

Northern Plains POTATO GROWERS ASSOCIATION



Northern Plains Potato Growers Priorities

Reporting to SBARE – November 3, 2021

Overview: The most recent economic study of the potato complex, aka production, processing and packaging revealed that \$836,443,173 were added to the ND economy annually. (Source: USDA and Informa Economics, 2016). The value demonstrates the high equipment, personnel, storage and crop inputs required plus the many packing, processing and transportation additives necessary to market the crop throughout the United States. The NPPGA views our industry as stable with huge upside potential. North Dakota is rare in that it supports fresh pack, processing, chipping and seed supply specialties that are all quality driven.

Short-mid Term Needs:

1. Retention of currently funded Plant Pathologist position. The current pathologist plans to retire in 1-2 years. This position has focused on bacterial, fungal and viral pathogens most closely related to the seed industry. He also has significant sugarbeet pathology projects.
2. Add Research Specialist position for NDSU's potato breeder. This position was frozen in September, 2015 and ultimately cut. Renewal would greatly enhance the most sustainable vehicle of any crop production system – breeding of more efficient, higher quality varieties.
3. Sensory evaluation facilities – Taste, texture and color are driving factors in a rapidly expanding culinary spectrum. Sensory evaluations early in variety development help eliminate marginal clones. Past sensory facilities were lost in the early 2000's.
4. Greenhouse and potato storage space for the ND-MN Potato Specialist. Currently he is not allocated space for research projects on NDSU campus. Such facilities would enhance productivity and continuity among Team Potato Researchers and their supporting technical staff.

Long Term Needs:

1. Vector virologist – This could be a multi crop position with emphasis on insect transmitted viruses, ie Potato virus Y(PVY) transmitted by aphids, PMYV, PLRV, TRV,etc . PVY is generally the #1 limiting factor in seed certification and can be a factor in commercial production.
2. Waldron Hall replacement – Current potato storage and processing facilities were built in the 1950's-60's. They are limited in storage environmental controls and space, ventilation for work, proper pesticide storage, electrical infrastructure, size to accommodate mechanical advantages and office space. Quality, productivity and employee retention would be greatly enhanced via a modern facility.

Transportation: Transportation of all ND commodities and finished product is the #1 challenge/limitation today. ND is a leader in many crops with many processed, packed foods. Transportation limitations going out of the state are preventing the sale and distribution of our products. Simply stated, we have more products to export than are required imported for our population. This must be addressed for all of ND to prosper.