

## **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 Team Potato Spud Run, Chef RJs globally-inspired School Foodservice recipes, retail trends, potatoes on menus, potatoes in the media and international marketing efforts.

Let's get into it!

Last Month Potatoes USA hosted its Annual Meeting, which celebrated 50 years of the National Potato Promotion Board, dba Potatoes USA. Annual Meeting is one of four board meetings that takes place during the fiscal year and is the only meeting the full Board attends. The 2021-2022 administrative and executive committee were elected, and will be led by Jaren Raybould of Saint Anthony, Idaho as new Chairman of the Board.

I don't know about everyone listening but here in Denver, we've had wonderful weather, perfect for running ....hopefully I didn't jinx myself. I have been coordinating my training with the many Team Potato members around the country who are all getting ready for the upcoming Team Potato Spring Spud Run that is taking place virtually this weekend (April 9-11) and for the past 7 weeks, Teammate William Semon, also known as the "Mayor of Runtown", and a running coach with at-risk youth in the Northeast has been provided running tips on the Team Potato's Facebook Page to help athletes of all abilities reach their running goals and motivate everyone to mix up their routine and push themselves to train for the upcoming virtual spud run. I don't want to give away all of William's tips but my favorite was "Surround yourself with people who will help keep you accountable for your goals". Which is exactly why I continue to encourage everyone to join Team Potato.

At least 100 members around the US have dedicated themselves to this virtual run, and it probably has something to do with the really cool potato medal that all virtual runners will receive upon completion.

I know I want one.

And spring has sprung. And with spring come holidays, and with holidays, come more recipes from Chef RJ Harvey. He developed a plethora of recipes for Passover Week and Easter Weekend but he did not stop there.

He also took on the challenge of developing new recipes for school foodservice. School Foodservice operators are challenged with the Gen Z tastebuds which, just based off of population alone, are extremely diverse. RJ created a series of globally inspired potato dishes using fresh, frozen, and dehy to give School Foodservice operators some inspiration to entice their students to eat a nutritious meal.

Inspired by flavors from around the world we have the Cheesy Green Chili Potato Tostada to embody Mexico, Crispy Baked Falafel Potato with Lemon-Sesame Dressing for Middle Eastern flavors, Butter Chicken Tater Drums for an Indian flavor and more. These recipes really help showcase the versatility potatoes bring to school lunch menus. So make sure to check them out on [PotatoGoodness.com](https://PotatoGoodness.com) or you can even find the recipe assets available for download on [PotatoesUSA.com](https://PotatoesUSA.com) to use in your marketing campaigns.

I've been a loyal fan of online grocery shopping for a long time, but in the last year, retailers have seen an increase in online shoppers, and even an increase in the amount of produce being bought online. To help keep the momentum in this online channel, consumer's need confidence in knowing that the person doing their shopping at the store, the virtual shopper, can appropriately fulfill a product if the original item is out-of-stock. The retail program led by Kayla Dome, created two new handouts to teach retailers and third-party virtual shoppers how to fulfill requests for a specific potato product with a variety of options across the store to make sure the consumer gets what they are expecting. The guide covers all potato categories at retail and are also attached with this episode.

We know potato-love was in the air in February and it hasn't gone away. So, what's the most recent buzz about? I'll give you a hint, it's not potato pizza.

Foodservice operators are looking for ways to drive patrons back to their restaurants and are turning to a trend that doesn't slow down, loaded fries! Loaded fries have seen a 54% growth on menus over the past four years and a 15% growth in the past year.

The latest restaurant hopping on the loaded fries trend is the popular casual-dining sports bar and restaurant, Twin Peaks. Twin Peaks announced their launch of four new potato menu items this month. They are putting an "American Comfort" spin on the concept, which includes trending fry flavors such as BBQ, pulled pork, buffalo, bacon, cheddar, and ranch.

I love seeing and hearing about the variety of ways restaurants are continuing to provide menu alterations to keep consumers guessing and wondering "What's Next?"

And now, let's talk about potatoes in the media.

There has been a lot of discussion on the amount of potassium potatoes bring to the table, which is a nutrient many people don't consume enough of in their daily eating. Recently, Cleveland Clinic published an article that listed the top 10 potassium-rich foods. And potatoes made top of the list. Parade dedicated an article to foods loaded with potassium and included a shout-out to potatoes.

You know who isn't talking about potatoes? The Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list. This year potatoes were not part of the annual list of what EWG considers to be the fruits and vegetables with the highest pesticide residues.

I'd like to point out that this list is problematic for the produce industry and has several science-based arguments against it. And while this year potatoes were skipped, the list has included potatoes in the past. That said, this is not a call for celebration but rather awareness. The produce industry as a whole must continuously promote the need to eat fruits and vegetables. Both The Alliance for Food and Farming and Produce for Better Health have proactively addressed this harmful report and continue to educate consumers about the misconceptions of it. To learn more about the misconceptions of the Dirty Dozen list please see the documents attached with this podcast episode on our website.

I'm not a mind reader but I think you're now wondering about potatoes abroad. Well, as you're listening to this episode, Potatoes USA is hosting the annual Reverse Trade Mission for importers and distributors from 14 markets, which is a 4-day event from April 5-9. This event is critical in getting international importers and distributors to continue to carry U.S. potato products. Participants learn about what separates U.S. potato products from other sources, including U.S. potato growing & harvesting practices,

the cold chain, frozen and dehy processing, and they even meet with U.S. potato farmers. However, this year, instead of hosting participants in-person here in the U.S., our Potatoes USA international marketing representatives are presenting in their own countries based on the country's current restrictions. The Denver-based Potatoes USA team provided pre-recorded educational and culinary inspiration videos for the international representatives to share as well as conducting live demos and presentations.

This is one of the many international activities that helps increase potato exports and another case where the Potatoes USA staff has managed to continue to implement programs despite the impacts of the global pandemic.

Another activity that helps increase potato exports is getting the U.S. seed potatoes registered in an international country. And recently, we had success with this in Morocco with the registration of Atlantic, Cal White, and Chieftain varieties from the U.S..

Well, that's all the March highlights I have for you today. I hope you'll tune in next time as I host my first special guest and we do a deep dive into consumer shopping trends at retail.

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

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

I am your host, Natalia Cervantes.

Until next time, take care everyone.