

Cervantes:

Hello everyone! Welcome to today's episode of *Potato-cast*. A Potatoes USA podcast, full of all of your favorite potato industry content.

I'm Natalia Cervantes, Potatoes USA Conversation Architect, and your host.

Today we will cover the updated frozen potato volumetric numbers, St. Patrick's Day recipes, new retail resources, the newest nutrition influencer partnering and an update on international markets.

As you may be aware, our annual meeting is underway and everyone at Potatoes USA has been working hard in preparation for it. My usual guest, John Toaspern, is also very busy, so he will join us a little later in the episode and share with us about potatoes in the media and provide an international update.

Let's jump right to it!

You might be wondering what's happening with the foodservice industry.

Well, frozen potato data from October-December 2020 shows continued modest improvement, up 303 million lbs over the previous quarter in 2020 when the industry hit, dare I say, rock bottom, and is now heading in the positive direction. Data also shows growth at quick-service restaurants which are outpacing the industry. It is important to note that fresh potato sales to the foodservice sector continue to lag as full-service restaurants still struggle.

But support to foodservice hasn't shown any signs of slowing down.

Three new foodservice videos have been developed that provide information from optimal packaging for takeout and delivery of potato products to tips and tricks for reheating delivery potatoes in your homes. These videos feature Chef RJ cooking and demonstrating from his very own kitchen!

The videos are being used in foodservice specific newsletters, potatogoodness.com and on the foodservice social media accounts, at 'Spuds4Chefs'.

Also, there are a lot of new recipes being developed for the upcoming St. Patrick's Day! If you're thinking I'm going to say potatoes and corned beef, you are correct. But this wouldn't be a proper potato-cast if I didn't also describe them to you.

There are the classics like shepherds pie with Irish cheddar whipped potatoes, or simmered corned beef and cabbage or Irish style smashed potatoes with cabbage, kale, garlic, and spring onions.

And some less common but not any less delicious dishes like griddled potato pancakes with red ale beer cheese and cast iron potato bread or the cheddar bay potato scones.

Whether you stay classic or get adventurous, they all sound good in my book!

And I know everyone can't wait to try these recipes so all of RJ's new recipes, as well as other recipes, are available on PotatoGoodness.com and can be downloaded on PotatoesUSA.com. I always encourage all of you to repurpose them in your marketing and promotion activities, or just share with your friends and family on social.

And if you want to watch RJ make these dishes, you should check out the next Keeping It Current video where RJ will provide a cooking demonstration.

Additional Keeping It Current videos coming up will feature the many ways to stay connected with the U.S. potato industry, our big launch of Potato University and insights from the attitudes and usage study.

Keep in mind that Keeping it Current videos are delivered straight to your email inbox every other Thursday. If you are not receiving these, then please make sure to reach out to us.

Now, let's move on to retail updates.

It's safe to say that consumer shopping habits have shifted. In 2020, retailers saw a return to the center store categories and potatoes were included in this trend, where as in 2019, the majority of consumers were shopping the perimeter with only limited trips into the center aisles for essentials. To understand shopping habits for all potato categories at retail, Potatoes USA partnered with Kantar Insights Consulting to conduct a total store potato study. The study showed that 86% of households purchased potatoes from one or all of the potato categories available across the whole store, and the average basket size reached \$79 when potatoes were in it, that's an increase of \$13 since 2019! The top three reasons consumers purchased potatoes in 2020 was to A: stock up, B: they had a specific recipe or C: needed to replace another item. Kayla Dome is making sure Retailers and the potato industry have access to this valuable information, which can be found on PotatoesUSA.com.

In addition, potatoes continue to see growth at retail into 2021. From March 16, 2020 to January 24, 2021 potato sales for all potato categories, with the exception of deli-prepared sides, increased in dollars and volume. The majority of fresh potato types saw double-digit growth and consumers continued to buy fresh potatoes in all pack sizes and in larger amounts than they did the same time period the year prior.

I know the growth of potatoes at retail continues to be an exciting fact but another exciting fact is the growth of Team Potato.

Winter may be around for a while longer, but Team Potato is heating up. The group kicked off 2021 with a training season. Teammate William Semon, also known as the "Mayor of Runtown", and is a running coach with at-risk youth in the Northeast, provides the Team Potato group with weekly tips on running a 5K or a 10K. For the next 7 weeks he will share techniques to help athletes of all abilities reach their running goals.

And this is only the beginning, as I've been informed that Team Potato is planning more virtual runs and events in the next couple of months. So make sure you join the team and get involved with this potato-loving community.

Staying active and fueling with potatoes is certainly important. As is getting the information about potato nutrition out to the nutrition professionals. To help Potatoes USA spread the word about potato nutrition, we have partnered with a new nutrition influencer, Cara Harbstreet. Cara is a nationally recognized registered dietitian and will be sharing facts about the benefits of potatoes on her blog and through social media.

Now, I think it's time to check in with John Toaspern so he can share with us some positive potatoes in the media news.

John, I know you've been busy preparing for our annual meeting but what's the word on potatoes in the media.

Toaspern:

Natalia, I'm always happy to make some time for potato-cast. Anything to talk potatoes. And I'm certainly very excited about our partnership with Cara. She has already started to blog and post on social media about how potatoes are a good carb.

And in the media, there have been numerous positive mentions of potatoes recently, especially since *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the Mediterranean Diet, as the "best diet overall" for the fourth year in a row. Since then, publications have touted meal inspiration, featuring potatoes, for those following the Med Diet, such as *Parade*, which highlighted potatoes as a nutrient-dense ingredient option.

Other publications have backed up potato nutrition and consumption with the updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans, such as the Cleveland Clinic's *Health Essentials*.

All of these articles were recently distributed in the weekly potato industry email as well.

Cervantes:

What about international markets? I know we seen some recovery so spill the tea John!

Toaspern:

You're Russian, so don't you mean *Potato Vodka*?

Cervantes:

Haha! potato-potato.

Toaspern:

U.S. potato exports were hit very hard from March through August, but the declines have been lessening since then and we saw even greater recovery in December 2020. For the first six-months of the marketing year since July, exports of frozen products are

down 17%, dehy is down 4% and 3% for fresh. Given the obstacles that have been overcome and the signs of recovery we expect exports to continue to rebound over the next six months.

The Potatoes USA international marketing programs implemented in the international markets continue to promote U.S. potatoes despite the pandemic barriers. We have seen a number of successes from these programs. A Japanese supermarket launched two new refrigerated U.S. potato products based on the merchandising efforts of our reps in the market. The items are tater drums and hashbrowns and are located by the meat selection!

Some markets were even able to resume in-person activities, such as a marathon that took place in Vietnam, where U.S. potatoes were promoted and even sampled and a stair run in Malaysia where the winner fueled with U.S. potatoes.

February's International Market Spotlight Newsletter, which focused on the Philippines market situation and opportunities showed us that U.S. potatoes are positioned well for growth. In terms of value, the Philippines is the 6th largest market globally for U.S. potato and product exports. And, despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. agricultural exports to the Philippines were up 12% through September 2020 and are expected to end the year 7% above 2019 export levels.

Natalia, Please add a link to February's International Spotlight on this episode's page.

Cervantes:

I definitely will John. Thank you for the update and as always, I appreciate your time.

Toaspern:

Always great talking U.S. potatoes with you Natalia.

Cervantes:

And time for me to go make one of those St. Patrick's day recipes.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Potato-cast!* Please subscribe on Spotify or Apple Podcast by searching for *Potato-cast*.

All supporting documents for data provided in this episode can be found on potatoesusa.com. To see all the great information available about potatoes or new and fun ways to cook with potatoes, visit potatogoodness.com.

I am your host, Natalia Cervantes.
Until next time, take care everyone.