Montana Potato Advisory Committee

Tuesday November 11, 2025
Holiday Inn – Downtown, Missoula, MT

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Paul Streich at 10:30 am.

Roll Call

Committee member Jonathan Schutter was absent. All other members were present. Members of the public present included: Andy Fjeseth, Dani Jones, Larry Krum, Taylor Cline, Rachel Johnston, Dr. Cahya Prihatna, Jolene Busch, Aritra Roy Choudhury, Bill Kimm, and Steve Cottom.

Public Comment

Chair Streich called for public comment. There was no public comment.

Meeting Minutes from November 12, 2024

Tim Venhuizen made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 12, 2024, with change to the CWT information. Michael Clarke seconded the motion. All Committee members voted to approve the minutes.

Financial Report

The budget information was shared and discussed with the Committee. Dani Jones shared that it was suggested to $25,000 available for FY26 grants. Tim Venhuizen moved to accept the financials as presented. Michael Clarke seconded. All Committee members voted to approve the financials as presented.

The Committee discussed the current assessment rate, which is 2.5 cents per cwt. The Committee discussed whether or not they should consider raising the assessment. The Committee had further discussion and decided to leave the assessment at its current rate. Mr. Venhuizen moved to keep the assessment at its current rate. Thane Tobol seconded. All Committee members voted to keep the assessment at its current rate.

Carli Hughbanks discussed the advertising and marketing budget and noted any changes. The Committee chose not to fund anything additional. Tim Venhuizen made the motion to approve the advertising budget, Michael Clarke seconded. All Committee members voted to approve the advertising budget.

Carli shared that she would take on the advertising but would like to have a new person for the booths and shows. Dani Jones offered to take care of the shipping and registrations for the Potato Expo Booth. Tim Venhuiven motion to approve the booth shipping and registrations to Dani Jones at the Montana Department of Agriculture. Laci Holbrook seconded the motion. All Committee members in favor.

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New Grant Applications

1. Rachel Johnston, MSU presented with Dr. Cahya Prihatna "Investigating suitable and sustainable gelling agents for tissue culture in support of the Montana Seed Potato Lab"
    - Grant Request $5,292.80
2. Dr. Jessica Kansman, MSU presented by Aritra Roy Choudhury "Aphid Field Survey Year 2: Identifying PVY vector species and timing of migrations on Montana"
    - Grant Request $10,843.00
3. Dr. Aritra Roy Choudhury, MSU "Evaluating current season PVY transmission in Hawaii during seed potato grow-out"
    - Grant Request $12,283.00

After discussion with the Committee and grantees, Tim Venhuizen made the motion to support all the grant applications with full funding. Michale Clarke seconded the motion. All Committee members in favor. Total FY26 Grant Award $28,419.00

Larry Krum provided an update on his work over the past year. For the 2025 shipments; 2,967,021 CWT, (3.8% decrease in CWT shipped in 2024). He shared the in 2026 there will be no field invoicing. There will be two rounds of testing with the electronic program. Eight laptops have been purchased and coming to the Helena office. There will be two laptops, called Toughbook's running for fall of 2025. There are 27 seasonal staff and 5 full-time staff members. Anticipating no long-distance fill ins for staff, which will help with a smooth season. Resulting in less field time for Larry. Larry shared that this is the best season in 20 years. Taylor Cline shared that there is a Reg Tag/ Blue Tag issue on the new system, which might not have the certificate number, will tell if it's out of the grade, can put red and blue tags on the same certificate. The program will be emailing certificates; no paper copies will be handed out. All email certificates will be sent at the end of the day or end of the week. Larry said that there will be more conversations before the season starts. The certificates can be emailed right away to the producers; wo can send them to other states. Taylor Cline said that 8 full-time staff will be using the tablets, others will be using the paper copies.

Tim Venhuizen gave an update that Tony Hart, from Schutter Brothers will be the leadership candidate for NPC this year. Tim V moved to fund Tony Hart travel to NPC. Thane Tobol seconded the motion.
Tim Venhuizen made the motion to fund the returning candidate; candidate will be determined at a later date. Michael Clarke seconded the motion. All in favor.

Out of State travel was discussed. The committee members that are going to be traveling out of state will reach out to Dani Jones to complete the required paperwork. Laci Holbrook made the motion for out of state travel to be reimbursed by the Potato Committee. Michael Clarke seconded the motion.

Committee appointments were discussed; Paul Streich will remain the Chair and Tim Venhuizen will remain the Vice Chair.

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Chairman Paul Streich asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Tim Venhuizen asked that the next committee meeting not be after the research meeting, to avoid a double meeting. It was brought up for the Committee meeting to begin at 10am.

The next meeting will be scheduled with the Potato Seminar, November 2026. Dani Jones will reach out to the committee members when the date gets closer.

Chair Streich adjourned the meeting at 12:04 pm.

Meeting minutes completed by Dani Jones, Program Officer for the Montana Department of Agriculture

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