

Focusing on Quality, Service and Honesty



Sid, John, Jonathan, Carl, Nick and Cliff Schutter are all involved in Schutter Seed Farm, Inc., Manhattan, Montana, one of Montana's premier seed potato farms.

Heading into the harvest season this year, John, Jr., Cliff, Nick, Sid and Carl Schutter were looking at a beautiful crop of Russet Burbank and Umatilla Russets. Approximately 80 percent of their crop is Russet Burbank and 20 percent Umatilla.

Their potatoes are grown and marketed under the name of Schutter Seed Farm, Inc. This year they harvested between 1,100 and 1,200 acres of certified seed.

The size profile is excellent, the readings are clean and the growers were hoping for a successful completion of their harvesting season before cold weather arrived. An early frost last fall caught them with about 300 acres still in the ground. Fortunately, they were able to salvage part of what could have been a major loss.

"After the frost, very nice weather returned, so we just left the potatoes in the field for about two weeks before starting digging again," says Nick. "Fortunately, we were able to get enough people to come in and help. The frozen potatoes showed up very well and largely sloughed off in the field. We dug slowly, put Oxidate on everything going into storage and kept the seed pile height very low. We forced a lot of air through the pile and were able to dry out the impacted seed and store it very well."

Took No Chances

To guarantee that there would be no problems for their commercial customers, the brothers tested the seed in greenhouses to see how well it would perform. The results were positive; feedback from customers this year also indicated that the seed "performed very well."

As John points out, "Our farm's philosophy has always been about quality, quality, quality."

"Our focus is on quality, service and honesty," Nick adds. "Everything we do here is geared toward producing a quality crop, whether it is a decision involving our rotation plan with other crops, a crop care application or anything else. We are very thankful for our customer base. If an issue of any kind should surface, we try to deal with it immediately. Our customers treat us well, and we expect to treat them the same way."

A Pioneer Seed Production Legacy

John, Jr., Cliff, Nick, Sid and Carl are the descendents of well-known seed potato pioneer, John Schutter, Sr., and his wife, Grace. They immigrated from The Netherlands to Montana's Gallatin County area in 1947. John, Sr., worked for various farmers for several years, before renting ground on his own to grow potatoes in the 1950s. He purchased his first farmland in the Manhattan-Churchill area in the early 1960s.

Overtime, John, Sr., was instrumental in propagating virus-tested seed and quickly established himself as a premier seed potato grower in Montana State. He died in 2000.

Today, his five sons – there were eight children in the family – farm independently but grow and market their potato crop as a corporate enterprise. The potato equipment is owned by the brothers as a whole, while all other farming equipment and crops grown are owned separately.

Due to the 200 miles distance to the nearest potato equipment