

● NEWS FROM NCAP

POTATO GROWER SUCCESSFULLY REPLACES SOIL FUMIGATION WITH A GREEN MANURE CROP

Potatoes grown with an alternative to chemical fumigant treatment provide important benefits, according to a new report about the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' Alternative Cropping Demonstration. NCAP and project partners completed the report in December and recently presented the results of the project to reservation potato growers.

"The results are encouraging. We



Jen Miller is NCAP's sustainable agriculture program coordinator.

are excited about the potential that more potato growers on the Reservation will consider this alternative practice," says Rosphine Coby-Jack, land use commissioner for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

Instead of treating the soil with the chemical fumigant metam sodium, a green manure crop was grown in the fall of 2002 between the wheat and potato crops. Green manure crops are turned into the soil to add nutrients, improve soil characteristics, and control pests and diseases.

The 160-acre demonstration field on

the Fort Hall Indian Reservation showed that planting a mustard green manure crop was an economically viable alternative to fumigant use in potatoes. These results are from the first alternative rotation of wheat/green manure-potato on the demonstration field. Another trial of the wheat/green manure-potato rotation will be completed this fall to confirm these results.

A concern for many farmers is the cost of growing the green manure crop. In this demonstration, the cost of the green manure crop was less than metam sodium treatment. With comparable to better potato yields and quality, the mustard green manure practice was profitable.

Todd Jensen of Cedar Farms, Inc. farmed the demonstration project field.

"We were early enough in the season to get the mustard in and established," says Jensen. "It works with the timing of fall activities."

"The only issue is the amount of water," says Jensen. "We normally use three inches of water in the fall to water up the harvested grain field. We had deep wells available, but with canal water it could be questionable."

"I see lots of potential for my operation," says Jensen. "Like anything else, I need to replicate it a few years and make sure we get the same results. If so, I would like to plant a whole pivot [160 acres] with the mustard."

The demonstration project will continue this year with the participating farmer growing potatoes on ground where a mustard green manure crop was mixed into the soil. A field tour will be held this summer for potato growers on the reservation to learn more about the benefits of adding a green manure crop to their wheat-potato rotation.

The next phase of the project involves getting more potato growers to try the green manure. This is one way to reduce pesticide use, while



Taking field measurements of yield and quality at the potato demonstration project.



Harvesting potatoes from the demonstration project field.

producing quality potatoes and good returns. This is a benefit for the Tribes and the farmers.

The demonstration project is sponsored by Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council

and NCAP, and is made possible with the continued support from Cedar Farms, Inc., Western Ag Research, Western Laboratory, NRCS, Fort Hall Extension System, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Land Use Commission.

The demonstration project was made possible by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. —*Jen Miller*

● NEWS FROM NCAP

WORKING TOWARD PESTICIDE-FREE PARKS IN PORTLAND

Two of the Northwest's best resources on pesticide-free public green space programs shared information about the benefits and challenges of developing and maintaining pesticide-free parks and landscapes on February 25, 2004. Barb Decaro, resource conservation coordinator for Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation, and Carrie Bowman, gardener for Seattle's Public Library, spoke at a free informal presentation to a packed room in Portland.

Over 70 people attended (double the expected number), including city staff, interested public, and conservation organizations from Portland, Salem, Eugene, and other municipalities in Oregon. NCAP organized and



One of Seattle's pesticide-free parks.

Pollyanna Lind is one of the coordinators of NCAP's Clean Water for Salmon campaign.

cosponsored the event with Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services and Endangered Species Act Program, as

well as a coalition of environmental and health groups called Pesticide Free Partners.

Jim Middaugh, Portland's Endangered Species Act program manager, praised the presentation and said, "Having this information will assist the City of Portland in making decisions about how to improve our programs for the residents of the city and the wildlife we share it with."

Pesticide-free parks and green spaces are growing in numbers across the west. Just last month Santa Barbara, California, established fifteen pesticide-free parks and pesticide-free zones around playgrounds and picnic areas.

A few other examples of city policies that include designated pesticide-free areas include Bainbridge Island and Lynnwood in Washington; and San Carlos, Fairfax, Arcata, and San Francisco in California.

If you want to get involved in the Pesticide Free Partners' community effort to establish pesticide-free parks in Portland please contact Pollyanna Lind at salmon@pesticide.org or (541) 344-5044 ext. 17. —*Pollyanna Lind*