



News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 12, 2013

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

David Fairbourn
United States Potato Board
(303) 873-2331
david.fairbourn@uspotatoes.com

Mark Szymanski
National Potato Council
(202) 682-9456
marks@nationalpotatocouncil.org

Philippine Market Now Open for U.S. Fresh Potatoes

Washington, D.C.—After four years of work, the National Potato Council (NPC) and the United States Potato Board (USPB) are pleased the government of the Philippines has revised its import requirements to allow for entry of U.S. fresh table-stock potatoes. Previous to this change, only fresh U.S. potatoes destined for processing into potato chips were allowed entry into the Philippines.

“NPC, the USPB, and the U.S. potato growers we represent want to recognize and thank the dedicated staff at USDA-APHIS and FAS who worked so hard to gain access for U.S. table-stock potatoes to the Philippines,” said John Keeling, NPC Executive Vice President and CEO. “The opening of this market is welcome news for the industry, and we appreciate all the hard work of our federal partners to make it happen.” Keeling also noted the important role USDA Technical Assistance for Specialty Crop (TASC) funds played in allowing the industry to help host a delegation of Filipino officials in 2012 to review and inspect the U.S. potato industry. Their favorable report was an important step in this process.

Recent economic growth, along with a population approaching 100 million, has propelled demand for imported foods in the Philippines. The Philippines became the fastest growing economy in Asia during the first quarter of 2013 with GDP growth at 7.8 percent. Potatoes are a popular vegetable and are used in a variety of local dishes. Filipino consumers increasingly prefer to purchase groceries from modern retail outlets, which provide a convenient format for one-stop shopping. This preference has led to growth in the hypermarket retail format where imported table-stock potatoes are most likely to be sold.

U.S. exports of fresh chipping potatoes to the Philippines have grown steadily over the past five years and were 5,289 metric tons, valued at \$2,843,016 in 2012. U.S. exports of frozen potato products to the Philippines were \$38 million in 2012. “The strong interest in U.S. potato products in the market bodes well for U.S. table-stock exports” stated John Toaspen, USPB International Marketing Vice President. However, he cautioned the russet type potato is not well known in the market, and there is substantial local production so exports will take some time to grow.

“What is needed now is for U.S. growers and shippers to make contact with the importers in the Philippines,” said Sarah Reece, USPB International Marketing Manager. “From there the USPB must build demand for U.S. potatoes with retailers, the food service industry and consumers in the market. Fortunately the USPB already has program funding in place to do this and will begin right away.”

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.

The mission of the United States Potato Board is to increase demand for potatoes and potato products through an integrated promotion program, thereby providing US producers with expanding markets for their production. For complete information about the programs, ROI results, resources and tools available to all members of the industry through the USB, please visit www.uspotatoes.com. The United States Potato Board—Maximizing Return on Grower Investment.

###