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USPB Hosts Thailand Media Crew on 2015 Potato Harvest Tour



DENVER (October 14, 2015)—The United States Potato Board (USPB) brought writers from five Thailand press publications and a television crew to Tri-Cities, WA and San Francisco, CA to learn how U.S. potatoes are produced. This activity was conducted in concert with McDonalds Thailand as a means of supporting their switch to 100 percent U.S. frozen potato products. The funding for this activity came from USPB funds especially allocated to help recapture lost market share caused by the slow down at West Coast ports last winter.



In Tri-Cities, WA, the tour group visited a McDonald's to compare the fast-food restaurant experience in the U.S. versus in their native Thailand. Following an orientation for the press tour conducted by USPB Thailand Representative Kraipob Pangsapa, and an overview about McDonald's, the tour group traveled to the farm of Mike Pink for an in-field tour of the 2015 harvest operations.

Pink is a USPB International Marketing Committee Co-Chairman and the 2015/2016 USPB First Vice Chairperson. Channel 3 Thai TV interviewed him about potato production in eastern Washington. He answered questions about resource planning, controlling costs, farming profitably with sustainable objectives and implementing modern agricultural technologies. The TV crew also filmed ample harvest action for future productions.

After seeing the harvest, the media group took the next step and toured a Washington processing plant to see how U.S. potatoes are processed into fries. They were impressed with the level of quality control and food safety required to creating perfect quick-service restaurant (QSR) quality fries. And of course, they appreciated the chance to sample these U.S. fry products at the end of their tour.





Next on their journey, the Thailand media went to Oregon State University to a potato research station. Director Phil Hamm and Assistant Professor Vidyasagar “Sagar” Sathuvalli spoke about plant pathology, potato breeding and genetics.

After a long day of touring, followed by a flight to San Francisco, CA, the Thailand media group learned about U.S. potato trends and nutrition at Ketchum, the foodservice contractor for the USPB. Next, they went to a new “create your

own taste” format McDonald’s with Vice President of Operations, Richard W. Jones and Director of Operations, Kim Knapp. This was followed by a visit to area retailers to see U.S. potatoes at retail.

This media event was resoundingly successful. The participants rated it a five on a five-point scale. The reporters from Thai TV submitted a total of five reports during the tour, which aired “live” in Thailand. They also have a great deal of footage and information to use for future stories on U.S. potato production and frozen products. *Brand Age*, *Gourmet & Cuisine*, *Bangkok Post* and *Krungthep Turakit* will be releasing articles shortly.

For more information on the USPB as the nation’s potato marketing organization, positioned as the “catalyst for positive change,” and the central organizing force in implementing programs that will increase demand for potatoes, please visit www.uspotatoes.com. In an effort to enhance diversity of the Board, USDA encourages women, younger growers, minorities, and people with disabilities to seek positions on the board.

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David Fairbourn is Manager, Industry Communications & Policy, at the United States Potato Board in Denver. The mission of the USPB is to increase demand for potatoes and potato products through an integrated promotion program, thereby providing U.S. producers with expanding markets for their production. David can be contacted at 303-369-7783 or david.fairbourn@uspotatoes.com. For complete information about the programs, ROI results, resources and tools available to all members of the industry through the USPB, please visit www.uspotatoes.com. The United States Potato Board—Maximizing Return on Grower Investment.