

## Idaho trade delegation led by rancher-farmer

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BOISE -- Having a high-ranking official such as a governor on an international trade mission opens doors to key government and industry officials.

Having a top official who understands agriculture is even better.

Participants in Idaho's Dec. 3-10 trade mission to Mexico and Brazil will be led by Lt. Gov. Brad Little, who runs a diversified farming and cattle operation.

Little, who comes from a ranching family, is also former chairman of the Idaho Wool Growers Association.

His intimate knowledge of agriculture will prove very useful during meetings with important buyers and grower groups in those two countries, said trade mission organizer Laura Johnson, manager of the [Idaho State Department of Agriculture](#)'s market development division.

"He understands the issues and what it takes to (do) business with agricultural products," she said. "That will make the conversations and interactions far more meaningful."

The trade mission includes meetings with several large grower groups and major retail chains, including La Huerta, an international fruit and vegetable company, supermarket chain Soriana, Mexico's largest retailer, and Grupo Altex, the main purchaser of wheat for Grupo Bimbo, Mexico's largest food company and one of the largest bakers in the world.

Many trade mission participants have additional meetings set up with current and potential new customers.

Many of the 20 ag representatives in the delegation will only go to Mexico, but some will visit both countries.

Industrial Ventilation Inc., which makes storage ventilation systems for the potato, onion, sugar beet and carrot industries, hopes to expand its current business in Mexico and is looking to establish a presence in Brazil, said sales and marketing manager Mike Machurek.

Four years after visiting Mexico for the first time 10 years ago, Industrial Ventilation established a dealership there that is now the company's top performing business.

Though the country is somewhat of an unknown, the company is hoping for similar success in Brazil, which has a population of over 200 million.

It was a similar situation in Mexico 10 years ago, Machurek said. "We didn't know what the storage possibilities were there but it turned out to be a great environment (for us)."

Mountain States Oilseeds, which contracts most of its roughly 30,000 acres in Idaho and buys from more than 100 farmers, will meet with its current customer in Mexico and also with other potential customers.

"We're looking to increase our (current) business down there and also gain more customers," said Mountain States Oilseeds President Jason Godfrey. "We're a small company looking to gain some momentum and this is a good opportunity for us."

The Idaho dry bean industry is already selling certified seed to Mexico and the Idaho Bean Commission has conducted test plots there for several years.

"Our objective is to put a face to the bean commission, No. 1, but also let key buyers down there know who to contact for quality seed," said IBC board chairman Lorell Skogsberg, who will also share the results of the test plots. "We have several years worth of data from those trials and we want them to see those results."