

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Bringing the tasty with food safety

AT A GLANCE

UI Extension and TechHelp assist food manufacturers with their food safety plans and food manufacturing businesses.

The Situation

Several potato processors needed HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) training to meet their regulatory and customer requirements to be GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) certified through Primus Global Food Safety.

Our Response

The Idaho Growers and Shippers Association reached out to TechHelp and University of Idaho Extension to identify the best course for their members. Janna Hamlett, Ph.D., food processing Extension specialist developed an online HACCP course focused on the potato packhouse industry that is recognized by the International HACCP Alliance and considered an accredited training program for the certification requirements. Subsidized through the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) NEAP (National Emergency Assistance Program) funds, this course was uniquely designed and provided at no-cost to the companies that process potato products, to equip them with the relevant training for their specific industry and food safety hazards. TechHelp designed this interactive course to give industry members opportunities to exchange ideas, successes and challenges through



Sun-Glo of Idaho, a family-run grower of Idaho Russet, Norkotah and Burbank potatoes, participated in course online.

activities that help them create, update and maintain their food safety programs. Additionally, the individual sessions after the course provided a comfortable, private and safe environment where participant's specific circumstances, hazards and concerns could be addressed.

The course was offered online, eliminating the need for travel, and reducing the cost of attending in person, as many facilities still faced restrictions due to the pandemic. If TechHelp had not provided this course virtually, participants like Sun-Glo of Idaho would likely not have been able to participate, to the severe detriment of their business. Such strategic partnerships allow TechHelp and University of Idaho's food sciences program to serve our clients to their very best of our

ability and have proven essential supporting Idaho's processors.

Program Outcomes

Ten companies took advantage of this program including Sun-Glo of Idaho. Sun-Glo of Idaho was established in 1974 by five potato growers in southeast Idaho and now owned by the Crapo family. Sun-Glo of Idaho is a family-run grower, packer and shipper of premium quality, fresh Idaho Russet, Norkotah and Burbank potatoes.

Because of this course Melissa Coles, HR and food safety coordinator at Sun-Glo of Idaho said, "When my certification expired during the Covid-19 pandemic, my options were limited due to travel and group

restrictions. When the Idaho Growers and Shippers Association offered this convenient course through TechHelp, I knew I needed to enroll as other courses I had taken through TechHelp were very educational. It was convenient to attend the online course and helpful to interact with others in the same industry. I was particularly grateful we could break the course into several afternoon sessions versus having to dedicate full workdays for training. I would highly recommend any future courses offered through TechHelp."

Because of this course, on a follow-up survey Sun-Glo of Idaho reported \$3 million retain sales, retaining 80 jobs related to food production, and made an investment of \$11.6 million in plant, people and processes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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