

## Brazil, Mexico trip set

**Updated:** Thursday, November 17, 2011 12:04 PM

State officials hope to open up new business opportunities

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Capital Press

BOISE, Idaho -- About 20 members of Idaho's agricultural community will join Lt. Gov. Brad Little Dec. 3-10 on a trade mission to Mexico and Brazil.

Idaho has participated in several trade missions to Mexico, but this is the state's first trip to Brazil.

Mexico, with a population of 112 million, is the second largest export destination for Idaho agricultural products. Brazil, the world's eighth largest country with a population of more than 200 million, has one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Some ag groups joining the mission, such as the state's potato and dry bean commissions, have already established business relationships in Mexico and hope to expand them. But others, such as Teton Valley Ranch, hope to gain entry.

Teton Valley produces fresh, dehydrated and frozen potato products. International markets, including Mexico, "are really starting to expand in the frozen potato category," said Mark Gabrylczyk, the company's national food service manager for frozen products.

"We're looking for customers," Gabrylczyk said. "As a company, we're always looking to expand and we think this is a good market to get into."

The Idaho Bean Commission has been planting test plots of certified Idaho dry bean seed in Mexico for several years and some have resulted in significantly increased exports of Idaho dry bean seed, IBC Administrator Diana Caldwell said.

She said IBC commissioners who join the delegation will meet with key trade officials "to discuss increasing exports of Idaho's dry bean seed to Mexico."

The Idaho Potato Commission has been on all of the state's trade missions to various nations since at least 2003 and each one has led to incremental gains in business, IPC President and CEO Frank Muir said.

Having the governor and other top officials accompany participants to private meetings has opened up access to high-level industry and government officials, he said. For example, IPC officials were able, with the governor's direct help, to gain back a company in Vietnam that had switched to Canadian potatoes.

"These trade missions are very cost-effective ways to leverage our international budget," Muir said. "They have always been beneficial to the Idaho potato industry."

Pickett Equipment, which manufactures edible bean harvesting equipment, has already developed a market presence in Mexico and, "Our goal is to look for a new dealer network to expand our market," said Jonathan Price, the company's international sales manager.

Many of the ag groups in the delegation will only join the Mexico leg of the mission, but others, such as Industrial Ventilation Inc., will visit both countries.

The company, which makes storage ventilation systems for the potato, onion, sugar beet and carrot industries, is looking for new business in Brazil and hopes to expand its current business in Mexico.

Other ag-related participants include Glanbia Foods, Great American Appetizers, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, Mountain States Oilseeds and the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.