

OPENING REMARKS

Nick Sandar, Extension Agent, Othello, and
Conference Chairman

Welcome to the Second Annual Washington State Potato and Vegetable Conference brought to you by the Agricultural Extension Service of Washington State University in cooperation with the Washington State Potato Commission.

The program is packed with features from early this morning till adjournment on Friday. We feel confident that you will want to stay till the last minute. We would like to direct your attention to the change in program emphasis that occurs during mid-morning on Friday with a good hard look at some aspects of our potato marketing - market quality, merchandising, advertising, competition of fresh and processed products, crop reports, outlook. Marketing is an integral part of production but we tend to overlook this too frequently.

Let us take a brief look at the year 1962 in terms of problems and accomplishments in the potato industry.

Fertilizer use is still a real problem with inadequate levels or excessive leaching of nitrogen, extensive areas of phosphate and potash deficiencies, etc.

There was continued use of the press wheel planter but problems developed associated with inadequate soil moisture.

There was extensive seed piece rot, again due to poor moisture conditions, and later much blackleg associated with this seed piece rot.

Growers made a good start on use of Eptam for weed control.

There were extensive aphid infestations with resultant losses from leaf roll net necrosis, particularly after a period of storage.

There was a most valuable and timely warning to the potato industry regarding chemical residues. Let us all learn from this and treat chemicals with the fullest respect whether on potatoes or other commodities.

We saw a continued build-up of disease problems - verticillium wilt, sclerotinia, early blight, root knot nematodes, etc. Knowing the nature of nematodes we again contaminated additional acreage, but the relatively low temperatures in 1962 prevented the severe tuber infestations that occurred in 1961. No one can afford laxity in sanitary precautions against nematodes. What was your program of sanitation in 1962?

This was a year when losses from bacterial ring rot were at a minimum, one of the real bright spots in the disease picture.

This was a year of blackspot that the industry will long remember, and as you will hear during the next two days, a situation that we should be able to lick. Have we really tried to do something about handling care, which is one of the very important factors that influence blackspot development? Let's Start a Revolution - injury and blackspot free potatoes on top of the eye appeal that we consistently pack now. This is the challenge that is before the growers and shippers. Any takers?

We saw further increases in potato storages in the Columbia Basin area with a total capacity estimated to be just over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million cwt. This just about doubles the storage capacity as compared to that available in 1960. We are now a late summer, fall and storage supply area to be reckoned with.

Processing developments saw the re-location of the Chef-Reddy Foods plant from Yakima to Othello. Growers value contract arrangements but these are harder and harder to get, as processors select only those growers who continually produce quality potatoes. The January 18, 1963 Disposition report of Washington State Potato Committee lists 3584 carlots of 400 cwt. that went to processing as compared to 3367 carlots at the same period last year. This is an increase of 217 carlots or almost 7 per cent.

New developments are continually challenging each and every one of us. Through the year there was much discussion of the proposed National Potato Marketing Order. Growers may still get a chance in 1963 to actually vote their convictions.

At this annual conference you are brought face to face with some of the dividends of research and study. Any new developments that may be presented are frequently a challenge to the way in which you have become accustomed to doing things. Will you change to take advantage of it? Currently the most discussed phase is bulk shipments of potatoes to receiving markets. As this practice grows (it has to date in other parts of the country) it may well lead to major changes in our established market structure. The implications are tremendous.

We want to direct your attention to the display section in the entrance lobby with heavy equipment located outside. The participating companies - Acme Equipment Co., Chef-Reddy Foods, Sterwyn Chemicals, California Chemical Co., Polson Implement Co., Pacific Fruit & Produce Co., Chemagro Corp., Lockwood Grader Corp., and Bemis Bros. Bag Co. have banded together to present attendance door prizes to be awarded during the afternoon of each day.

We want to thank the conference committee as listed on the back sheet of your program, with special thanks to the Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce for the invaluable help in handling the many local arrangements necessary to present a meeting of this type.