Potato Producers Use University Information

The Situation:
Idaho produces more potatoes than any other state in the United States accounting for nearly 30 percent of the annual U.S. production. Producers must stay current on the latest production practices and marketing strategies to remain competitive in the potato market.

Our Response:
The University of Idaho Extension System disseminates information to potato producers via newsletters, newspaper and magazine articles, field days, and workshops. The most popular forum for producers to obtain information is by attending the annual Idaho Potato School held in January.

The University of Idaho College of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension System have conducted this school for 26 years. The last 14 schools have been held only in Pocatello. Prior to 1981, the school was repeated at three or four locations throughout the state.

Seminars and workshops are used to present information to producers and others about production, management, storage, and marketing of potatoes. Information is presented to a large number of people at one time in the seminars, while the workshops allow for more one-on-one interaction with the audience. These workshops have become a very popular method for producers to discuss with specialists and researchers their specific concerns.

Achievements:
Attendance at the 1994 Idaho Potato School was 1449 which included trade fair exhibitors and speakers at the school. To date, this is the highest number attending this school.

Surveys are used to determine the effectiveness of the information presented during the workshops. One of the survey questions was "Will the information provided in this workshop be useful to you?" We received 207 responses and nearly 99 percent said the information was useful.

A second question on the survey was "Will you make changes in your operation as a result of this workshop?" Of the 184 responses received, nearly 80 percent said they would make changes.

Attendees were also asked to rate the quality of the seminars on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent. There were 149 responses received and the average quality rating of the seminars was 4.3.

Cooperators and Co-sponsors:
The school is sponsored by the University of Idaho in cooperation with:
The Idaho Potato Commission
Idaho Grower Shippers Association
Potato Growers of Idaho
Idaho State University
Raw Products Committee of Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry
Trade Fair Exhibitors
Spectra Productions, Inc.
The Future:
This annual event will continue to be a key method for information dissemination to those in the potato industry.

For More Information:
Contact any local University of Idaho County Extension Office for more information.