

Spanish online learning format helps Hispanic workers in the potato industry

AT A GLANCE

Spanish education was offered through the COVID-19 pandemic in an online format to help the potato workforce continue to work effectively.

The Situation

The potato industry has always relied heavily on a strong Hispanic workforce, which is why University of Idaho Extension has always offered classes in Spanish at the Idaho Potato Conference held annually. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Idaho Potato Conference was unable to be held in its usual format. An adapted online format allowed University of Idaho Extension to reach audiences throughout the region, as well as provide education from multiple locations across countries.

Our Response

UI Extension educators Jason Thomas and Joseph Sagers teamed up with experts around the world, such as University of Idaho Extension specialists Nora Olsen and Mike Thornton, industry experts Jeff Miller and Arturo Quintero Ferrer, and researcher Carin Cruzado Gutierrez from Guadalajara, Mexico, to offer an educational workshop online. Participants logged on to the workshop and watched educational videos, learned about new research, and asked questions of experts. All information was provided in Spanish and translation was available to ask questions to non-Spanish speaking experts.



Helping Hispanic workers in the potato industry. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Program Outcomes

Forty-eight individuals attended the virtual conference, and the majority were native Spanish-speaking agricultural workers. Many workers joined in groups from their employers' farms.

Educational videos were produced in collaboration with University of Idaho Extension specialists and county educators. Videos were recorded in English and then dubbed in Spanish to show at this conference. The themes discussed were:

- Reducing bruise in potatoes
- Rating potatoes and improving quality
- Five common potato diseases

impact University of Idaho Extension

- Best practices for piling potatoes
- Unloading potatoes properly from the cellar

These videos have been published on the University of Idaho website <https://www.uidaho.edu/cals/potatoes/bruise-management/videos-in-spanish>.

The Future

After the success of this programming, University of Idaho Extension sees the opportunity to utilize online formats to reach diverse audiences. Going forward,

there will be an online Spanish component to the Idaho Potato Conference that will be accessible to audiences from remote locations.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Jeff Miller from Miller Research, Idaho contributed his time and efforts to produce the information provided in these classes. Arturo Ferer contributed in providing his own information, which he presented from his laboratory in Guadalajara, Mexico.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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