

# PGI Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 3



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## 2009 PGI Annual Business Meeting & PAC Auction A Success

The PGI annual business meeting and PAC auction was held January 22, 2009, in Pocatello, following the Idaho Potato Commission's (IPC) Ag Affairs Meeting and Banquet. The meeting was moved from the traditional November/December time slot in an effort to find a time that was most convenient for growers. The meeting and auction coincided with the annual Potato Conference. While the jury is still out regarding the best date for the meeting, judging by the good attendance and record earnings from the auction, PGI will strongly consider this date in the future.

### PGI PAC Auction – Record \$\$\$\$ Raised

The annual PGI PAC Auction was a big success, raising a record amount of nearly \$18,000. Much of this money will be forwarded to the National Potato Council (NPC) in support of their federal PAC. PGI extends its sincere gratitude and appreciation to auctioneer Gale Harding for his support and also to all the committee members that worked arduously to make the auction a success. We also want to thank all those who donated items to PGI for the auction. Please let them know how much their support is appreciated. The 2009 donors included:

- Crop USA – John Taylor
- Bayer – Dave Wynn & Brad Schaat
- BASF – Ron Ellis
- Gowan – Scott Kerbs

- DuPont – Bob Jenks
- Northwest Ag Products – Dave Vance
- Amvac – Michael Bell
- Syngenta – Allen Landon
- Pioneer Equipment – John Magoon
- FMC – Dean Wildert
- Western States Equipment – Saul Grasteit
- 1,4 Group – Mike Frelleson
- Christiansen Implement – Jeff Hare
- IVI – Mike Machurik
- Travis Blacker
- Terry Helms
- Russell Mitchell
- Les Schwab – Idaho Falls, Gary Bair
- Ashton Seed Growers Association
- TSMA – Fred Doormaier

### PGI Business Meeting

Following the auction, the *Potato Grower Magazine* presented awards to the Potato Grower of the Year, Willie Heward, and Seed Potato Grower of the Year, Nick Johnson. PGI President James Hoff then convened the business meeting. PGI's long-term accountant, Layne Van Orden, reported that the association's finances are in order. James reviewed the ongoing functions of PGI, which included:

- Raising funds for the Political Action Committee and co-administering it with IGSA.
- Being a member of Grower's National Cooperative to give growers an alternative way to buy crop insurance.
- Performing duties the IPC cannot do as a quasi-state agency.



- Being prepared to lobby for “grower” issues, if necessary.
- Assist the PGI members of the IPC’s Ag Affairs Committee.
- Delivering potato gift boxes to the legislature, Governor, and other Executive offices in Boise.
- Participating on state NRCS technical committee, to give advice on conservation programs for growers.

“There continues to be vital functions for potato growers that will not happen without PGI”, said President Hoff. “PGI is operating with a part-time staff, on a much reduced budget, but performing these duties and monitoring issues for growers continues to be a cause that all potato growers should support.”

The following board members were elected to represent the various districts of PGI: District I, Seed Growers, Paris Penfold; District II, James Hoff; District III Ray Matsuura; District IV Kamren Koopin; and District V, Willie Heward. At a later board meeting, Kamren Koopin was elected Vice President of PGI and Willie Heward as Secretary / Treasurer. James Hoff had been elected President at a meeting prior to the annual meeting.

PGI thanks these loyal sponsors for their support at the annual meeting: DuPont, Ag World Support Systems, Idaho Ag Credit Association, Spudnik, Idaho Crop Improvement Association, Northwest Farm Credit Association, Lamb Weston, and Simplot.

## Potato PAC Reorganized

This past year, PGI was delighted to learn that the Idaho Grower Shipper Association (IGSA) was interested in joining PGI’s efforts to raise money for political campaigns. Potato PAC was reorganized into the Idaho Potato Industry PAC, which is now

jointly administered between PGI and IGSA. Last year over \$15,000 was donated to Idaho candidates for the state legislature. Thousands of dollars more were raised for our federal candidates or sent to the NPC’s POPAC to help with other national efforts.

“With IGSA’s support we expect to be a much stronger voice in supporting candidates that are supportive of agriculture and the potato industry”, said PGI Executive Director and co-administrator of the new PAC, Keith Esplin. “IGSA will hold a fundraiser at their annual meeting in Sun Valley; PGI will continue its annual auction; and together we will look for new ways for the Idaho Potato industry to be a voice politically.”

## Report on Transition

The transition of many former duties of PGI to the Idaho Potato Commission continues. PGI would like to thank the IPC for holding an Ag Affairs meeting January 22 for all the industry to learn about key issues and have an opportunity to give input. The banquet, which was held immediately following the Ag Affairs meeting, was also much appreciated.

The IPC and Industry Relations Director, Todd Cornelison, have also expanded the frequency and content of the industries’ e-mail newsletter, the *Idaho Potato Pulse*. Anyone not receiving this newsletter is encouraged to contact Todd at 559.4792 to have their name and e-mail address added to the distribution list.

## Ag Affairs Committee

One of the IPC’s new committees, which handles many of PGI’s former issues, is the Ag Affairs Committee, which has been chaired this past year by former PGI president Klaren Koopin, with Todd Cornelison carrying out the administrative functions. Other PGI members on the Ag Affairs Committee include: Doug Hanks, Mike Telford,



Brad Foster, Doug Gross, Shane Webster, Jim Tiede, Ray Tominaga, Bryan Wada, and Dan Moss. All growers are encouraged to contact one of these committee members or Todd Cornelison if you have questions or issues you would like the committee to discuss.

## Famous Potato Gift Boxes

PGI leadership met February 19 at the Hoff Farm, near Idaho Falls, to assemble 300 potato gift boxes. The job takes several hours and involves assembling the white cardboard boxes; applying the PGI logo sticker on the box; hand selecting choice 70 count potatoes out of donated cartons; adding a box of dehy hash browns and a packet of dehy flakes; the inclusion of a list of PGI officers; and finally closing the box and loading it in a trailer to take to Boise.

Legislators, secretaries, and Executive offices look forward to the annual gift and are very appreciative of receiving the potatoes. Any extra boxes are left with the Governor's office and with the Department of Ag. The boxes were delivered February 24<sup>th</sup>, following the Ag Summit, by Ray Matsuura, Nick Johnson, Kamren Koopin, and Keith Esplin.

This effort is PGI's way of reminding the state's political leaders that despite the myriad of issues they face, potatoes remain an important part of the Idaho economy.

## NRCS Conservations Programs

PGI Executive Director, Keith Esplin, continues to serve on the state technical committee of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This committee meets once or twice a year to give input to the state office regarding their various conservation programs. PGI has successfully worked for many years to ensure that these conservation programs, such as EQIP, are more

available for potato growers to use on their farms. PGI was successful in getting IPM Scouting, and Biofumigation cost share programs implemented in Idaho. PGI was involved from the beginning in getting a CREP program implemented in Idaho, and has worked to improve the CSP and other NRCS programs.

Keith will be attending a technical committee meeting March 13, in Boise, to discuss the many exciting program changes included in the new Farm Bill. Any PGI grower that would like to discuss these issues with Keith is welcome to call him at 243.1824.

## Growers National Co-op Dividends Up 28 Percent – PGI Growers Benefit

The Growers National Co-op Board of Directors met last week at the Commodity Classic in Grapevine, Texas, and declared the 2008 patronage dividend in the amount of \$638,128. Co-op members were sent their Participation Reports in February and are returning them in great numbers. Members complete the Reports by indicating the commodity assessments (check-off) paid on crops sold in 2008 and that amount, together with association dues, is used in the dividend calculation. The Reports should be returned by April 1, 2009. If you have any questions regarding GNC's 2008 dividend distribution, please contact JoLee Duclos at GNC - 800.635.1519.

## PGI Extends Condolences

PGI extends condolences to the families of recently deceased potato growers. They include seed growers Jeff Jenkins and Lynn Loosli, of Ashton, and former USBP Chairman Bill Webster, of Rexburg.

