

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Please see the two important USDA press releases below containing opportunities you may want to further investigate.

Be aware the inspection requirements for the bonus product are the same as for potatoes purchased under entitlement – USDA's specifications require that the product be inspected at destination. Therefore, bidders will want to include receiving point inspections costs in their calculations.

USDA announces produce purchases By Tom Karst

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a major purchase of a variety of commodities for nutrition programs, including **potatoes**, strawberries, pears, apples and other items.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA's plan to purchase \$161 million in commodities April 30.

The USDA said the purchases will include up to \$32 million in fresh and processed apples; **\$18 million in potatoes**; \$7 million in strawberries; \$3 million in fresh and canned pears; \$21 million for red tart cherries; \$1.1 million in blackberries; \$5 million in dried figs; \$9.3 million in dried plums; and \$18 million in cranberry products.

For more information on purchase details, interested suppliers can contact the USDA contracting officer through the AMS Web page, <http://www.ams.usda.gov>.

Nancy Foster, president of the Vienna, Va.-based U.S. Apple Association, said the planned purchases will benefit apple growers.

In particular, she said growers have suffered low prices for processing fruit.



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For Immediate Release

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USDA FUNDS AVAILABLE TO PRODUCERS TO REDUCE WATER DEMAND

Boise, ID, April 30, 2010 – Farmers interested in increasing their water efficiency can apply for financial assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to employ specific water conserving

practices. The sign-up period for funding from the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) runs through May 28, 2010.

AWEP offers financial and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers complete activities that conserve ground and surface water and improve water quality on agricultural lands including irrigated cropland and irrigated pasture. For land to be eligible it must have been irrigated two out of the last five years.

"Last year, the Idaho Water Resources Board, Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, and Portneuf Marsh Valley Canal Company each received funding through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program for water quantity or quality projects in central and eastern Idaho," said Jeff Burwell, Idaho NRCS State Conservationist.

"This is the second year producers in the project areas can sign-up for special funding to carry out water conservation practices," Burwell said. "Farmers can get support to shift to less water-demanding practices like converting irrigated crops to dryland or planting crops with lower water requirements."

Other work that may qualify for funding includes replacing leaky canals and diversion structures with pipe or concrete; converting ground water irrigation sources to surface water sources; constructing surface irrigation water regulating reservoirs; or converting surface irrigation to sprinkler systems.

NRCS contracts directly with agricultural producers who are included in approved project areas. AWEP funding goes to producers and not the entities sponsoring projects.

Producers who apply for AWEP assistance must meet Environmental Quality Incentives Program eligibility requirements.

Please contact your local NRCS office to see if you are eligible for AWEP funding. To find the location of your local NRCS office visit the NRCS website at <http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/> and click the link "Find a Service Center" at the end of the list on the left side.

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