

John O'Connell/Capital Press

Jeremiah Clark looks over quinoa plants he's raising to produce his own varieties fit for Eastern Idaho conditions June 2 within the new quinoa processing facility he's making in Idaho Falls. Clark has continued increasing his guinoa production this season.

# E. Idaho expanding quinoa production

### By JOHN O'CONNELL Capital Press

IDAHO FALLS — A local businessman who made Eastern Idaho the nation's top quinoa growing region in 2015 is increasing his production of the nutritious, gluten-free crop this season.

Jeremiah Clark, who contracted with local growers for just under 400 quinoa acres last season, has about 600 acres under contract this season. He's also added two new growers and now works with 10 farmers spanning from Driggs to American Falls.

"Last year, we were shooting for 1,000 pounds per acre, which we thought would be pretty good with the prices,' Clark said. "It seemed everybody came in between 1,100 and 1,400 pounds."

Clark had hoped to increase his operation's scope to between 2,000 and 3,000 quinoa acres this season, but prices have dropped sharply recently, dipping well below his prior \$1-per-pound contract rate.

He's poised to open a qui-

noa cleaning, color sorting and processing facility in Idaho Falls within the next two months. Clark has worked with another packing facility to process his quinoa thus far and is still running last season's supply. His new facility will be capable of processing 1,000 pounds per hour, sufficient to handle his entire crop in a month, and of packaging quinoa in smaller bags.

Clark said a couple of large flour mills have contracted for a couple of hundred acres of the current quinoa crop, for use in breakfast cereal production, wanting an "American-sourced quinoa they can depend on year in and year out.'

He's also raising his first 150 acres of quinoa for the organic market and has interest from a West Coast organic flour producer.

"There are no herbicides or pesticides labeled for quinoa anyway," Clark said. "I figured we're 90 percent of the way (to organic) anyway."

Clark plans to apply for a patent this fall on the first variety he's developed in his own greenhouse for Eastern Idaho's conditions, called Kailey.

Firth farmer David Mundt is raising 5 acres of Kailey for seed this season. Mundt was intrigued by quinoa when he saw fields during his mission to Peru with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"For me, it's an opportunity to diversify," Mundt said. "Further in the future, diversification is going to be key to our industry.

Clark also has a second variety in development, called Eli, capable of producing a crop within 90 days. It yields denser heads with larger seeds on shorter stalks, preventing the plants from tipping.

University of Idaho is conducting trials this season into quinoa fertilizer application and seeding methods.

Soda Springs grower Larry Simmons has hedged his bet with quinoa, planting 30 acres simultaneously with alfalfa. If all goes well, he said he'll harvest the quinoa, which grows taller than alfalfa, but he still has the hay as a backup.

# Quinoa investigated for PCN control

## By JOHN O'CONNELL Capital Press

FIRTH, Idaho - One of Eastern Idaho's newest and most promising specialty crops may also provide another tool for growers in the region looking to suppress a quarantined pest, pale cyst nematode.

For the past few years, the region's growers have slowly increased their planted acreage of quinoa, an ancient, gluten-free crop native to Peru valued for its high nutritional content.

Ten local quinoa growers are raising about 600 acres of the crop, but those numbers could rise markedly if a University of Idaho trial conducted at the Idaho Potato Commission's behest demonstrates quinoa can help control PCN, as research in South America has demonstrated.

Idaho's PCN species, discovered in 2006, is known to exist in the U.S. only within a 7.5-mile radius encompassing prime potato production acres in Bingham and Bonneville counties. USDA is treating 2,897 infested acres, and the program includes another 7,032 acres governed by special testing and sanitation requirements due to associations with infested fields.

The program abandoned the use of its most effective treatment, methyl bromide, in May 2014 due to concerns about it carrying over into subsequent crops. The program has been moving toward planting litchi tomato as a so-called trap crop, which stimulates hatching of cysts in the absence of a viable host, but the plant presents special challenges due to its current status as a weed.

"(Quinoa) would be a cash crop rather than growing litchi tomato," said Brian Searle, president of Idaho Farm Bu-



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Pat Kole, vice president of legal and government affairs for the Idaho Potato Commission, inspects a quinoa field in Firth, Idaho. At Kole's request, the University of Idaho is conducting a trial to determine the potential use of quinoa as a tool in Idaho's pale cyst nematode eradication program.

reau Federation and a regulated grower who serves on a PCN advisory committee. "Not only would it be a payment, but litchi tomato is on the invasive species list. Litchi tomato, I think, is falling off the list of options real fast."

On the morning of June 2, Pat Kole, IPC's vice president of legal and government affairs, evaluated a small quinoa field in Firth, on ground that was recently deregulated from the PCN associated fields list.

Kole said UI has planted quinoa varieties in a greenhouse, along with PCN eggs. Results of the trial should be available within a month, he said. Furthermore, Inga Zasada, a nematologist with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Corvallis, Ore., confirmed plans to test several plant species, including quinoa, against PCN at the request of Louise-Marie Dandurand, director of UI's pale cyst nematode project. Zasada knows of a single paper from Bolivia highlighting quinoa's effectiveness in controlling PCN.

Kole explained he thought of testing quinoa after hearing a speech in Boise by Jeremiah Clark, an Idaho Falls businessman who has bred quinoa varieties for the region and is marketing the growers' pro-duction. Kole said PCN, like quinoa, is a native of Peru. A quick literature check confirmed to Kole that quinoa may emit a natural nematicide.

"I got a hold of some researchers at UI. They agreed they would take some seed from Jeremiah," Kole said, adding the addition of quinoa into the PCN program could also give Clark's business a major boost. "They could have a crop that helps them both financially and in terms of dealing with the nematode issue."

Clark said prices paid for quinoa are down, but he sees great long-term demand.

"As long as we can compete with Peru, there's a 200 to 300 million pound market for it every year," Clark said, adding quinoa could also be chopped for forage.







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Farm regulators drop 'stop work' authority proposal Apart from refining "legequate authority there after

JD 6125R, 380 hours, premium cab, IVT,

JOHN DAY, Ore. - The Oregon Department of Agriculture has dropped a proposal to give the agency "stop work" authority over food processors and pesticide applicators.

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI

Earlier this year, ODA was considering asking the legislature for a new regulatory tool to prohibit companies from using equipment or taking actions that are potentially hazardous.

These "stop work" orders would be more specific than the agency's current authority to suspend or revoke the licenses of regulated companies

After "combing through" existing enforcement laws for state agencies, however, the agency decided to first try using tools that are already on the books, said Lisa Hanson, ODA's deputy director.

'We feel like we have ad-

a lot of work rethinking the statutes," she said during a June 7 meeting of the Oregon Board of Agriculture in John Day, Ore.

It will likely be possible to compel companies to "cease and desist" hazardous activities with statutory tools that ODA has not used in the past, said Katy Coba, the agency's director.

"If we exhaust those and they don't work, we can come back and look at new statutory authority," Coba said.

While the "stop work" idea was scrapped, ODA has also decided against seeking federal funds to conduct on-farm food safety inspections.

The agency will instead wait to see what role the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will play in on-farm enforcement of the Food Safety Modernization Act, the law that Congress passed in 2011 and is just now going into effect through new regulations.

islative concepts regarding agricultural policy, the ODA is also currently examining possible funding requests for next year's legislative session.

State agencies are expected to face a budget shortfall in the 2017-2019 biennium due to increased costs related to Oregon's Public Employee Retirement System.

However, state government may obtain several billion dollars in revenue if voters approve a ballot initiative raising corporate taxes this year.

The ODA is conservatively planning for budget cuts if the initiative fails, but the agency has also undertaken a parallel process to identify "asks" if it passes, said Coba.

"It's kind of a strange budget prep for us," she said.

The agency will have more specific budget plans ready to submit to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in September, she said.

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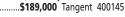
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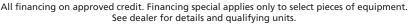
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