STATE OF IDAHO
DIRK KEMPTHORNE/GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PATRICK A. TAKASUGI/DIRECTOR

This Week In Agriculture

September 9, 2005

‘Healthy Harvest’ puts Idaho-grown products in Treasure Valley schools

Students in some Treasure Valley schools will get a taste of the fresh, delicious foods grown right here in Idaho starting Monday, September 12.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture’s Idaho Preferred™ program and the Child Nutrition Programs of the State Department of Education are teaming up this year for the program called “Healthy Harvest.” The partnership works to get fresh Idaho-grown fruits and vegetables in school lunchrooms.

Meridian’s 25 elementary schools will be serving fresh peaches, pears, watermelons and nectarines.

Boise schools have ordered Idaho watermelon. And the Vallivue School District is using pears, pluots (plum-apricot mix) and watermelon.

“This is an exciting opportunity to introduce school children to some of the delicious foods grown right here in this state – and at the same time increase fruit consumption and add something fresh and new to school lunch menus,” said Idaho Preferred program manager Leah Clark.

"It is important that children learn healthy eating habits early in their lives," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard.

"This program provides a way for schools to reinforce this habit that also helps provide a lesson about Idaho's rich agriculture production."

“What a great way to remind our youngsters of the role Idaho farming continues to play in their lives,” Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi said.

“When you can provide students with a fresh peach or apple grown right from their communities, it helps them connect the dots between the farm and what’s on the dinner table.”

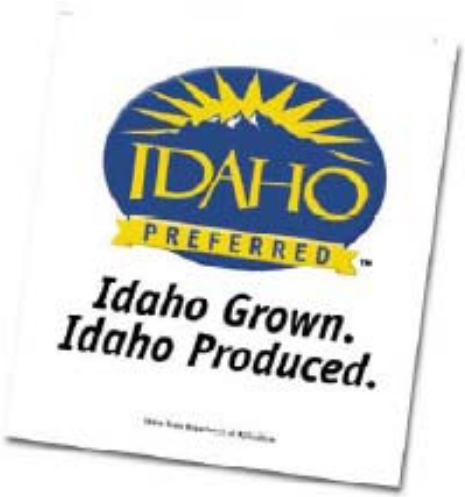
Inside: More exciting news from Idaho Preferred

Stores to again feature Idaho products

Look for stores to feature Idaho fruits and vegetables next week.

Wal-Mart is teaming with Idaho Preferred to feature an assortment of Idaho-grown products including peaches, pears, plums, pluots, nectarines, watermelon, corn, and new crop gala apples.

In addition, Paul's Markets will continue to feature Idaho products every week in store ads and in-store promotions.



What is Idaho Preferred

It's a product identification and promotion campaign to promote the quality, diversity, and availability of the food and agricultural products we grow, raise, and process in the Gem State. For more information, visit the website, http://www.idahopreferred.org.

Pears from Caldwell

Schools to get fresh Idaho options for fund-raising

In anticipation of new child nutrition standards that will take effect in 2006, both the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Education are promoting fund-raising options that support Idaho products.

The pilot project in the Treasure Valley comes as new federal nutrition standards take effect, requiring more wholesome food in schools, including the items sold for fund-raisers.

Community members who wish to support their local schools can buy Idaho apples, potatoes, onions, honey, herbs, water and specialty foods.

For more information about how to include Idaho Preferred products in your school's fund-raiser, call Leah Clark at 332-8684, or Heidi Martin, Child Nutrition Specialist, at 332-6827.

A sample order form and brochure are enclosed in this newsletter.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Education are working on programs to expose children to healthy eating choices, such as Idaho peaches. In addition to the "Healthy Harvest" program, a pilot program is encouraging parents and schools to turn to healthy choices in their fund-raising activities. The pilot program is in anticipation of new child nutrition standards which take effect next year.

Idaho Farmers Supporting Idaho Schools
A Fundraiser Featuring Idaho Products

Apples

Fresh-picked apples from Idaho's orchards are delicious any way you eat them— just as they are, in pies, or in salads. Order a 10 pound box for lunchbox treats or healthy snacks for the whole family.

Pickles

These gourmet pickled vegetables are locally grown and produced in Idaho. A healthy snack made from the finest and freshest ingredients. The gift box includes Pickled Asparagus and Pickled Dilly Beans and comes packaged in an attractive wooden crate with ribbons and ready for gift giving

Potatoes

Just $10 each

Now you can buy Idaho's number one crop - fresh from the farmer. Great for baking, mashed or fried, Idaho potatoes come in 15 lb. boxes. Potatoes store well in cool, dry locations – so stock up for the holidays!

Water

Trinity Springs in Paradise, Idaho, offers the world's most naturally pure spring water from one of the planet's deepest known sources. Buy a case of 24 16.9 oz bottles for only $10 and enjoy the pristine taste of one of the nation's best selling waters.

Onions

Did you know Idaho raised nearly 6 million pounds of onions last year - 16% of the nation's production? A staple in nearly every kitchen, Idaho jumbo onions come in 10 lb. bags - share with neighbors and friends, or store in a cool, dry place for holiday cooking.

Honey

This holiday season treat yourself and your neighbors to some sweet premium Idaho Clover Honey. Gorder Honey is light in color and tastes great. This unique combination of 12 oz creamed honey and 6 oz pure clover honey is sure to delight everyone.

Huckleberries

A genuine Idaho Breakfast complete with Real Idaho Potato Pancakes, Wild Idaho Huckleberry Syrup and White Chocolate Huckleberry Cocoa mix. A great gift from Idaho or a special treat for the family. Enough for a family of 4.

Herbs

Starlight Herb's Idaho Mountain Blend & Mountain Stream Fish Rub are two of our most popular items. These herbal seasonings will add zest & character to a wide variety of foods, including beef, fish, chicken, & wild game. Use as a dry rub or to create a flavorful marinade. Chemical & pesticide free. (Two 1.8 oz jars)

The Pick of the Crop from Idaho!

The Pick of the Crop from Idaho

Idaho Preferred™ is a program managed by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to promote the quality, diversity and availability of Idaho's food and agricultural products. This fundraising project is one way of increasing awareness of Idaho foods while providing opportunities for schools and other organizations to sell fresh, local and nutritious products to raise funds for worthwhile projects. On behalf of Idaho Preferred™ members, we hope you will support your local schools and organizations while enjoying the bounty of Idaho agriculture! For more information go to www.idahopreferred.com.

Sold by _____ For _____

(student's name) (school/organization)

Just $10 each

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	HERBS	HONEY	WATER	APPLES	ONIONS	PICKLES	POTATOES	HUCKLEBERRIES	TOTAL
Make Checks Payable to		Totals									

For more information contact your school or call 332-8684 or email lclark@idahoag.us

Schools throughout the U.S. are working to improve the wellness of their environment to help improve the health of their students. A new law was passed in 2005 requiring all schools who participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program to implement a Wellness Policy by July 2006. An important contribution to a school's environment and its student's wellness is supported by the fundraisers that they participate in. This school has chosen to participate in a healthy fundraiser in an effort to comply with recommended changes to the wellness of the school's environment. Schools participating in healthy fundraisers not only promote healthy lifestyles in their schools but also promote health in their local community. By participating in this fundraiser, you are not only helping a student organization raise money but you are also investing in the health and wellness of Idaho schools and your family. Thank you for your support.

Healthy meals for every child, every day.

Horse owners reminded about West Nile vaccine

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is recommending equine owners have their horses vaccinated against the West Nile virus.

To date, the ISDA Animal Health Lab, which tests for West Nile virus, has tested 106 horses. Of those, 62 horses have tested positive for West Nile. Most of the horses that tested positive for West Nile had not been vaccinated.

"Although the vaccines are not a 100 percent guarantee, they are an excellent way to help prevent West Nile," said Dr. Marilyn Simunich, a veterinarian with ISDA.

For three years, ISDA, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game have been sending "Fight the Bite" brochures throughout Idaho, informing the public, horse owners and hunters on what they can do to prevent mosquito bites and the transmission of West Nile. The information is provided in English and Spanish.

Since the introduction of equine vaccines, the number of horses reported with West Nile infections has decreased dramatically nationwide, from 15,000 horses in 2002 to 1,341 in 2004. In Idaho during 2004, there were 22 horses diagnosed with West Nile virus.

The most common sign of West Nile virus in horses is weakness, usually in the hindquarters. Weakness may be indicated by a widened stance, stumbling, leaning to one side and toe dragging. In extreme cases, paralysis may follow. Fever is sometimes evident, as are depression and fearfulness. Lip smacking, chewing movements and fine muscle tremors may be noticed.

Humans cannot contract West Nile through contact with an infected horse.

West Nile was first discovered in 1999 in the New York City area. Since then, the virus has spread westward and can be found throughout the country. People and animals are generally infected through the bite of a mosquito.

Additional information about the virus is available from the Department of Health and Welfare's website at http://westnile.idaho.gov.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Urban Pest Management program also has information available on steps you can take to prevent home-grown mosquito infestations. Information is available on ISDA's website at http://www.idahoag.us.

Producers have until September 30 to enroll in DCP program

Producers who missed the June 1, 2005 deadline still have until September 30 to enroll in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) 2005 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), announced Wayne Hammon, the state executive director of Idaho FSA.

Applications will be considered late-filed and a $100 late filing fee per farm will be assessed.

According to Hammon, it's important that our program participants remember that their DCP contracts must be signed annually to receive benefits for the current year, regardless of changes.

Producers do have the option of not participating in the DCP program for 2005, but for those who have just overlooked getting their paperwork in order; this will be the last notice to participate.

The DCP program provides both direct (guaranteed) and counter-cyclical payments. Counter-cyclical payments become available when the actual market price of a crop falls below a predetermined price for the crop.

Any changes in the shares on a DCP contract must be reported to local FSA offices so that all required signatures on the revised contract are obtained no later than September 30, 2005. Failure to notify FSA of any share changes or failure to acquire the signatures by the September 30 deadline will result in the termination of the DCP contract and the requirement that any advance payment be refunded with interest.

An approved contract, eligibility forms, and 2005 rental agreements, if applicable, must be on file before payments can be made.

Producers who elect not to participate in the DCP program for 2005 will retain eligibility to participate in the 2006 program.

If you would like to apply for the 2005 DCP or need additional information, please contact your local county FSA office.