

IMPACT



Bingham County, 583 West Sexton Street, Blackfoot, ID 83221; 208-785-8060; Fax: 208-785-2511

Potato Producers Adopt University of Idaho Information

The Situation

Idaho farmers produce nearly 30 percent of the annual U.S. potato production. For Idaho potato producers to compete in a challenging potato market, it is essential they remain current on production practices. To remain informed, producers receive information from various sources including research-based information from University of Idaho. One of the largest informational events for potato producers is the annual Potato Conference held each January. Although the conference is well attended, the question arises as to how many producers are adopting information presented.

Our Response

The University of Idaho (UI) College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the UI Cooperative Extension System plan and conduct the annual UI Potato Conference held on the campus of Idaho State University in Pocatello. Topics presented at the UI Potato Conference are solicited from people working in the potato industry. Most of the information is presented by UI faculty, but other qualified personnel from other universities, U.S. Department of Agriculture, or other organizations may participate. Information is delivered via classroom-like seminars and interactive workshops allowing for more questions from the audience.

Several of the workshops provide pesticide license recertification credits from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, and credits are also available for those who hold a Certified Crop

Consultant Advisor license from the American Society of Agronomy.

Average attendance for the 2001 through 2005 conferences including speakers, staff, and trade fair exhibitors was just over 1,200 people. Many people attend the conference every year.

At the 2005 UI Potato Conference, people attending a workshop on planting management completed a pre-post-test survey. Participants used a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high) to indicate their level of understanding of topics discussed before and after the workshop.

Program Outcomes

In the planting management workshop, the average level of understanding before the workshop for eight topics was 4.89, and the level of understanding increased 21% to an average of 5.94.

Participants were also asked if they had attended a planting management workshop at a previous UI Potato Conference, and if so, had they put into practice information presented. Twenty-one participants—just over half—had attended a previous workshop. Nearly 24% indicated they had put into practice all the information from a previous workshop while 71% had used some. Participants were also asked how much of the information presented in the current workshop would be put into practice. Approximately 34% indicated they would use all of it while 66% said they would use some.

A second evaluation tool was also used in the planting management workshop. This evaluation tool simply asked the participants to indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as to the usefulness of the information presented. The average score was 4.25, which falls between “agree” and “strongly agree.” They were also asked to indicate if they would adopt any of the practices on a scale of 1 (none) to 5 (all). The average score for this was 3.89 in which 4 signifies they would adopt "most" of the practices.

For More Information

William H. Bohl, PhD, Extension Educator-Potatoes
University of Idaho Extension—Bingham County
583 West Sexton Street
Blackfoot, ID 83221-2063
208-785-8060
Fax: 208-785-2511
Email: wbohl@uidaho.edu