



Courtesy of Kasia Kinzer

Kasia Kinzer, director of the plant diagnostic lab at North Dakota State University, has been hired to be University of Idaho's new seed potato pathologist, filling the position vacated when Phil Nolte retired in early 2015.

## UI hires new crop disease pathologists

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

IDAHO FALLS — The University of Idaho has hired crop disease experts to fill two vacant positions and plans to start a diagnostic laboratory in Parma, where a wide variety of crops will be tested for pathogens.

Kasia Kinzer, director of the plant diagnostic laboratory at North Dakota State University, will be UI Extension's new seed potato pathologist, replacing Phil Nolte, who retired in early 2015.

Kinzer, 45, will share time between offices in Aberdeen and Idaho Falls and is scheduled to start with UI during the week of Jan. 11.

James Woodhall, of the United Kingdom, has been running a federal laboratory in York focused on potato diagnostics with the country's Food and Environmental Research Agency. Woodhall, who starts in February, will be a general plant pathologist covering Idaho's major crops. He will be based at the UI's Parma Research and Extension Center.

"He's very well respected in the plant pathology molecular techniques area," said Mark McGuire, interim director of the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station.

McGuire said Woodhall's first duty will be setting up UI's planned plant diagnostic laboratory in Parma, which will aid in the rapid detection of Idaho crop diseases.

McGuire said support for the lab is "mostly coming from the agronomists on the faculty and the county extension agents saying we need to better identify the problems out in the industry, and to do that, we need a location to send (samples) to get an accurate assessment of the diseases out there."

McGuire estimates it will take Woodhall six months to a year to get the laboratory set up to accept a large number of samples. Both Woodhall and Kinzer will be allocated \$150,000 to get their labs started. McGuire said some renovations of the Parma facility will likely be in order to accommodate the new diagnostic lab.

Woodhall, who has already done some work in Aberdeen while on sabbatical, will hire a single support person in his first year to help get the laboratory running, with subsequent hires based on the volume of samples processed by the lab.

Kinzer spent six years in Idaho after completing her master's degree at the University of Minnesota and working a year for an Iowa State University crop epidemiologist. She spent 11 months working under UI nematologist Saad Hafez in Parma and remained in Idaho to work for a small vegetable seed company, before becoming director of the NDSU diagnostic lab. In September, Kinzer also finished a Ph.D. in plant pathology from NDSU.

"I'm very excited to be able to focus on one crop," Kinzer said.

McGuire said Kinzer will work closely with Woodhall on seed potato pathology issues.

Kinzer's husband, Dwight, operates his own agricultural engineering business. They have two children, Coleman, 13, and Elyce, 14.

# Northwest benefiting from potato research cooperation

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

EAGLE, Idaho — Leaders of the potato commissions in Idaho, Oregon and Washington state believe they're better positioned to bring in USDA grants now that they're pooling their research dollars.

The commissions began funding projects together in 2012, operating as the Northwest Potato Research Consortium.

Andy Jensen, the consortium's director, said industry officials representing the research committees of each commission received more than 50 rudimentary research project outlines during a late-October meeting in Portland, Ore., and requested full proposals to further evaluate 38 of those projects.

Prior to a Dec. 15 deadline, Jensen said scientists submitted detailed proposals, requesting more than \$2 million from a \$1.5 million funding pool. The Washington and Idaho commissions each contribute \$650,000 to the research fund, and Oregon allocates \$200,000 — roughly equivalent to what each commission invested in research prior to the partnership.

During the third week of January, the state research committees will rank the projects by perceived importance, and three members from each commission will make final decisions during a Jan. 29 meeting in Pasco, Wash.

Jensen pulled out one of the submissions — a collaborative project led by Oregon State University, proposing to study genetic resistance in spuds to verticillium wilt and

nematodes — and submitted it for a roughly \$600,000 USDA grant seeking to promote cooperation among researchers in different states. Jensen said he identified additional scientists to include in the proposal to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Specialty Crop Multi-state Grant Program.

"We have the three states working together on paper in an official way so when we as an industry or research community want to apply for big USDA grants, we can effectively say we're working together as a Northwest industry," Jensen said.

Jensen said crop scientists in the three states are sharing ideas as they research common problems and are collaborating more than ever before.

University of Idaho Extension weed specialist Pam

Hutchinson said the consortium's approach has expedited the approval process for research funding, and the policy of taking pre-proposals has helped researchers avoid needless work on applications that don't make the cut.

Furthermore, Hutchinson said, feedback from Jensen helps researchers hone their projects when before submit in-depth proposals.

On Dec. 17, members of UI's Potato Pest Management Advisory Committee met in Aberdeen to identify priorities for future research, guiding their funding requests from the consortium and other grant sources. Aphid research and preparing for the onset of chemical resistance among Colorado potato beetles were among the top priorities of the industry officials in attendance.


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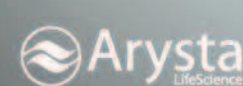


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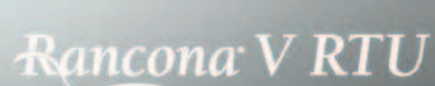


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