



News Release



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Historic Purchase of Potato Granules Opens New Opportunities ***USDA makes first purchase of dehydrated granules for a U.S. global feeding program***

Washington, D.C.—On October 24, 2012, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the purchase of 240 metric tons (MT) of dehydrated potato granules and 320 MT of dehydrated potato flakes under the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The announcement marks a historic achievement for the domestic potato industry as it is the first time U.S. dehydrated potato granules have been purchased for a U.S. international food assistance program.

“The significance of this purchase is the long-term potential for the potato industry,” said Ritchey Toevs, co-chair of the United States Potato Board’s (USPB’s) international marketing committee. “By developing demand and opportunities in international food assistance programming, we are creating a new outlet for U.S. potato growers that did not previously exist.”

“For years, U.S. potato growers have been working with USDA to recognize the significant nutritional and economic benefits of the potato in all its forms,” said Randy Hardy, the National Potato Council’s Vice President of Trade Affairs. “We are honored and humbled to learn that our crops will be helping the country meet its commitment to improving childhood education and nutrition throughout the world.”

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is a global school feeding program promoting education, child development, and food security for some of the world’s poorest children. The potato granules purchased under this program will be utilized in Cameroon by the private voluntary organization (PVO) Counterpart International as part of a three-year school

feeding project. The project will ultimately use 1,986 MT of dehydrated potatoes and will promote the growing of fresh potatoes by Cameroon's citizens to develop a more sustainable food source.

Prior to the purchase, only U.S. dehydrated potato flakes had been approved and purchased for food assistance programs. The inclusion of fortified potato granules marks an achievement for the USPB, which promotes the suitability of dehydrated potato products as a base for fortification.

"It took us five years to get here," commented T.K. Kuwahara, USPB International Marketing Manager for dehydrated potato products. "The challenges were immense. In particular, developing the packaging was a team effort requiring a lot of man-hours by many aspects of the industry, as was the formulation of a fortified product."

After obtaining initial approval for granules to be placed on the USDA's list of approved commodities for food assistance programming, USPB worked for four years with industry partners to develop a bag to meet USDA program requirements. After obtaining approval for the bag in 2011, USPB worked with Counterpart International to get the new product included in its application. Counterpart's interest in granules was sparked by attending USPB's PVO workshop in 2011. USPB will also be providing on-the-ground training for Counterpart in February 2013, to ensure this PVO is able to successfully utilize the new product.

"We will provide education, training and support to the PVOs all throughout the process to ensure they will be successful in programming this product," Kuwahara said. "We are particularly excited because we have worked with several PVOs to include granules in other applications currently awaiting USDA approval. Counterpart International's purchase could open the door for these additional applications."

As a result of the USPB International Food Assistance Program and the support of the National Potato Council (NPC) in Washington D.C., demand for U.S. dehydrated potatoes as a solution to food insecurity continues to expand in both volume and scope. These new flake and granule purchases bring the amount of dehy sold through USDA food aid programs since 2001 to 1,621,005 cwt on a fresh weight equivalent (FWE) basis, valued at \$12.6 million. USDA purchases of U.S. dehydrated potato products should increase with the inclusion of fortified granules in addition to flakes.

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.

The mission of the United States Potato Board is to increase demand for potatoes and potato products through an integrated promotion program, thereby providing US producers with expanding markets for their production. 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.

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