



STATE OF IDAHO



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR
CELIA R. GOULD
DIRECTOR

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Contact: Kevin Merritt
208-332-8690
Kevin.Merritt@agri.idaho.gov

NCWM Announces Weights and Measures Week: March 1-7, 2010
Weights and Measures: Keeping Pace for the Future

Weights and measures inspectors are keeping pace with rapidly advancing technologies to ensure fairness in the marketplace. Their service to consumers and industry plays an essential role in our economic recovery by protecting buyers and sellers in virtually all sales of goods in the United States. To recognize this vital element of our free market society, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Weights and Measures celebrates Weights and Measures Week, *Weights and Measures: Keeping Pace for the Future, March 1-7, 2010*.

This date marks the signing of the first weights and measures law by John Adams on March 2, 1799. During the 105 year history of the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM), we have seen advancements from mechanical devices to highly sophisticated software-based weighing and measuring instruments. The NCWM is a professional nonprofit association of state and local weights and measures officials, manufacturers, retailers and consumers. It was formed in 1905 to develop model standards for uniform enforcement from city to city and state to state.

Today, quantities are determined in all business sectors using the latest advancements in technology. Gasoline stations and supermarkets employ state-of-the-art weighing and measuring equipment. Railway cars and highway vehicles are weighed "in-motion." Coal is weighed while moving rapidly across belt-conveyor scales. Motor fuel quality, another function for weights and measures, also is a rapidly advancing science. Regulatory officials are challenged with the development of performance specifications and laboratory testing of evolving fuel sources such as ethanol, biodiesel, biobutanol, and hydrogen. Regardless of the technology in place, inspectors are well trained to ensure accuracy and equity.

Weights and Measures Week serves as a reminder of the value that our society receives for a very small investment in weights-and-measures inspection programs. The cost of a regulatory presence is less than \$0.50 per person per year based on the population of Idaho. Yet we can realize the full return on that investment in a single trip to the market or gas station.

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