

Cervantes:

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

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

I want to share with you all an interesting quote. It resonated with me, and maybe it will resonate with some of you!

"Tell me, and I forget, Teach me, and I remember. Involve me and I learn." by Benjamin Franklin.

Cervantes:

A quick announcement from Potatoes USA.

Are you someone who genuinely loves the potato-farming community? Are you passionate about promoting potatoes and increasing demand? Do you go out of your way to correct people when they say potatoes are fattening? If this sounds like you, you'll be happy to hear that Potatoes USA Board Member nominations are now open for the 2023-2026 term. Join the largest vegetable commodity board and help us continue supporting farmers like you across the nation.

To enhance the diversity of the Board, we strongly encourage women, younger growers, minorities, and people with disabilities to seek positions on the Board and participate in the Board's activities.

If you're interested in being considered or know someone else that might be, please contact your state program manager. You can alternatively contact Chelsea Gray at our Potatoes USA office in Denver. I'll include her contact information on this episode's page and the full press release regarding the nominations.

Cervantes:

I've got a fun line-up of updates for you today. So, let's get into it.

As you know, Potatoes USA moved into a new office last November. We have been in this space for a little less than six months, but we are seeing great interest from various organizations to check out the office- and most importantly, the shiny, big, bright, stainless-steel kitchen.

And, to make sure I get all the details right, I've invited our Culinary Director, Chef RJ Harvey, to join me today. Welcome to Potato-cast, RJ!

Harvey:

Thank you, Natalia. Glad to be here.

Cervantes:

RJ, can you tell our listeners about our new kitchen?

Harvey:

Happy to. The spud lab is a culinary innovation hub for everyone. The space is loaded with the latest equipment and technology to ensure we use the same equipment that foodservice operators are familiar with. Induction cooktops, combi ovens, immersion circulators for sous vide cooking, high-speed blenders, smokers, grills, air fryers, etc. It's designed to be a space for food creation, food photography, culinary workshops, and so much more.

Cervantes:

And don't forget the fun internal ways we are using the kitchen, like those giant potato chip chocolate chip cookies or "spudnuts" you whipped up with your Sous Chef, Vince Armada. And the incredible Cinco de Papas spread the two of you prepared for us.

Harvey:

Got snacks on your mind?

Cervantes:

Maybe a little. We're very close to lunchtime right now. In the last two months, there's been a lot of activity in the lab, though. Can you share a little more about that?

Harvey:

Sure. We've had several filming sessions in the lab in the last two months for most of our programs. For example, we did a set of videos for Potato University starring Chef Richard Hoelzel, featuring dehydrated potato products.

We also filmed five demonstrations using fresh, frozen, and dehydrated potatoes for our marketing program in Malaysia. The shoot went well, and we used those videos in our Reverse Trade Mission.

There was also a filming session for Edutrac, a webinar series aimed at educating dietitians about processed foods, specifically processed potato products. For this, we did two cooking demonstrations with frozen tater drums, kettle chips, and fresh potatoes.

The spud lab was also utilized for filming content for a School Nutrition Association webinar. The content focused on using potatoes to optimize school menus, showcasing delicious potato recipes that kids will crave and recipes that can aid with labor costs and help reduce food waste.

Cervantes:

Wow, the spud lab has been busy. That's fantastic.

Harvey:

It is. It seems like about every other week, there is filming in the lab; in fact, we just finished some more filming for Potato University last week. Those videos focused on reducing food waste, swapping potatoes for other carbohydrates, and takeout/delivery strategies with potatoes.

Cervantes:

This is fantastic, RJ. And the spud lab will only continue to grow in notoriety across the potato industry. If someone listening would like to come, and check out the new kitchen, what's their best way to do that?

Harvey:

They can send me an email at RJ@potatoesusa.com, and I'd be happy to give them a tour, do a collaboration, or anything else that helps people eat more potatoes in more ways.

Cervantes:

Thank you, RJ, for taking the time to share that with us today. I appreciate it.

Harvey:

Not a problem. Happy to spread the spud love. Thank you for having me!

Cervantes:

The Spud Lab isn't the only area in the office that is used as a resource for the industry to learn and grow in.

The new Potatoes USA office space is conducive to meetings of all sizes. When an invite was extended to the entire industry to take advantage of this collaborative office space, the industry responded.

There is a large board room filled with virtual meeting capabilities, a private meeting room, an open workspace, and a library; the Potatoes USA office is fantastic for the industry to gather.

Since move-in, we've had four industry-led events here, and it makes sense – great amenities, beautiful and central location, and a whole lot of team-building opportunities in the surrounding area.

Fresh Solutions held a small meeting in the private meeting room, "The Tater Tank," as we like to call it. During the meeting, members could utilize the additional spaces for breakout sessions.

United Potato Growers of America comfortably held its Annual Board Meeting at the office and were effortlessly able to include the virtual attendees. One advantage of hosting this meeting here was the simplicity of having Potatoes USA staff present throughout the meeting. This also goes for WERA89: Potato Virus and Virus-Like Disease Management, which held its Annual Meeting in the Board Room with a virtual aspect. That's also when I recorded the podcast with Alex Karasev.

Lastly, Tasteful Partners recently conducted its Annual Board Meeting at Potatoes USA. They worked with Chef RJ and Chef Vince to curate a custom menu for lunch, utilizing their own products during the planning process!

While I mentioned the space is excellent for these events, a huge bonus is the interaction Potatoes USA staff get to have with the potato industry throughout meetings.

The invitation is open to anyone in the potato industry. Please come and utilize the space, take advantage of the communal kitchen, the warm and sunny library with floor-to-ceiling windows. Stay an extra night or two and go on a hike, maybe a rafting trip, or even a ski trip once the season peaks again.

Our space is your space.

I have two fantastic mentions of potatoes in the media to share. Potatoes were featured in some top-tier media as a source of important nutrients like vitamin C, fiber, protein, and complex carbohydrates.

For example, EatingWell published an article called 7 Carbs You Should Be Buying to Lower Cholesterol, According to a Dietitian. In the article, they state that "The humble potato is a starchy veggie that is equally delicious as it is good for you. Along with the boost of carbohydrates that potatoes provide, each serving fuels your body with soluble fiber, a nutrient that can reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream."

And Healthline's article, Starch Health Benefits, said that "Not all starchy foods are created equal. Foods like potatoes and slightly unripe bananas contain resistant starches, which have a number of health benefits with no known harmful side effects."

These are all the updates I have for you today.

As always, 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.