



# News Release

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## Potato Growers Host EPA Staff in Minnesota

**Washington, D.C.** – The National Potato Council (NPC) led a delegation of 12 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff on a tour of Minnesota potato fields. The annual field event gives EPA staff the opportunity to see potato production, discuss pesticide utilization, and interact with farmers outside the confines of Washington, D.C. Growers provide employees at EPA an in-depth look at their pesticide stewardship practices and the process of bringing potatoes from field to table. The 2016 tour was held August 16-18 in various locations surrounding Park Rapids, Minn.

“The tour offers potato growers a chance for extended interaction with Agency decision-makers,” said Chuck Gunnerson, this year’s organizer and President of the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association. “It’s a unique opportunity for both growers and policymakers, one that NPC undertakes to enhance understanding on both sides.”

Participants from EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, including members of the divisions that handle product registrations and reviews, made visits to the local farms of Pete Ewing and R.D. Offutt Farm Operations, and Sand Plain Research Farm at Becker, Minn., which is affiliated with the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences and the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station. Tour participants visited a fresh potato packing plant, witnessed harvest activity, experienced an aerial application demonstration, toured recently planted pollinator forage habitat, discussed the use of cover crops and crop rotations, received detailed insight on day-to-day potato production activities and learned more about university field plot trials to maximize nitrogen efficiency.

“The field tour hosted by NPC allowed me to see firsthand how pest management tools work and to gain a better understanding of how potatoes are harvested. I came away from the tour with a greater appreciation for the pest management challenges of growers and the work they do to produce a crop for a market that has rigorous quality standards,” said Nikhil Mallampalli, Entomologist, Biological and Economic Analysis Division of the Office of Pesticide Programs, EPA.



*Nick David, PhD, Midwest Regional Agronomist at R.D. Offutt, explains field conditions and disease modeling.*

*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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