

United Potato Growers of Idaho Potato Acreage Count

United Potato Growers of Idaho has completed another successful 2023 potato acreage count for the state of Idaho. All potato growing areas have been entered with a county-by-county breakdown and year-over-year comparison. The total acreage count for this year's crop came in at 328,858 acres, up 39,193 acres from last year's UPGI count of 289,665 acres – a 13.5% increase. With strong alternative crop returns and rapidly escalating input costs, last year's acreage was one of the lowest in the last 2 ½ decades.

An acreage increase was certainly to be expected given the strong finished product demand in both the frozen and dehydration sectors. In addition, there has been some moderation of water concerns as well as some input costs, most notably fertilizer/chemical and fuel costs. Dialing into the increase a bit deeper on a county-by-county basis, Idaho has 12 counties with potato acreage over 8,000 acres, and 7 of those counties would be considered "processing" counties. The total acreage increase in those 7 counties (Cassia, Elmore, Gooding, Jerome, Minidoka, Power, and Twin Falls) was slightly over 21,000 acres.

It is also believed that dehydrators in some of the eastern counties have contracted for additional acreage, potentially adding another 6,000 to 8,000 acres in counties such as Bingham, Bonneville, Jefferson, and Madison. Seed acreage also expanded, estimated at roughly a 3,000 acre increase in counties including Fremont and others.

Given the positive returns in the fresh market over the past year, it is expected that fresh acreage also expanded to some extent, but it appears that a large majority of the acreage increase can be attributed to the processing sector. Yields will be the second part of the total production equation. The trend line yield for Idaho would be 447 cwt/acre, but the last two years have demonstrated the potential for variability from that number, with many factors still needing to play out.