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O.C. Schulz & Sons ready for the Red River Valley potato season

By

Kyle Eberth, Northwest editor

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[O.C. Schulz & Sons Inc.](#) understands a vital key to success is simply doing the right thing, for a long time. Longevity is synonymous with the fifth-generation family potato farm, which has made a name for itself growing, packing and shipping spuds from the Red River Valley.

“My great-grandfather homesteaded here,” said Dave Moquist, a partner in the Crystal, ND-based company. “Now we have the next generation involved.”

While Moquist and the Schulz team think they’ve seen it all, that doesn’t mean the days are boring. “This time of year, we’ve got guys on the farm fixing trucks and doing what we need to get going,” said Moquist.

Everyone pitches in, whether the need is in the warehouse or outside clearing snow from the most recent blizzard. “There’s a new challenge every day; right now it’s getting roads cleared so we can get trucks in and out,” he said.

Schulz & Sons specializes in red and yellow potatoes and utilizes sugar beets, wheat and soybeans for rotational purposes. “We raise 1,200 acres of potatoes for the fresh market,” said Moquist. The breakdown is 70 percent reds and 30 percent yellows. “We’ve been at that split for a few years now, it’s all demand-based so we grow with the market,” he added.

“A majority of our potatoes go out A-sized, both colors,” he said. “We work hard to not do damage to the potatoes, so we don’t have too many No. 2s, but there’s always some misshapen or with growth cracks.”

Schulz is currently seeing a strong market for potatoes this year, “partly based on the supply of russets being down some, so we’re seeing stronger demand for reds and yellows to help fill that gap,” Moquist said. “Price-wise that puts us all on a more equal basis between the colors.”

News on the farm is the addition of a new packingline, fit with new electronic grader and sizer. “We’re still fine-tuning, making adjustments as we go, but are getting closer to a finished product as it relates to bagging and sizes,” he said.

The rain-fed potato farm is dependent on the Red River Valley’s good weather and stable snowpack. “This year we’ve had more normal yields, last year was down due to drought, but we have good supplies and we’re here to sell them,” he said.

With a good crop this year, Schulz started shipping in October and expects to go through May. “We start as soon as we can and go until we’re through them,” said Moquist.

[Kyle Eberth](#)

About Kyle Eberth | 

Kyle Eberth is new to the produce industry, but has grown up around it, in proclaimed "Apple Capitol of the World," Wenatchee, WA. For the past 14-years he has worked in the non-profit sector with an emphasis on brand storytelling, community engagement, and donor relationships.

Kyle graduated from Whitworth University (Spokane, WA) in 2007. He and wife Kelsey were married shortly thereafter, when they moved to Wenatchee to launch their careers. Kyle is "Dad" to Brooklyn and Hudson, together the Eberths enjoy skiing, biking, their family and friends, and playing together in the beautiful place they get to live.

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