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UNITED ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER, ACTUAL POTATO ACREAGE COUNT FOR IDAHO

Idaho Falls, Idaho, July 8, 2008— For the growing year 2008–2009, United Potato Growers of Idaho (United) projects that statewide potato acreage equals 300,266 acres, a decrease of 12.3% over the acres counted by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in 2007–2008. United announced the results of its first ever potato acreage count at this year’s All-Grower Summer Meeting. Prior to this year’s acreage count, Idaho potato growers relied solely on the acreage survey conducted by the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS). Now, Idaho’s potato growers have an actual count versus a statistical estimate of all potato acres planted in Idaho.

“The acreage count represents United’s continued commitment to helping Idaho growers achieve long-term profitability,” said Jerry Wright, CEO and President of United. “For years, growers only had the incomplete information provided by the NASS survey, and we’ve managed to gather data that provides an actual acreage count versus a statistical estimate.”

An actual acreage count gives growers much-needed information for the upcoming market season. If a grower knows the number of acres potentially available to the market, better decisions can be made about when to sell or to hold the crop, increasing the grower’s profit potential. The marketplace also responds to this key information as highlighted by the market’s reaction with the release of NASS’s survey number every year.

“Knowing the actual number of acres is a critical first step,” said Wright. “Throughout the remainder of the growing season and thru harvest United will take a large number of field samples to monitor both the quality and the yield of this year’s crop. We are committed to providing United growers with the most accurate crop forecast possible. Information gives growers knowledge and power. It’s all about helping growers manage their markets and improve their returns.”

How United Counted

Earlier this year, United contacted the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and requested actual field maps for the entire state of Idaho. Using these maps, United created an acreage counting program. Starting May 15, 2008, seven teams traveled throughout the state of Idaho physically counting potato acres by ground and air. All told, these teams reviewed more than 122,000 fields and counted 4,262,449 acres.

To count acres, United used a combination of GPS and mapping software to record the crops planted in each field. Fields were recorded as either potatoes or ‘other.’ In order to properly verify a field’s crop, a

PAGE 2— UNITED ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER ACTUAL POTATO ACREAGE COUNT FOR IDAHO

team member, at minimum, had to be close enough to see the field using field glasses. United required that teams visually verify a field before recording its crop. Each team transmitted its data to the home office. For tracking purposes, each team's data was tagged electronically to ensure that if errors arose they could be linked back to a specific team.

Following the count, United conducted an audit to verify the accuracy of its findings. Of the 122,000+ fields, 793 fields were audited, representing 41,161 acres. The audit results indicated an error rate of 0.74%. This number means that out of almost 800 fields, only six were identified as mislabeled. United's counters achieved an accuracy rate of 99.2%.

Protecting Data

As part of this counting process, United established a data policy for the handling of all acreage data. By adhering to a data policy from the beginning, United believes it can best serve the grower community and still maintain privacy for landowners. See unitedpotato.com for an electronic version of the policy.

Briefly, the policy states that United will only provide and/or publish acreage data in aggregate by United districts, counties and by state. Within the system, individual fields are not identified by owner name, only by map location. Any maps published as part of a presentation or article, for example, will have all identifiable characteristics (e.g., road names, county names, etc.) removed to prevent disclosure of specific field locations. United will take every necessary measure to ensure that this data is protected to maintain program standards and security.

About United Potato Growers of Idaho

United Potato Growers of Idaho is a member co-op of the United Potato Growers of America, which was formed in March 2005 by growers to balance supply to demand. The mission is to reverse years of declining and unprofitable prices for growers, which has caused many independent growers to go out of business. UPGA is a federated cooperative currently with eight member co-op chapters.

UPGI and UPGA were created under the protection of the Capper-Volstead Act that was enacted in 1922 by Congress to allow growers to work collectively to market their products.