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USA Onions teams with Boise State football for grilling extravaganza

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Following the precedence set by its 2012 onion grilling campaign, USA Onions/Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee is launching an all-new program this football season in conjunction with Boise State Bronco Football home games.

As part of the tailgate-themed promotion, Idaho Gov. Butch Otter will compete at the grill against a surprise "opponent" during the Broncos' match up with University of Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles at Boise State on Sept. 28.

The highly publicized game, which will be aired on ABC or ESPN, is expected to fill Bronco Stadium, as will other games during the promotional period.

According to IEEOC Marketing Director Sherise Jones, the "USA Onion Grill-Off" series will include a number of high-profile participants such as well-known chefs, sports figures and other big-name personalities.

"We anticipate it to be a really super-charged fun, friendly and high-energy food experience that football fans and grillers alike won't want to miss," Jones said in early July.

The tailgate competition series kicks off Sept. 7 during the Boise State Broncos vs. the University of Tennessee-Martin Skyhawks game, which will be televised on ABC or ESPN. The schedule takes in games against the Air Force Academy Falcons on Sept. 13, University of Nevada Wolf Pack on Oct. 19, University of Wyoming Cowboys on Nov. 11 and University of New Mexico Lobos on Nov. 30.

"The series is part of the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee's ongoing promotion efforts to encourage consumers to include grilling and USA Onions as part of their in-home or foodservice dining," Jones said. "Our series includes six separate grilling events, each held over the course of a three-hour period prior to all Boise State University football home games. And the series is considered to be a key component of the tailgate atmosphere for Boise State's football season, designed to build local awareness and national branding for USA Onions."

She said each separate grilling competition will match up two contestants and may include up to three additional team members per contestant. The competitors will be asked to create a grilling or tailgate recipe incorporating USA Onions and other local products. A variety of local products will be selected for each competition, giving the competitors the opportunity to develop recipes in advance.

The locally produced items will be chosen specifically to complement USA Onions and to encourage unique and creative recipe development.

"Competitors at each will grill and present their creations to three pre-selected judges, and a winner will be chosen just prior to the kick-off." Jones said.

Prizes for winners include custom Weber charcoal grills, as well as national recognition for being among the 2013 USA Onion Grill-Off winners.

"We hope to build sponsorship for the series and are working closely with various media outlets to build national notoriety for this new grilling competition," Jones said. "We have potential exposure of the competition series through commentary pieces on each of the six nationally televised games."

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