

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE WASHINGTON POTATOES?

by

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How do we promote Washington potatoes? First of all, we have to determine what it is that we know about Washington potatoes. In simplest terms, Washington potatoes have the advantages of deep rich volcanic soil, great water supply and controlled irrigation and an ideal climate that provides growers with a 60 to 90 day longer growing season.

Recognizing these advantages and the rapid increase in production, yield per acre and processing plants, several years ago we coined the name, Potato Country, U. S. A., in order to indicate in our advertising what a great potato growing area it really is. Unfortunately, everyone isn't so easily convinced, and this year we felt the time had come to examine the Washington potato closely and see what it really is and just where it's going.

Well, what we finally decided was that, as far as the Washington Russet Burbank is concerned, what it really is is an Idaho in nearly every sense of the word, and where it's going, according to all reports, is back into Idaho processing plants in ever increasing quantities.

Now Idaho for years has grown a superb potato, and they promoted it so well that the majority of people in this country will unknowingly call any Russet Burbank an "Idaho" even if they knew it had been grown in Texas or Tennessee. To a great many people, all refrigerators are still Frigidaires, and every record player is a Victrola, and, of course, every Russet Burbank is an "Idaho." As a matter of fact, I'd hate to have to try to convince people that there is a difference between an Idaho and a Washington when all our research indicates that there is more difference between two potatoes on the same vine than there is between a Washington and an Idaho Russet Burbank.

So if the general public wants to call it an Idaho, and since it comes from an Idaho seed potato to begin with, then we're really growing "Idaho" potatoes except for one very basic difference...we're growing them in Washington.

So how do we promote Washington potatoes? It was almost too simple, as the headline in our first 1975 ad shows: "Why Idaho potatoes grow better in Washington." Of course, we qualified the "Idaho" in the ad with quotation marks and an asterisk and a qualifying statement at the bottom of the ad that the most popular processing potatoes grown in Idaho, Washington and Oregon come from Idaho Russet Burbank seed potatoes. Strong words, yes, but, of course, we do have our asterisk!

I'm sure you've already seen our second ad, which, by way of preprints and an earlier publication date for The Packer, will appear somewhat earlier than our first ad. Our headline on this second ad reads, "It grew Famous in Idaho... It grows Better in Washington." After all, everyone knows by now where the Idaho was born. Washington is merely where it's growing up.

Our copy approach in these ads is equally simple and to the point. With all the trends being upward, with our almost unlimited potential, and with so many other things in our favor, we felt it was only natural to list the amenities of Potato Country, U. S. A., where the famous "Idaho" is finding new life.

Now, if all this sounds like we're throwing down the gauntlet, forget it. We're simply trying to set the record straight. Idaho has done an admirable job, not only in growing great potatoes, but in promoting them heavily to the point where buyers just naturally think that other potatoes are second rate. That may have been true once, but we know it's not true anymore, and it's high time we said so.