

EXPO 2024 ANTAD

WISCONSIN GROWERS ATTEND EXPO ANTAD

WPVGA awarded Export Expansion Grant for exploring access to Mexican potato market

By Joe Kertzman, managing editor, Badger Common'Tater

Members of the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) took full advantage of an opportunity to attend the 2024 Expo ANTAD in Guadalajara, Mexico, March 12-14.

For David Wickline of Alsum Farms

& Produce, Craig Fields from RPE, Inc., the WPVGA's own Joe Kertzman and Dana Rady, and Peter Joyce, a consultant for Potatoes USA and the WPVGA, Expo ANTAD provided an opportunity to promote Wisconsin potatoes in Mexico.

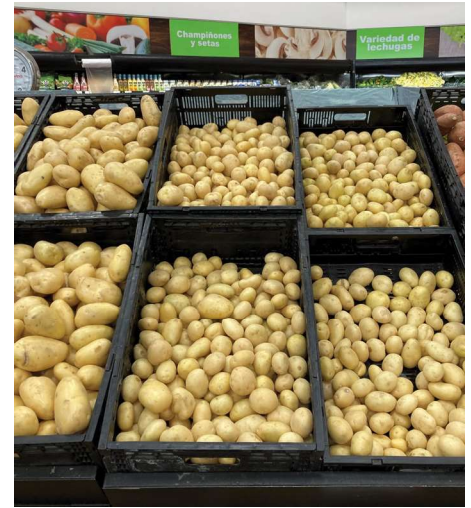
The produce show was also a chance to gain more knowledge of the Mexican market, meet with potato table stock and chip stock importers, and identify potential participants for WPVGA's upcoming Mexico Reverse Trade Mission, to be held in September 2024.

At the expo, WPVGA representatives and Wisconsin producers met with potato importers, several of whom expressed interest in getting quotes from Wisconsin growers, shippers, and packers.

With ANTAD being the Mexican federation of grocery stores, Expo

Left: Representing Wisconsin potatoes at the 2024 Expo ANTAD in Guadalajara, Mexico, are, from left to right, WPVGA Director of Promotions & Consumer Education Dana Rady, David Wickline of Alsum Farms & Produce in Friesland, Wisconsin, Potatoes USA and WPVGA consultant Peter Joyce, and Craig Fields of RPE, Inc. in Bancroft, Wisconsin.





ANTAD is an environment conducive to networking that affords the chance to meet with over a thousand exhibiting companies, buyers, marketers, managers, department heads and other leaders from 67 countries, all of whom are potential business partners.

Attendees can also participate in talks, conferences, and panel

discussions with industry experts.

UNTAPPED POTATO POTENTIAL

Regulatory changes have made Mexico a relatively new market for Wisconsin that could potentially create opportunities for sales and provide options that increase returns for potato growers, shippers, and packers.

Above: In Guadalajara, WPVGA staff, grower members and consultants visited the Dubacano wholesale market and Soriana grocery stores—the latter making up the largest retail chain exhibiting at the Expo ANTAD produce show.

The Wisconsin potato industry is known as a national leader in sustainable production and has

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developed the Healthy Grown® program, allowing growers to compete in an international marketplace increasingly demanding food grown using ecologically friendly practices.

The WPVGA is fully utilizing funds from an Export Expansion Grant awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) to cover expenses for attending Expo ANTAD.

In Guadalajara, the Wisconsin contingent not only attended Expo ANTAD, but also visited the Dubacano wholesale market, and Soriana grocery stores—the largest retail chain exhibiting at the exposition.

Grupo PM, a marketing agency representing Potatoes USA in Mexico and Central America, is an essential component in connecting U.S. producers with Mexican importers. Grupo PM meets with Mexican importers daily to discuss their

Left: University students from Tecnológico Superior de Jalisco visited the WPVGA booth at Expo ANTAD.

Right: From left to right, Potatoes USA consultant Peter Joyce, WPVGA Director of Promotions Dana Rady and David Wickline, sales and business development manager for Alsum Farms & Produce, talk with Luis Moreno of Grupo PM at the WPVGA booth during Expo ANTAD.

strategies for bringing U.S. imports to market and dealing with regulations.



Tasteful Selections potatoes were displayed at the RPE, Inc. booth in Guadalajara.

POTATOES MINUS PACKAGING

“Grupo PM’s focus now is to eliminate the requirement for potato table stock to come in bags,” says Peter Joyce, consultant for Potatoes USA. “Bags are an impediment for importers and consumers that just raise prices.”

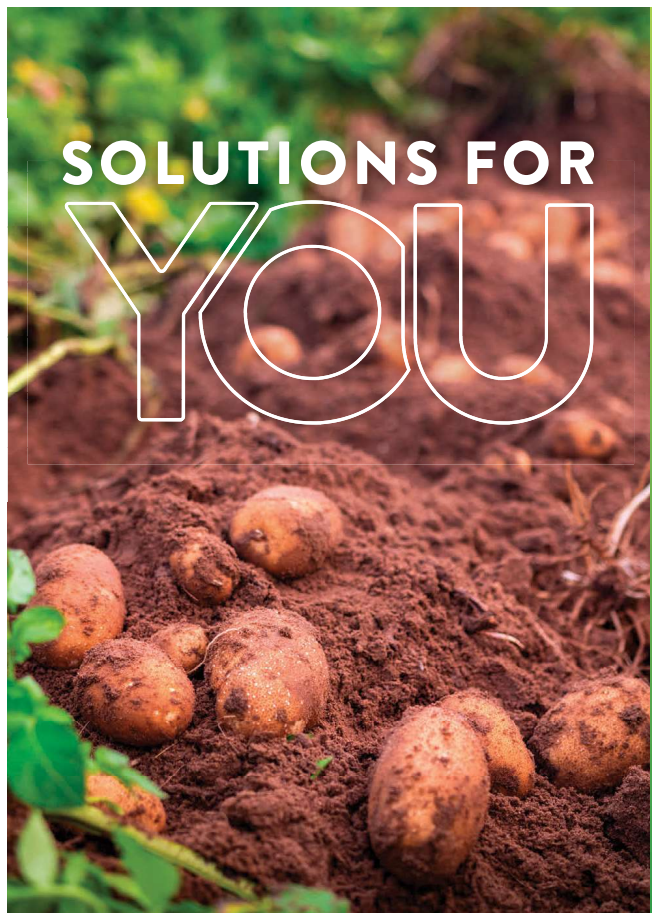
“Ninety five percent of fresh market potatoes sold in Mexico are sold loose, without packaging,” Joyce relates.

Grupo PM says that about 50 percent of potatoes go through the 64 wholesale markets in Mexico, with the other half handled by grocery stores that have their own distribution. Mexico has 750,000 street markets that buy wholesale produce.

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WPVGA staff and grower members met with representatives of the Dubacano wholesale market. Included from left to right are WPVGA Director of Promotions Dana Rady, Potatoes USA consultant Peter Joyce, Daniel Torres and Heliodoro Solis Gallardo of Dubacano, David Wickline from Alsum Farms & Produce, and Edmundo Valdes of Grupo PM.



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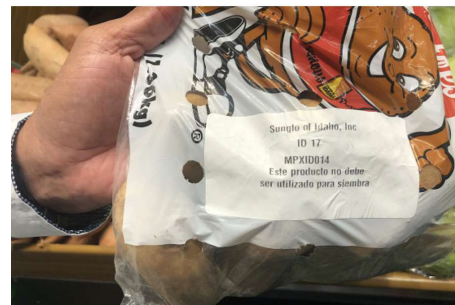


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U.S. table stock exports to Mexico were 123,000 metric tons in 2021-'22. Mexico is the largest U.S. potato table stock export market outside of Canada.

The WPVGA and grower members took advantage of a previous

WDATCP Export Expansion Grant to attend the 2023 Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) Convention and Trade Show in Toronto, Canada. The Association exhibited a second time at the CPMA Show, April 23-25, 2024, in

Vancouver, British Columbia.

Additionally, Wisconsin hosted a Canadian Reverse Trade Mission in April 2024, and looks forward to hosting the Mexico Reverse Trade Mission in September. [BCT](#)

“Ninety five percent of fresh market potatoes sold in Mexico are sold loose, without packaging.”

*– Peter Joyce,
Potatoes USA consultant*

Above: Edmundo Valdes (left in the first image), from Grupo PM, explains to David Wickline of Alsum Farms & Produce and WPVGA’s Dana Rady the dominance of the fresh potato variety, Alpha, in the Mexican marketplace. Alpha has pale, yellow, shiny skin, and an oval-to-long shape like Kennebec. Note that potatoes are mostly sold loose in Mexico retail stores, not in bags. U.S. potatoes, on the other hand, are required to be sold in plastic bags, as seen in the closeup photo taken at a Soriana grocery store, and the bags must each have a U.S. packing house identification number along with the statement “This product should not be used for planting.”