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Were you selected to be audited on the Potato Sustainability Initiative (PSI) survey?

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Announcements recently went out on whether you will be audited in person for your 2016 responses to the Potato Sustainability Initiative (PSI) survey. Most process growers are requested to participate in the PSI sustainability survey. The survey is administered through the FoodLogiQ website and is completed electronically. The 2016 version of the survey has 105 questions that include topics within sustainable farming, and social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Approximately 20% of the growers who completed the survey will be audited in person each year. If you are being audited this year, you are one of those 20%. You will not be audited for another 3 to 5 years.

The audit requires an auditor to interview the grower or farm manager with specific questions and visually inspect documents. Currently, the audit takes 1.5-3 hours and is solely an office visit. The goal of the physical audit is to confirm or verify the grower's responses to the electronic survey. There are 13 minimum requirement questions (mandatory to complete) asked during the audit, and an additional 27 questions are selected from the survey by the auditor (at least 15 questions in priority 1 and no more than 12 questions from priority 2). How is the survey scored? A grower is assigned a performance level based upon their level of participation in a particular sustainable practice. The four levels range from basic to steward to expert to master.

The Northwest Potato Research Consortium is currently funding IACI, University of Idaho and Washington State University to provide specific resources, education, and extension programming targeted at navigating and completing the PSI survey and efficiently and effectively preparing for a PSI audit. We have developed a manual to help growers to methodically and successfully enter all required documents, with examples of standard operating procedures, and resources to help answer interview questions. In the manual, each question is broken into the individual question number, survey question, survey level, reference guide, and guidance given to auditors for the interview questions and required or requested documentation. For each question you will find clarification on documents to attach, common practices to help with answering interview questions, document templates, and additional resources.

The manual will be posted at www.uidaho.edu/potatoes. Changes to this manual will be done periodically/annually to adjust for changes to the PSI survey. Additional resources will also be posted on the website.

Here are just a few helpful hints to prepare you for the physical audit.

- The person who filled out the PSI survey should attend the audit and bring a copy of the survey answers. This audit asks questions that encompass all aspects of the farming operation from how you clean between seed lots to employee compensation calculations.
- Use the reference guide (“i” in the top right hand corner of the question box) associated with your PSI survey to help in gathering documents necessary for the audit.
- Have all documents easily accessible- computer, files, notebook, printed out, etc. You will need:
 - o A list of field names exactly as inputted into the survey and names provided for processor information.
 - o A list of all 3rd party pesticide applicators, license # and expiration dates.
 - o Access to all of your pesticide, fertilizer, and irrigation records that you provide to your processor. Electronic programs that collate all the information for you are ideal (e.g. Land.db; Agrian, etc.). Pesticide application records must include all the following: Time, Date, Locations, Target pest, Material applied, Rate, Applicator, Application method, Weather conditions (including wind speed and direction and temperature) in order to get credit for the question. You can access electronically or have printed copies available for the audit.
- Other documents to have readily available:
 - o GAP (USDA, Global or Harmonized) certificate.
 - o Copies of seed tags or seed receipts.
 - o Farm maps to identify sensitive areas, roads, conservation areas, etc.
 - o SDS (formerly MSDS) of pesticides used on farm (electronic or print form).
 - o Inventory records or receipts for personal protective equipment (PPE), if farm employees apply any pesticides on farm (exempt if all third-party applications).
 - o Pesticide application calibration records for all equipment used on farm.
 - o List of potato fields with previous rotational crops for past three years.
 - o Nutrient analysis results from soil or petioles.
 - o A statement that the farm “complies with all federal, state/provincial and local laws including all bribery, corruption, extortion, and embezzlement laws.” If this statement is written in your contract with a processor, then show contract statement.
 - o Copy of water rights, permits, or water share certificate.
 - o See manual for additional documents needed for steward, master and expert designations.

Use the consumer driven PSI survey and audit as an opportunity for documenting your stewardship and sustainability and enhancing your farming operation. The potato industry has a sustainable story to tell, we just need to document that story.