

INTERVIEW

NAME: Amanda Gevens

POSITION: Professor & Extension Specialist, Administrative Director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program, and Associate Chair of the Department of Plant Pathology (former Chair from 2019 to 2025)

UNIVERSITY & DEPARTMENT: Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

LOCATION: Main lab in Madison, Wisconsin, as well as statewide research and Extension programming

HOMETOWN: Southold, Long Island, NY

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION: 17 years

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: Assistant Professor with the University of Florida in Gainesville

SCHOOLING: Bachelor of Science in Biology, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, Master of Science in Plant Pathology, Purdue University, and Ph.D. in Plant Pathology, Michigan State University

ACTIVITIES/ORGANIZATIONS: American Phytopathological Society, Potato Association of America, and Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA)

AWARDS/HONORS: 2026 Spudman Impact Award, 2023-2028 UW-Madison CALS Fritz Friday Chair for Vegetable Production Research, 2022 UW-Madison CALS Agricultural Research Station Research Award, 2018 Excellence in Extension Award from American Phytopathological Society, 2017 UW-Madison CALS Pound Extension Award, 2017 Wisconsin Seed Potato Industry Leadership Award, and 2010 WPVGA Researcher of the Year Award

FAMILY: Husband, Dr. Stephen Jordan; son, Jack (age 19 and a freshman at UW-Madison); daughter, Lucy (age 11); and son, William (age 9)

HOBBIES: My children, outside activities, gardening, mowing the lawn, and walking



DR. AMANDA GEVENS, Professor & Extension Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Plant Pathology, and Administrative Director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program

By Joe Kertzman, managing editor, Badger Common'Tater

“My path into plant pathology began on a small direct-market vegetable farm on the eastern end of Long Island. As a kid, I loved being outdoors and was eager to be involved in every part of the operation, from planting and weeding to harvesting and interacting with customers,” fondly recalls Dr. Amanda Gevens, Professor & Extension Specialist, UW-Madison Department of Plant Pathology.

“What surprised me was how fascinated I became by the diseases and pests that threatened the crops,” she adds.

“That interest only grew during my college summers working as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) scout with Cornell Cooperative Extension,” Gevens relates, “where I spent my days in growers’ fields learning firsthand about the challenges of crop production.”

Those early experiences sparked a lifelong interest for Gevens in helping growers solve problems and ultimately led her to pursue

a career in applied plant pathology and Extension, combining her passion for agriculture, science, service, and the outdoors.

With a Master of Science Degree

Above: A WPVGA base-funded researcher since 2019, Dr. Amanda Gevens wears many hats, not only as a professor and Extension specialist, but also as associate chair of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Plant Pathology, and administrative director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program. Dr. Gevens is shown here posing in an Alsum Farms & Produce potato field near Arena, Wisconsin, on July 3, 2019. *Photo courtesy of Michael P. King, UW-Madison CALS*

in Plant Pathology from Purdue University, a Ph.D. from Michigan State University, and a two-year stint as an assistant professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Dr. Gevens embarked on a career as a Professor and Extension plant pathologist at UW-Madison, in 2009.

In what key areas has your program at UW-Madison, the Gevens Lab, and your team grown and evolved in the 17 years that you've been at the helm?

It has been an incredible journey here at UW! My research and Extension program, supported expertly for many years by Dr. Stephen Jordan in coordinating field and storage research and Dr. Monica Chen in coordinating molecular biology and diagnostic research, has trained 22 graduate students, six post-docs, and dozens of undergraduates.

Along with my students and staff, we have advanced research and understanding of vegetable and potato pathogens and disease management. My research focuses on improving the productivity, sustainability, and profitability of potato and vegetable systems.

The work integrates plant disease epidemiology, diagnostics, pathogen biology, soil health, seed potato certification, plant disease

regulation/policy, and precision agriculture technologies.

Specifically, our research on potato and tomato late blight, potato early blight, potato common scab, potato silver scurf, and potato early dying (PED) has helped growers better understand disease risk and underpins effective management strategies.

More recently, through collaborative efforts with Dr. Phil Townsend of UW-Forest and Wildlife Ecology, we have

Above: Dr. Amanda Gevens lists her children as a favorite hobby, with the family including, from left to right, Jack, William, Amanda, Lucy, and Amanda's husband, Dr. Stephen Jordan.

pioneered the use of hyperspectral imaging, remote sensing, and machine learning for early disease detection and crop monitoring in potato.

I have greatly valued and enjoyed my collaborations with fellow

continued on pg. 10



Any field. Any challenge.
WE ALWAYS SHOW UP.

See how at jay-mar.com

Your exclusive Channel Corn and Soybean Seed dealer in Central WI.




Channel.

 **Jay-Mar, Inc.**



scientists, growers and industry partners. Through these closer collaborations, my work has translated discovery into practical solutions in support of resilient production systems.

Further, my students, upon graduation, have gone on to have even greater impact on agricultural research, production, academia, and regulation. I'm tremendously proud of them, and appreciative of the opportunity that I had to be a part

of their academic, professional, and personal journeys.

Are the problems facing growers today comparable to what they were when you arrived at UW? Disease priorities are not static and often shift in response to changes in production practices and environmental conditions.

New varieties can alter disease susceptibility profiles, while changes in tillage systems, crop rotations,

Above: Dr. Amanda Gevens (back center) poses with her lab students and staff, in 2023, in an onion disease field research trial at Gumz Farms in Coloma, Wisconsin.

Below: As part of the 2023 Hancock Agricultural Research Station Field Day, Dr. Amanda Gevens (left) updated attendees on potato and vegetable disease research and the then-current growing season. *Photo courtesy of Troy Fishler*

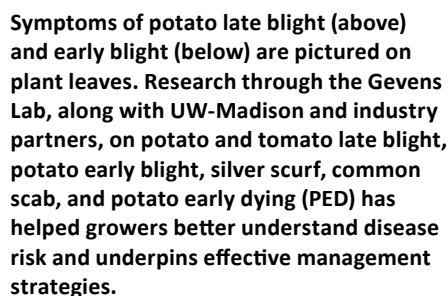
pesticide availability and use patterns, market demands, and evolving weather conditions can all influence disease risk.

In recent years, gradual environmental changes, particularly during the shoulder seasons, have further affected disease development and management considerations.

While growers contend with a core group of diseases year after year, others occur more sporadically or are emerging as new concerns.

As these challenges evolve, my program remains responsive to industry needs by providing timely diagnostics, research-based management recommendations, and support for both established and emerging disease issues.





To what do you attribute Wisconsin's ability to largely avoid late blight of potato in the second half of your career at UW-Madison? Late blight management has strengthened considerably in the years following the emergence of several new pathogen clonal lineages, including the now-dominant US-23 genotype, in Wisconsin potato and tomato production.

Increased vigilance across commercial potato and tomato industries nationwide, coupled with rigorous disease prevention measures in the northern U.S. seed potato production regions, has substantially reduced pathogen inoculum.

While Wisconsin's climate during 2010-2019 was generally warmer and wetter than historical averages, several growing seasons lacked the extended periods of cool, wet weather that favor late blight development.

continued on pg. 12

“Potato is one of the most resource-efficient food crops, delivering exceptional nutritional value relative to the inputs required for production.”

– *Dr. Amanda Gevens*



2013 Lenco Wrap-Around Self-Propelled Harvester
Sale Price: \$550,000



2007 Lenco 4RSPAH
65" Air Head



SALFORD BBI SPREADERS
In Stock



NEW LINE OF FERTILIZER TANKS
Duo-Lift Cone Bottom Tanks
Multiple Sizes Available



PORTABLE DIRT CONVEYOR
In Stock

Proud Dealer of:  **ADVANCED FARM EQUIPMENT**  **SPUDNIK DEMCO**  **FAZ**  **FORAX**
 **LENCO**  **LS Tractor**  **WISHEK**  **LEGEND**  **SALFORD**  **BROEKEMA**

2731 Maple Drive • Plover, WI 54467 • 715-344-3401 • Toll Free: 1-888-696-4019

www.bigironequipment.com

Interview . . .

continued from pg. 11



Wisconsin has long maintained a proactive approach to late blight prevention through partnerships and policies of UW-Madison and UW-Extension, the WPVGA, and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

These efforts include cull pile destruction deadlines, regulations

addressing unmanaged late blight infections, seed certification standards that support the production and distribution of disease-free seed, and research and Extension efforts to support proactive disease monitoring, diagnostics, and management planning.

At UW, my Extension and research program supports growers through

Left: Amanda Gevens poses with seed potatoes in hand, early May of the 2026 during planting season, at the UW Hancock Agricultural Research Station. *Photo by Taylor Wolfram, UW-Madison*

Right: Dr. Amanda Gevens (rear left) presents research findings at the Hancock Agricultural Research Station during the National Potato Council's 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Farm Tour in Wisconsin. For more on the tour, see the related feature article in this issue.



Amanda Gevens (fourth from right) says an important aspect of her service is supporting the success of junior colleagues, students, and industry partners. Shown with her lab students, Gevens says her field advances when talented people are given the opportunity to pursue new ideas, take on meaningful challenges, and grow as professionals. Whenever possible, she strives to make room at the table for individuals who bring curiosity, dedication, and innovative thinking. Gevens' Lab group is photographed in the summer of 2025, in the Plant Pathology Library of Russell Laboratories on the UW-Madison campus.

accessible late blight forecasting tools, including the Blitecast risk model, and through timely disease updates and management recommendations published in the weekly UW Vegetable Crop Updates newsletter.

My laboratory also provides diagnostic and genotyping services that enable rapid confirmation of late blight and characterization of pathogen populations, allowing for more targeted management recommendations.

This work is strengthened through collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, led by Dr. Brian Hudelson, the partnership of Dr. Russ Groves and Mr. Ben Bradford of UW-Entomology in developing and managing the web-based disease forecasting tools and Vegetable Crop Updates Newsletter, and the support of the WPVGA

through base research funding.

While my role is one part of a broader statewide effort, it is my conviction that consistent support, timely information, and regular reminders help growers manage late blight effectively while balancing the many demands of modern farm operations.

Update me on your WPVGA grant-funded research investigating crop protectants and alternative strategies to manage diseases in potatoes. Every year, my program works to evaluate up-and-coming fungicides and inputs to manage disease in potatoes both in the field and in the post-harvest space at the UW-Hancock Agricultural Research Station and Storage Research Facility, and the UW-Langlade County Research Station.

Some of our trials also take place on grower farms around the state.

We continue to evaluate complex



Amanda updates attendees of the 2022 UW Hancock Agricultural Research Station Field Day on potato and vegetable diseases and related research.

early blight and white mold fungicide programs for supporting management decisions on fungicide timing and rate.

We have greatly expanded our research in seed-applied, at-planting,

and at-hilling fungicides for the management of diseases including black dot, silver scurf, Rhizoctonia, pink rot, and common scab.

We have also spent a few years looking at the resulting early blight management of complex tank mixes, including commonly used fungicides, insecticides, and fertilizers.

This work expanded to additional cultivars and spray strategies. We aim to further explore drone application technology and disease management in the future.

In 2026, we expanded our research of common scab and black dot to improve our understanding of not only fungicide, timing and rate, but also of pathogen ecology through soil moisture and harvest timing experiments.

These expanded projects have resulted from additional support from the Wisconsin Specialty

continued on pg. 14

Next level nutrition is here.

Most nutrition programs kind of look the same—until they don't. If you take a closer look at NutriSync products, you'll see a proprietary nutrient transport technology like nothing else on the market. NutriSync brand micronutrients contain a naturally occurring carbohydrate that moves nutrients through the vascular tissue to the growing points where they are needed most.

NutriSync. D

NutriSync. Boron

NutriSync. Calcium

NutriSync. Essential

NutriSync. Copper

NutriSync. Magnesium

NutriSync. M

NutriSync. Manganese

NutriSync. Micro Pak

NutriSync. Phos

NutriSync. Sulfur

NutriSync. Zinc



Nutrien
Ag Solutions™

Plainfield, WI

CROP PROTECTION
715.335.4900



Crop Block Grant program and collaboration with Dr. Julie Pasche at North Dakota State University.

How big of a problem is disease in Wisconsin potato storages, and have the number of potatoes being stored and length of time they are stored compounded grower challenges?

Storage diseases continue to present challenges for Wisconsin potato growers. While advances in storage design, environmental controls, disease monitoring, and post-harvest management have greatly improved over the past two decades or so, disease losses can still be substantial.

Nationally, storage losses from shrink, disease, and quality degradation are commonly estimated at just under 10% of stored potatoes, and losses can be considerably greater when conditions favor disease development.

Common storage concerns include bacterial soft rot, *Pythium* leak, silver scurf, black dot, pink rot, late blight, and *Fusarium*, many of which originate in the field and are carried into storage.

Currently, growers store larger volumes of potatoes and often maintain them in storage for longer periods to supply fresh, chip, fry, and

seed markets throughout the year.

Longer storage durations increase the amount of time diseases have to develop and spread, while maintaining tuber quality becomes increasingly important.

In many ways, successful storage begins long before harvest. Factors such as variety selection, field disease management, harvest conditions, tuber maturity, handling practices, and storage management all influence how well a crop will store.

As the industry continues to optimize year-round supply chains, there is growing interest in tools that better connect field conditions with storage performance, allowing growers to identify lots at higher risk of breakdown and make more informed management decisions.

Wisconsin growers have been leaders in this area, investing in research and facilities that improve our understanding of the relationship between field management and storage outcomes.

What diseases are most devastating in Wisconsin potato production today, and how can your research team help growers control those pathogens? The diseases that most

Left: Dr. Gevens says potatoes are a particularly rewarding crop to work with because they present both significant challenges and tremendous opportunities.

Right: Dr. Amanda Gevens (fourth from left) poses with her students at the 2016 UW Hancock Agricultural Research Station Field Day.

consistently challenge Wisconsin potato production are PED and early blight.

These diseases are widespread across production regions and remain among the most economically significant due to both yield impacts and management costs.

Common scab and black dot are not far behind, although their effects can be highly dependent on field history, environmental conditions, and cultivar susceptibility.

Other important diseases include powdery scab, blackleg, white mold, silver scurf, pink rot, *Pythium* leak, and late blight.

The incidence and severity of these diseases can vary considerably from year to year and among production systems, as each is driven by its own unique combination of pathogen biology, environmental conditions, and crop management factors.

Addressing this complex disease landscape requires an integrated approach. My research and Extension program supports growers by advancing diagnostic capabilities, improving our understanding of pathogen ecology, and developing practical disease management strategies.

The complexity also requires strong partnerships with other pathologists and industry partners. These relationships and the information they offer fill in the knowledge gaps.

By translating research findings into actionable recommendations, we help growers mitigate multiple diseases.

Potatoes are a particularly rewarding crop to work with because they present both significant challenges and tremendous opportunities. Interestingly, potato is one of the most resource-efficient food crops, delivering exceptional nutritional

value relative to the inputs required for production.

What impresses you most about the potato and vegetable industry in Wisconsin?

What impresses me most is the strong culture of collaboration and engagement that exists throughout the sector.

Growers, processors, allied industry partners, researchers, and Extension professionals work together with a shared commitment to advancing the industry and addressing challenges proactively.

I have always appreciated how approachable, responsive, and willing stakeholders are to engage in meaningful dialogue. This creates a highly effective environment where ideas, concerns, and innovations can move quickly between the farm, industry, and research communities.

As a result, research programs remain closely aligned with real-world production needs,

allowing us to develop practical solutions that support the long-term success and competitiveness of Wisconsin agriculture.

What impresses you most about the potato and vegetable research team in Wisconsin?

Wisconsin is fortunate to have an exceptionally talented potato and vegetable research team. I am continually impressed, and humbled by the depth of expertise, creativity, and dedication of my colleagues.

Across specialties, my colleagues bring both scientific excellence and a practical mindset to addressing real-world challenges facing growers. Equally important, they are genuinely enjoyable people to work alongside.

Agriculture is a team sport, and the success of our programs depends on strong relationships and a willingness to collaborate across disciplines. Our group has a remarkable ability

continued on pg. 16



FAMILY OWNED & GROWN
J.W. MATTEK & SONS
FOUNDATION & CERTIFIED SEED POTATOES

OVER 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN SEED PRODUCTION!

**SNOWDEN • ATLANTIC • LAMOKA
MANISTEE • LADY LIBERTY
MACKINAW • PETOSKEY • BLISS**

N5798 Star Neva Road • Deerbrook, WI
Telephone: 715-623-6963 • Fax: 715-627-7245 • Email: jwmattek@gmail.com

Contact: Jim or John

WISCONSIN CERTIFIED SEED POTATOES

Interview . . .

continued from pg. 15

to tackle complex problems while maintaining a sense of humor and perspective.

The science is outstanding, but it is the people who make the work especially rewarding.

I've heard several times that Wisconsin has the best potato research team in the country. What do you attribute to that reputation?

That is quite a compliment! There are many outstanding potato researchers across the country and here at UW-Madison, and I have been fortunate to work alongside many of them throughout my career.

An intentional institutional commitment and reciprocating industry support of potato research are instrumental in building and sustaining a strong team.

Potato production is complex and draws upon expertise in plant pathology, entomology, agronomy, soil science, engineering, economics, data science, and more. By bringing these perspectives together around common goals, we create opportunities for innovation and discovery.

This transdisciplinary approach strengthens our ability to address emerging challenges and deliver science-based solutions that support both growers and the broader potato industry.

If you could name a favorite thing you do in the office, lab, or field as part of your position, what would it be? One of the aspects of my position that I value most is its diversity. The role provides opportunities to contribute across many environments and capacities, allowing for continual growth in research, Extension/outreach, mentoring, teaching, and administration.

No two days are exactly alike, and I find that variety both energizing and rewarding. I thrive on the range



Emeritus Professor Walter Stevenson and Professor Amanda Gevens staff the Wisconsin Certified Seed Potatoes booth at the 2025 Potato Expo. Walter retired in 2007 after many dedicated years of service in the UW-Madison Department of Plant Pathology. Amanda filled the vacancy as an assistant professor and vegetable pathology Extension specialist, and they've remained lifelong friends.

of activities the position offers, from spending time outdoors conducting field research, to crafting grant proposals and publications, to meeting with students as they explore career paths and opportunities.

On any given day, I may also find myself at a microscope carefully examining an unfamiliar diagnostic sample in search of answers while communicating with a grower on improving their disease management strategy.

The ability to move between these different facets of science, education, and service is what keeps the work engaging and meaningful.

You're also the administrative director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program, so you wear multiple hats. In what ways are you able to make valuable contributions to the seed certification program? The Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program (WSPCP) is one of the nation's premier seed potato certification programs, built on the expertise and

dedication of outstanding scientists, diagnosticians, inspectors, and certification specialists.

The program's success is a testament to the talented people who work every day to support Wisconsin's seed potato industry and maintain the high standards that have defined the program for more than a century.

I am particularly grateful for the leadership of Brooke Babler, the program's manager, whose vision, expertise, and commitment continue to guide the program forward. It is a privilege to work alongside her and contribute to the program's ongoing success.

As administrative director, one of my primary responsibilities is to ensure that all facets of the WSPCP remain strongly connected to the goals, priorities, and resources of UW-Madison, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and the Department of Plant Pathology.

This role is especially important as the program adapts to evolving operational, financial, and infrastructure needs while continuing

to deliver critical services in diagnostics, tissue culture, mini tuber production, and seed certification.

Throughout my career in the Department of Plant Pathology, I have been privileged to support the WSPCP as both an administrator and Extension potato pathologist.

Since 1913, the program has exemplified the Wisconsin Idea by delivering university-based expertise and innovation to growers. I remain committed to helping ensure its continued success and service to Wisconsin agriculture for generations to come.

Is Potato Virus Y your biggest challenge in seed potatoes, and has the Wisconsin team had progress in limiting the disease? Potato Virus Y (PVY) remains one of the greatest challenges facing seed potato certification programs in North America.

This aphid-vectored virus poses a significant threat to the production of healthy seed potatoes and to the integrity of certification systems across many northern-tier potato-producing states.

As environmental conditions continue to change, aphid populations, migration patterns, and strain types are also shifting, increasing the risk of virus introduction, persistence of PVY, and detection of the pathogen.

Addressing this challenge requires a sustained and collaborative effort. The WSPCP, together with research and Extension colleagues, has been committed to understanding and responding to changes in both pathogen and vector ecology for decades.

A key component of this work has been the collaboration with Dr. Russ Groves, whose expertise and leadership in insect vector ecology and management has helped advance our understanding of aphid biology, movement, and virus transmission dynamics in potato systems.

Through integrated advances in vector management, pathogen detection and testing, seed certification practices, and potato breeding and genetics, the industry has made meaningful progress in reducing PVY incidence in seed potato production.

While the challenge continues to evolve, these collaborative efforts have strengthened our ability to protect seed health and support the long-term sustainability of the potato industry.

You are one of only a handful of what I'd consider veteran WPVGA base-funded researchers and certainly one of the leaders. What responsibilities do you take most seriously in your work with the UW Division of Extension? While I approach all aspects of my work with dedication and seriousness, service has always been at the center of my responsibilities as a professor, Extension specialist, and administrative director of the WSPCP.

Whether working with growers, allied industry partners, or graduate students, I view responsiveness and accessibility as essential parts of the job.

I believe it is important to answer questions promptly, provide practical and science-based guidance, and maintain strong relationships with the people and organizations we serve.

A few signature efforts that I'm especially committed to are the UW Vegetable Crop Updates Newsletter and the WPVGA/UW Extension Grower Education Conference.

I coordinate and contribute to the UW-Madison Extension Vegetable Crop Updates newsletter, which provides timely information on disease management, crop production challenges, emerging issues, and current research findings.

The newsletter serves as an

important connection between university research and on-farm decision-making, helping growers respond to changing conditions and protect crop health.

The WPVGA/UW-Extension Grower Education Conference is another signature effort. The event represents the culmination of countless hours of research, Extension programming, collaboration, and preparation.

continued on pg. 18

Ron's **Refrigeration** & Air Conditioning



24 HOUR
EMERGENCY SERVICE

YOUR ONE CALL **STORAGE SOLUTION**

Computerized Control Systems
Refrigeration • Humidification • Ozone
Electrical Design & Installation
Potatoes • Onions

Sprout Inhibiting:
Sprout Nip® • Amplify® • Shield®



1-800-236-0005
WWW.RONSREFRIGERATION.COM

Interview . . .

continued from pg. 17



It provides a unique opportunity to share new knowledge, exchange ideas, and engage directly with growers and industry leaders. For our team and collaborators, it serves as a nexus where science, education, and industry concerns come together.

At its core, my work is guided by a commitment to service, whether conducting research, mentoring students, supporting certification efforts, communicating through Extension programs, or delivering educational programming,

The goal is to provide value to the agricultural communities we serve and help ensure the continued success of the Wisconsin potato and vegetable industry.

Another important aspect of my service is supporting the success of junior colleagues, students, and industry partners. Throughout my career, I have sought to advocate for opportunities, resources, and professional development for emerging scientists, field agronomists, growers, and students entering our profession.

I have been fortunate to benefit from the guidance, encouragement, and opportunities provided by mentors and colleagues who invested their time and influence in my development. Those experiences

have left a lasting impression on me.

As a result, I am committed to helping create pathways for others to contribute and succeed. Our field advances when talented people are given the opportunity to pursue new ideas, take on meaningful challenges, and grow as professionals.

Whenever possible, I strive to make room at the table for individuals who bring curiosity, dedication, and innovative thinking.

Supporting the next generation of leaders is not only an investment in people, but also in the future of agricultural research, Extension, and the industries we serve.

In what areas (breeding, genetics, crop protection products or best practices, etc.) are the most exciting advances being made in potato and vegetable plant pathology today?

I am particularly excited about four advances in potato research.

I'm greatly interested in the advances being made in diploid potato breeding and the opportunities these systems provide for improving our understanding and deployment of disease resistance.

For decades, the genetic complexity of the cultivated potato has made breeding for durable resistance a challenging and time-consuming process.

Above: Students and staff of Dr. Amanda Gevens and Dr. Phil Townsend, UW-Madison Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, conduct remote sensing exercises in a potato field. Amanda Gevens says, through collaborative efforts with Dr. Townsend, UW researchers have pioneered the use of hyperspectral imaging, remote sensing, and machine learning for early disease detection and crop monitoring in potato.

Diploid breeding strategies offer new tools to more efficiently identify, combine, and incorporate resistance traits against some of the industry's most important diseases and pests.

I am encouraged by innovations involving True Potato Seed (TPS). Beyond its potential role in production systems, TPS offers opportunities to improve the maintenance, movement, and long-term preservation of clean planting material.

These approaches may ultimately complement traditional seed potato systems and provide additional pathways for maintaining healthy germplasm and reduce the risk of pathogen dissemination.

Another area generating considerable excitement is the development of RNA interference (RNAi) technologies for pest and disease management.

These approaches offer the potential for highly targeted control strategies

that can suppress specific pathogens and insect pests, or their ability to transmit disease while reducing impacts on non-target organisms.

Although significant research and development remain ahead, RNAi technologies represent an important new frontier in crop protection.

I am enthusiastic about advancements in hyperspectral reflectance and other remote sensing technologies that are improving our ability to detect and interpret crop stress before symptoms become visible to the human eye.

These tools allow researchers and growers to better distinguish among disease, insect, nutritional, water, and environmental stresses in potato and other high-value specialty crops.

As these technologies continue to mature and integrate with artificial intelligence, precision agriculture, and decision-support systems, they offer tremendous potential for prescriptive input management, helping growers apply the right intervention, in the right place, at the right time.

The result can be improved crop health, more efficient use of resources, reduced environmental impact, and greater economic return.

Collectively, these innovations reflect a broader transformation occurring within potato research and production.

While no single technology will solve every challenge, advances in genetics, breeding, seed systems, crop protection, and precision agriculture are providing powerful new tools that, over time, will help address some of the most persistent disease and pest challenges facing potato production.

These advances are sure to enhance the sustainability and resilience of specialty crop systems.

What do you see on the horizon for disease control in Wisconsin potatoes? We are always working to sustain plant health and reduce overall chemical reliance in potato production. Critical to the success of these initiatives is an underpinning disease resistance within the plant.

As we advance in developing integrated management schemes for PED, early blight, black dot, silver scurf, common scab, PVY, and other important diseases, we must continue to invest and advocate for improved understanding and application of disease resistance within our commercial cultivars.

In what areas would you like to see growers become more invested or involved? While I wouldn't necessarily ask for growers to do more, one current activity that I would like to see them continue to take on is their engagement beyond the farm gate.

Many actively participate in discussions related to research priorities, public policy, seed certification, crop protection, and advocacy for funding at the federal, state, and university levels.

Their commitment in time, expertise, and leadership has been instrumental in advancing both the industry and the research programs that support it.

I am optimistic that these continued partnerships will have a lasting, positive impact on the future of potato production in Wisconsin.

Engagement from growers and industry leaders helps ensure that UW-Madison remains closely connected to the needs of the agricultural community and fulfills its land-grant mission of service, discovery, and education.

Together, these collaborations help position Wisconsin as a leader in the U.S. and global potato industries and create opportunities for continued innovation and success.

Anything that I've missed that you'd like to add, Amanda? I think these questions have covered a lot of territory! Thank you for your interest. I'm honored to be asked to provide responses to this feature in the Badger Common'Tater. **BCT**



**Water reuse made simple,
safe and reliable**

www.vam-watertech.com