



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Garden State Growers Host EPA Tour

WASHINGTON, D.C. –During the week of August 26, the National Potato Council (NPC) led a delegation of 19 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff on a crop tour of New Jersey's potato growing region. NPC's annual tour helps staff gain a better understanding of how the agency's policy decisions impact potato production and of the actions taken by growers to be good stewards of the environment.



An EPA staffer tries her luck at digging potatoes at Jim Coombs Farms.

The tour kicked off at Jim Coombs Farms in Elmer, N.J., where the staff were given an area overview by potato grower and member of NPC's Board of Directors Jennifer Coombs-Kelly. Agency personnel watched a live demonstration of a potato digger and ground and aerial pesticide application practices. The stop concluded with the staff rolling up their sleeves and using shovels to dig their own potatoes.

The staff also stopped in Bridgeton, N.J., where they visited Seabrook Brothers and Sons, Inc. packing facility. Tour participants saw fresh vegetables being processed and frozen and heard about challenges that must be addressed at the production level such as weed control. Staff later visited a Rutgers University Research Farm where they learned about specific pest and disease challenges faced by fruit and vegetable growers.



Live aerial pesticide application at Jim Coombs Farms.

New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Doug Fisher capped off the night by addressing the staff over the course of dinner, offering his praise of the overall thriving New Jersey agriculture industry. The tour traveled to Nottingham, Pa. the following day where Herr's snack food plant owner, Gene Herr, led a tour of the potato chip processing facility.

Each summer, NPC joins with potato growers from a specific region to host a group from EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. The goal of the trip is to educate the agency staff on the impact of regulatory

actions on potato growing practices and also to tell the positive message of the U.S. potato industry's collective effort to care for and protect the environment.



Secretary Fisher speaking before the EPA tour group during dinner.

The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.

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