



Press Release

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Idaho Potato Acreage Down 14 Percent from Last Year

Potato growers in Idaho have planted an estimated 300,000 acres in 2008, a 14 percent decrease from the 350,000 acres planted in 2007. Harvested acres, at 299,000, are also down 14 percent from a year ago. This is the least potato acreage in Idaho since 1980. In the 10 Southwest Counties, planted and harvested acres are estimated at 15,000 acres, down 6,000 acres from 2007. This is the least potato acreage in the 10 Southwest Counties since 1963. Acres for harvest in the State's Other Counties are expected to total 284,000 acres from 285,000 planted acres. This is a 13 percent decrease from last year's 329,000 acres planted in Other Counties.

Potatoes planted in Idaho are estimated to be 2 percent red, 3 percent white, 1 percent yellow, and 94 percent Russet. Based on a special Growers' Survey, acreage intended to be marketed through fresh channels accounted for 57 percent of the total acres planted, acreage intended to be marketed directly to a processor accounted for 33 percent, and acreage to be marketed or used for seed accounted for 10 percent.

Nationally, potato growers across the United States have planted an estimated 1.06 million acres of potatoes in all four seasons this year, down 8 percent from last year and 7 percent below 2006. Area for harvest, forecasted at 1.04 million acres, is also down 8 percent from 2007 and 7 percent below 2006. Area planted to fall potatoes for 2008 is estimated at 929,100 acres, down 8 percent from last year and 7 percent below 2006. Harvested area is forecast at 916,200 acres, also down 8 percent from 2007 and 7 percent below 2006. The decrease in planted acreage can partly be attributed to higher prices from competing crops, which influenced growers to plant crops other than potatoes. Washington producers planted 6 percent fewer acres than a year ago. Oregon growers decreased acreage 3 percent from last year and the crop was 1 to 2 weeks behind normal. Planted acres in Colorado dropped 4 percent. A storm at the end of June caused wind and hail damage to some of the acres. Montana's fall potato acres are down 4 percent and Nevada's acres decreased 14 percent. California producers increased acreage by 10 percent and farmers in New Mexico planted 15 percent more acres. North Dakota's planted acreage declined 14 percent from last year. When compared to 2007, planted acres decreased 4 percent in Minnesota, went up 5 percent in Michigan, and remained unchanged in Wisconsin. Ohio producers reduced acres 22 percent from a year ago and growers in Nebraska decreased acreage 5 percent from last year. Maine's planted area is down 4 percent from 2007. Growers in New York planted 5 percent fewer acres than in 2007, acreage in Pennsylvania increased 5 percent, and Massachusetts' planted acres decreased 4 percent. Rhode Island's planted area is estimated at 500 acres, 100 acres below last year.

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