

Ecosystem Services and Idaho's Farmers

Interview Seventeen

Interviewer – Let's begin with some background information. Please tell me a little bit about how you got into the farming business.

RESPONDENT – Okay, well I was born and raised on a farm, and my whole family was totally involved in you know a planting, irrigating, harvesting all my life and. so naturally my dad had some land and it was just natural to just get started in farming, that's what I always wanted to do.

Interviewer – How long have you and your immediate family been in the farming business?

Respondent – I started in 1984, at 28 acres of potatoes, 60 acres of wheat that's how I got going.

Interviewer – what do you grow now?

Respondent – I raise, my primary row crops are sugar beets and potatoes, mainly for fresh pack. I have some small processing contracts but uhh my off rotation crops are wheat and sugar snap peas for seed.

Interviewer – how many acres are you farming now?

Respondent – I think it's around 4300.

Interviewer – in what ways if any has nearby urban expansion or any nearby construction affected you or your farm?

Respondent – nothing construction wise and not a lot of urban expansion going on out here you know. I mean when you have neighbors you always have issues about you know spraying trees or somebody's garden, but nothing major.

Interviewer – do you have any current plans to sell or lease any parts of your farm in the future?

Respondent – to sell any land?

Interviewer – yeah.

Respondent – you know, I got two boys that want to farm so the plan right now is no.

Interviewer – you plan on farming for the rest of your life?

Respondent – you know I hope there's 10 years there or so I can sleep in and take it easy; I'd like to sleep in. I hope there's a few years there were the responsibility squarely on somebody else, and I can kind of mess around a little bit. But I probably will be involved and tell I'm dead.

Interviewer – you will always care anyway right?

Respondent – yeah exactly.

Interviewer – how important is it to you that your farmland remains in agriculture?

Respondent – You know extremely important, I mean this is, there are parts of our land that have been in my family since my grandpa came from Sweden and homesteaded it in 1914. One particular piece is the home place there on that road, and my dad asked me before he died "don't ever sell that"; So I felt like he was saying "keep on farming". But I think it's important you know we built up the ground and would like, I'd like always see it in farming.

Interviewer – Have you implemented any conservation practices your farming operation?

Respondent – Oh yeah. I mean I try to keep cover crops on you know we have a ton of wind. And I, like I just said we put a lot into building our soil up with fertilizer and good fertility practices, and I just hate to see blow away into the neighbors. So we try to keep cover crops, leave the ground rough in the fall, so it doesn't blow away and uhh man we are forced to conserve water constantly just to raise crop.

Interviewer – What are some of your driving forces to conserving water?

Respondent – Well the crops need so much every day, and we have a limited amount it seems like. Nine out of 10 years we're just barely there you know, so ugh that and power bills is a driving force, you know economics. it used to be labor savings, pivots and things, I'm having some issues with pivots not working out as good as they used to. So we have went back to some manual labor type irrigation, you know with wheel lines and things but.

Interviewer – I guess sometimes the center pivots and things just aren't getting to the land fast enough or something?

Respondent – Yeah, I mean the ability to put down enough water when you need it, and also to be able to wash, I think our aquifer naturally holds salts. and If you put down the minimum amount of water then you bring the salts up and leave it in the top foot. So salt issues have become more of an issue, you know salt Burns roots and plants without roots don't do very much, don't do very good. So I like the way that the wheel lines wash the salts back down. So it's kind of a fertility issue to. Interviewer – are there any other conservation that come to mind?

Responded – I am just trying to think... I.

Interviewer – Do you.. have you planted trees?

Respondent – Yes we tried to have wind barriers in areas where the wind blows a lot and things you know. But yeah we have planted some trees here and there.

Interviewer – How do you make decisions about pesticide and herbicide use on your farms?

Respondent – Well I go to a zillion classes in the wintertime, because I'm required to you know in order to fertilizer and things through my irrigation water, and to spray, and to buy chemicals. All those things

require you to have a license, and to keep that license up I got to go to these meetings. But I listen and try to do what is recommended, I've crop consultant that I use quite a bit; he takes care of thousands of acres so he's quite knowledgeable and he guides me a lot to what the newest and best chemicals are. A lot of it is my own experience you know 30+ years of knowing what works doesn't work. You know, I know what chemicals you put on my burn next year's crop and things like that. So you handle everything really carefully.

interviewer – So sometimes you are considering "the long-term" instead of just "the right now"?

Respondent – Right! When you lay chemical down you need to know plant pack restrictions and the effects it's going to have on your soil long-term, and other crops on your rotation.

Interviewer – What kind of pesticides and herbicides to use on your farm?

Respondent – Okay so you want the scientific name?

Interviewer – Whatever comes to mind.

Respondent – Because I don't know all those formulations.

Interviewer – Like do you use Roundup?

Respondent – Oh okay so you just want like the trade name?

Interviewer – yes.

Respondent – Okay, will beats yes it is primarily Roundup. We kind of use some kind of lightweight pesticides for cut worm for aphids in beats, it's called Loursband, there is Mustang Max to name a couple and of course Roundup. And we always stay on the label rates on those you know.

interviewer – Right.

Respondent – Potatoes is usually Diametric, the Old Sincere.

Interviewer – Okay.

Respondent – Oh gosh, having blank brain... starts with a "p". Well this year, I could dig up my list.

Interviewer – You're fine. What do you use them for mainly more than anything?

Respondent – Okay Château, that's a new chemical that I have tried this year, it is a little cheaper and has a better control of broad leaf wheat.

Interviewer – That is always a challenge.

Respondent – Yeah, yes. Grasses, I am trying to think with the grass were herbicide use, it is yellow, get your hands all yellow. You know I'm talking about?

Interviewer – Nope.

Respondent – Anyways wheat I use a lot of Starane, Bromate, Mcp, Discover for wild oats. So I try to cover you know strains are like the kosher broadly like spectrum. There are some I put in there for grass to.

Interviewer – This is a really good next step, and I am asking you about your use of genetically engineered or genetically modified seeds. Just mentioning that they have been in the news recently, and the coverage doesn't always ask the farmers their experience with these seeds "positive or negative" how do you see them?

Respondent – Well I am kind of limited to sugar beets, that's really all I raised "Roundup", that is genetically engineered; I mean my experience with them has been very positive. We've had a couple huge hurdles in the sugar company, and it wasn't the consumers so much as the organic sugar be seen growers over in Oregon that were fighting us. It was a two year or so long battle in the courts and we won that, and kind of overcame that hurdle that we are good. I think the consumer has really accepted our sugar, I mean it is nationwide. pretty much all the sugar companies in the United States are pretty much owned by growers. every state in order to compete has to have Roundup ready beats or you're going to lose out, because the hand labor is just crazy, it would be hundreds of dollars per acre with the way things have gone labor wise and that. So it is kind of a must stay alive. As far as potato seed, I hear a lot about genetically modified potatoes, and I hear there is a lot of pushback from a lot of French fry end-users like McDonald's and Burger King. And I think it's something that consumers in general think it's healthy, I don't know why they think that, I myself don't think that there is anything wrong with them. What I feel hesitant to feed my kids genetically modified? Absolutely not. Because I could tell you this but there is less chemicals on genetically modified sugar beets then there used to be before genetically engineered seed.

Interviewer – Because some of the seeds are resistant to problems that before you use chemical on?

Respondent – Well yeah, the fact that we can put a chemical on, whatever you shoot Roundup on is going to die. But if there's genes that have been bred into those beads to resist Roundup, then all you have to spray on your beats is Roundup. Roundup is a lot tamer chemical than the stuff that we were spraying on the beats before, and we had to spray the beats or maybe five times and it is still hand labor so we had to spend all that money and time, and all that extra chemical on the plant. I personally think that Roundup is healthier for people, than if you're worried about getting an overdose with chemicals that may cause you to get some disease or something, there is a lot less chemicals going on Roundup ready beats then conventional beats.

Interviewer – Turning now to the subject of environmental change, have you noticed any change in the environmental conditions in your area that seemed beyond normal variation year-to-year?

Respondent – No, I am finding out the older I get there is never two winters for summers that you know are exactly the same. I just think we are in an ever-changing weather cycle that causes new challenges

every year, new experiences with the weather. As far as our environment I really don't think. I mean I think fields are generally cleaner than they used to be because Roundup.

Interviewer – You mean less weeds?

Respondent – Yes less weeds yeah, I mean how, I'm asking you back, you been here a big chunk of your life to Kathy. I remember fighting the weeds till I just kind of gave up and you just felt like well I gotta stand to beats and I'm going to live with it, and I can't afford to give the beat whores a hundred bucks an acre, so there's going to be weeds out there. There just isn't that anymore.

Interviewer- Definitely less weeds than there used to be.

Respondent – Beet fields are generally pretty clean.

Interviewer – What about habitat?

Respondent – Umm on my own farm, I have had a lot more deer in the past with the price of ground and the economic pressure I have cleaned up rock piles and corners used to have weeds and trees where I used to see deer every spring but I do not see him anymore, because the cover isn't there. I don't see a lot of change and, I think the animals kind of just cycle just like the weather. There is tons of rabbits right now and I can't tell you why. I think the number of coyotes has dropped so I think the rabbits have flourished. Three or four years ago I've seen a lot more peasants than I am know; maybe too many Pocatello hunters.

Interviewer – Did you used to grow up hunting?

Respondent – Yeah little bit, you know we did not spend time because it was always harvest when it was hunting season. But I like to go shoot a bird and eat it now and then.

Interviewer – Okay next question, it is kind of connected to asking about environmental change. My question is what has caused those environmental changes. And you shared forming every inch.

Respondent – yeah.

Interviewer – Is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Respondent – Ugh, well I think, you know environmentally maybe a little, time to stretching and I guess maybe it seems dry around here than he used to be you know. I don't know we just be less, you know I think you're in a cycle or something and we just get less moisture through the winter and things seem to be a little dryer when we plant. Maybe that's due to you know water conservation. Everybody's...

Interviewer – Right.

Respondent – Nobody puts down one more drop than the absolutely need it doesn't seem like.

Interviewer – When you used to do the graphs irrigation, there is a difference.

Respondent – Yeah, you know one thing my dad used to do is when he got the beats up so high, then he would, he would go to one 22 hour sets or something you know and really pour the water to the beats. You know we don't do that anymore. Just can't afford fertilizer can't afford the you know dad always did it for a good fertility practices to you know. I think he felt like, if you have good moist ground then you have fertile ground. And if you are raising your crops to dry it is just going to be less microbial activity and things that make the ground fertile. There is little less of that going on because of limits of water and economic limits, things like that.

Interviewer – We have kind of touched on some of these, have you noticed any persistent change in the length of the growing season, including the first and last frost.

Respondent – Yeah, there again I don't know we are in some kind of cycle, and I should probably knock on wood will probably happen to me this year but, I remember 25 years ago I had a beautiful crop of potatoes and it froze really hard on 28th August.

Interviewer – right.

Respondent – You know I don't believe that in August frost since then.

Interviewer – right.

Respondent – You know, a killing frost. I do see longer growing season in the fall and maybe a little frost prone in the spring then we used to.

Interviewer – Have you noticed any change average Winter temperatures and snowfall?

Respondent – Yeah I mean, I have been on the canal board since 1995, and ugh it just seems like we are always going into the spring with limited snowfall and then more often than not we get some spring snow storms, kind of like this year .

Interviewer – yes.

Respondent – You know where we just get enough to get through. I think it's like somebody's taking care of us you know? Environmentally things, you know I hate to give any credence to climate change people and sometimes you think man, I hate the fact that sometimes it looks like we are having dryer winters. I think I think we are just in a cycle you know. Can I share an opinion on this deal?

Interviewer – You absolutely can, this is your opportunity.

Respondent– I was visiting, a very intelligent person he does a lot of reading and he said he had read ugh a doctor's studies. I can't name anything so it's like I'm making it up but this weather or environmental doctor, anyway he said that the earth is in a 127 year cycle where it tips on its axis. And I don't know if you guys have heard this but the north pole while it is shrieking, the South Pole is growing now ice wise. So we were talking about that and he said the doctor that had this study said that it is a

127 year cycle and to me that makes so much sense because the average human lifespan is something like 78 – 76 something like that. And of course it is not going to be, you know every old-timer that you talk to says you know the winters are not like they used to be when we were young. and I say the same thing you know, it seems like every you years you notice changes in the environment that come and stay. like I was saying about being on the canal board, when I first came on the canal board we always had good snow packs going into the spring and we pretty much had our water shed built up by the first of march. well around the turn of the century, it seemed like that we go into march first short of snow pack but we always fill our watershed or come close to it because we have spring storms. I guess I don't think that is an accident, I think that is part of the cycle, and my personal belief is that our creator wouldn't put us here on an earth that couldn't take care of us. and I don't think it's you know, I think there is very few human reasons why there would be climate change, I really do. you know I don't want to sound ignorant I know there is a ton of pollution and things like that but I think that this earth was built to ugh, what's a word for recharge? kind of re- rebirth every spring or something? I think so.. that's kind of my own personal belief but I really did like. you know what is funny to is this friend of mine that read and studied this and everything that this study said is and he read some things about this study. and the guy has been very frustrated because he cannot get any traction with his theories, because politically we are all supposed to be believing in climate change. when maybe we are in a climate cycle that is longer than the lifespan of man. so we, there is nothing we are doing to the earth that is causing this, it is just a simple cycle where the earth tips on its axis every 127 years and rotates back; call me crazy but to me that makes a lot more sense than climate change.

Interviewer – So as far as precipitation goes have you seen change in precipitation not necessarily less precipitation but a change from snow to rain?

respondent- Yeah, exactly because as our economic base grows water just becomes tighter, I think we are using more water, and every drop has to be accounted for so the fact that we are getting through points too proof that we are getting just as much precip, it just comes in different forms and a little different times of the year. yeah it's a good question though... yeah.

Interviewer – Okay we have touched on this, do you worry about water availability and maintaining your water rights?

Respondent – Very much, Like I said I got faith in god that he is going to like give me the water that we need, I don't have faith in government and the judicial system that they're going to award the water to the right people. umm I think money is a driving force in greed, why we are losing some water rights right now. you know the fact that the state licensed every acre out here four acre feet and our average use is 2.3 acre feet and we are offering, because it's become dryer supposedly because the aquifer is ugh supposedly dropping, umm there in the government are in negotiations right now to give 13% of our water away, and I am totally against it. because we are not using our whole ground water right anyway. and I heard it explained like this, our aquifer, our pristine untouched aquifer is like a bathtub and it is full, and what is running over it is what is what were, man is naturally going back down into the ground, man is putting into the ground and natural rainfall, and natural recharge of our aquifer. so the depletion that they are talking about, so let's say the bath tub is running over an inch in the 1950's, and

now the bath tub is running over a half of an inch, but our aquifer is still intact. by that, every one that I talk to and I talk to some pretty heady water people, because I'm on this canal board. um I, I guess I, I don't understand why the alarm you know. and we let a lot of water go down the river if we could funnel that out and recharge that aquifer overflow that I'm talking about to keep those up but um. and that is what we are working on, in the canal company with the ground water people, is to try to get something done there but ugh.

interviewer- To try to feed back that aquifer?

respondent- To try to recharge and to get credit for it. people don't want to give us credit for it, they wana just take our water. and let's call a spade a spade, it's the Surface Water Coalition from Twin Falls, um and I'm not sure those people have ever been short on water. but just because they have a Sr. water right, they are just like, like the playground bully's. they got plenty but they are going to go around and make sure no one else has any extra. we continually negotiate with them to the point I am sick of it, I just flat say it I am sick of it. one reason they are so confident and cocky about it is because they got Idaho Power with them. Idaho Power wants our water too. because if they, my theory on that is if free water floating down the river that gets passed Milner damn down there becomes there water and they can make power with it and use it where ever they want.

interviewer- So have you seen, like you have been involved with the canal?

respondent- Yeah.

interviewer- Do you think the canal sends less water down to the aquifer then it use too?

respondent- No that's the thing, we lose over 60% of our diversion. So up at the river gates for easy figuring; if we divert 1000 acre feet we are only delivering 400 acre feet to our shareholders. 600 acre feet is going through that. First of all that first 20 miles from of the canal is just so much gravel, and then just shattered the salt, shattered the lava rock down through the system; there in Springfield there is a really bad spot. There is spots just kinda all along the desert there just where the floor of the canal is just lava rock, and it just finds cracks. but see they won't let us use that as recharge, and we just got losing a big important battle in the courts because law 42-228 in the water law books of Idaho says we can recover the water that is lost. so we have been putting in perch wails, shallow wells, you know shallower than 250 feet. And we can prove, we have monitor wails that we can prove that the water level comes up when the canal system is charged in the spring. and late in the fall when the canal system shuts off then the water level drops; we are saying that is our water. but the judge ruled that that's public water, because it mixes with public water in the aquifer. so we thought we had a pretty good case; we lost that case. so the next thing to do is to line the canal system.

interviewer- That is the opposite, that is not putting water into the aquifer.

respondent- Right, but that is our only choice. because look how much water we are losing.

interviewer- At least then you can get that water to the farm.

respondent- yeah. exactly.

I- Next question, where and how do you receive your water, some of it is canal water, do you mostly get canal water?

R- Oh, about 1/3 of it is canal water and uhh quite a bit of my canal ground in the 1970's, there is a capacity issue in the canal, because we lose so much water. we can only shove so much water down there and then they, and the banks are only so high. and a lot of guys in the 70's, 60's and 70's drilled wales to kinda take, eliminate some pressure, and it did, it really helped out. It helped, it made it so, you know 7 days a week if you needed water out of the canal you could get it. it's a little scary because of what's going on, there is a little issues there that might force more people to take those wale rights somewhere else and try to hook back up to the canal which will limit our availability of having around the clock water. you know you might only get it 4 days a week instead of 7. which would really.

I- Sometimes you need it.

R- When you got 100 degree weather out here you just can't shut your pump off, so there is some real issues there but mostly but 1/3 of it is canal which I pump out of a ditch or pond or something, and then the rest is wales.

I- If you have a certain amount of water allocated, about how much of that water do you use? and it sounds like you use it all.

R- Yeah, well because I have some wales on some canal ground, I don't ever sell water. but occasionally I try to conserve and just make sure I have plenty of water where I need it, you know. I'd say 9 out of 10 years I have a little water left over.

I- Do you rely on bees to pollinate your crops?

R- No the bees don't really need it, and I don't really raise any seed alfalfa so I don't. but I know there; ok a few years ago I had to, I raised sweet corn. Since then they have pulled that; they pulled all there corn out of this area. I think bees are a pretty important part of our agriculture around here you know.

I- So have you noticed any change in the bee population?

R- I see less bees you know, I see a lot of bee boxes too, in the corners of peoples pivots and things. so I just assume they are out there. I have read that that's kind of a scare we are kind of running low on.

I- Would you contribute that to anything?

R- Maybe just one of those cycles you know, I don't know.

I- But you have seen some of your neighbors like have the hives?

R- Yes

I- So they are bringing them in.

R- Yeah they're working them out here, I don't really understand the whole bee thing you know. anyway umm I know that they are out there, and I do see them you know, and get stung occasionally.

I- How concerned are you about climate change?

R- I think climate change in today's political vernacular is another word for controlling the folks. I think it is a way that a segment of our; you know one political party is trying to put a cap on business and people's rights really. there has been a bill been introduced in the US senate or US house, I don't know which one. It's called waters of America. you guys heard about that? it scares me, because they are going to try and control everybody's water. we are already fighting everybody for our water you know. now all we need is Washington dc to tell us what they can. but I think our government has reached a point where climate change has, you know all kinds of things they use to control people, and people's property. you know our water I kind of feel like belongs to my family. my water rights belong to me. I think there is a certain amount of people in government that and people in our country that think that all natural resources should belong to everybody; I don't see it that way, I think that is major trouble that is going to happen. So my answer to climate change is, I think its PR to be yes I believe in climate change you know, or PC I mean. I think it's a crock, I'll just tell you flat out.

I- So you think it's a part of a power struggle?

R- I do, I really do, I feel strongly about it because. in the winter of 49 they had 12 feet of snow in Idaho, but in the spring of 1975, it was one of the driest winters on record. you know cycles, and people like that get really quite when it comes to climate change.

I- Do you think that the change to the climate is caused by human activity?

R- I'm going to say no, you know everyone said to get away from the hair spray cans; because that is going to burn a hole in the ozone. you know nobody talks about ozone anymore. all we talk about is carbon credits and how we are ruining this or that. I mean I, I don't, I just don't buy it.

I- Alright, other than water, for you what is the most valuable natural resource for successful farming?

R- You know I think if people would just let farmers regulate their own resources whether it's you know water or sunlight or soil. I guess being able to control, I don't know I'm a little lost in this question.

I- Have you changed your farming practices in recent years, such as crops you grow, when you plant and harvest, how you manage the pests?

R- Yeah I mean with roundup ready beats we have been able to plant later and get just as much. I think a lot of it is just there is less chemicals on the plants and they kinda, you know when they hit the ground they are running, they are not limping like they use to be. When beats where this big we would just pummel them with chemicals because the weeds where coming right with them. Now we can get them a good size and roundup doesn't seem to hold them back so we plant them a little later to avoid frost. And we get better tonnage, better crop performance. I plant spuds a lot earlier then my dad use to, but I think that is just economic pressure. You know the old timers use to say if there is snow in the caps over

there it is too early to plant but we don't pay any attention to that anymore. When we get 40+ degrees soil temps we are going because by then we already owe the bank by then a lot of money. It's funny how much money you spend before you get this crop going before its even growing. So economic pressure has forced a little bit of a change in the way I farm. We, I feel so much pressure to make every crop pay, because there is no stubbing your toe anymore. If you shoot yourself in the foot and have crop failure like on potatoes or something, you better have deep pockets, because that's a deep hole to dig out of. My grandpa had a thrasher, when he got done thrashing his own grain he'd go around a thrash for everybody. My dad told me that my grandma would follow him around and feed his thrashing crew.

I- What are the biggest challenges you see in farming in south east Idaho?

R- I see a shrink in customer base a little bit. just over all less people eat potatoes. you know Wal-Mart started a big home grown thing, and that's a big problem

I- Which regulatory agencies have you been in contact with in the last few years, and what has your experience been with them?

R- We have to pass a test every year called gap inspection, which stands for good ag practices, and. so we spend quite a bit of time on that. I use to do my own stuff, my own books my own everything. I got two girls, they are not full time but are pretty close to full time. so the USDA I give them a lot of money every year. I pay a lot of fees to past the test, for inspection fees you pay to test the spuds. it's all negative, it's just a pain in the butt, but we try to keep positive attitude about it. like the people that come out, I can rag on them but I don't.

I- What has been your experience with those particular individuals?

R- I'll give you one example; the GAP inspector from last year was a gal, you know she was like four hours late, we were all ready to go, just sitting around here waiting. she showed up here, nice gal, and she wanted to do, just like everybody else just wanted to do exactly what she is supposed to do. Well this bathroom here is for these two ladies, and I occasionally use it, but primarily for them. Well she wanted to see the cleaning schedule on this bathroom, and these girls just looked at each other and said well "we just clean it". Well she said "you may not pass that deal", everything you do not pass on a gap inspection; you don't pass gap inspection you're in trouble, you can't sell potatoes anywhere. It's become like a drivers license to sell potatoes you know. You know we have to put up with crap like that, but for the most part they are really good people, but kind of just doing a dumb job. some of the things they; like for instance they will ask you to keep a log on animals you see on your property, and if you see any fancies from that animal. But you know we just play the game, its retarded is what it is, its retarded.

I- Do you think there is anything that the local state or federal government could do for you as a farmer?

R- No, I mean I think they could do, they do a market report like on potatoes, and I think it is bias. I think they talk to certain people on both sides. you know you got the buyers and the growers over here, and they get there information from the buyers which are the potato sheds and processors, stuff like that.

They don't ever talk to the growers, you know what I mean? I think a good marketing ,reporting system to represent everyone. but unfortunately its always pulled by money. you know growers don't have somebody sitting by the phone everyday like shippers do processers do. so I think yeah they could; unbiased market reports, unbiased acreage reports, I mean things that really help growers make decisions. the government doesn't help at all, nothing you know. They keep a running tab on the market for the buyers and the buyers back east they use that market report too, so they wana be as well armed as possible when they go to buy potatoes. the growers just don't have anything like that you know. We did have a group, we have a group, it's called United Potato and they are a lot less active then they use to be because we got sued for violation of the capital sued co-op act, and we had to settle out of court. because good old judge Wildman sold us down the river on it you know. So sometimes it's hard to stay in business as a grower with all these government things and big money kind of fighting against you know, mother nature, everything against you usually.

I- What about other people or organizations in the area, can you think of anything they can do to help you farm?

R- Yeah I mean, United Potato Growers of Idaho has been excellent, its I feel is the only advocate for the grower really. You know the Idaho Potato Commission is supposedly supposed to help us sell potatoes; I don't know how well they do. I think they spend a lot of time and money paying attention to the big money people and trends and stuff like that. I don't know you know, they probably do some good but as far as the growers are concerned; groups like united potato of Idaho is probably the only friend we got out there that is a group that spends money and goes around and gathers information for the grower and no one else. and then they share it with the growers, then there is a lot of growers that share it with a lot of people, but at least we get some information for us, that is kind of geared toward us.

I- And for sugar beets?

R- Yeah, sugar beets is in the last couple of years a bit more grower friendly. we bought the company years ago, but never felt like we were controlling it. I think we've had some changes in the national, no not the national, in our grower board that represents our growers to this company that we own; and they have become a lot more grower friendly. Just seems like they, the last couple three years you know. We pretty much just do what they tell us to do, but it is nice to have a little input you know.

I- Are you using and Arial drones in your farming practice?

R- Yeah I have a drone, and so far we have just flown over family get together and stuff. we are waiting for a particular drone program where they use inferred to tell where dryer spots, photosynthesis activity, something like that. There is nothing as neat as going and looking at your field, you just gotta be there. I think it's going to be neat down the road, a lot more helpful as we get going.

I- Before we finish here I'd like to ask you a couple demographic questions, how many people are in your household?

R- Two, me and the wife.

I- In simple terms how would you describe your political views?

R- You know I was raised by democrats, but I'm more conservative, I think our country is falling apart to tell you the truth I'm a little worried about it.

I- What is your age?

R- 52 .

I- Is there anything you would like to share about farming in southeast Idaho that we have missed?

R- No I cannot think of anything. I think that there oughta be to be tax breaks and things for people for people who can prove that they are a family farm, and there's lots of family farms that have become like corporations and things. there has to be some advantage to a smaller farm you know. because if we lose the family farm we are going to lose a lot of business. But on the other hand.

I- Do you think family farms look at the farming in a different way than the corporate?

R- Yeah I do, I think it's a way of life, and I think family farms provide community with good people that love the community and that love the environment. a lot of big corporate farms bring in a lot of H2 workers and I don't know.