

IMPACT



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Internationalizing University of Idaho Extension

The Situation

The demographics of Idaho are changing rapidly. Over the past few years the racial profile has evolved to include a more diverse population. This is even true for the smaller communities in Idaho. This shift has led to unbalanced positions concerning international trade, global competition, environmental standards, and labor standards. Nowhere has the globalization of our world affected Idaho more than in the area of agriculture. A large portion of our potato, grain, and livestock crops are marketed overseas. In addition these global systems are complex, and not everyone is prepared to face our dynamic and interdependent world.

Our Response

We as Extension Educators felt the need to enhance our capacity to provide educational services in Idaho concerning international issues and the challenges that face agriculture. We set out to visit other countries in order to recognize our own biases as educators, and to search out information that would assist us in developing common ground between our countries. We also sought out information that would help us develop balanced and informed positions concerning trade, labor, and environmental issues.

Program Outcomes

Four Extension Educators from the University of Idaho visited the countries of Mexico, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Honduras, Russia and the Republic of Georgia. These educators were able to teach the people they met about our concerns and views of global agricultural markets. We were also able to

discuss agricultural concerns with policy makers, present current UI production recommendations, and publish in their conference proceedings. We brought back new ideas and production practices, which have been shared with our growers at pesticide applicators trainings and commodity schools.

Reed Findlay and Wayne Jones visited Leon, Mexico. These educators presented information concerning the phytosanitary control and management of various potato diseases. The discussions developed the idea of easing international trade through NAFTA and the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which is directed by the World Trade Organization. The presentations also discussed various crop rotations that could be used to control potato disease. Following the presentations there were many opportunities to discuss each country's unique production practices, trade barriers, and unbalanced biases.

Rauhn Panting visited Uzbekistan. He shared his expertise in cattle and sheep production with the local farmers and ranchers. While there he learned of the well-developed local coalitions the people had formed. The people of that country are very adept at using local coalitions to solve agricultural problems. They have learned to depend on each other and have developed powerful working groups. These groups solve production and disease problems. Rauhn has taught farmers and ranchers in various communities in Idaho how to build better coalitions by using the techniques he learned in Uzbekistan.

Gale Harding was invited to share his expertise on potato seed production in the Republic of Georgia.

He also taught potato storage techniques in Novogrod, Russia. While teaching in these counties Gale was impressed with how well the potato farmers in those countries cooperated with each other. They were very open with each other and cooperated in many ways. These farmers were able to consolidate their crops and put together a unified marketing plan to present to buyers. Gale has shared these ideas with the potato farmers he works with in his county.

Wayne Jones also visited Belarus, Russia and Honduras. Wayne was asked by these countries to share his expertise in potato disease control measures and potato seed production. He was also able to visit with government policy makers about farm policy issues. Through his travel he has been exposed to many different cultures. This has helped him to offer more balanced perspectives while teaching in his own county here in Idaho.

The University of Idaho extension educators are committed to excellent agricultural programming. This includes presenting non-biased, balanced, and informed information concerning, international issues. Educational exchanges are key to increased understanding and cooperation between countries. Educating our local clientele about international issues will prepare them to live, work, and thrive in our complex, dynamic, and interdependent world.

For More Information

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