Spanish Sessions Open Many Doors

The Situation
As farm size increases farm managers are relying more on hired hands to make day-to-day decisions. Many hired hands are seasonal migrant workers that have difficulty understanding technical instructions in English. Agriculture, as in most other fields, is becoming more technical and a thorough understanding of pest, soil, and irrigation management is increasingly important to farm laborers. There is a real need for technical training in Spanish so that hired hands can make informed decisions based on understanding the concepts behind the management practices.

Our Response
Several sessions in Spanish were developed and presented at the annual Potato Conference. Personnel from the Idaho Department of Agriculture assisted in the workshops. Workshops included bruise management, soil moisture and irrigation management, and insect and disease recognition and management. In addition summer on-farm programs in several areas of the state are being organized by both Extension Educators and growers for those who were not able to attend the conference.

Program Outcomes
The Potato Conference program was able to reach 41 Spanish-speaking students. Many commented that they were finally able to understand all that the classes had to offer. A pre- and posttest revealed that there was a 40% increase in student understanding of the various topics. Many farm operators said they would have their Spanish-speaking employees attend next year’s conference. The Spanish-speaking session is now incorporated into the Annual Potato Conference agenda.

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