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**NEXT MEETING** of the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (Area II) will be held **April 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm** by teleconference.

**MARKETING/ SOCIAL MEDIA;** As we head into spring and the beginning of a new planting season, we do so with an uncertainty that we never have had to deal with in the 25 years that I have been in the potato industry. Feelings of fear and the unknown seem to come to the front of my mind almost daily. I try to push them back with thoughts of hope for a new beginning when this horrible pandemic runs its course and we get back to some kind of new normal. I want to remind you that now, more than ever, is the time to take care of yourself on all fronts; mental health, personal sanitation and good nutrition. Eating a healthy meal that includes Colorado potatoes is the first step to facing these crazy days head on. I encourage you to visit our website, [www.Coloradopotato.org](http://www.Coloradopotato.org), for a plethora of recipes where you can find that perfect feel good option for you and your family. We hope that while shopping you get only what you need to help stop this hoarding mentality that seems to have taken over. The Potato Industry has witnessed first-hand how over purchasing by consumer's can stress the supply chain. We encourage you to thank potato farmers, warehouse workers, and truck drivers every day, as they continue to work long hours, in not always the best conditions, to produce and deliver safe, high quality, nutritious products for us. Stay safe, check on your neighbors, and be kind as we make it through this unsettling time. We're all in this together!



**POTATO USA** elected its new leadership during its 48th Annual Meeting on March 11. The newly elected Chairman and Executive Committee will lead the 99 board members through 2020-2021. Marty Myers of Boardman, Oregon was elected Chairman of the Board.

In addition to Myers, Potatoes USA's 2020-2021 Executive Committee members are:

- Jeff Jennings of Camden, North Carolina, Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee
- Ed Staunton of Tulelake, California and Steve Streich of Kalispell, Montana, Co-Chairs of the International Marketing Committee
- Mike Carter of Rosholt, Wisconsin and Heidi Randall of Friesland, Wisconsin, Co-Chairs of the Industry Outreach Committee
- Steve Elfering of Idaho Falls, Idaho and Jaren Raybould of Saint Anthony, Idaho, Co-Chairs of the Domestic Marketing Committee
- Chris Hansen of Bliss, New York and **Jared Smith of Alamosa, Colorado, Co-Chairs of the Research Committee**
- Phil Hickman of Horntown, Virginia, Past Chairman

**Les Alderete serves on the Administrative Committee on Industry Outreach and Jason Tillman represents us as a member of the Board.**

Myers said that up until this month, his main goal as chairman was to increase outreach to the processing community. With the impact of COVID-19 however, Myers' priorities are shifting gears. "My main goal now is helping the U.S. to fulfill the potato needs of the American people, and helping the potato industry through this difficult time," Myers said.



**POTATOES USA UPDATE** Retail sales soar as consumers stay home; the entire retail supply chain is feeling the pressure as consumers ramp up their purchasing in store and online. All are working around the clock to supply unplanned demand during a time of year usually focused on planning for the next crop, summertime, and store remodels.

Farms are working at full capacity running their packing sheds almost 24 hours per day. The capacity is described as "Thanksgiving velocity," and some areas are even bringing summer workers in early to help with the increased workload in packing sheds and the planting season. Farmers are packing as fast as they can to fulfill the demand and retailers are helping by waving their quality and size standards for the time being. The transportation sector is being stretched to their limit too. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) extended drive-time hours for truckers moving from distribution centers to retail outlets and for drivers moving fresh produce across the United States. Some states have also increased the load weights allowed per truck to alleviate the out-of-stock problems seen in retail stores.

Retailers are seeing double-digit growth across the entire store despite the increased number of out-of-stocks and decreased store hours. According to IRI, sales are up in the grocery sector by 62.7% for the week ending March 15 compared to year ago. Produce sales for the same week were up by 34% with vegetables driving the majority of the increase. Fresh potatoes specifically were the number one sold vegetable with a dollar sales increase of 71.6%. Total fresh potato sales accounted for \$44.2 million for the week of March 15.

The pressure on the supply chain is impacting online as much as in store. Consumers using online shopping for groceries moved from 11% to 41% since the beginning of March. Walmart Grocery, Instacart, and Shipt downloads doubled. Amazon suspended all non-essential inventory deliveries until the middle of April, and other retailers are establishing limits to make online ordering beneficial for consumers and retailers. Since the adoption of online shopping, Kantar Insights recorded a change in consumers' rated experiences from majority positive to majority negative. This may impact continued adoption.

Education remains the most important factor as retail evolves throughout this challenging time. Consumers need to understand how to use the online platforms and how to properly store, handle, and clean their increased fresh potato purchases. Retail matters and the current increase in demand is showing the country how hard the whole supply chain works to keep food on America's plates.

**LATE BLIGHT QUARANTINE FOR IMPORTED SEED** Are you importing seed from out of the area? Be sure that you know the rules and contact the inspection service. [See the rules](#)

**RESEARCH** The research sub-committee met virtually on March 31st to finalize recommendations for 2020-21 research project funding. I want to thank all the committee members for their time and effort this year in evaluating the proposed projects. We had a total of 17 projects to read, evaluate, and discuss before making funding decisions. It was harder to do in a virtual setting but they pulled it off quite well considering they are a large, highly engaged group. Thanks to Art Holland, Bill Crowder, Doug Messick, Eric Hinton, Grant Mattive, Chris Sittler, Jeff Bishop, Kent Price, Sheldon Rockey, Jared Smith, Tyler Mitchell, Will Hathaway, and Zach Czarnecki. Stellar work for a bunch of schmucks.

CPAC has a National Institute for Agriculture (NIFA) research RFP out to address soil-borne disease management in potatoes. This project is a multi-year proposal that will be matched dollar for dollar by NIFA. Proposals are due April 16<sup>th</sup> and we are very hopeful that we will get a good project from this program.

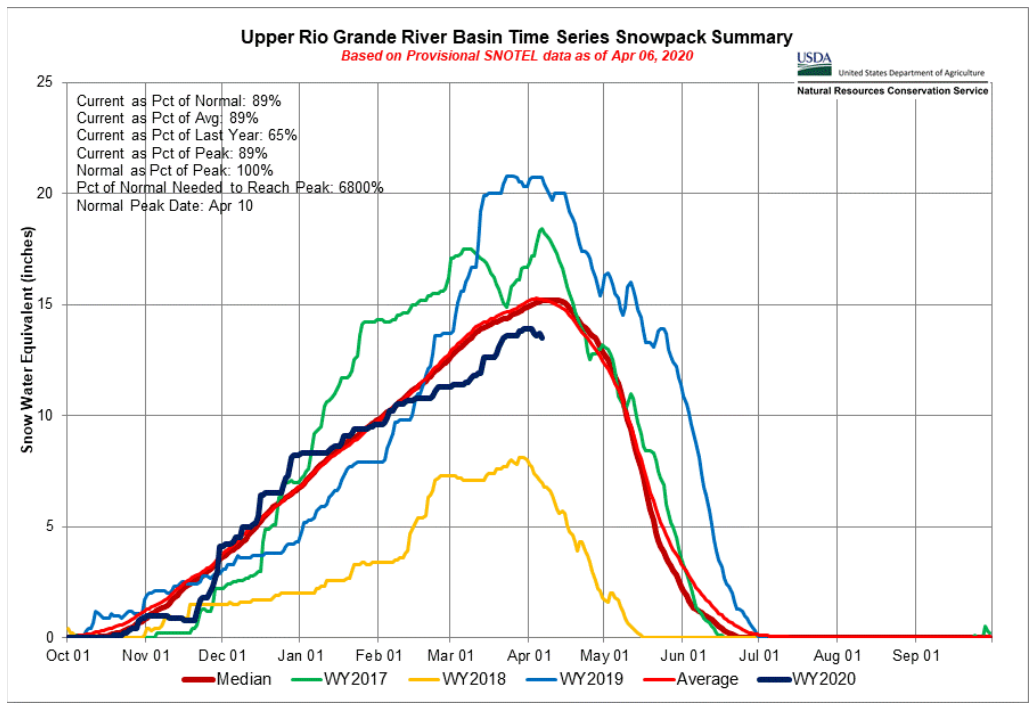
**COVID 19 RELIEF** Farmers and ranchers are eligible for a payroll relief program the Small Business Administration (SBA) has developed as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll. SBA may forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. The SBA provides \$349 billion in forgivable loans to small businesses to pay employees and keep them on the payroll. This includes the self-employed, start-ups, and cooperatives. To learn more [PPP Loans](#) and [CARES ACT ANSWERS](#)

**MARKET NEWS** While the COVID 19 virus resulted in a major surge in demand for our shippers and growers the result has been much different for the process sector of the potato industry. With the closure of the food service industry, finished process product has backed up and created literally a "frozen" supply chain. In North America, nearly 60% of the total sales of processed potatoes take place at food service and with food service sales down severely this has the potato market in a tizzy. Potato processors have asked growers to reduce their 2020 plantings by 15-25 %. This is significant when you consider that the process industry supplies 41 % of the potatoes utilized in the U.S.A. Many growers in Washington state already had their crop planted when they learned that the processors didn't want their crop. How this is going to play out for the fresh market will be interesting to say the least. Thankfully the current fresh market supply was already tight so the influx of newly released process potatoes into the fresh market hasn't crashed the market to the extent that it could. The NPC, Potatoes USA, and state organizations are working to request that USDA take steps to reduce this pressure on the supply chain with some of the funding that congress appropriated for specialty crop producers in the CARES act. The issue is that the majority of agriculture is suffering incredible losses and there will be fierce

competition for funding. Hopefully, the virus will abate sooner than later and the food service industry will be able to open up. It will be a major undertaking for them as many of them. They were already under a great deal of stress prior to the virus outbreak for many reasons.

**CSU COLLEGE OF AG SCIENCES (CAS)** This week CSU virtually hosted the two finalists for the position of Dean in the CAS. Dr. James Pritchett, the current interim dean at CSU, and Dr. Geoff Dahl, Animal Science Department Chair at the University of Florida, are the two finalists. Jim has the honor of serving on the search committee and believes that both finalists are excellent candidates. CSU President McConnell has expressed a desire to complete the process soon so we expect a decision and offer will come quickly. We will keep you posted. CSU is a major partner with our industry and this position is critical in our working relationship, and for the state’s agricultural sector.

**SNOWPACK**



**MEETING CALENDAR:**

- 4-16 CPAC meeting 7:30pm
- 5-21 CPAC meeting
- 6-17 CPAC annual golf ?
- 6-18 CPAC meeting

**MARCH SPUD FACTS**

		<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Reds	Percentage of Crop	6.6	7.5	8.2	7	5.8	5.8
All Russet Varieties	Percentage of Crop	75.5	73.4	72.5	74.9	76.6	73.9
Yellows	Percentage of Crop	12.4	13.4	13.9	12.6	12.9	15.9
Other Varieties	Percentage of Crop	5.4	5.8	5.4	5.5	4.7	4.5
U.S. No. 1	Percentage of Crop	50.5	50.6	52.2	54.1	53.3	52.6
U.S. No. 2	Percentage of Crop	3.7	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.9	5.9
U.S. Commercial Grade	Percentage of Crop	30.2	26.8	25.7	27.4	22.6	25
Seed	Percentage of Crop	15.8	17.3	16.6	13.1	18.2	16.5
Bulk	Percentage of Crop	50.4	50.9	47.9	44.1	48.4	46.9
Total Rail Shipments	480 CWT Equivalent	16	22	84	122	128	146
Total Truck Shipments (Fresh)	480 CWT Equivalent	3670	2971	2969	2994	2926	3068
Total Truck Shipments (Processing)	480 CWT Equivalent	379	273	281	364	310	260
Total Monthly Shipments	480 CWT Equivalent	4065	3266	3335	3480	3364	3474
<b>Total YTD Shipments</b>	480 CWT Equivalent	<b>20762</b>	<b>20181</b>	<b>20273</b>	<b>20133</b>	<b>20368</b>	<b>19980</b>

**AVERAGE F.O.B. PRICES FOR MARCH**

(per 50 lb. carton or bale unless noted)

		<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Reds	U.S.#1 A 5#						
Yellows	5#	15.05	12.00	10.50	12.50	12.11	10.50
All Russets	U.S. #1 Size A	9.05	8.26	7.80	5.31	5.75	3.94
All Russets	U.S. #2	6.40	6.88	6.50	4.66	4.58	3.48
Russet	U.S. Commercial Grade 100 lbs.	12.61	10.25	9.95	6.75	6.70	6.12