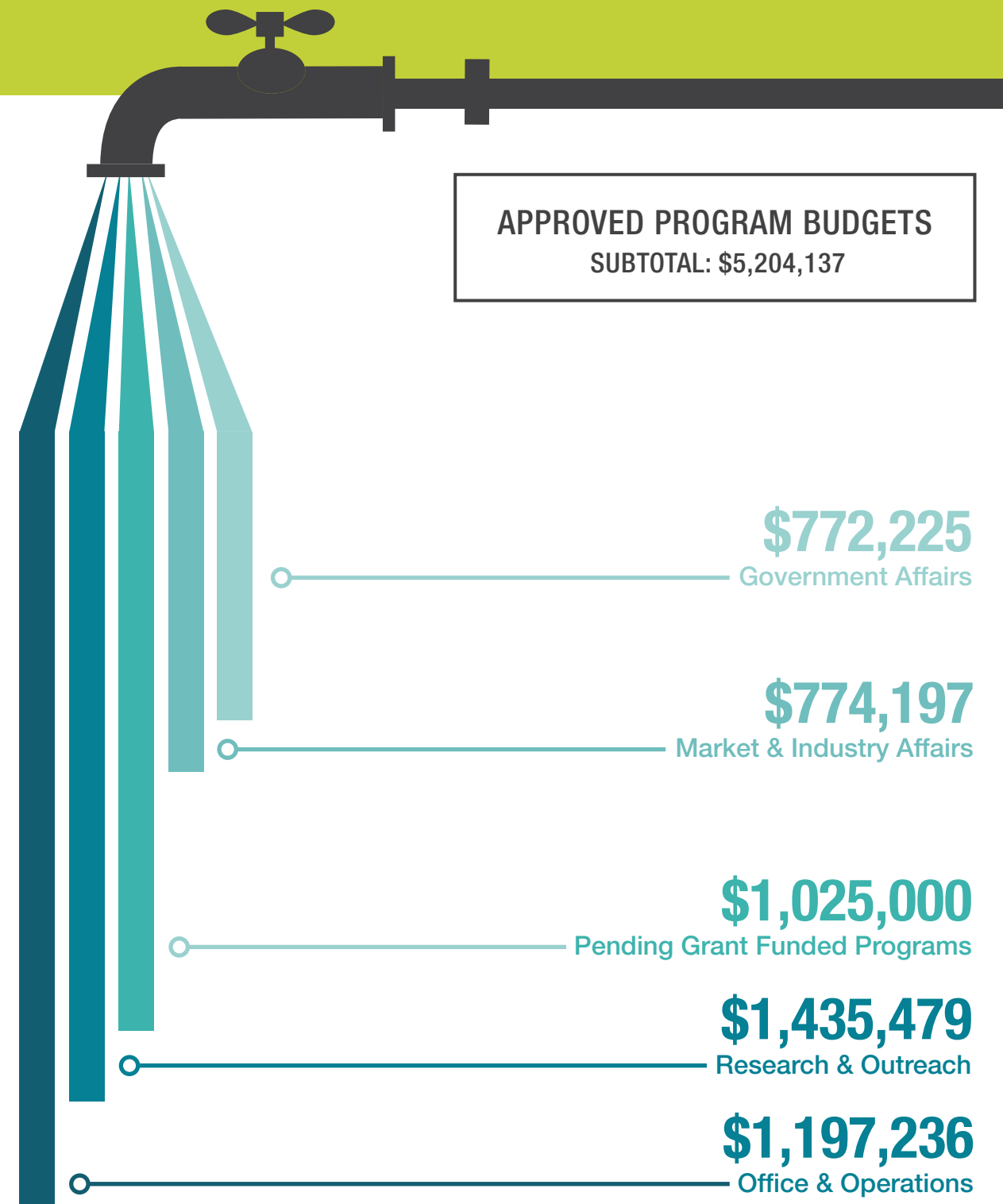
APPROVED BUDGET REVENUE

SUBTOTAL: \$5,204,137



APPROVED PROGRAM BUDGETS

SUBTOTAL: \$5,204,137



DIRECT SPENDING PROJECTS

SUBTOTAL: \$298,408

\$85,000 Government Affairs Direct Spend
\$83,408 Research & Outreach Direct Spend

\$70,000 Office & Operation Direct Spend
\$60,000 Marketing & Industry Direct Spend

Announcing Staff Changes to the Northwest Potato Research Consortium

Dr. Andy Jensen has managed the Northwest Potato Research Consortium (NPRC) since its inception in 2013. After 25 years of service to the potato industry, Andy fully retired in June 2024. Raina Spence was hired in October 2023 to assume the role of NPRC Director, benefiting from months of cross-training and collaboration. Having first served the potato industry as a graduate student studying potato late blight in the early 2000s, Raina brings decades of experience to her new role as the NPRC director. With a career that spans university extension work to international diplomacy, Raina most recently hails from the fresh produce food safety sector, where she has been a producer advocate and held leadership roles within the International Fresh Produce Association's Food Safety Council. She will be actively seeking input from growers, researchers, and other stakeholders during and after the growing season in an effort to continuously advance potato research in the region and beyond. Raina may be reached at rspence@potatoes.com.

Potato Academy 2024: A Premier Educational Event for WA Potato Growers

WSPC provides potato growers and farm workers with annual educational opportunities that include the Washington/Oregon Potato Conference General Session and Ag Innovation Session. Also, every year, we fund and are involved in Washington State University's Potato Day in Othello, WA, led by Dr. Mark Pavsek. Over the past two years, we have offered the WSPC Potato Academy, a symposium of experts who covered topics important to potato growers. In 2024, the Potato Academy provided presentations on integrated pest management, potato storage, water use, and agronomy with Doctors, Tim Waters, Alan Schreiber, Mark Pavsek, Mr. John Klimes, and Mr. Bret Reynolds shared their expertise, answered questions and participated in round table discussions. Also in 2024, we provided a one-hour webinar with Drs. Tim Waters and Carrie Wohleb discussing the Washington State University Potato Decision Aid System.



GRANTS TO OUR RESEARCHERS FROM OTHER AGENCIES THAT BENEFIT WA POTATO GROWERS

Research that we fund frequently acts as a catalyst leading to other research projects funded by various state and federal agencies. Below are grants received by our scientists from agencies in 2024 to study issues that are important to Washington potato production.

Beet Leafhopper And Associated Pathogens In Columbia Basin: Impact Of Crop Type And Abiotic Factors: Kylie Swisher Grimm. Washington State Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crop Block Grant, \$249,517

Sustainable Management Of Wireworms By Targeting Adult Click Beetles: Jackie Serrano, Louis Nottingham. Washington State Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crop Block Grant, \$250,000

Enhancing Integrated Insect Pest Management Strategies For U.S. Potato Production Systems: Gina Angelella. National Institute of Food and Agriculture, \$163,288

Developing A Solanum Sisymbriifolium Based Biopesticide For Plant Parasitic Nematode Contro: Cynthia Gleason, Louise-Marie Dandurand, Inga Zasada, Suzette Galinato. National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Methyl Bromide Transitions Program, \$606,818

Agricultural Biosecurity: A versatile, high-throughput, molecular diagnostic protocol to detect plant pathogens: Chakradhar Mattupalli, Ana Cristina Fulladolsa, Melanie Filiatrault; Amy Charkowski. National Institute of Food and Agriculture, \$999,656

The Whirligig Mite And New Biological Control Opportunities in Potatoes: David R Horton, Rodney Cooper, Tim Waters, Bonnie Ohler. USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$37,000

A Long-Term Trial To Address Critical Soil Health Questions In Potato-Based Cropping Systems In The Columbia Basin: Steve Culman, Mark Pavsek, Andy McGuire, Tim Waters. Washington Soil Health Initiative, \$298,763

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, \$29,222

Developing New Tools To Predict Migration Of Insect Vectors Into Potato Crops: Kylie Swisher Grimm, David Crowder. USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$74,553

Characterization Of Novel Viruses Pathogenic To The Powdery Scab Pathogen Spongospora Subterranean: Kylie Swisher Grimm, Alex Karasev. USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$45,088

Beet Leafhopper And Associated Pathogens In Columbia Basin-Impact Of Crop Type And Abiotic Factors: Kylie Swisher Grimm, David Crowder, Carrie Wohleb, Gina Angelella. WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, \$249,517

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, Rodney Cooper, Andy Jensen, Carrie Wohleb, Erik Wenninger, Kasia Duellman. USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$37,889

Testing the efficacy of entomopathogenic fungi in controlling potato psyllid (Bactericera cockerelli) in potatoes: Gina Angelella (USDA-ARS), Josephine Antwi (OSU), Ken Frost (OSU), Rodney Cooper (USDA-ARS), USDA-ARS State Partnership Program, \$50,000

Enhancing Integrated Insect Pest Management Strategies For U.S. Potato Production Systems: Zsafia Szendrei, David Douches, Russell Groves, David Crowder, Paul Mitchell, Brian Nault, Andrei Alyokhin, Tim Waters, Gina Angelella, Jessica Goldberger, Katherine Dentzman, Punya Nachappa, Bee Khim Chim, National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Initiative. SCRI, \$8,121,095

Managing Soil Moisture And Soil Physical Health For Annual Specialty Crops In Northwestern Washington. LaHue G.T., Mattupalli C., Galinato S., Griffin LaHue D.E., Neely H., S. Culman. Washington State Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crop Block Grant, \$249,416

Nematode Management In Columbia Basin Potatoes: Alan Schreiber. Washington Commission on Integrated Pest Management, \$22,460

Collecting Baseline Information For Developing Insect Phenology Models For Potatoes: Tim Waters, Washington Commission on Integrated Pest Management, \$19,900

PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE NORTHWEST POTATO RESEARCH CONSORTIUM FY2024-25

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

Screening Palmer Amaranth And Waterhemp For Resistance To Potato Herbicides: Albert Adjesiwor, Joel Felix, Pam Hutchinson, Rui Liu, \$27,909

Yellow Nutsedge Management In Pacific Northwest Potato Production: Rui Liu, Tim Waters, Joel Felix, \$40,000

Plant Pathology/Soil Health

Understanding Factors Involved In The Development Of Potato Surface Blemish Diseases: Chakradhar Mattupalli, Ken Frost, \$40,000

Minimum Continuation Of SCRI Potato Soil Health project: Ken Frost, Brenda Schoeder, Steve Culman, Deirdre Griffin LaHue, \$17,381

Improved Management Of Soft Rot In The Field And Post-Harvest: Jeff Miller, Nora Olsen, Mike Thornton, \$40,000

Alternatives To Metam Fumigation For Early Dying Management: Jeff Miller, Ken Frost, \$46,970

Alternative Carriers For Potato Seed Piece Treatments For Control Of Fusarium Dry Rot Seed Decay: Jeff Miller, \$9,850

Support For The Investigation Of Emerging and Persistent Potato Diseases In The Northwest: Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$24,000

Advancing Our Understanding of Drivers of Soil Health In Potato Fields In The Pacific Northwest: Steve Culman, Deirdre Griffin LaHue, Ken Frost, \$44,305

Developing A Fast And Accurate Assay To Quantify Verticillium Dahliae Inoculum in Soils: Ken Frost, \$10,740

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

Probiotic Capsule That Boosts Potato Immunity Against Root Knot Nematodes: Cynthia Gleason, \$35,000

Mimicking Enhanced Calcium Signaling For Potato Resistance Against M. Chitwoodi: Cynthia Gleason, \$30,593

Harnessing The Natural Resistance Of Solanum Sisymbriifolium For Generating Root-Knot Nematode Resistance In Potato: Cynthia Gleason, Allan Caplan, Joe Kuhl, \$35,000

Development Of Nematicides For Pacific Northwest Potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$32,000

Potato Virus

Foliar And Tuber Symptoms Induced By PVY Strains In PNW Potato Cultivars Under Screenhouse Conditions: Alex Karasev, Ken Frost, \$36,264

Hiding In Plain Sight: Investigating The Genetics That Determine The (in-) Visibility of PVY: Aymeric Goyer, \$41,421

Monitoring The PVY Strains In Othello And Hermiston Trials: Alex Karasev, Ken Frost, \$28,000

Entomology

Development Of Insecticides For Pacific Northwest Potatoes: Alan Schreiber, \$36,000

Identifying Biological Controls Of Insect Vectors In Non-Crop Habitats Of The Columbia Basin: Rodney Cooper, Tim Waters, \$32,082

Testing The Efficacy Of Entomopathogenic Fungi In Controlling Beet Leafhopper, Potato Tuber Moth, And Various Aphid Species In Potatoes In The Lower Columbia Basin Of Oregon: Josephine Antwi, Rodney Cooper, \$30,000

Managing Insect Pests Without Neonicotinoids, Pyrethroids And Organophosphates: Stuart Reitz, Erik Wenninger, Tim Waters, Louis Nottingham, \$55,000

Cropping Systems, Plant Physiology

Screening Potato Cultivars For Markers Of Wound Response And Wound-Healing Potential: Jake Blauer, \$42,147

Alleviating The Development Of Pressure Bruise Symptoms After Unloading From Bulk Storage: Gustavo Teixeira, Nora Olsen, \$37,360

Measuring The Respiration Rate Of Russet Potatoes Under Different Storage Conditions: Gustavo Teixeira, Nora Olsen, \$34,005

Can Wound Healing Be Enhanced At Low Curing Temperatures And Maintain Potato Quality During Storage?: Gustavo Teixeira, Nora Olsen, \$34,025

Can We Increase Potato Yield By Optimizing Soil Thiamin Production?: Aymeric Goyer, \$32,021

Exploring Phytosanitary Methods To Obtain Zero Plant Emergence With Sprout Inhibitors: Nora Olsen, Gustavo Teixeira, \$41,750

Modeling Interactive Effects Of Variable Irrigation And Nitrogen Application To Improve Resource Use Efficiency And Reduce Nitrate Contamination In Potato Production Systems: Ruijun Qin, \$42,076

Evaluation Of Soil Potassium Availability In The Columbia Basin And Snake River Valley: Ruijun Qin, \$19,413

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

Variety Development Base Funding

University Of Idaho And ARS Base Funding For Variety Development: Rhett Spear, Rich novy, Mike Thornton, Nora Olsen, Gustavo Teixeira, \$139,998

Washington State University Base Funding For Variety Development: Jacob Blauer, Mark Pavek, \$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 \$1,498,310

Other Research and Service Projects Funded by the WSPC

In addition to research funding the 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 FY2024-25.

WSU Research Support–Othello Research Unit: Mark Pavek, \$81,554

Washington Commercial Potato Seed Lot Trial: Mark Pavek, \$40,977

Regional Sampling Network For Insect Pests Of Potato In The Columbia Basin Of WA: Carrie Wohleb, Kylie Swisher Grimm, \$30,575

Development Of A Crop Protection Guide For Potatoes That Can Integrate With The Potato Decision Aid System: Carrie Wohleb, \$9,750

Assessment Of Management Practices At Vine-Kill On Skin Set And Tuber Quality: Chakradhar Mattupall, Gabe Lahue, \$19,791

RESEARCH & OUTREACH COMMITTEE 2023-2024:

Jordan Reed, Chair
Marvin Wollman, Vice Chair
Ellie Charvet
Heath Gimmestad
Roger Hawley
Andrew Hyer
Matt Taylor*
Greg Harris*
Paul Yamane*
Ubaldo Martinez*
Matt Funk*
Austin Lenssen*
Staff: Matthew Blua

* at large industry position

SERVING THE POTATO COMMUNITY

The WSPC is dedicated to enhancing the profitability and sustainability of the Washington potato industry. To serve that goal, the research and outreach arm of the 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 bring our expertise to the Tri-State Potato Breeding Program during field selections and the annual Potato Research and Breeding Meeting, and going forward will be part owners of new varieties produced here.
- We are represented on the board of the Washington Commission on Integrated Pest Management that provides grant funding for pest management projects that impact potatoes and other crops.
- 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 and make decisions that are important to Washington grown potatoes.
- We keep abreast of new developments in science and technology, including integrated pest management, soil health, 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 have recently enhanced our website which now contains new content, including informative videos, Good Agricultural Practices handbooks, and a collection of websites that feature farm safety videos for farm worker education.
- 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.



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