

## Potato Certification Advisory Committee Meeting

January 29, 2013, Kennewick, Washington

### MINUTES

**Voting members present:** Jim Carlson, Brian Charlton, Scott Cheyne, Philip Hamm, Greg Harris, Rob Lane, Mike Macy, Richard Macy, George Rajnus Jr, Phil Rathbun, Ed Stastny Jr., Sagar Vidyasagar.

**Non-voting members present:** Russ Karow, Dennis Lundeen, Jeff McMorran (secretary),

**Members absent:** Lon E Baley, Jim Cramer (represented by Nancy Osterbauer), Dan Curry, (represented by Dennis Lundeen), Phil Rathbun

**Guests present:** Terry Burr, Bill Brewer, Larry Davidson, Ed Macy, James Macy, Iraj Motazedian, Dan Walchli, , Solomon Yilma

**A. Welcome and Introductions:** Meeting commenced at 10:05 AM with a welcome by chair Scott Cheyne. Introductions were made. All present were asked to sign the sign-up sheet and verify accuracy of contact information.

**B. 2012 Minutes:** The minutes for the 2012 meeting were included in the packets and had been emailed to members in advance. No changes were recommended. A **motion**, duly made and seconded (Lane/Stastny) to approve the 2012 minutes without changes or additions, unanimously **passed**.

### C. Proposals Requiring Committee Action:

#### 1. Modifying Requirements for Inspection of Non-Certified Seed.

The information presented in the packets regarding the OSCS inspections on non-certified fields inspected for Bacterial Ring Rot was reviewed. This inspection is required unless (1) The field is planted with the grower's own seed; or (2) The grower is willing to declare their seed fields an 'own-use-only'. Both exemptions have been used in the past and McMorran said he hasn't received complaints from the few times growers have had to have their commercial fields inspected. Referring to the table "*Canadian and State Regulations Summary*" in the packets, he noted the requirement for BRR inspections of commercial lots was put in place because Oregon is one of the few states that allow a 'seed grower' to have 'commercial' (or non-certified) lots. If, however, the intent of this rule was to help ensure the grower's seed lots had not been exposed to BRR by the commercial field, it seemed somewhat strange that same Oregon certified lot planted by the seller as commercial would not have to have been inspected. He didn't feel a change in the Standards to exempt any commercial lot planted with Oregon certified seed would negatively affect the way the Oregon program is perceived by other states.

Discussion centered around the value of having 'another set of eyes' looking at this lot for BRR, the cost, and that \$6 per acre was pretty inexpensive option to limit the potential BRR impact. Q: How many acres are inspected each year in this program? A: Very few, 10-20 tops. With the outbreak of BRR in Idaho in 2012 it was also suggested that perhaps now would not be a good time to revise the rules to reduce the number of required BRR inspections. Phil Rathbun was more concerned with the potential for lots infected with BRR from out-of-state and for these not being required to be inspected if planted by the same grower. McMorran clarified that, though technically the Standards currently allow lots produced by 'the same grower' (but in another state) to avoid the BRR inspection, this has never happened. Phil Hamm emphasized that, regardless of how the lots are inspected, the best way to prevent BRR infections of seed potatoes is to follow stringent sanitary measures in cutting, planting, and harvest, and that growers should be inspecting all fields for BRR.

There was no action taken on the proposal to revise the Standards regarding this rule, so the Standards will not be changed.

## 2. Bacterial Ring Rot – Review of inspection process and limitations

The practices and limitations of the current BRR inspection program were reviewed. OSCS's timing of the second inspection at early die-down is a compromise between being at the best time to detect mosaic (early die-down) and the best time to observe BRR (late die-down). Inspecting the fields at a later date, as is done in Colorado in a third inspection, would improve the chances of detecting BRR but would be an additional cost. In addition, under this system growers would not be allowed to kill down fields early to control size. McMorran noted that the best opportunity for detecting BRR in the Oregon program is during the harvest inspection (which in effect is a third field inspection) but the harvest inspection is not actually required for certification. Though most lots are inspected, some are not. Failure to inspect a lot is either because the Harvest Inspectors are not able to get to the field in a timely manner, or due to lack of cooperation by the grower in informing the Harvest Inspector of the harvest dates. McMorran also noted that the harvest inspection is the only time the crop is reliably inspected for nematode, for which there is a zero tolerance. He noted that the Harvest Inspectors are instructed to try to inspect the tubers in the storage if they fail to be able to inspect them in the field, but this is not always possible due to storage configuration or when lots are shipped directly at harvest.

Scott Cheyne asked if lots withdrawn prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> inspection receive a harvest inspection. A: No, the Standards only require that such lots receive a second inspection (if not destroyed) but because the harvest inspection is not actually required, such lots would not have to be inspected. In practice however, the Harvest Inspector would likely look at them if still in the field being harvested along with other lots.

Jim Carlson questioned the practice of conducting harvest inspections if this is not an actual requirement for certification. He felt that such a practice opened up OSCS to appeals and possible legal complications if a lot is rejected. McMorran agreed, but also pointed out that it did not seem possible to say Oregon had a zero tolerance for BRR and Nematode if OSCS did not routinely conduct harvest inspections or do a third field inspection after a minimum of 90 days. He said he would favor amending the Standards to require a harvest inspection, but allow for this inspection to be waived with no penalty at the discretion of the Harvest Inspector if they were not able to observe the lot in the field or bins. Lack of cooperation on the part of the grower (such as not communicating the harvest dates to the Harvest Inspector) could be grounds for lot rejections.

Greg Harrison asked if OSCS could simply require a grade inspection of all lots. A: Historically the Oregon growers have been opposed to required grade inspection of all lots, and such a practice complicates tagging because these are conducted by ODA, not by OSCS, meaning that OSCS could not issue tags (or final reports) until the grade inspection was complete. Currently, the grower is eligible for tags as soon as the harvest inspection is complete.

The general consensus was that the harvest inspections are a critical part of the certification process, being the equivalent of a 'third inspection', and the only reliable opportunity for OSCS to inspect for the presence of BRR and nematode. As such they should officially be a requirement for certification as long as some leeway is made for lots that cannot be inspected due to circumstance out of the grower's control.

A motion made and seconded (Carlson/Rathbun) to modify the Standards to require harvest inspections, but allow for such inspection to be waived at the discretion of the OSCS inspector (for example cases where the lot could not be looked at due to timing of harvest), unanimously passed.

Specifically, the Standards in Part II, section E (pg. 8) would be changed to insert the following as item 3 (and thus renumbering existing items in this section)

3. A harvest or bin inspection has been completed, unless this inspection is not considered possible by the Harvest Inspector due to circumstances out of the grower's control. Any lot not so inspected will have the sentence "No harvest/bin inspection conducted on this lot" included on the Final Report. Lots not inspected due to lack of cooperation by the grower, such as failure in communicating harvest dates to the Harvest Inspector, may not be eligible for certification.

Some further discussion continued in regards to what comments appear in the final reports that the grower receives (and must share with their customers). Jim Carlson felt that only conditions set forth in the Standards should appear in the Final Reports, but that OSCS needed a mechanism to relay other inspection observations to the grower without it showing up in a final report. Such information is important to the grower, but may be awkward to explain to a customer. Nancy O. noted that ODA inspection reports have an area for 'official' comments, and one for solely informational communications with the grower. Jeff M. said the yellow 2-ply copy for the inspection reports could be used this way, but for the most part growers did not seem to want these copies. He tries to put only 'score-able' comments on the official reports, and put other comments in the inspection summary tables sent to the growers, but this system is not perfect. He noted that grower should feel free to request particular non-relevant items be removed from their reports if deemed inappropriate. OSCS would see if a more useful method of reporting both types of inspection information could be devised.

#### **D. ISSUES and UPDATES FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION**

##### **Item A –Review of Appeals Granted in 2012**

Jeff reviewed the two appeals made in 2012, both of which were approved (see meeting packet).

The first (Stastny 11-01 & 11-15) involved accepting a lot without a proper Winter Grow-Out due to extenuating circumstances on the part of the seller. The seed lot had been received and planted by the buyer who mistakenly believed it had received a WGO in Canada. The lot had done well in the field and subsequent winter grow-out and was accepted by an appeal panel as eligible for certification as an Own-Use-Only lot to be planted by the grower during the 2012 season.

The second (Shasta Seed) involved the lack of a skip row in-between a portion of two Nuclear class lots. The lack of a skip row as inadvertent, the lots involved were 'own-use-only' subclass (as requested by the grower), and the varieties involved were substantially different in appearance. OSCS felt it was able to accept this material for certification at Nuclear class without going to a formal appeal panel by applying the same restrictions as applied to two similar lots in 2011 (OVDP-Klamath).

##### **Item B – Fee increase for N & G1 fields – explanation & justification**

McMorran reviewed the reasons that a fee increase was merited on Nuclear and G1 lots. Referring to the two tables found in the meeting packets, he pointed out that Nuclear class producing seed can require 10-20 times as many man-hours to inspect as G2+ lots, and G1 lots can require 5-10 times the labor. Over the years the size of G1 lots in particular have gotten very large (up to 22 acres for one lot). He pointed out that 3 years ago the inspection protocol had been modified to lower the intensity of inspection on lots greater than 2 acres from 100% (4 rows) to 50 and 33% (see box on page 6 of the packet). This has helped lower the cost of

inspecting these larger G1 lots but not to the point that the current acreage fee covers the increased cost. Growers could avoid the increased fee by voluntarily downgrading their lots to G2. Self down-grading was somewhat common when Nuclear and G1 lots were required to be PVX tested, and G2+ were not but now there is no financial incentive to do so.

Brian C. asked if the intensity of inspections could be further changed to lower the labor required without compromising the program. A: Yes, the Standards (as well as national requirements in the MOU) only stipulate that two field inspections are required, and what the tolerance allowed for disease/off-types at each class are, not specifically how this is to be accomplished. OSCS does have a protocol in place, but this can be modified if desired as long as OSCS staff felt they would have a reasonable confidence that the tolerances were being met. Jeff noted that far fewer plants could be inspected and meet this demand, however in the past it was felt that a 100% inspection of the material was warranted to aid in the detection and removal of infected plants. This was, however, back when G1 lots were much smaller due to the manner in which they were initially introduced (line selection or stem cuts). He also felt that, while the current level of intensive inspection might be merited at the 1st inspection where individual plants were still visible and rogueing possible, at the time of the 2nd inspection the OSCS inspectors might be doing more harm than good due to all the vine damage that occurs. The labor requirements per acre for the 1st inspection are much lower than that for the 2nd due to the difficulty of walking down rows full of vines.

OSCS felt a fee increase could be avoided if the group was comfortable with a less intensive inspection of G1 class material (i.e. 2nd year-field material). Nancy O. suggested looking into national recommendations for field inspections (USDA/APHIS) to see if something might apply. Phil H. suggested a more intensive inspection of the borders (where current season infected plants were more likely to be found), and a less intensive inspection in the center of such fields. It was also pointed out that for the most part Nuclear and G1 lots are being grown for the growers own use anyway (i.e. not being sold that year). The group seemed comfortable with allowing OSCS to develop a modified protocol for G1 inspections that would involve a complete inspection of the border rows, and an interior inspection at perhaps 4x the normal rate for a G2+ field (i.e., 400 plant per acre rather than 100). Jeff promised to develop such a protocol and send it out to the seed growers for comment.

#### **E. OTHER UPDATES:**

**Review of Items Discussed at the National Certification Meetings** – highlights of the items discussed at the national PAA/NPC Certification Sections meetings held in Memphis, TN in December 2012, and Las Vegas in January 2013, were reviewed by Scott Cheyne (who attended both), Jeff McMorrان (Memphis) & Jim Carlson (Las Vegas) with comments added by others present where appropriate. Minutes of these meetings have been posted at the following:

NPC Meeting:

<http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/advcom/potato/NationalPotato/npcminutes2012.pdf>

PAA Meeting:

<http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/advcom/potato/NationalPotato/paaminutes2012.pdf>

New Virus Management Plan (draft)

<http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/advcom/potato/NationalPotato/virusmgmtplanv10.3.pdf>

Scott noted that much of the meeting seemed to be centered on how to avoid upsetting the Canadians with new changes in items such as the MOU and Virus Management Plan. This seemed odd to him because 35% of our seed comes from Canada and he felt we should have more power to dictate terms. Highlight of the meeting included current status of the **MOU** (Seed Potato Quality Management Program=SPQMP) of which 75% of the states have signed on and will go into affect in March of this year. **Zebra Chip** was discussed, and it was emphasized that this disease was not a seed borne issue because emergence of Zebra Chip infected seed is very poor and generally not an effective source of inoculum. Jeff noted that this view point is prevalent in the US and Europe but some Pacific rim countries may still try to make an export issue of it, thus necessitating the need for more research ‘proving’ this point and, more importantly, publications saying this.

The **PVY stains** situation was discussed, noting the steady increase in necrotic and recombinant PVY types (strains other than the common PVY<sub>o</sub>). The increase of strains like PVY<sub>no</sub> was most problematic for the yellow flesh varieties. A discussion of **Bacterial Ring Rot** was held in light of the outbreak in Idaho this year. Each state present summarized how they deal with outbreaks of BRR to limit its spread. Sanitation was critical. Scott noted how truck hauling the seed could be an over looked point (they can be harder to clean/disinfect then cutting or planting equipment, and are often overlooked). Other topics covered included **Potato Cyst Nematode** update (not much being found, many acres being release from restrictions), **Potato Wart** (small area in Canada, contained).

Jim Carlson mentioned that the **meeting times and participation** were discussed in Las Vegas with realization that it was unlikely that the certification agencies would ever be able to combine their annual sectional meetings with the Expo in January due to timing of reading their winter grow-out plots. With this in mind the NPC is actively trying to get more growers to attend the December meetings by designating participation by time zones (2 growers per time zone). If the group found grower participation in the national certification meeting valuable he suggested that that this should be communicated to the Oregon Potato Commission that funding could be made available to cover travel. Scott seconded this opinion noting how few growers were present. Important decisions are being made so more growers should be present. No formal motion made or warranted at this meeting. Jeff reminded the group that only the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the “National Meetings” in December were NPC; day two was a meeting of the Potato Association’s Certification Committee.

**PVY Strains Review** – Phil Hamm gave the group a summary of the current national situation regarding PVY strains. He compared the distribution of PVY strains found in the Hermiston Seed Lot Trial in the early 2000 with those of more recent years. There has been a dramatic rise in the level of recombinant strains found (PVY<sub>no</sub>, others). This is critical because the recombinant strains are the ones likely to cause tuber necrosis in certain varieties, thus affecting tuber yields and quality. He noted that Europe had the same change in ‘common’ PVY strains to more aggressive necrotic strains a decade ago, and the same appears to be happening here. Of particular concern are yellow flesh varieties like Yukon Gold & Yukon Gem, and the variety Alturas. In the US there seem to be areas where this problem is more prevalent and they (researchers) are trying to determine why this is, and how to mitigate the problem. Growers can get their material screened for PVY strains at the Hermiston lab (for a fee). Jeff noted that the WGO samples that show mosaic can be sent to the Hermiston lab for strain testing, but OSCS needs to know this in advance because plantlets are destroyed when read (i.e. they are pulled).

**Zebra Chip and Dehy Potato Concern:** Phil Hamm discussed the concern in the Columbia Basin with the potential spread of Zebra Chip by producers of potatoes for dehydration (Dehy). Because these growers are being paid for “everything but the dirt” (i.e., culls, tubers with internals, knobby tubers, etc.) they are not concerned about Zebra Chip. These growers are mainly concerned about yield and cost of production (not grade), thus scouting and spraying for Potato Psyllid (the vector of Zebra Chip) are not practiced, nor are they overly concerned about volunteers. This practice may result in an increase in ZC as well and necrotic strains of PVY.

**ODA Update:** Nancy Osterbauer gave an update of activities at the Oregon Department of Agriculture including information on:

- (1) Food Safety - the FDA's new proposed Standards for Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption. The link to the relevant information is: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA/ucm334114.htm>.
- (2) Renewing Oregon's signing of the MOU, which will include review and updating of the Quality Manual (QM). The revised QM will refer the older version of the Necrotic Virus Management Plan and not the one currently being revised (unless the new plan becomes official prior to signing). It will include the use of PCR testing protocols however. Q: Once the renewal is signed, could the MOU be changed prior to the next 5-year renewal? A: Not without a majority of the signatories agreeing. This can cause a problem if the NVMP needs to be revised (as conditions change) during this time, however Nancy felt that because the NVMP was listed as an appendix it could be revised if needed being federal issue (under APHID oversight).
- (3) Update on the Potato Cyst Nematode found at the Powell Butte Station. Soil testing is continuing. The nematode is new and now called *Globodera ellingtoniae*. It has potato as a host, but is currently not considered pathogenic on potato. There is no quarantine at this time but it is under state regulation, but not federal or international regulation. The OPC, OSU, and ODA got together to put measures in place to prevent spread of this nematode from Powell Butte while Russ Ingham does his research. For more information see [http://www.npdn.org/webfm\\_send/1054](http://www.npdn.org/webfm_send/1054) or <http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/person/990/Handoo%20Chitwood%20Globodera%20ellingtonae%202012.pdf>.
- (4) New NAPPO rules regarding importations into Mexico (see: [http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Potato%20Risk%20Mitigation%20Measures%20Announced\\_Mexico\\_Mexico\\_11-20-2012.pdf](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Potato%20Risk%20Mitigation%20Measures%20Announced_Mexico_Mexico_11-20-2012.pdf)
- (5) Need for support of the Department during the upcoming Oregon Legislative session.

**Winter Grow-Out Report** – Terry Burr reviewed the results of the 2012-2013 WGO with the aid of a table showing number of lots by mosaic % for 2012 lots. A total of 127 samples were received, versus 119 last year, including 9 Canadian lots for qualifying grow-outs. 18 lots were still in the GH. There was good emergence of all but a few lots that had delayed planting after cutting and had to be re-cut and were planted late. Testing went well with no major problems, however there were concerns over the number of lots that had zero reading for mosaic in the second inspection but had significant amount of virus in the WGO. The amount of virus found was up somewhat from last year, especially in some of the early generations which generally have had no virus in the WGO.

The OSCS is discontinue the practice of routinely evaluating Canadian lots solely to make them eligible for recertification in Oregon because the western provinces now have a CFIA sanctioned winter grow-out program available to them. Terry noted that the number of these lots continues to grow each year and this is causing a space problem requiring us to replant in one greenhouse (i.e., use it twice in one season). It is also deemed 'inappropriate' for Oregon to offer this service to growers of another state/province if a local 'official' WGO is available.

Jim Carlson asked how many of the Oregon lots were not entered into the WGO program. A: about 10-15 (or 10%) {Added later: there were a total of 155 lots signed up for certification in 2012, 4 were withdrawn or rejected prior to the WGO, thus participation in the WGO is 118/151= 78% participation}

**OSU and Crops Science:** Russ Karow referred to a CSS handout. Some items he highlighted were (1) Budget issues: teaching budgets up, while Extension and Experiment Station's were down. OSU will have 26,000 students this year vs. 20,000 only 5 years ago, resulting in increasing tuition revenue. At the same time state and federal sources for research, and extension are declining or uncertain. Though the funding amount was unchanged from last year, increases in retirement and health cost mean a negative budget. They are trying to at least keep the actual funding available even with previous years. Federal funding is up in the air at this point. (2) Positions – moving ahead to fill positions when able – in Malheur County Lynn Jensen's Extension position has been refilled by Stuart Reitz and a new tax levy will allow for the filling of a new agricultural position. Sagar Vidyasagar has been hired to fill the Variety Development PI role as well as having statewide extension responsibilities. He is stationed in Hermiston. His position has been made possible through generous support of the Oregon Potato Commission endowment (currently \$168,000 to grow to \$500,000) and the potato industry at large. Sagar is a voting member of the Potato Certification Advisory Committee as well as the Certification Board.

Bill Brewer welcomed all to attend a potato bar and focus meeting on the ODA and OSU budgets related to the potato industry to happen on March 7th in Salem. The potato bar will be from 11:30 to 1:00 PM with the meeting to follow. He hopes to have John Kitzhaber and Katy Coba help serve potatoes.

**OSCS/Seed Service:** Dennis Lundeen thanked all present for their continued participation in the Potato Certification Advisory Committee and interest in OSCS. He then referred to 2 handouts in the packet, the brown covered "*Certification Activity Summary*" and "*Summary of New Plantings by Crop Kind and Calendar Year*" (both available at: <http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/reports>). He noted that total certified acreage took a dip after 2007 but has now recovered. Most of this acreage is grass seed. Potatoes make up a relatively small part of the over-all program acreage-wise, leveling out at a constant 2,500 acres/year, but make up an important part of the program budget and time-wise due to the more intensive inspection requirements. He noted that Randy Knight, who joined OSCS seven years ago, retired this year (he had worked for the OSU Wheat program for 17 years previously). Two replacements have been hired and will begin employment in a few weeks. Both will be involved in potato inspections.

F. **OTHER BUSINESS** - none

#### G. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**A motion**, to nominate George Rajnus to fill the vice chair position, **unanimously passed**.

H. **ADJOURN** - Meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM

Submitted 2-9-13 by Jeff McMorran

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**These minutes will also available at: <http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/potatoes>**