



For Immediate Release:

Contact

Tamas Houlihan

thoulihan@wisconsinpotatoes.com

715-551-0775

Photos available upon request

Wisconsin Potato Industry Supports Hurricane Victims

(Antigo, WI – October 16, 2017) Mother Nature has hit the southern United States with a number of hurricanes this season, the worst of which was Hurricane Irma which struck the Florida Coast, leaving thousands without everyday essentials. Wisconsin's potato and vegetable industry is answering the call for help.

The Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) is pleased to announce a large truckload of potatoes and onions is on its way from Wisconsin to the Harry Chapin Food Bank in Fort Myers, Florida.

"Wisconsin farmers have a history of being generous, especially to those in need or suffering through an emergency hardship," said WPVGA Executive Director Tamas Houlihan. "Through a coordinated effort by WPVGA members, we are proud to be a part of delivering 'Something Special from Wisconsin' to our friends in the southern U.S."

Hurricane Irma did considerable damage to crops in Florida. A recent article in The Packer newspaper stated: "Hurricane Irma left Sunshine State citrus groves with dropped fruit, standing water and dashed hopes." The article went on to say that "no part of the Florida produce industry was untouched by the Sept. 10-12 storm." Irma also hit southwest Florida's Immokalee/Naples region hard, doing considerable damage to the tomato crop.

(More)

The storms also affected people who work in the fields. Irma not only caused widespread and lengthy power outages but also destroyed housing in and around Immokalee, a community largely made up of agricultural field workers.

The following Wisconsin potato farms made generous donations of potatoes: Wysocki Produce Farm/RPE of Bancroft, Bushmans' Inc. of Rosholt, Okray Family Farms of Plover, Alsum Farms of Friesland, and Worzella & Sons of Plover. All told, over 30,000 pounds of potatoes were donated.

In addition to the large quantity of potatoes, Dean Kincaid, Inc. of Palmyra donated 8,000 pounds of onions.

Bula-Gieringer Farms of Friendship contributed the generous donation of the freight, picking up product and delivering the load to Florida.

A number of organizations also made monetary donations including Roberts Irrigation of Plover, JW Mattek and Sons of Antigo, Bula Potato Farms of Antigo, Brenda and Dennis Bula of Antigo, Coloma Farms of Coloma and Heartland Farms of Hancock.

"We are saddened by the devastating impacts of the hurricane, and we feel the pain suffered by the agricultural community in the Immokalee/Naples region," said Houlihan. "We are hopeful that this gesture from the Wisconsin potato and vegetable industry lets those folks know that we care about them and at least shines a ray of hope on their future."

Among the other donations made regularly by the WPVGA are the following: annual donation of time, money effort in packing over 100,000 meals to the charitable organization Feed My Starving Children; multiple salad bar donations to Wisconsin schools; thousands of pounds of potatoes annually to Feeding America food banks; annual donations to the Wellers Walk helping drill wells in Africa; and annual donations of potato chips to Boys and Girls Clubs and other organizations throughout Wisconsin, including shipments of potato chips to U.S. troops in Iraq.

WPVGA is a non-profit organization that represents and promotes state potato and vegetable growers. We currently represent more than 400 members and affiliates. For more information on our commitment to sustainable agriculture, jobs and water use, visit

www.eatwisconsinpotatoes.com.

###