



News Release

1300 L Street NW · Suite 910 · Washington, DC 20005
(202) 682-9456 · fax (202) 682-0333 · www.nationalpotatocouncil.org

MEDIA INQUIRIES:
Kam Quarles
(202) 682-9456

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2017

Potato Grower Testifies on Importance of Trade Programs for Specialty Crops

Senate Ag Committee Hearing Held in Preparation for 2018 Farm Bill

Washington, D.C. – Potato grower Eric Halverson was in Washington, D.C., today to speak in front of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee regarding the importance of the USDA export programs. Mr. Halverson is a fourth-generation farmer and CEO of Black Gold Farms in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

U.S. potato growers see fierce foreign competition in key export markets and continued access is vital for maintaining the economic health of the industry. The USDA Market Access Program (MAP) allows the U.S. to be competitive overseas through marketing and promotional activities that build commercial export markets.

Halverson spoke about MAP's important role in this public-private partnership, noting its 28-to-1 return-on-investment. Export market development programs funded through the farm bill have contributed an average of \$8.2 billion per year to farm export revenue from 1977-2014. Without the existence of MAP, exports would not have returned to positive growth last year, said Mr. Halverson.

Halverson testified on behalf of the National Potato Council and United Fresh Produce Association. As the Senate committee's work in preparation for the 2018 Farm Bill continues, NPC is actively engaged in providing information and outlining the importance of Farm Bill programs working in concert with U.S. trade policies.

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.

###

