



News Release

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U.S. Potato Growers Concerned New School Meal Rules Constrict Local Flexibility in Meeting USDA's Nutritional Requirements

Washington, D.C. – The following statement is from John Keeling, Executive Vice President and CEO of the National Potato Council (NPC), on the release of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's final regulations on school meals:

“As growers of the most nutrient-rich and cost-efficient vegetable available to schools, U.S. potato farmers are pleased that USDA recognizes the importance of increasing the overall consumption of vegetables by children. However, we are concerned that, just as in the proposed regulations, USDA's final rule falls short of giving schools flexibility in the breakfast program to meet nutritional goals within their constrained budgets. The rule's prescriptive nature in promoting certain groups of vegetables over others will increase costs while handcuffing local schools' abilities to meet USDA's nutrition, caloric, fat and sodium requirements. We look forward to working with school food service professionals around the country as they evaluate the final rule and work to increase vegetable consumption by students at both breakfast and lunch.”

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The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. Potato growers, along with the U.S. potato industry as a whole, directly benefit from involvement in the National Potato Council. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level. The National Potato Council is a voluntary organization supported by quota assessments from state organizations, allied industry memberships and sponsorships, and directly by potato growers through membership dues.