



# News Release

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### **NPC Takes USDA Staff on Potato Production Tour**

**Washington, D.C.** – NPC hosted USDA staff from the AMS Plant Variety Protection Office and APHIS Biotech Regulatory Services on a tour of Serman Masser Potato Farm facilities in central Pennsylvania on August 23. The goal of the tour was to educate USDA staff on the details of potato production and the innovative work being done by Serman Masser. “NPC believes getting out of the office and into the field can shed light on the challenges growers face and the steps they take to address those challenges,” said John Keeling, NPC CEO and EVP.

The first stop was the Keystone Potato Products Facility, which is a dehydration plant that has a sustainability focus. Staffers learned how water is taken from abandoned anthracite mines and treated to remove iron and manganese. The filtered water is later returned to the watershed, restoring an environment affected by acid mine drainage. Steam created with the methane gas from the nearby landfill is used for dehydrating, cooking, peeling, and washdown. The tour also included a stop at the Masser solar panel farm and potato packing operations. Attendees capped the day with a visit to the famous Utz potato chip factory in Hanover, PA.

“The Pennsylvania potato tour provided an in-depth view of the challenges and innovative solutions of U.S. potato growers and processors,” said attendee Dr. Paul Zankowski, Commissioner, Plant Variety Protection Office, USDA. “The Serman Masser potato facilities that we toured used state-of-the-art, sustainable methods to conserve water, energy, and other resources while supporting the local economy.”



*Participants learned how dehydrated potato flakes are made.*

*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. 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.*

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