



# News Release

1300 L Street NW · Suite 910 · Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 682-9456 · fax (202) 682-0333 · [www.nationalpotatocouncil.org](http://www.nationalpotatocouncil.org)

## MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Mark Szymanski

(202) 682-9456

[mark.szymanski@nationalpotatocouncil.org](mailto:mark.szymanski@nationalpotatocouncil.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 23, 2012

## NPC Hosts Montana Farm Tour for Federal Environmental Regulators

**Ronan, Mont.** – During the week of Aug. 6, the National Potato Council led a delegation of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees in a crop tour of the Flathead Lake growing area in Western Montana. By visiting potato fields, storages, and packing facilities, NPC's annual tour of a potato growing area in the United States helps EPA staff gain a better understanding of how the agency's policy decisions impact potato production.

The Montana tour was hosted by Dan Lake, NPC's Vice President of Environmental Affairs and co-owner of Lake Seed in Ronan. During the three-day trip, staffers were briefed on spray drift mitigation efforts, toured seed potato tissue culture, early generation fields and experimental variety yield trials, and heard from area growers on disease and pest challenges, including wireworm, ground squirrels, orange wheat blossom midge, and stripe rust.



During an aerial pesticide application demonstration, pilot Mike Campbell explained to participants how innovative nozzle designs, angle positions, and additives to formulations that encapsulate chemicals serve to minimize spray drift concerns.



The staffers were also shown how ground sprayer equipment, such as pulse nozzle technology, GPS navigation, and boom shutoff valves, prevent overspray and keep pressure consistent during applications.



Montana's role as a seed potato producing state was a focus of the tour. During a visit to Lake's Glacier View Farm tissue culture and greenhouse facility, Jan Lake demonstrated the process of initiating a nuclear potato crop in the lab and bringing it to commercial maturity in four years. Dr. Nina Zydak, director of the Montana Seed Certification Program administered out of Montana State University, also explained the rigorous process by which seed potatoes are tested and, ultimately, certified for sale.



During the final day of the tour, participants visited the Northwestern Agriculture Research Center in Creston, which is an integral part of the statewide research system designed to conduct and promote studies, scientific investigations and experiments to maintain the vitality of Montana's agriculture industry. Dr. Bob Stougard, director of the research center, explained how yield trials on crops like wheat, barley, canola, lentils and chickpeas - which are used as rotational crops by Montana seed potato growers - may someday allow growers to increase output while protecting soil fertility and minimizing the need for pesticide and other applications.

The annual EPA crop tour would not be possible without the support of NPC's generous sponsors, including the United States Potato Board, Wilbur-Ellis, the Washington State Potato Commission, First Interstate Bank, Northwest Counties Farm Bureau, Farm Credit Services, and Lake Seed.

For more photos from the EPA farm tour, visit NPC's Facebook gallery at:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.173829276075361.16464.107253416066281&type=1>

*The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. Potato growers, along with the U.S. potato industry as a whole, directly benefit from involvement in the National Potato Council. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level. The National Potato Council is a voluntary organization supported by quota assessments from state organizations, allied industry memberships and sponsorships, and directly by potato growers through membership dues.*

###