

Subscribe to our weekly Idaho email newsletter at CapitalPress.com/newsletters

Idaho



John O'Connell/Capital Press File
Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir hopes to draw up to 500 growers to the Big Idaho Potato Meeting on Nov. 14.

Potato truck spud gets upgrade

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

KETCHUM, Idaho — The Idaho Potato Commission plans to replace the 6-ton replica Russet Burbank hauled on its Great Big Idaho Potato Truck with a new model that's lighter, leaner and glows in the dark.

IPC President and CEO Frank Muir said the new spud will be 2 feet narrower, enabling the commission to operate the truck without wide-load restrictions, and special lighting beneath its translucent fiberglass facade will make it visible at night.

Muir explained wide loads can't be driven at night, and having a glowing spud should come in handy now that the truck will be eligible to drive in nighttime parades.

"The potato will look like it magically is glowing, and



Courtesy Idaho Potato Commission

The Idaho Potato Commission plans to build a new, glow-in-the-dark potato for its Great Big Idaho Potato Truck.

people will absolutely love it," Muir said during the Idaho Grower Shippers Association's 89th Annual Convention last month.

Muir said the new spud will appear almost identical to the current potato and will remain 27 feet long.

IPC intended for the spud to last a single year when it unveiled the truck in 2011 to celebrate its 75th anniversary. However, the organization opted to keep the truck rolling based on the promotion's popularity. The truck has now logged 148,000 miles, covering

7,200 U.S. cities, during its six years of touring and promoting the Idaho brand. IPC's Tater Team also supports local charities during the tours — most recently, a contribution to the American Red Cross to benefit victims of Hurricane Harvey during its stop at the IGSA meeting.

Each year, IPC has had to resurface and repaint the potato to repair cracks. Muir is also concerned that the boards beneath the facade may no longer be sound, potentially posing a risk to team members who ride on top of the tuber during parades.

Muir believes the project demonstrates IPC's commitment to operating the truck "until its wheels fall off."

He anticipates construction will cost "a couple hundred thousand dollars." It will be built by Chris and Sharolyn

Schofield of Weiser, who also built the spud currently on the potato truck and both of the giant potatoes that have been used in the annual New Year's Eve potato drop in Boise.

The latest potato-drop spud was equipped with lights to make it glow, and will provide a prototype for the potato truck upgrade.

Since the truck launched, IPC has featured it in a series of commercials starring "actual potato farmer" Mark Coombs and his "spud hound," who pursue the "missing" truck throughout the country but never manage to catch up with it.

Its first broadcast will be during the IPC-sponsored football game between Boise State University and Virginia. The commercial will continue airing on cable television, and IPC has started a streaming TV contract with Hulu.

Group plans Big Potato Meeting

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

EAGLE, Idaho — The Idaho Potato Commission is planning an all-day meeting featuring a lunch, an inspirational speaker and various presentations, hoping to draw a large percentage of the state's growers to a common location.

The main purpose of the first Big Idaho Potato Meeting, scheduled for Nov. 14 at the Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Event Center in Fort Hall, is to highlight how IPC invests marketing dollars collected through a grower checkoff fee.

Other Idaho potato organizations — including the Potato Growers of Idaho, United Potato Growers of Idaho, Southern Idaho Potato Cooperative, Idaho Grower Shippers Association and Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry's raw products group — have been encouraged to host their own meetings in Fort Hall on the morning of the meeting to help boost attendance.

"We're just all so fragmented," said IPC Commissioner James Hoff, of Idaho Falls. "Anymore, we've kind of lost some synergy with the growers as a whole, and I think this is a good way to start bringing that back."

The event will replace IPC's Whistle Stop Tour — a tradition IPC President and CEO Frank Muir started 14 years ago when he first joined the organization.

Muir explained growers at the time weren't satisfied that the commission was "keeping Idaho on the current trends," so he hosted meetings in seven cities to inform them about IPC's new programming.

Grower interest began to wane and Whistle Stop Tour meetings were consolidated until about six years ago, when a single meeting in Idaho Falls remained.

Muir hopes to draw up to 500 growers to the new meeting, where participants and researchers will engage in a conversation about ways to improve the quality of Idaho potatoes that are shipped.

"I want all hands on deck when it comes to improving Idaho's potato quality," Muir said.

PGI, which works to further Idaho growers' political interests, will reschedule its silent auction and awards for growers of the year to coordinate with the new meeting.

PGI Director Keith Esplin said the event has been hosted during the University of Idaho's Potato Conference in Pocatello, which draws more farm managers and workers than growers.

"We've always been wishing for a grower banquet and a little better environment," Esplin said.

Commission member Randy Hardy, of Oakley, said door prizes will be awarded, and he's attempting to organize a political forum featuring Idaho gubernatorial candidates.

"I think this is a really good opportunity to bring the industry together," Hardy said. "We've got some topics like quality issues and other things we need to be addressing."

Research targets weeds in dry bean fields

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

KIMBERLY, Idaho — For years researchers have been trying to improve the efficacy of Basagran for post-emergence weed control in dry beans.

The herbicide works well in the humid Midwest but not as well in Idaho's dry climate, and the researchers have been looking for an adjuvant to boost its efficacy.

Annual trials in that regard have yet to find something that works well. But "results from this year's trials are the most promising yet," said Don Morishita, a weed scientist and superintendent of the University of Idaho Kimberly Research and Extension Center.

Adjuvants improve the plant's uptake of the herbicide. The chemical structure of herbicides often causes



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Don Morishita, weed scientist and superintendent of the University of Idaho Kimberly Research and Extension Center, explains research the university is doing on controlling weeds during a dry bean field day on Aug. 23.

them to be repelled on the plant surface, and adjuvants are used to help them break through the waxy layer on the leaves, he said.

Nearly all pesticides either contain an adjuvant or require

adding one, and herbicide manufacturers are always trying to find ones that work well with individual herbicides. The university has been trying to find one that works well with Basagran, he said.

Four herbicides are registered for broadleaf weed control in dry beans — Basagran, Raptor, Pursuit and Sandea. But Basagran is the only one that does not have restrictions for planting rotational crops, such as potatoes and sugar beets, due to crop injury.

The university has been testing different adjuvants in combination with Basagran and other herbicides to find which treatments, applications and practices work best for weed control.

"It boils down to process of elimination," Morishita said.

This year, three adjuvants and an experimental application of Basagran show prom-

ise, he said.

The adjuvants — commercially available StrikeLock and Preference and experimental AG13064 — "seem to have worked as well as anything we've looked at in the past," Morishita said.

Future trials will show whether they are consistent in post-emergence weed control, he said.

One of the more promising aspects of this year's trials is using micro rates of Basagran at emergence or the unifoliolate stage.

A researcher at North Dakota State University adapted such research from work done in sugar beets to dry beans and has had some great results applying Basagran at micro rates earlier than recommended by the manufacturer, he said.

The manufacturer's recommendation is for a first application of Basagran at

the first trifoliolate stage, which might work well in the Midwest but it wouldn't control weeds in Idaho, he said.

"Because of our drier climate, it just doesn't work consistently. A total post-emergence program with Basagran would be a total failure," he said.

But Idaho growers might be able to get a jump on weed control by applying micro rates of Basagran before the trifoliolate stage, he said.

"I think that maybe these reduced rates of Basagran at a much earlier stage ... may be something that could be helpful to us," he said.

Another idea is that if growers can hold back weeds starting at emergence with Basagran, they could follow up later with a soil-active herbicide, such as Outlook or Sonalan, for extended weed control if need be, he said.

WIX FILTER DAYS SALE

COMING SOON
VISIT YOUR LOCAL STORE FROM
09/07/2017 - 09/16/2017

REGISTER YOUR FARM TODAY FOR SPECIAL AG PRICING
AT YOUR LOCAL O'REILLY STORE

70% OFF

LIST PRICE ON SELECT

WIX

AGRICULTURAL FILTERS

LET US BE YOUR AG & HEAVY-DUTY PARTS SUPPLIER

- Fuel bowls
- Electric trailer brakes
- Pillow block bearings
- PTO adapters

- Hitch pins
- Lynch pins
- Draw bars
- Fence stretchers

OReillyAuto.com

ADV 1120 36-4/102