

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.

It's been a moment since our last episode, but I am here to share with you the latest updates.

First, let me say that if you need assistance with downloading any of the mentioned recipes, or locating a supporting document, or if you're not sure how to get access to our plethora of potato images, you can reach out to me directly at

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In today's episode I will cover potatoes at foodservice, potatoes at retail, potatoes making an appearance at Chicago's Restaurant Week, potatoes in the media, new potato recipes and an international update you won't want to miss it.

So, let's get into it!

Potatoes are popping up on menus across the U.S. For breakfast, Taco Bell brought back its breakfast burritos. There are two burrito options with potatoes now. A Grande Toasted Breakfast Burrito and a Hash Brown Toasted Breakfast Burrito. Not to be confused with the new Spicy Steak and Potato Griller though that is available at Taco John's nationwide. And, O'Charleys launched new campfire potatoes, available now for a promotional period.

Loaded fries and tater drums continue to see growth on menus. According to Datassential menu trends 2021, loaded tater drums are predicted to grow 226% over the next 4 years. And plant-based is not going anywhere either. The number of restaurants featuring plant-based options continues to expand with consumer demand.

Operators are still experiencing shortages with supply chains, specifically in the to-go packaging category. They are also still experiencing labor shortages. In fact, the latest Technomic report calls it a labor crisis, where 67% of operators are having a hard time hiring employees. Some of the ways foodservice operators are coping with this is by modifying hours of operation, reducing seating capacity, or using more value-added products.

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Based on data from IRI, at retail, potato sales from July-September decreased in dollars by 1.1% and in volume by 5.7% compared to the same period in 2020. But, compared to pre-pandemic level, potato sales are up. Consumers bought 80 million more pounds of potatoes from July-September 2021 than in 2019.

Deli-prepared sides had the largest increase compared to 2020 with an 11.7% increase in dollars and a 6.9% increase in volume.

The two largest volume driving categories, chips and fresh potatoes, decreased in dollar sales and volume compared to the previous year.

The decline in fresh sales was largely impacted by a decline in russet sales, which fell by 7.1% in dollars and 10.9% in volume. Russets make up 59% of fresh sales volume. On a positive note, petite potatoes had a double-digit growth in dollars and yellow potatoes increased in dollars and volume.

The latest retail sales report can be found on this episode's page.

From a total retail perspective, consumers are choosing more wholesome snacks than in 2019. They are changing what they buy in meat and deli and lean more toward organic, grass-fed and farm fresh. The younger, lower-income households are looking for convenience and specialty. Top IRI trends report says; Don't assume low income only buys low at retail, it's about the experience.

Consumers are still cooking more potatoes at home compared to pre-pandemic. And if you're interested in learning what they are cooking at home, check out our latest Keeping It Current episode with Chef Dina Paz who shares the Recipe Research results. Are consumers more likely to cook with ingredients they already have? Do more people identify as highly skilled cooks or average skilled? You can watch the update on potatoesusa.com to find out.

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Here's something you might not have heard about. Potatoes were a hit at Chicago's Restaurant Week. Every year, StarChef organizes a Rising Stars Restaurant Week to celebrate up-and-coming chefs for their culinary strengths, leadership and inspiration. During this year's event, one of the Chefs receiving recognition was Chef Won Kim, owner of Kimski, a Korean-Polish fusion restaurant on the east side of Chicago. Chef Kim displayed delicious potato dishes featuring Asian flavors. He created a Korean Potato Pierogi with Tamari Sour Cream, shiitake mushrooms and goat cheese. These pierogi were served at the industry late-night event and were featured on the menu for consumers to enjoy as well.

Shout out to grower Lynn Wilcox for graciously donating the russet potatoes used in Chef Kim's dish.

While I'm talking about delicious dishes, I know you're excited to hear what Chef RJ Harvey has been cooking up.

To start the school year off right, Chef RJ has created an abundance of mouth-watering dishes. For example, we have simple school night dinners like the cast iron spuddy joe casserole which is a fun take on the classic sloppy joe. Or there is the quick and easy roasted chicken and mashed potatoes bake. Perfect for those busy weeknights. And let's not forget tailgates and game days. There are the porky BBQ kettle chip nachos or the fresh onion potato casserole, and even pot roast mashed potato grinders. Yum! He also innovated with salads and created unique ways to incorporate potatoes into fall salads. These recipes are being promoted on social media as a reminder to consumers to Fall-In-Love with salads again.

In total there were 17 recipes developed for consumers, but Chef RJ did not stop there. He was on a culinary roll. To support foodservice operators and show them new ways to incorporate potatoes onto their menus or to show how potatoes can be a time-saving ingredient, there were 11 recipes developed featuring potatoes in bowls and potatoes in a variety of cuisines.

From crispy smashed potatoes tikka masala to potato poke with salmon. There is a potato recipe for everyone! I will include a link to all the recipes on this episode's page.

Remember that these recipes are available to everyone in the potato industry and if you need any assistance with images and sizing for social media, check out the free social media image sizing tool that's available on potatoesusa.com

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Potatoes have been receiving some attention in the media.

Does a potato a day keeps the doctor away? The Nutrition Society's Paper of the Month finds that early adolescent girls who ate more potatoes in any form consumed more dietary potassium, fiber, vitamins C and B6, and magnesium. There's also no association indicated between potato consumption and increased risk factors for heart health or type 2 diabetes by late adolescence. This follows another recent study published in *Nutrients*, which found that adolescent boys and girls whose diets include potatoes have higher-quality diets than those who don't, regardless of how the potatoes are processed or prepared.

The link to both studies can be found on this episode's page. I highly recommend everyone in the industry to give it a read and share this study with their peers.

But that's not all. Well-Good published a registered dietitian's 5 dinners to make with potatoes. In the article, the RD states, If eaten with skin on, potatoes pack in more potassium than a banana and provide a source of fiber. Potatoes also serve as a carbohydrate source and carbohydrates are our body and brain's preferred source of energy.

Well-Good also published an article called *The Surprising Reason White Potatoes Are Great for Gut Health* and encourages consumers to not skip the humble spud when filling up their grocery carts.

And Thistle published an article called *Most Popular Fruits and Vegetables In The World and Their Health Benefits* where the article listed potatoes as #1. Specifically, the article notes the abundant varieties of potatoes and their versatility. You can bake, fry, mash or boil them!

Last but not least, U.S. News published an article about cost effective produce and potatoes were ranked in the top 20 specifically for their nutritional value.

These positive messages about potatoes have been fantastic. I am loving the spud-love.

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The potato industry continues to make strides in promoting sustainability in potato production. If you'd like to learn more about these efforts please consider subscribing to the *PSA Update*, the monthly newsletter from Potato Sustainability Alliance (PSA). Over the next few months, PSA will be developing a sustainability program on behalf of the potato industry, and this is the best way to be informed. I will include a link to subscribe on this episode's page.

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Did you know that Potatoes USA provides access for all U.S. potato industry members to its digital asset management system, Widen? Widen has a plethora of potato images for all your potato promotion needs. Whether you're looking for an image large enough to print on a 9ft standing banner or to make flyers for your booth at an expo, Widen is the place to look. If you don't have access to Widen or you're not sure if you have access to Widen, reach out to me, and I will make sure we find you the image you're looking for.

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I think it's time for our international update. There has been a lot of activity with U.S. potatoes abroad.

First, the international foodservice program had tremendous success when it partnered with the Morelos Brewers Association in Mexico. The partnership provided an opportunity to attend an event and show 20 Mexican breweries how potatoes and beer can make an excellent pairing. Attendees of the event learned about the many benefits of U.S. potatoes, including their quality, versatility, flavor, and convenience. Based on the attendees' list, this partnership will open doors for stronger business relations and greater awareness for U.S. potatoes within Mexico's foodservice sector.

Every year Potatoes USA conducts a research study in the international markets that promote U.S. potatoes. The results help Potatoes USA better understand consumer attitudes and perceptions about U.S. potatoes. The results from this year's study show that consumers in international markets recognize the nutrition and performance benefits of potatoes. Specifically, 81% agree that potatoes are healthy for you, 79% believe that potatoes are a nutrient-dense food and 72% think that potatoes give them the energy they need to perform at their best. The study was conducted in 10 markets, Central America, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and China.

Speaking of China, a major pizza chain in China, Champion Pizza, ran a co-promotion with Potatoes USA for three U.S. potato menu items back in April through May that increased sales of the items by an average of 421%. You heard that correctly. One of the main goals of the promotion was to see if Champion Pizza would switch to using 100% U.S. potatoes. Since the promotion, all 1,300 Champion Pizza outlets have

committed to using 100% U.S. potatoes for at least 6 months. This is a tremendous opportunity for U.S. potatoes.

Based on a recent article from Japan, Japan chip manufacturers are experiencing a problem. The potato crop in Hokkaido has been below average for both quality and quantity.

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These are the updates that I had for you today. I hope you enjoyed hearing about the variety of activities happening with potatoes around the globe.

Cervantes:

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. 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