

## AI-powered podcast expands access to Idaho agricultural research

### AT A GLANCE

The SEED podcast used AI-assisted production and expert review to turn Extension publications into accessible audio connecting agricultural listeners to research, authors and local UI Extension offices.

### The Situation

University of Idaho Extension produces research-based publications that can help agricultural producers improve practices and make informed decisions. However, producers may not always have the time or opportunity to read technical publications, particularly while working in the field, traveling or completing other tasks. Feedback from 98 attendees at Magic Valley Pesticide Recertification workshops held in winter 2024 showed interest in an ongoing Idaho agriculture podcast and indicated that audio could make reliable information easier to access while listeners were working or active. Respondents also emphasized that scientific accuracy and expert review were essential for maintaining trust. The Idaho SEED (Short Educational Extension Discussions) Podcast was developed to use AI-supported tools to translate sustainable agriculture research into convenient audio while connecting listeners to full publications, subject-matter experts and local University of Idaho Extension offices.

### Our Response

UI Extension developed the Idaho SEED Podcast to make sustainable agriculture research more accessible through audio. Eleven episodes were produced from June 2025 through February 2026 using an AI-



Logo for the Idaho SEED Podcast, a University of Idaho Extension agricultural outreach program.

assisted workflow that converted Extension publications into draft podcast content. Each draft was reviewed by subject-matter specialists, including original authors when available, and revised as needed by generating and editing additional AI-supported content. This process allowed Extension to efficiently transform written educational materials into concise, convenient episodes while maintaining expert review and scientific accuracy. Each episode also directed listeners to the full research article, the publication's author and their local UI Extension office.

### Program Outcomes

The Idaho SEED Podcast released 11 episodes and generated 242 downloads between June 2025 and

February 2026. Listeners took 156 measurable follow-up actions: 85 clicked to read a full research article, 58 sought contact information for an author and 13 looked for a county University of Idaho Extension office. These actions show that AI-assisted audio did more than repackage existing publications; it encouraged listeners to move from a short, accessible episode to deeper engagement with research-based information and Extension expertise.

The podcast also created pathways for topic-specific Extension engagement. One episode highlighting barn owls as a sustainable tool for managing voles prompted eight farmers to request additional information directly from Extension, while 14 listeners accessed the complete University of Idaho article containing barn owl box plans and management recommendations. This example illustrates how an AI-assisted media format can introduce practical management options and then direct producers to the full technical information needed for further consideration.

The potential economic value of the barn owl information remains a useful supporting example. The average Idaho farm encompasses 505 acres, and a high-density configuration comparable to one organic dairy demonstration would include approximately 15 barn owl boxes on an operation of that size. Previous University of Idaho estimates placed the long-term annualized cost of barn owl boxes at approximately \$0.35 per acre, compared with \$23.35 per acre for one rodenticide treatment during moderate-to-heavy vole pressure. If farmers who contacted Extension or accessed the complete article managed average-sized Idaho farms, adopted barn owl boxes and would otherwise treat all their acres with rodenticide once every four years, each operation could potentially reduce vole-management expenses by approximately \$83,000

over the estimated 30-year lifespan of owl boxes. This model estimate assumes 7.5 whole-farm rodenticide treatments over 30 years and successful long-term use of the boxes. It represents potential avoided management costs rather than documented savings. Actual benefits would vary according to vole pressure, acres requiring treatment, box occupancy, maintenance costs and the degree to which owl predation reduced the need for rodenticide.

Although actual adoption and savings data are unavailable, the Idaho SEED Podcast demonstrates how Extension can use AI to expand access to research-based information. By pairing AI-assisted production with expert review, the project reduced barriers to convenient educational media while preserving connections to trusted publications and local Extension support. This approach gave producers clear next steps for learning more, contacting experts and considering practices with potential economic and environmental benefits.

### The Future

The Idaho SEED Podcast demonstrated that accessible audio could encourage agricultural audiences to read research, contact experts and connect with local Extension offices. Future outreach can build on this success by using AI-assisted production and other convenient media formats to make research-based practices easier to access and understand. Program development should prioritize topics with clear opportunities for producer action, direct access to complete publications and Extension assistance, and a sustainable review process with subject-matter experts. Future evaluations should track adoption, acreage affected and economic value so the long-term benefits of Extension media can be documented more precisely.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Jason Thomas**, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Minidoka County • 208-436-7184 • [jasont@uidaho.edu](mailto:jasont@uidaho.edu)

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