



# Potato Progress

Research and Extension for Washington's Potato Industry

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## Public Weather System at WSU

**Editor's note:** The following information is being passed along to you for your information. If you are interested in publicly available weather data, this information may be important to you. The fund raising drive described below is being coordinated by a group of interested agricultural industry members.

PAWS (Public Agricultural Weather System) was created in 1987 and quickly established itself as the premier agricultural weather network in the nation. While the initial purpose was to provide irrigation scheduling data, PAWS data was quickly found to be useful in other aspects of agriculture as well.

The data provided by PAWS has become a critical component of our farming operations, but we are in imminent danger of losing this system. Ten years after PAWS was created, the funding was lost. Subscription fees were imposed, but have fallen far short of providing the support needed. The original equipment was designed to last about 10 years. Today it is obsolete, failing with age, and beyond repair. PAWS is about to gasp its last breath unless something is done soon.

Dr. Fran Pierce, Director of WSU's Center for Precision Agricultural Systems, has developed and partially deployed new generation technology into the PAWS network. This new technology allows existing PAWS stations to be upgraded at a cost of about \$1800 each, rather than a replacement cost of over \$10,000 each. Through WSU and private funding, some of the PAWS sites have already been upgraded. However, it would be ideal to find a way to upgrade the remaining sites, and keep them operating, in order to maintain access to the critical weather data we have come to rely on.

A steering committee that represents diverse agricultural groups and a widespread geographical area has formed to secure the funding needed to upgrade PAWS and keep it running. Committee members include folks from tree fruit, potatoes, wine grapes, vegetables, conservation districts, seed crops, hops, and others that are working together with WSU in a public-private partnership.

The usefulness of the weather data provided by PAWS extends beyond agriculture. PAWS data are now used by a number of state agencies such as Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Transportation. The data are also used by emergency services and natural resource management. Because of the widespread use of the weather data provided by PAWS, the committee believes that the system should be publicly funded. The committee is formulating plans to seek permanent annual funding for a public weather network. While initial indications are that such an effort would likely receive legislative support, public funding would not be available until 2006.

With that ultimate goal in mind, funds are being sought to bridge the gap so that we have a functioning weather network for Washington agriculture for 2005. The committee is soliciting donations to upgrade the system and keep it running this season. The funding need is \$200,000. In order to start some of the more critical pest models, we need to have the system up and running by March.

An account has been established to receive donated funds, and contributions to that account are a charitable deduction. Following is a coupon to send in with your donation to ensure that it goes to the proper account.

## PAWS DONATION

My contribution of \_\_\_\_\_\$2000, \_\_\_\_\_\$1000, \_\_\_\_\_\$500, \_\_\_\_\_\$200, \_\_\_\_\_other is enclosed.

Please note that this contribution should be credited to the PAWS Donation account so that it will qualify as a charitable contribution for my company.

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: WSU Foundation  
The memo line should note: PAWS 2 Donation

Contributions should be mailed to:

WSU-PAWS  
c/o Lynne Hartz  
WSU – IAREC  
24106 N. Bunn Road  
Prosser, WA 99350

## Washington Potato Acreage, Production, and Storage Data

Crop Year	Harvested Acreage	Yield Per		Production (000cwt)	Stocks on Hand (000 cwt)									
		Harvested (cwt)	Acre Tons/A		Dec. 1	Jan. 1	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Apr. 1	May 1	June 1			
1966	58,000	376	18.8	21,830	18,300	7,150	5,500	3,950						
1967	64,000	345	17.3	22,090	10,660	8,800	6,600	4,400						
1968	64,000	378	18.9	24,173	10,430	8,800	7,050	5,100						
1969	71,700	415	20.8	29,796	15,300	13,100	10,300	7,800						
1970	87,000	386	19.3	33,590	18,500	16,000	12,500	9,700						
1971	78,000	386	19.3	30,110	16,450	13,500	10,350	7,500						
1972	75,000	418	20.9	31,365	15,800	13,400	10,300	7,100	4,200					
1973	82,000	430	21.5	35,260	18,600	15,600	12,600	9,100	5,500					
1974	98,000	420	21.0	41,160	22,500	20,500	16,800	12,800	8,900					
1975	105,000	460	23.0	48,300	27,900	24,100	19,900	11,500	10,000					
1976	124,000	450	22.5	55,800	33,200	29,700	25,000	20,100	15,200					
1977	110,000	460	23.0	50,600	28,400	24,700	20,800	15,900	11,300					
1978	109,000	465	23.3	50,685	32,000	28,800	24,000	19,300	14,500	9,500				
1979	103,000	475	23.8	48,450	30,800	27,300	23,300	19,000	14,400	10,500				
1980	87,000	505	25.3	43,935	24,300	22,000	18,500	14,600	10,900	7,200				
1981	108,000	490	24.5	52,920	29,200	25,100	21,000	17,000	12,600	8,200				
1982	110,000	480	24.0	52,800	29,200	25,100	21,600	17,100	13,200	8,600				
1983	103,000	520	26.0	53,560	29,500	25,600	21,800	16,500	11,000	7,100				
1984	115,000	495	24.8	56,925	29,600	25,900	20,800	16,600	11,300	7,000				
1985	127,000	505	24.3	61,100	33,500	30,000	25,700	21,000	16,200	9,700				
1986	118,000	510	25.5	60,200	32,300	28,000	24,400	20,400	14,600	8,700				
1987	124,000	540	27.0	67,000	36,600	32,900	28,300	22,800	17,500	12,400				
1988	115,000	550	27.5	63,300	36,700	32,100	27,700	22,500	16,200	10,700				
1989	118,000	545	27.3	64,310	34,500	30,400	25,100	20,000	13,100	7,100				
1990	132,000	515	25.8	67,980	35,500	29,500	24,500	19,800	15,100	10,400				
1991	141,000	535	26.8	75,440	37,000	32,200	27,000	21,200	15,000	9,600				
1992	125,000	525	26.3	69,300	31,000	26,700	24,900	19,800	13,000	8,200				
1993	150,000	590	29.5	88,500	43,500	38,500	32,000	26,500	20,000	13,500				
1994	152,000	585	29.3	88,900	47,500	43,000	37,500	30,500	23,500	17,000				
1995	147,000	550	27.5	80,850	39,500	33,000	30,500	25,000	18,000	12,500				
1996	161,000	590	29.5	94,990	48,000	42,000	36,500	30,000	23,000	16,500				
1997	152,000	580	29.0	88,060	47,000	41,500	36,500	29,500	22,500	16,000				
1998	165,000	565	28.3	93,225	49,000	43,500	36,500	29,500	21,500	14,500	7,500			
1999	170,000	560	28.0	95,200	48,000	41,000	35,000	28,000	20,500	14,500	7,000			
2000	175,000	600	30.0	105,000	59,000	52,000	44,500	37,500	29,500	21,500	13,000			
2001	160,000	590	29.5	94,400	53,000	45,500	40,000	32,500	25,000	18,000	10,000			
2002	165,000	560	28.0	92,400	53,000	46,500	40,000	33,000	25,500	19,500	12,000			
2003	162,000	575	28.8	93,150	51,000	44,000	38,000	29,500	21,500	15,000	7,000			
2004	159,000	590	29.5	93,810	50,000	43,000								

**Data from National Agricultural Statistics Service**

# Bringing Change to the Potato Variety Development Program

**Mark J. Pavek**

Washington State University, Pullman, WA

Your participation is requested at the upcoming Cultivar Performance Workshop on the Big Bend Community College campus. Now is the time to incorporate positive change into the Potato Variety Development Program and your comments and participation are highly desired. During the workshop, we'll discuss positive change already underway and then open the floor for comments from the industry regarding the performance of newly released cultivars – the good and the bad, and future changes you would like to see in our evaluations. Additional items of discussion range from post harvest evaluations to the diseases resistance of new cultivars. The schedule is as follows:

**Tuesday, Feb 1, 2005 – ATEC Conference Center, Big Bend Community College**

- 2:00 p.m      Potato Tuber Display
- 2:15 p.m      Introduction – Mark Pavek and Rick Knowles
- 2:20      2004 In Field Results and New Additions to the Book – Mark Pavek
- 2:40      2004 Post Harvest Results – Rick Knowles
- 3:00      Break
- 3:20      The Good Stuff – A Report from Hermiston, OR – Dan Hane
- 3:40      Breeding Potatoes for Eclectic Consumers – Chuck Brown
- 4:00      Late Blight Resistance in the Tri-State Program – Dennis Johnson
- 4:20      Closing Observations and Comments