

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Sam Doran, Grant County Extension Agent and
Conference Chairman

Welcome to the Third Annual Washington Potato and Vegetable Conference. Again this year the Conference is jointly sponsored by Washington State University and the Washington State Potato Commission.

The two-day program that has been prepared for you emphasizes the production, harvest and storage of quality potatoes. Trends in potato utilization during recent years require that Washington potatoes be equally acceptable for the fresh and processing markets.

Your program committee considers weed control problems an important factor limiting potato and vegetable production in Washington. Each year growers must deal with many weed problems. There is a change of program emphasis on Friday afternoon to consider some techniques currently used in combating weeds.

As with other phases of modern agriculture, most developments in potato production and handling are first tested by research workers. It is appropriate that we have a summary report on the potato research conducted in Washington during recent years. Your Washington State Potato Commission is an important, though often unrecognized, contributor to potato research in the state. Through your contributions to the Washington State Potato Commission and the actions of your Commission members, you support much of that research.

The wireworm and chemical residue problems received considerable attention in early 1963. Growers were concerned by the withdrawal of U. S. D. A. registration of aldrin and dieldrin for wireworm control. However there was reason to believe that most potato fields did not contain wireworms. Many growers collected and screened soil samples to determine the need for wireworm control measures. Of 150 samples collected, only 14 contained dryland wireworms while 5 contained wetland wireworms. Fall applications of DDT or ethylene dibromide are proving effective on fields known to contain wireworms.

The seed corn maggot also attacked many potato fields in the spring of 1963. Observations in 1963 indicate that improper seed suberization and the use of picycle planters provides sufficient entry for maggots. While properly timed applications of DDT are effective in the control of wireworms, they do not adequately control the seed corn maggot, as you will hear tomorrow morning.

The Potato Seed Lot Trials have been conducted at the Othello Research Unit for three years. Those trials are helping potato producers evaluate

the seed they purchase from various areas. Although no ring rot was observed in the trials in 1963, the disease was observed on some certified seed and in some fields.

Again in 1963, there was a considerable amount of leaf roll in the seed lots. While the number of samples showing leaf roll decreased, there was an increase in the number of infected plants per lot. Also, it was apparent that leaf roll in seed may, and often does, vary within the seed producing areas.

There are still many potato fertility problems in the state. Potato production in central Washington is affected by nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus and zinc deficiency problems. This afternoon speakers will discuss such fertility problems as plant nutrition, the effect of potassium on yield and quality of potatoes and the value of soil testing in potato production. Concluding the fertility section will be a review of the fertilizer program used by a well known central Washington potato producer.

The per capita consumption of fresh potatoes has steadily declined in recent years but consumers are buying more processed potatoes. Processors need quality potatoes that can be stored over a longer portion of the year. Producing and harvesting potatoes suitable for storage, suitable storage facilities, and handling potatoes in storage and transit will be considered Friday morning.

Many other phases of potato production also will be presented. The effect of seed piece size on potato yields, irrigating potatoes, aphid and mite control and the 1964 Potato Insect Control Calendar are but some of the other topics to be discussed at this Conference.

We want to direct your attention again this year to the many commercial displays in the main room upstairs and outside. They will provide you with several new ideas in potato production, handling, storage and marketing. The participating companies also have joined together to provide door prizes which will be awarded during the afternoon of each day.

I want to recognize and extend appreciation to the Conference Committee as listed on the back sheet of your program. The Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce, who has been especially helpful in handling many local arrangements, deserve special recognition.

The developments in potato production and handling to be presented these two days provides Washington's potato industry with a challenge and an opportunity. They will challenge the way in which you are accustomed to producing and handling your potatoes. On the other hand, they will give you an opportunity to overcome some of your production and handling problems. We hope many of you can and will take advantage of the concepts to be presented.