



News Release

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Potato Industry Welcomes \$50 Million USDA Purchase for Potatoes

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Potato Council today welcomed USDA’s announcement of a \$50 million surplus potato purchase to support the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The potato purchase, the largest of all the specialty crop purchases, was part of a \$470 million Section 32 food purchase announced by USDA. This purchase is in addition to those previously announced by USDA.

“This is very welcome news from Secretary Perdue, Undersecretary Ibach, and the entire team at USDA. Given the size of the crisis involving potatoes, this purchase is a partial down payment on the industry’s overall relief needs and more will be needed. In the short term, the announcement is very positive in that it provides clarity on the immediate relief efforts and gives family farms hope for more to come,” said Britt Raybould, NPC President.

“Due to mandated shutdowns, the U.S. potato industry has been reeling from an oversupply of processing potatoes left over from the 2019 harvest,” said NPC CEO Kam Quarles. “Individual potato growers and state potato associations have distributed millions of pounds of potatoes to charities, food banks, and local drop off locations nationwide, incurring substantial financial losses in support of the needy despite their own businesses being threatened by the pandemic. We desperately need Congress and the Administration’s partnership to defend America’s family farms in this crisis and believe today’s announcement is a positive step in that long road.”

According to the announcement, The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will purchase a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, and seafood products. These “USDA Foods” will then be provided to USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) nutrition assistance programs, including food banks.

The National Potato Council represents the interests of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental and trade issues. The value of U.S. potato production is over \$3.7 billion annually and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs both directly and indirectly.

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