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Sun-Glo enters Idaho potato season with increased capacity

By

John Groh, publisher

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[Sun-Glo of Idaho](#), long known for its high-quality russet potatoes, is looking forward to bringing even more spuds to market following an addition to its packing facility in Sugar City, ID.

Jill Crapo Cox, vice president of sales for Sun-Glo, said the new construction essentially doubles the size of its facility, adding 80,000 square feet, including three new lines, automatic palletization, additional holding bins for extra sizes, and three new loading docks.

The facility is now operational for the current harvest season, and Cox said, “We are really pleased with the added volume the plant is producing,” but she lamented the fact that construction was delayed by a year due to COVID-19-related issues.

“We had been planning to do this for a while, but we were delayed by a year due to the fact that we could not get microchips due to COVID-19,” she said. “Plus, the machinery was caught up in West Coast port traffic. We actually had to reroute it to New York and have it trucked in to Idaho.”

Cox said another new development at Sun-Glo is that it will be shipping red and gold potatoes for the fresh market for the first time, and its new red/gold line will come on line in early January.

“This is something I have wanted to do for a while,” she said of adding reds and golds to Sun-Glo’s retail offerings. “We’ve always grown reds and golds for processing, but this is our first time growing them for the fresh market.”

She said in prior years, customers would have to procure their colored potatoes from other shippers, but now Sun-Glo can be a one-stop shop for all their potato needs.

Regarding the current potato crop, Cox said, “Our early digs showed small sizing, but we expect that as we progress with the harvest we will start to see larger sizes. As for quality, we are very happy with what we are seeing so far, and we expect the same as harvest continues and potatoes size up.”

She said Sun-Glo’s customers have been very cooperative and understanding about the challenges the company has faced this year.

“We gapped for about 10 days this summer, which was bad for us and bad for our customers,” said Cox. “They relaxed their standards for a while when we were unable to provide them the sizes they require, and they continue to remain flexible as we navigate the challenges of the harvest.”

Cox said the 10-day gap was weather-related, with a cool and wet spring giving way to searing, prolonged heat this summer. The pattern disrupted the growing cycle, resulting in the late start of harvest.

“We are always on top of our crop management, and we never would have had the gap had it not been for the weather,” she said. “I think that is why our customers were so understanding, because they know there was nothing we could do about it.”

[John Groh](#)

About John Groh | 

John Groh graduated from the University of San Diego in 1989 with a bachelors of arts degree in English. Following a brief stint as a sportswriter covering the New York Giants

football team, he joined The Produce News in 1996 as an assistant editor and worked his way up the ranks, becoming publisher in 2006. He and his wife, Mary Anne, live in northern New Jersey in the suburbs of New York City.

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