



POTATOES
GOODNESS
UNEARTHED

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Fairbourn
Manager, Industry Communications & Policy
United States Potato Board
303-873-2331
david.fairbourn@uspotatoes.com

USPB Importer Distributor RTM Adds NRA Tradeshow Training, Education for Key International U.S. Potato Associates



DENVER (August 19, 2015)—Providing importers and distributors with training and education continues to be an important United States Potato Board (USPB) marketing program activity. These professionals are key players in international markets for U.S. potatoes, and act as gate keepers in their home countries, informing potential customers about product quality, variety and selection.

In May, 31 importers and distributors joined the USPB for a week-long reverse trade mission (RTM) to eastern Washington and Portland, OR. They came from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, the Dominican Republic, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. This RTM group visited potato variety research plots and the farms and fresh pack

facilities of grower/shippers. They also toured frozen processing plants, cold storage operations, and the Food Innovation Center (FIC) in Portland.

These importers and distributors received training on potato handling and preparation, the latest developments in cold chain technology, the USBP's 'Why Buy US' program and global U.S. potato product innovations.

“Past RTMs have not only helped raise the level of the awareness for U.S. potatoes, but they have also led to increased demand and usage by importers and distributors,” said Susan Weller, USBP Global Foodservice Manager. “These RTM participants gain confidence in upgrading to higher spec product, and adding different frozen potato cuts. RTMs have also led to improved promotional efforts, better marketing and enhanced training activities by the participants after each event.

“A few examples of these successes were the Indonesia Surabaya Fry Festival and Filipino Better Burger campaigns. RTM participants are also challenged to train their organization associates to help increase demand for U.S. potatoes in their markets.”

NRA Tradeshow Attendance

After this year's RTM, 25 participants and the USBP Global Foodservice Manager traveled to the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Tradeshow in Chicago. For the first time, international RTM participants were offered a chance to attend this NRA tradeshow event as part of a USBP sponsored event. They had the opportunity to meet U.S. potato industry associates as they visited booths for the Idaho Potato Commission, Northern Plains Potato Growers Association, Michigan Potato Industry Commission and the Washington State Potato Commission. They also joined representatives from these organizations at a special dinner hosted by the U.S. potato industry.



The NRA show offered international participants a chance to learn more about foodservice through event seminars and cooking demonstrations by leading chefs and foodservice experts. A highlight for many of them was visiting with USPB Chairman Carl Hoverson at his White Diamond Potatoes Booth and learning how to cook fresh-cut potato chips.

Based on participant evaluations, this RTM successfully met the expectations of the importers and distributors. Positive remarks illuminated the success of this program regarding the versatility, quality and variety of U.S. frozen potato products. “Good products with the highest quality monitoring from farm to table,” was a notable comment shared by one participant. Another participant stated, “I can apply all of my knowledge and experience from (this RTM) to train my people.”

Special thanks to the Washington State Potato Commission for hosting this year’s importer and distributor RTM, and for assisting with RTM participants gaining access to group booking rates at hotels hosting NRA tradeshow attendees.

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.

###

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.

