



WASHINGTON STATE POTATO COMMISSION  
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***Washington State Potato Field Days***

Each year Washington State University's (WSU) Othello Research Station is host to the state's annual Potato Field Day. This year's field day will be Thursday, June 25 and marks the 52<sup>nd</sup> time that the Washington State Potato Commission (WSPC) and WSU have teamed up for the Potato Field Day's seed lot trials.

WSU researchers will provide farmers and other industry members with reports of how different varieties of potato seeds have performed during their independent trial test. Numerous varieties of seed are grown and monitored for quality factors such as susceptibility to disease, pests, and other potential damages. The majority of Washington's commercial potato growers typically purchase their seed potatoes from seed-growing regions outside of the area. The trials provide a venue where both the seed producers and Washington's growers can view how the seed varieties perform within Washington's growing region.

"The potato field lot trials at the Othello research station are critical in helping potato farmers in the region gain a better understanding of the quality of their seed," said Dr. Mark Pavek, Associate Professor and Potato Extension and Research Specialist for Washington State University. "As a result of the partnership of the local potato industry and WSU, growers are able to have a realistic and accurate view of the performance of the seed they purchased and planted within their own fields."

"We can't overstate the importance of the work that is done at WSU's research station for our state's potato farmers," said Dr. Matthew Blua, Director of Industry Outreach for the WSPC. "Each year WSPC's Research & Technical Committee directly funds these trials which provide growers with valuable data about their current crop."

The funding from the WSPC is then utilized by WSU's extension professionals, research scientists and graduate students as they carry out the planting, monitoring and coordination of the trials. In addition to the standard funding that the WSPC has traditionally provided, they also collaborate with WSU to ensure the research station continues to be a model of success and provide the industry with optimal results.

"Supporting the Othello research station's potato work is one of the key elements that the WSPC's Research and Technical Committee is focused on each year. So much so that this year the WSPC was able to purchase a tractor for WSU's research team as an effort to help them replace their existing and outdated equipment while allowing them to continue their vital work."

The total contribution from the WSPC for the new tractor was nearly \$87,000. The tractor will be on display during this year's Potato Field Day for all to see. Pavek will also discuss how the new tractor positively impacted all the research they conducted at WSU-Othello this year. The tractor is the second major donation the WSPC has recently made to the research station. In 2013 the WSPC purchased three center pivots to assist in revamping the station's then obsolete irrigation system.

Both of these donations ensure that the seed lot trials and other potato research efforts at the station will continue far into the future while helping to adequately simulate modern potato growing techniques and methods.

Approximately 200 growers, seed producers, researchers, and other industry professionals will attend this year's Potato Field Day. If you would like additional information regarding the potato field day or the seed lot trials please contact Matthew Blua at the WSPC, 509.765.8845.

*Established in 1956, the mission of the WSPC is to support an economically and environmentally sustainable Washington State potato industry by providing strong leadership and innovation and building partnerships to meet the demands of global consumers. For more information about the WSPC, Washington potatoes or other general inquiries please visit [www.potatoes.com](http://www.potatoes.com) or call 509.765.8845.*

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