

WASHINGTON STATE POTATO COMMISSION

GROWERS PROGRAM - 1971 REPORT

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This report is made to bring the Washington State Potato Grower's up to date on programs that are currently being carried on by the Commission, and to advise you of a new program that is now being initiated. These programs are being conducted by the Commission in cooperation with Washington State University, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington State Department of Agriculture, the Chemical and Fertilizer Industry, Equipment Manufacturers and many more too numerous to list.

A definition of the Washington State Potato Commission might be simply stated as an organization founded by the potato growers in the State of Washington to advertise, promote, and conduct research on potatoes. Please note, the definition says potato growers - you as potato growers, and you alone finance and through your board of Commission members conduct the business of the Washington State Potato Commission. The growers programs are merely a way of making each and every one of you aware of the most up to date information on growing potatoes, that it is possible to obtain.

One of my responsibilities as Administrative Assistant to this Commission is "Spud Topics". This weekly newsletter is sent to, among others, every potato grower on record in the State of Washington. In it is information about cultural practices, seed, harvesting, storage and covers nearly all aspects of potato culture. An attempt is made to inform potato growers in matters of legislation, traffic, and so forth that is relevant to growing potatoes and managing your operation.

In cooperation with Birely Landis and Donnie Powell, an aphid survey report is included weekly for 12-16 weeks each summer. This report tells the story of aphid populations distribution and concentrations during the growing season.

A second program I am actively engaged in is the annual conference. I can safely state this is the largest potato meeting of it's kind for potato growers on the American Continent. The Commission cooperates with industry to bring you the finest meeting with the best information, coupled with a trade fair displaying the latest products and techniques available to the industry. The conference is in it's eleventh year, and has certainly grown with the industry from its infancy.

	PROCESSED	%	FRESH CWT.	%	TOTAL CWT.	ACRES
1960	1,836.5	(26)	5,100.5	(74)	6,937.0	35,000
1970	19,399.6	(85)	6,951.1	(15)	26,350.7	71,700

IN 1960 THE AVERAGE YIELD WAS 285 CWT AN ACRE.

IN 1970 THE AVERAGE YIELD WAS 430 CWT AN ACRE.

While research has painted the way to better yields it has been you, the grower who applied the knowledge gained from research and have obtained better yields.

This conference is just one way of making information available to the potato grower.

Washington State University has played a big part in this conference. The staff has promoted it, worked on it, and the research people report at it. Big Bend Community College performs an invaluable service in both facilities and in manpower to make this show run.

The proceedings from this conference are printed at the Commission offices, and distributed to Washington Potato Growers and all others registered at the Conference.

The seed lot trials under the direction of Robert Thornton, are an important grower information program. In so far as possible a sample of each lot of certified seed planted in the State of Washington is collected by the Horticulture Inspectors and planted at the Research Station at Othello. These samples are made under the direction of Dr. Gene Easton, from the Prosser Experiment Station. The State of Washington plant certification department uses these trials for training purposes. A grower's field day is held each year to acquaint growers with the different diseases present in the seed samples, and a reading is printed and made available to anyone interested showing the disease content of each lot.

The harvester demonstration and evaluation is in it's infancy and will no doubt be improved, and the information more valuable to the potato growers. As is true in all other programs, cooperation is the key word. With the splendid cooperation from harvester manufacturers, and people from Washington State University this program could not be carried on by the Commission above.

I'd like to talk just a moment about the research program conducted by the Washington State Potato Commission. Research programs are developed by the Commission members and Washington State University and the United States Department of Agriculture, in response to the needs of the potato growers. A research agreement is written between the Commission and the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington State University or the entity that is to conduct research in a specific area. Reports of this research are made to the Commission at a reporting session and from this session reports are carried to the grower at this annual conference and in Spud Topics.

Projects that have been agreed upon are funded by the Commission. Your total commitment to research with Washington State University in 1971-72 was \$182,240.00. This amount is about one-third of the total amount spent for potato research or \$680,604.00. The balance has been shared almost equally by the United States Department of Agriculture and Washington State University.

The total research program with Washington State University consists of the following research people and thier projects.

Dr. Doyle Smittle:

1. Studying market quality for Washington Potatoes.
2. Cooperating with Charles Peterson, Agricultural Engineer on a project aimed at reducing harvest bruise damage in Russet Burbank Potatoes.
3. Studying Black Spot and Hollow Heart conditions and is trying to establish a method to prevent their development.

Dr. Lynn Faulkner:

Is investigating the control of root-knot nematodes through fumigants and granular nematicides, and is evaluating potato breeding lines for resistance to root-knot nematodes.

Dr. Gene Easton:

Is working on Verticillium Wilt and studying its control by chemical and biological means. In addition to the project he has a project to study the control of early blight and powdery mildew diseases.

Robert Thornton, Dr. Gene Easton and Dr. Kunkle:

Are all involved in the Seed lot trials. They are determining the disease content of seed potatoes entering Washington. Their aim is to assist seed growing areas by encouraging improved seed quality.

Dr. Kunkle:

Is studying the factors responsible for maximum yields of quality potatoes under Columbia Basin growing conditions. He is trying to discover treatments which will restore the productivity of old soils.

Past harvest handling and storage of potatoes is the research concern of Dr. W. M. Iritani. A part of his program this year has been development of a low-cost system of evaporative cooling for potato storage. This system was demonstrated at the Potato Harvester Field Day in Othello.

Dr. Wyatt Cone, Washington State University associate entomologist at Prosser is examining a means of biological control of two spotted mite control.

Dr. Hoyman, also at Prosser, is a United States Department of Agriculture Plant Pathologist, and is funded in part by the Commission in a Plant Breeding Research to develop early, medium, and late maturing Russet skinned potato varieties having desirable horticultural characteristics and resistance to the important diseases and viruses present in Washington.

Dr. Alex Ogg, United States Department of Agriculture, at Prosser is working on weed control research in potatoes.

Research in the field of entomology is handles by Birely Landis and Donnie Powell. These men are housed at Yakima, but conduct work on the green peach aphid, wire worms, and scab gnat.

A recent statement by chairman George Skone best sums up the potato research program.

"The Potato Commission and Washington State University research program has been highly successful, but many important problems remain unsolved. Without continuing commission support some research and extension programs on potatoes in our state would be seriously handicapped and others would be drastically curtailed."

That is a brief look at the current programs. More will be said about different parts of the program during this conference. Now I would like to talk for a few moments about a new project designed for Washington Potato Growers.

With the approval of the Commission, the staff at the Commission office has been putting together a growers handbook. This handbook measures 6" x 9" and is

indexed into four major divisions: Seed, Cultural Practices, Harvest and Storage. Into these major indexes we have reprinted and included the latest information available in a handy quick reference for potato growers and other connected with the potato industry. Distribution of this book will be made as soon as the covers are available from the supplier.

You can obtain a copy of this book free of charge if you are a Washington Potato Grower, by picking one up at the Washington State Potato Commission Booth, or by writing in to the Washington State Potato Commission Office at Moses Lake. Others can obtain a copy of this book by paying two dollars. Once you have signed up for the book your name will be placed on a permanent mailing list, and you will receive new information as it is available. Being a loose leaf binder, new information can be inserted in place of information it is designed to replace.

It is the hope of the Commission and staff that everyone will take advantage of this offer and have available for quick and ready reference the information given in this book.

This has been a brief look at the grower's programs and only those programs concerned with the growing of potatoes. You are invited to attend the Commission meetings and become better acquainted with these programs and the others conducted by the Commission. Meeting announcements are carried in Spud Topics in the Calendar that is printed once a month. The meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month in various locations in the State. Watch Spud Topics for time, date and place of the monthly meetings. Plan to attend, these are all open meetings.

Remember, this is your Commission, and will function properly only with your guidance and counsel.