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Idaho Preferred Month Celebrated Idaho Agriculture

September was declared by Governor Otter as Idaho Preferred Month. Idaho Preferred Month is designed to increase consumer awareness of the quality and diversity of local Idaho food and agriculture products. Now in it's 4th year, the celebration has continued to grow.

September's activities began and ended along the banks of the Boise River. The popular Locavore Express kicked off the month with over 100 ThunderMountain Line passengers enjoying Idaho wines, cheese, fruit and a wide variety of locally produced foods prepared by chefs from DoubleTree Riverside, AB Foods, George's Deli, Corner Café and Whitewater Pizza and Pasta.

Idaho Preferred Month continued with retail promotions at Albertsons and Walmart. Albertsons held farmers market events at each of its stores including trucks from Wissel Farm and Idaho Preferred signage to draw attention to local peaches, green beans, sweet corn, watermelon and other produce available in their stores throughout the Treasure

Valley. Walmart also promoted locally produced fruits and vegetables in their stores statewide. The highlight of their promotion was a special media event at the Meridian store on September 9th. Students at select Meridian schools were given a "Ticket to Healthy Snacking" which they took to Walmart to exchange for a bag of Idaho produce. Over 230 students received a bag of fresh fruits and vegetables including pears, apples, peaches, nectarines, plums, pluots, sweet corn and potatoes from local farmers and commodity commission representatives.

September also kicked off the Farm to School pilot project being conducted by Idaho Preferred and Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Services. Five school districts throughout the state are participating in a pilot project to determine best practices for incorporating more local foods on school lunch menus. First Lady Lori Otter spoke to students at Morley Nelson Elementary School in Boise on September 2nd. As part of the pilot project, all cafeterias in the Boise School District pledged to serve at least one Idaho product on the lunch menu every day. They will continue their Farm to School efforts by serving at least one Idaho product each week throughout the school year.

Advertising is a big part of the Idaho Preferred month celebration. TV and radio ads were aired across the state to remind consumers to look for the Idaho Preferred logo to identify and purchase local products. Radio ads included live-read messages specific to what was fresh for each of the 6 weeks of the run - as well as promoting Farmers Markets as a great place to find local products. Farmers Matt Wissel and Dan Symms "starred" in radio spots that ran the first two weeks of September highlighting the fresh vegetables and fruits they produce.

To conclude Idaho Preferred Month, Locavore Express II departed on Sunday September 26th. This time, over 250 passengers enjoyed the train ride, Idaho foods and wines. Local beef, lamb, trout, pork, potatoes, peaches, squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes and breads were prepared by chefs from Bogus Basin, Rudy's, Zee's Catering, Cheerleaders, Highlands Hollow and Corner Café.

Consumer market research will take place in October to assess the effectiveness of the Idaho Preferred promotional activities and events and help direct future Idaho Preferred Month plans.

Specialty Crop Grants Awarded to Industry

Specialty crop projects across Idaho were awarded grants from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture thanks to the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The State of Idaho allocated \$865,672.94 to projects that will enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Eighteen grant applications were submitted at a total request of over \$1.2 million. A panel of industry representatives reviewed and scored all applications and provided input to ISDA for final selection. A total of seventeen projects were selected for funding that included research, educational, and promotional activities for specialty crops such as potatoes, beans, grapes, seeds, apples, onions, stone fruit, mint, and nursery.

"The Department is pleased that we can fund so many projects this year." commented Director Celia Gould, ISDA. "These projects truly will enhance the competitiveness of Idaho's specialty crop industry and generate increased economic returns to Idaho agriculture."

Specialty crops were defined by USDA to include fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. Eligible projects were required to benefit more than one organization and enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

ISDA is expecting to receive Specialty Crop Grant funding from USDA again in 2011 and 2012. If you have questions about the grant program, please contact Lacey Menasco at lacey.menasco@agri.idaho.gov or 208-332-8538.

Click here to see a complete list of projects:

<http://www.agri.idaho.gov/Categories/Marketing/specialitycropgrantphp.php>

Farmers Market Workshop Scheduled in North Idaho

A workshop for North Idaho farmers market vendors and managers will be at the Holiday Inn in Ponderay, Idaho Saturday, November 6, from 8:30am-4:00pm. The workshop will provide training for markets in the areas of marketing, promotion and business planning.

The number of farmers markets in Idaho has grown from 24 in 2006 to 55 in 2010. With the number and size of markets growing and more customers visiting farmers markets every season, there is much potential to be captured.

"We are excited to offer this training opportunity for farmers market managers and vendors. The networking at these events is always invaluable, as is the information provided on the presentations," says Lacey Menasco, Trade Specialist at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. "By learning new ways to enhance their marketing and business planning skills, markets and vendors can increase sales and meet the growing consumer demand for local products."

Anyone involved in a farmers market in any capacity or considering becoming involved in the future, should plan to attend this valuable training. The cost is \$20 per person which includes lunch and materials if registered by October 27th. The cost is \$25 per person after October 27th.

The workshop is a cooperative effort between the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and University of Idaho Cooperative Extension. For more information contact Lacey Menasco at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture at (208)332-8538, or lacey.menasco@agri.idaho.gov

Idaho Students Participate in Healthy Idaho Preferred[®] Fundraiser

Idaho Preferred[®] celebrated this year's harvest season with a fundraiser featuring fresh Idaho apples, pears, Idaho's famous potatoes, and other locally produced specialty products and gift items. The unique fundraiser program featured fourteen healthy products grown and made in Idaho with local ingredients-ensuring that fundraiser dollars benefitted local schools *and* local producers. All products were purchased directly from Idaho producers, allowing funds raised for Idaho's educational organizations to be reinvested right back into the local community.

The 2010 Idaho Preferred[®] Fundraiser, now in its sixth year, was again a hit with schools around the state. Idaho clover honey, fresh fall produce, pickled Idaho asparagus, healthy cookie, muffin and pancake mixes, and much more were featured in the 2010 fundraiser. Forty-

three schools and nearly 8,500 students participated-an increase from 4,500 students in 2009. The fundraiser has continued to increase in school and student participation each year since 2005.

A great alternative to traditional fundraising programs, the Idaho Preferred® Fundraiser offers nutritious products all grown and processed right here in the Gem State. This year, two schools held fundraiser "kick off" assemblies in which Idaho Preferred® staff discussed the importance of supporting our local farmers to keep agriculture thriving in Idaho. Through this program, the fundraiser helps Idaho schoolchildren experience agriculture first-hand while directly supporting Idaho farmers and producers. Thank you to all who participated to make the 2010 Idaho Preferred® Fundraiser a great success!

REDIFIT Low Interest Loans Available to Idaho Freight Shippers

Financial assistance in the form of low interest loans is available to qualified freight shippers or rail lines for projects to upgrade, expand, rehabilitate, purchase or modernize equipment and facilities for Idaho's freight shipping infrastructure. This program is not limited to rail projects.

The Idaho Rural Economic Development and Integrated Freight Transportation (REDIFIT) Program was established by the Idaho Legislature to help business and industry develop and expand freight transportation options. Transportation infrastructure is critical to rural Idaho. Idaho agricultural producers and manufacturers are dependent on timely and affordable transportation options to get products to market.

The \$5 million loan program administered by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture finances up to 90 percent of project costs at interest rates ranging from 2 to 4 percent annually, depending on the length of the loan. Qualified applicants include class III short lines, branch lines of class I railroads leased or operated by a class II railroad, branch lines of class II railroads, lines owned by public entities, and freight shippers. State funding is contingent upon appropriate private sector partnerships with the participation and cooperation of state and local governments.

Applications for the next round of loans are now being accepted. The

submission deadline is Friday, November 12, 2010.

In addition to the revolving loan fund, assistance is authorized in the form of a matching grant for the specific purpose of planning and developing Intermodal Commerce Authorities. One matching grant (100-percent match) will be awarded annually as funds allow. There is a \$100,000 funding cap on individual grants. The annual grant application deadline for 2011 will be May 27th.

For more information about the REDIFIT loans or grant, or to apply, contact Laura Johnson. The loan and grant application and instructions can also be found at www.agri.idaho.gov.

Bon Voyage - Sayonara - Adiós - Auf Wiedersehen - Ciao - Farewell

The Marketing Division Wishes Amanda Albers Congratulations on her New Job

It is with a mix of sadness and happiness that we say good bye to Amanda Albers as a Trade Specialist with the Market Development Division. She is moving up in her career and has accepted a job as International Marketing Manager with the Idaho Potato Commission.

Amanda joined the Dept November 13, 2007. Now, three years later, she is moving on. Her last day with ISDA is November 5 and she assumes her new duties with the Idaho Potato Commission November 8. During her time at ISDA, she has been instrumental in organizing two Governor's Trade Missions to Asia, has coordinated numerous WUSATA activities in China, Hong Kong, Macau, Korea, and Southeast Asia, worked diligently on trade policy issues in Korea and Japan, and launched the REDIFit Grant Program. And that's just to name a few. Amanda has been a tremendous asset to the marketing team and will be missed by all in the Division. On the other hand, she is staying in the field of agriculture and ISDA will have the opportunity to continue to work with her in the new position.

Congratulations, Amanda!

Idaho Welcomes New Idaho-China Trade Office Manager to

Export Team

Mr. Xu Fang (Pronounced "Shoe Fong") has been selected to manage the state of Idaho-China office in Shanghai with the departure of Dr. Cao Guoli. Mr. Xu will be responsible for managing Idaho's trade, investment, tourism and education marketing promotions throughout China.

Xu Fang kicked off his new position by visiting Idaho September 27th through October 8th. During his visit, Xu had the opportunity to meet with sixteen food and agriculture companies. This was a great opportunity for Xu to become more familiar with our Idaho companies as well as consult with them on strategies for expanding sales in the China market.

Mr. Xu is a Chinese national and brings a strong background and successful track record of promoting U.S. products and services in China. From 1999-2009, Xu represented the American Forest & Paper Association (AF & PA) in China and was heavily involved with development of the commercial and residential building codes for wood products in China. Currently, Xu owns and operates his own marketing firm and in addition to his work for the state of Idaho, manages a contract for the American Softwoods consortium, a group which includes: APA-The Engineered Wood Association, the Softwood Export Council (SEC), and the Southern Forest Product Association (SFPA). Mr. Xu holds a B.S. in Structural Engineering from Tong Ji University in Shanghai.

China is currently Idaho's 3rd largest export destination with more than \$570.1 million in products sold in 2009. The state of Idaho-China office works to serve the needs of Idaho exporters, promote foreign direct investment from China to Idaho and to showcase the state's tourism and higher education opportunities. Business services provided by the Idaho office include market research, due diligence, customer matchmaking and organization of trade shows and trade missions.

If you are interested in working with our Idaho-China Trade Office, you can contact Mr. Xu directly to access the offices services:

State of Idaho-China Office - Shanghai
Mr. Xu Fang, Chief Representative
Rm. 805, Tower 3, Wellington Garden, #183 Western Huaihai Road

Shanghai 200030

Phone: 86 21 6448 4405 or 86 21 6448 4408 (direct)

Fax: 86 21 3226 2978

The Marketing Division Welcomes a New WUSATA Intern

Skylar is currently a senior at Boise State University studying International Business and Spanish with minors in Economics and Latin American Studies. She has studied abroad in Spain and Germany. Born and raised in Idaho, she loves the quality of life here and decided to study international business because of a love of learning new languages and about new cultures.

To reach Skylar, call 208-332-8542 or email Skylar.Jett@agri.idaho.gov. Skylar Jett has joined ISDA's Market Development Division as the international intern providing support in international market and trade policy research, database management, scheduling and logistics for visiting international buyers and trade missions. Her position is funded through WUSATA (Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association).