

Potatoes USA
2025 Spring Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2025
The Four Seasons Hotel Denver, Colorado
Recorded by: Chelsea Gray

Welcome

Chairwoman Shelley Olsen called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM MT.

Antitrust Statement

Shelley Olsen acknowledged the antitrust policy statement, which Zoom attendees must accept when logging into the meeting platform. A copy of the Antitrust Policy Statement was also provided to attendees before meetings on BoardEffect.

New and Re-Appointed Board Members Sworn In

Harrison Hodges, USDA-AMS, swore in the following new and re-appointed board members:

First Term:

- Thomas Baker (CA)
- Nathan Bender (NV)
- Ben De Jonge (MT)
- Andrew Price (CO)
- Beth Rachut (IA)
- Diane Szawlowski Mullins (MA)

Re-Appointed for second term:

- Norbert Bomm (Public Member)
- Jennifer Bunger (WA)
- Pete Ewing (MN)
- Matthew Linehan (VT)
- Alison Sklarczyk (MI)

Roll Call

Board Members present in person included James Baker, Thomas Baker, Steven Barrett, Trever Belnap, Nathan Bender, Jess Blatchford, Norbert Bomm, Jennifer Bunger, Mike Carter, Daniel Corey, Jim Corneillie, Sander Dagen, Ben De Jonge, Danny Deprey, Wendy Dykstra, Steve Elfering, Hunter Gibbs, Jennifer Gogan, Jaclyn Green, John Halverson, Jeff Irving, Jace Jensen, Ben Josephson, Brian Mahany, Juan Martinez, David Masser, Tara May, Nathan McBride, Travis Meacham, Andrew Moquist, Ryan Moss, Shelley Olsen, Derek Peterson, Mike Pink, Andrew Price, Elizabeth Rachut, Jaren Raybould, Bradley Reed, Bruce Richardson, Cliff Shaw, Camburn Shephard, Alison Sklarczyk, Clifton Smith, Kathy Sponheim, Jonathon Springstead, Diane Szawlowski Mullins, Jordan Thomas and Dennis Wright.

Board members online included Adam DeGroot, Sanjiv Kakkar, Rhonda Kleyn, Matthew Linehan, and David Mundt.

Retired board members present included Les Alderete, Taylor Grant, Leah Halverson, Kory Hansen, Eric Jensen, Jordan Johns, Martin Kimm, Braden Lake, Bevan Lenz, Sammy Stahl, Ed Staunton, Jason Tillman, Jeff VanOrden, Marvin Wollman, and Ben Zechmann.

Guests in attendance included: Tara Artho and Jessica Bradshaw with CPAC, Mark Klompier with UPGA, Chris Voigt and Brandy Tucker (virtual) with WSPC, Kam Quarles and Mike Wenkel with NPC, Chris Olsen, a Washington potato grower, Nathan Tallman with Pennsylvania Co-Operative Potato Growers, Dana Rady and Tamas Houlihan (virtual) with WPVGA, Kelly Turner with MPIC, Gary Shields with Northland Potato Growers Association, Gary Roth with Oregon Potato Commission, Dale Lathim from Potato Growers of Washington, Travis Blacker and Darren Bitter from Idaho Potato Commission, John Vachalek

from Webolutions, Tricia Psota (virtual) from Nutrition in Demand, Chef Alexander Sadowsky, Chef Andrea Todd, Chef Dave Wooley, Laurel Muir, Kaylyn Bender (virtual) and Eric Friedman from SRG.

Harrison Hodges from USDA-AMS and Shari Kosco from USDA-FAS (virtual) were also present.

Proxies were received from Aron Derbidge, David Mundt, Kevin Schleicher, Troy Sorensen, Levi Underwood, and Blake Underwood. With over 50% of the board in attendance, Chairwoman Shelley Olsen acknowledged a quorum was present.

Minutes Approval

Copies of the meeting minutes were emailed to attendees before the meeting and made available for everyone to view via BoardEffect.

A **MOTION** was made by Bruce Richardson and seconded to approve the minutes from the Winter Board Meeting held on January 8, 2025. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Executive Committee Report

Shelley Olsen shared an overview of recent Executive Committee activities. Based on feedback from USDA-AMS, the Executive Committee recommended the board change the 'Respect' value in the 2025-2026 strategic plan to read, *"We are committed to equal dignity and respect, and we appreciate the contributions made by everyone involved in the potato industry."* A **MOTION** was made by Daniel Corey and was seconded to update the verbiage of the Respect value in Potatoes USA's strategic plan, as noted above. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Market Development Committee

Marisa Stein, Director of Marketing for Potatoes USA, shared results from the recent Consumer Attitudes and Usage Study, which gives valuable information that drives Potatoes USA's marketing activities in the U.S.

Kayla Vogel, Senior Global Consumer Marketing Manager, shared details of the program's target audience and how it reaches this audience on various social media platforms, traditional media, and live events. Kayla also shared domestic and international budget allocations for Research, Events, Public relations, and Media.

Nick Bartelme, Global Retail Marketing Manager, presented the FY26 retail tactics, which included tailored collaborations, merchandising and marketing support, shopper engagement, and data-driven insights. Nick also presented the budget allocations for domestic and international retail programming.

Tiffany Kocir, Global Foodservice Marketing Manager, shared the program's target audience, explained the Foodservice innovation pipeline, and presented the domestic and international program budget allocations.

The meeting was suspended at 10:29 AM for a break. Chairwoman Shelley Olsen reconvened the meeting at 11:17 AM.

Culinary Committee

RJ Harvey, Culinary Director for Potatoes USA, presented the Culinary program budget allocation and shared how the Culinary Committee supports the other Committees, including Nutrition & Health,

Consumer, and Foodservice. Chef RJ shared future innovation sessions with six major restaurant brands in the U.S. As a result of an innovation session with the team at Potatoes USA, Fuzzies Tacos recently won a Menu Masters award, a noteworthy win for the culinary program.

Culinary Panel Discussion

Chef RJ Harvey led a panel discussion with chefs Dave Wooley, Andrea Todd, and Alex Sadowsky, who shared their experience and outcomes of working with the Potatoes USA Culinary team.

The meeting was suspended at 12:14 PM for a lunch break. Chairwoman Shelley Olsen reconvened the meeting at 1:18 PM.

Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE)

Tricia Psota, PhD, RDN, reported on behalf of APRE and shared that the group helped fund 47 studies totaling over \$10 million in research over the last 12 years. She also presented several of the recently published research studies.

Nutrition and Health Committee

Kim Breshears, Potatoes USA's CMO, shared the program's objectives and historical results and presented the Nutrition & Health program budget allocation.

Production Research Committee

John Lundeen, Director of Research at Potatoes USA, shared highlights and lessons learned from the National Seed, National Chip, and National Fry programs over the past year. John also presented objectives, strategies, measurements, and the program budget allocation for the upcoming fiscal year.

The meeting was suspended at 2:31 PM for a lunch break. Chairwoman Shelley Olsen reconvened the meeting at 3:00 PM.

Communications Committee

Kim Breshears shared objectives and historical results from the Communications Committee and the Communications program budget allocation.

Finance & Policy Committee

Monica Heath, CFO for Potatoes USA, presented the FY25 financial statements, FY25 budget projections, and FY26 Budget. The Finance & Policy Committee recommended that the board keep the assessment rate at \$0.03 per cwt for FY26.

Budget Approval and Board Business

Wendy Dykstra made a motion, which was seconded, to approve keeping the FY26 assessment rate at 3 cents per hundredweight of potatoes. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

A **MOTION** was made by Wendy Dykstra and seconded to approve the FY26 Budget as presented by Monica Heath. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

At 4:16 PM, the meeting was suspended.

Potatoes USA
2025 Spring Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2025
The Four Seasons Hotel Denver, Colorado
Recorded by: Chelsea Gray

Welcome

Chairwoman Shelley Olsen reconvened the meeting at 9:19 AM MT.

Antitrust Statement

Shelley Olsen acknowledged the antitrust policy statement, which Zoom attendees must accept when logging into the meeting platform. A copy of the Antitrust Policy Statement was also provided to attendees before meetings on BoardEffect.

The Why Behind Today's Biggest Food Trends

Guest speaker Eve Turow Paul presented causes for popular food trends and trends to watch in the future.

Nominations and Elections

Mike Carter shared the Nomination Committee report for the board Chairman. Steve Elfering was nominated as board chairperson for the 2025-2026 term. There were no other nominations. A **MOTION** was made by Dan Corey and seconded to elect Steve Elfering as board chairperson for the 2025-2026 term. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Mike Carter shared the Nomination Committee report for the board officers. The slate included Nathan Bender, Trever Belnap, Jess Blatchford, Wendy Dykstra, Steve Elfering, Hunter Gibbs, Dave Masser, Travis Meacham, Cliff Shaw, and Kathy Sponheim. A **MOTION** was made by Camburn Shephard and seconded to elect the Executive Committee slate as presented. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Mike Carter shared the Nomination Committee report for the ex-officio role of the past chairperson, who will act as chair of the Nominating Committee for the 2025-2026 Board of Directors. The Committee nominated Shelley Olsen to fill the role. There were no other nominations. A **MOTION** was made and seconded to elect Shelley Olsen as an Ex-officio member of the Executive Committee and Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Board members were assigned to one of eight operating committees:

Finance & Policy: Chair: Wendy Dykstra. Members: Jason Davenport, Jaclyn Green, Charlie Husnick, and David Mundt

Communications: Chair: Trever Belnap. Members: Jennifer Bunger, Juan Martinez, Tara May, Jaren Raybould, Alison Sklarczyk, Diane Szawlowski-Mullins, and Blake Underwood

Production Research: Co-Chairs: Nathan Bender and Jess Blatchford. Members: Nate McBride, Jordan Thomas, Camburn Shephard, Sander Dagen, Jennifer Gogan, Brian Mahany, Danny Deprey, and Ben DeJonge

Market Development, Retail: Chair: Dave Masser. Members: Adam DeGroot, Jeff Irving, Ben Josephson, Matthew Linehan, Derek Peterson, Kevin Schleicher, and Andrew Price
Market Development, Foodservice: Chair: Travis Meacham. Members: James Baker, Jim Corneille, Aron Derbidge, Pete Ewing, Ryan Moss, Trevor Searle, and Troy Sorenson
Market Development, Consumer: Chair: Hunter Gibbs. Members: Thomas Baker, Gabe Boldt, Daniel Corey, Sanjiv Kakkar, Rhonda Kleyn, and Beth Rachut
Culinary: Chair: Cliff Shaw, Members: Norbert Bomm, John Halverson, Jace Jensen, Andy Moquist, Mike Pink, Bruce Richardson, Dennis Wright, and Kathy DeVries Ruehs
Nutrition & Health: Chair: Kathy Sponheim. Members: Steve Barrett, Eric Makarewicz, Andrew Porath, Bradley Reed, Clifton Smith, Jonathon Springstead, and Levi Underwood

Caucus Reports

The seven caucuses provided reports on regional challenges, reflections on the new board structure, and strategies for engaging growers in their regions.

USDA Update

Harrison Hodges, USDA-AMS Specialist, shared recent approvals and encouraged everyone to visit [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov) for any needed information.

CEO Report

Blair Richardson, Potatoes USA CEO, presented an overview of the board’s global activities and the importance of grant funding to international programs.

Closed Session

At 11:43 PM, a **MOTION** was made by Shelley Olsen and seconded to go into a closed session. The motion passed, and the board went into closed session.

The board returned to open session. No action was taken during the closed session.

Adjourn

Chairman Steve Elfering adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.

Approved by:	
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Chairperson	Date
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Secretary/Treasurer	Date