

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE

“OLD WORLD MEETS NEW” AT 12TH WORLD POTATO CONGRESS

Adelaide plays host and showcases the excellence of the Australian potato sector

By Joe Kertzman, managing editor, *Badger Common'Tater*

The reason for the “Old World Meets New” theme of the 12th World Potato Congress (WPC), June 23-26, 2024, in Adelaide, South Australia, was evident from the start during a welcoming reception held at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

After opening remarks by WPC Secretary and Convenor Nigel Crump,

and Sonia Waterson, executive officer of Potatoes Australia Ltd., as well as the welcoming of delegates and thanking of sponsors, Crump introduced Australian aboriginal descendant Robert Taylor.

Taylor entertained the receptive crowd by playing one of the world’s oldest woodwind instruments,

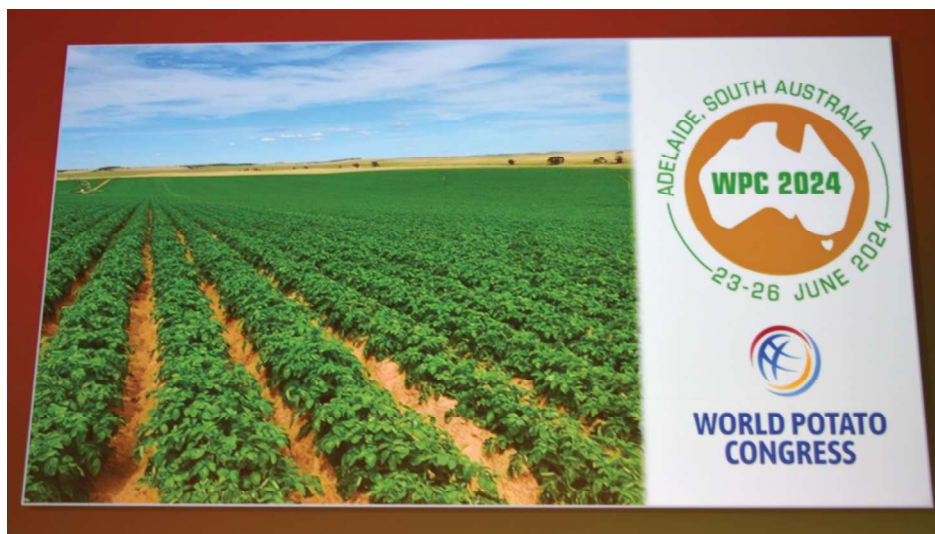
the didgeridoo.

“We hope you feel the blessings of our ancestors while you’re here,” Taylor said in between projecting haunting sounds from the didgeridoo, which traces its roots to Australia’s Northern Territory. “With the didgeridoo, we can mimic sounds of the brush, our animals, and 250 native languages.”

Of course, “Old World Meets New” also refers to the evolution of traditional farming into today’s modern potato production. In 2022-’23, South Australian potato production included 80 farm businesses, 545,000 tonnes of potatoes, equating to an AU\$245 million farmgate value, and exports of 19,500 tonnes.

Australia’s largest export markets

Above and Left: Over 1,000 delegates representing 40 countries descended on the 12th World Potato Congress (WPC), June 23-26, 2024, in Adelaide, South Australia.





are South Korea and the Philippines, and South Australia is the largest producer of fresh, washed potatoes in the country, with 80 percent of the market share.

A THOUSAND DELEGATES

While rattling off numbers, over 1,000 delegates representing 40 countries descended on the 12th World Potato Congress in South Australia, a state that Waterson says is a world leader in renewable energy, sustainability, and adaptable and resilient agriculture.

Hosted by Potatoes Australia, the Congress was held “Down Under” for the first time in its 25-year history.

A day after the welcoming reception, sponsored by the South Australian Government’s Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), Her Excellency, the Honorable Frances Adamson, governor of South Australia, officially declared the Congress open on Monday, June 24.

She also gave a few words, saying, “During my career as an Australian diplomat, I’ve been involved in free and fair trade in agriculture, including potatoes, one of the world’s largest food crops.”

“The potatoes we produce can contribute to sustainability, fighting world hunger and against global

warming,” Gov. Adamson continued. “The isolation of Kangaroo Island, Australia’s largest producer of seed potatoes, makes it an ideal location for growing clean, disease-free certified seed.”

The Congress officially got underway then with an address by World Potato Congress President Dr. Peter VanderZaag. “Potato is an important bioresource of food,” he stated. “I consider the ancient world of potato, Peru, to be a place where

continued on pg. 20

Left: During a welcoming reception held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Clare Scriven, South Australia Minister of Primary Industries, Regional Development and Forestry, described South Australia as a world leader in renewable energy, and sustainable, adaptable and resilient agriculture.

Right: Australian aboriginal descendant Robert Taylor entertained those in attendance at the WPC Opening Reception by playing one of the world’s oldest woodwind instruments, the didgeridoo. “With the didgeridoo, we can mimic sounds of the brush, our animals, and 250 native languages,” Taylor said.

M.P.B Builders, Inc.

From Planning through Completion

Commercial • Residential • Agricultural

Design and Construction of:
Post Frame • Stud Wall & Steel Buildings

www.mpbbuilders.com

M.P.B.
654 E. OSHKOSH STREET
RIPON, WISCONSIN 54971
Phone: 920-748-2601
1-800-782-9632
Fax: 920-748-4829

BUTLER **STAR**

“Old World Meets New” at 12th World Potato Congress . . .

continued from pg. 19

people are dedicated to protecting potato varieties.”

“We held the 10th World Potato Congress in Peru and saw how the ancient potato played a role not only there, but also beyond the Andes,” VanderZaag added.

FOR ALL MANKIND

“Then we moved from the ancient world to the Old World, Ireland,” he said, “and now we ask how the global north can help the global south improve production for all of mankind, in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the world over.”

“How do we help with low yields and enable countries to improve their production potential?” VanderZaag asked. “The World Potato Congress has evolved as a networking organization designed to disseminate and share knowledge.”

VanderZaag went on to explain how May 30 became National Potato Day in Peru, how the Declaration of Dublin was adopted and implemented by the WPC, and how eventually the United Nations officially proclaimed May 30 as the



International Day of Potato.

Dr. VanderZaag said a new evolution in potatoes will involve the old and new—potato breeding at the tetraploid and diploid levels, and the discovery of how diploids can be bred on a commercial scale.

All will be achieved, he added, to help the world become more food secure through the potato and such actions as conservation of potato germplasm and tapping into indigenous knowledge.

In his Plenary Session titled “Overview of World Potato Production,” Dr. Guy Hareau, principal scientist at the International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima, Peru, said potato crops are currently grown on approximately 20 million hectares across the globe, and 1.3 billion people consider potato a food staple.

HIGH YIELD POTENTIAL

“Potatoes have high yield potential, adaptability in different agroecological systems, a short growing cycle, and small carbon footprint,” Dr. Hareau said. “The new biofortified potatoes that CIP introduced in Peru can provide up to

Above: Her Excellency, the Honorable Frances Adamson, governor of South Australia, officially declared the Congress open on Monday, June 24. “The potatoes we produce can contribute to sustainability, fighting world hunger and against global warming,” Gov. Adamson said.

Bottom: In his address, WPC President Dr. Peter VanderZaag described potato as an important bioresource of food and asked the audience how the global north can help the global south improve production for all of mankind, in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the world over. “How do we help with low yields and enable countries to improve their production potential?” he proposed.

50 percent of the daily recommended iron intake in areas where malnutrition is prevalent.”

Other Plenary Sessions covered “Global Trade issues and Opportunities,” “Climate Change + Food Systems,” “Marketing Potatoes to the Next Generation,” “How Does the Industry Tackle the Challenges of the Future?” “Celebrating Success in Enhancing Yield and Quality,” “Food Waste” and “Utilization of Genetic Resources.”

Expert international speakers covered areas such as disease control, potato consumption, novel seed

production, the consequences of the neonicotinoids ban in Europe, nitrogen efficiency, revolutionizing agriculture with artificial intelligence, global trade, soil compaction, and tillage.

Panel discussions involved the topics of regenerative agriculture, and tetraploid and diploid potatoes.

The trade show portion of the WPC provided an excellent opportunity for the potato industry to network, forge new business connections, engage with a global audience, and secure contracts.

Meeting spaces were located off the exhibition hall with catering, seating, networking and business areas, all centrally located to maximize engagement with supporting partners.

Tuesday, June 25, included presentations on storage technology, soil health, biocontrol and bio-

“Potatoes have high yield potential, adaptability in different agroecological systems, a short growing cycle, and small carbon footprint.”

– Dr. Guy Hareau,
principal scientist at the International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima, Peru

stimulant products, international collaboration for potato research, hyperspectral imaging, and implementation of an early warning system for preventative management of potato late blight.

One informative session was titled “Private Sector Meets Indigenous Famers: Direct Benefit Sharing as a Win-Win Model to Conserve Potato

Varietal Diversity in Peru.”

CLOSING CEREMONY

Master of Ceremonies Leith Forrest, the number one rated nighttime announcer at FIVEaa radio in Adelaide, helped conduct the Closing Ceremony on Tuesday, during which Crump gave gifts to many people involved in planning, coordinating,

continued on pg. 22

FAMILY OWNED & GROWN
J.W.
MATTEK & SONS
FOUNDATION & CERTIFIED
SEED POTATOES

OVER 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN SEED PRODUCTION!

**SNOWDEN • ATLANTIC • LAMOKA
MANISTEE • LADY LIBERTY
MACKINAW • PETOSKEY • BLISS**

N5798 Star Neva Road • Deerbrook, WI
Telephone: 715-623-6963 • Fax: 715-627-7245 • Email: jwmattek@gmail.com

Contact: Jim or John

**WISCONSIN
CERTIFIED
SEED POTATOES**

“Old World Meets New” at 12th World Potato Congress . . .

continued from pg. 21



and implementing the 12 World Potato Congress.

Gdansk, Poland was officially named host of the 13th World Potato Congress, to be held in 2026, during a ceremony transferring the official WPC flag from Australia to the Polish delegation.

Old World Meets New—it’s a theme

that carried through to the iconic Adelaide Oval, built in 1871 after the establishment of the South Australian Cricket Association, where the WPC Gala Dinner took place. The Oval is home to Adelaide cricket, Australian rules football, and rugby league teams.

During the gala dinner, an award



Left: Part of a rapt WPC audience were Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association Executive Director Tamas Houlihan and Mark Finnessy of Okray Family Farms (second row, third and fourth from left).

Right: Falling under the category of international friendships forged, Dick Okray (right), officially retired from Okray Family Farms of Plover, Wisconsin, poses with his longtime friend, Nathan Richardson (left), a potato farmer from Tasmania, during the 12th World Potato Congress in Adelaide, Australia. Richardson grows processing potatoes for Simplot.



Not only did the trade show portion of the WPC provide an excellent opportunity for the potato industry to network, forge new business connections, and engage with a global audience, but it also gave South Australia center stage as a world leader in renewable energy, sustainability, and adaptable and resilient agriculture.

22 BC'T August

ceremony was held to recognize nine remarkable individuals who have devoted their lives’ work to the potato industry. VanderZaag presented the awards during the sold-out closing gala dinner in front of more than 800 attendees assembled at the Adelaide Oval.

The nine Global Industry Award winners are Nelio Campelio, Philippines; Walter Davidson, Canada; Abd-Allah Md Dhaif-Allah, Yemen; Dr. Paul Horne, Australia; Dr. Liping Jin, China; Dr. Mohinder Singh Kadia, India; Frank Mitolo, Australia; Alan Pye, Australia; and Dengshe (Don) Wang, China.

Post-Congress tours on Wednesday included those to Kangaroo Island and the Cooper Farming seed potato



operation; Mitolo Family Farms; SARDI's Molecular Diagnostics Centre; Cleland Wildlife Park; and to Australia's oldest surviving German settlement, Hahndorf.

The Old World met new at the 12th World Potato Congress in Adelaide, Australia, where organizers and delegates took lessons from the past to ensure a healthy landscape for the potato industry now and into the future.

continued on pg. 24

Top: The 12th World Potato Congress provided an opportunity for a global potato panel discussion, which included, from left to right, Dr. Simon Heck, Brett Fifield, Blair Richardson, Dr. Hannah Brown, Sonia Waterson, Kate Truffitt, Willie Jacobs, and Dr. Peter VanderZaag.

Middle Right: Derek Roulston, director of the Africa Potato Initiative, who grew up on an Irish seed potato farm in County Donegal, explained the transformative work of Vita, a non-governmental organization revitalizing communities in Eritrea and Ethiopia, countries in the Horn of Africa, through comprehensive initiatives. Roulston's own pivotal role in assisting farmers struggling with poor potato yields began in the Republic of Kenya, East Africa. Roulston established one of Kenya's first certified seed potato farms, dramatically improving local yields and laying the foundation for the Africa Potato Initiative. In 1998, he and his family moved to Kenya, dedicating themselves to improving the community's agricultural practices. "We have a responsibility to reach out to our fellow farmers, help them along the way, and uplift their lives," he said.



From right to left, Drs. Peter VanderZaag and Nigel Crump officially transfer the World Potato Congress flag from Australia to Tomasz Bienkowski, president of the Polish Potato Federation, during the WPC Closing Ceremony. The 13th World Potato Congress is set to take place in Gdansk, Poland, on the Baltic coast, in late June 2026.

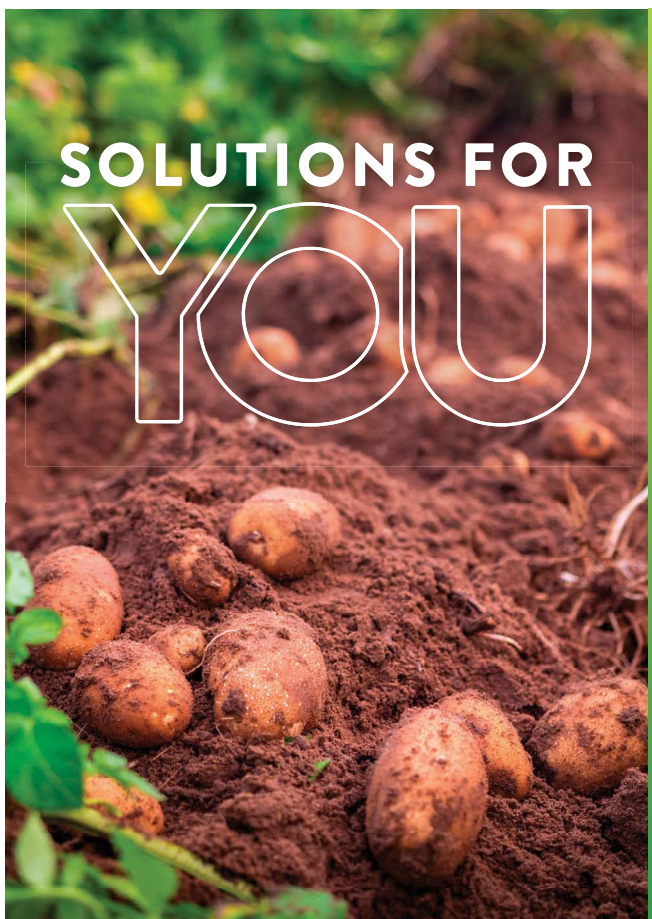
“Old World Meets New” at 12th World Potato Congress . . .

continued from pg. 23

Mark your calendar. The 13th World Potato Congress is set to take place in Gdansk, Poland, on the Baltic coast in late June 2026, a global event that will shine a spotlight on Poland’s thriving potato industry and surrounding potato-growing regions. **BCT**

Right: The Wisconsin contingent enjoyed the WPC Gala Dinner at the Adelaide Oval, built in 1871 after the establishment of the South Australian Cricket Association and home to local cricket, Australian rules football, and rugby league teams. From left to right are Shannon Finnessy, Tamas and Paula Houlihan, Dick Okray, Tricia and Joe Kertzman, Carol Okray, and Mark Finnessy.

Opposite Page: A post-Congress tour on Wednesday, June 26, included a ferry ride to Kangaroo Island and the Cooper Farming seed potato operation. Peter Cooper (shown) has been growing such varieties as Canberra, Mozart, and Sifra certified seed potatoes on the isolated island for 20 years without Potato Virus Y infecting the crop.



At Compeer Financial, we’re defined by you — your hopes for the future as well as your needs today. **Our Food & Agribusiness team leverages industry expertise across the entire food value chain to provide flexible and innovative solutions that support our clients’ growth.** And we’re equipped with the funding capacity to position your business for success every step of the way. As agriculture continues to evolve, so will we, together.

DEFINE YOUR SUCCESS WITH US
COMPEER.COM/YOU OR CALL (844) 426-6733



Cathy Schommer, VP Food & Agribusiness
(608) 370-6792 | Cathy.Schommer@compeer.com



Dan Kendall, Insurance Officer
(608) 370-6825 | Dan.Kendall@compeer.com

Ag Lending | Crop Insurance | Ag Business Services | And More

Compeer Financial can provide assistance with financing and operations based on historical data and industry expertise. Compeer Financial does not provide legal advice or certified financial planning. Compeer Financial, ACA is an Equal Credit Opportunity Lender and Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. NMLS #619731. © 2024 All rights reserved.





SWIDERSKI SEI
EQUIPMENT INC
MOSINEE WAUSAU THORP ANTIGO WAUPACA

YOUR PARTNERS ON THE JOB
swiderskiequipment.com



PLANTER UPGRADE PROGRAM



Precision Planting®



Premier Dealer

NOW - SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2024

**NOW IS THE TIME TO
UPGRADE FOR LESS!
SAVE \$50/ROW
PER PRODUCT!**

VISIT SEIPRECISIONSOLUTIONS.COM TODAY!



QUALIFYING PRODUCTS:

- DeltaForce
- vDrive
- SpeedTube
- vApplyHD
- EMHD
- FurrowForce
- Reveal