

THE NATIONAL POTATO PROMOTION PROGRAM

by
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If I told you the earth was flat (and you took me seriously) you would leave this room. Centuries ago men thought the earth was flat and that if they traveled too far, they'd fall off. Then some farsighted men financed a sea voyage. Another misconception was stamped into oblivion. Now a new journey has been launched, wiping out another misconception -- one that costs you money. The potato misconception. Potatoes are NOT fattening. They ARE nutritious. Don't you think there's a misconception? Tell a weight-conscious friend potatoes aren't fattening. That laugh of his will make you think you told him the earth was flat! Harmless jokes about potatoes making you fat are not harmless. This painful, costly misconception is being attacked and will be defeated -- by a carefully conceived and implemented program never before used in the potato industry. The vehicle? The National Potato Promotion Board.

Is this a good step forward -- the industry going to work to help itself? This is an excellent example of many people and interests joining together and cooperating to accomplish common goals. This is a grower-instigated program to benefit the growers through increased monetary returns. Still it is an industry program. To succeed, the cooperation of all involved in the potato industry is needed. All will benefit.

I have been associated with industry for many years. There is keen competition between departments within a company. Each department wants to be the top department. Each is competing for budget dollars. Still, all departments cooperate and work together. They realize that their ultimate success is based on the success of the whole company. They work together to sell more and earn more profits. The potato industry is no different. Each segment naturally must work for itself, but ultimately, the success of one part is the success of the whole industry.

American industry also recognizes some basic steps to success. It cannot simply manufacture a product and expect that product to sell. There are other important factors such as market research, promotion and advertising. Two ingredients are a must to successful marketing -- a good (quality) product and telling the consumers about it. A quality product is very important but it is not all. The consumer must be convinced and this is why every successful business has marketing dollars budgeted in its program.

The potato industry has one of the greatest natural products ever produced, but does the consuming public know this? They know the potato is relatively inexpensive and is good to eat, but what else?

Many don't even know there are different kinds of potatoes, let alone that different varieties can be used for different purposes. Do they know that potatoes are approximately in the same caloric level as peas, beans, carrots and oranges? They have the lowest caloric level of the common potato substitutes such as rice, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, etc.

Are people aware of the high nutrition level of potatoes? The potato industry has impressive data from noted food nutritionists but it has never been passed on to the consumer. It is time that these facts were passed on to the consumer. It is time the real story of the potato is told.

A recent comprehensive government study of the potato industry, headed by Ed Hews, concluded (among other things) that research and promotion are vital factors in the health and future of our industry. We feel promotional efforts on behalf of the potato are long overdue.

Since the President signed into law the Potato Research and Promotion Act in January 1971, the National Potato Promotion Board has been organized, assessments are being collected, a staff has been hired, and the initial promotional program is being developed. This potato promotional program is just commencing and I would like to tell you our plans. This program is yours -- the potato growers of America. You took the initiative to start the program. You are paying for it. With your continued support and the cooperation of the rest of the potato industry, and with hard work, our story will be told. The challenge is great but the rewards are even greater. The future of the potato industry is exciting.

The initial thrust of the campaign will be consumer-oriented, stressing three points:

1. A reintroduction of the potato
2. High nutrition
3. Relatively low in calories

The main theme line is "Something good that's good for you."

Media

For this fiscal year (period to June 30), NPPB ads will be seen on:

1. Network television (30-second spots)
 - a. The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson
 - b. The Today Show
 - c. ABC's Wide World of Entertainment with Parr and Cavett

Our 26 spots will be aired in 86 million TV households.

2. Spot television
 - a. Spot time has been purchased in the nation's 50 largest market areas. This will supplement the network time in areas where the consumers are.
3. Magazines
 - a. Reader's Digest (18.2 million circulation)
 - b. Family Health (900,000 circulation)
 - c. Cosmopolitan (1.6 million circulation)
 - d. Weight Watcher (592,000 circulation)
 - e. Time (Doctor's edition) (110,000 circulation)
 - f. Journal of the American Medical Assn. (240,000 circulation)
 - g. Journal of the American Dietetic Assn. (29,000 circulation)
 - h. School Food Service Journal (48,000 circulation)

4. Specialty Media

- a. Monthly ads explaining the program's progress will be run in both Packer and Produce News.

Research Justification

Naturally everyone has questions about why ads are appearing or not appearing on their favorite TV show, radio show or publication. An extensive analysis was made by our agency, as well as using government research data, and decisions were made for placement of these ads to hit specific target audiences and get the most mileage from your investment.

Public Relations

An extensive public relations program will support the advertising program and expand on the advertising by getting our story into markets where we aren't advertising.

- a. PR complements advertising by going into greater detail about the low calorie and nutrition story of potatoes.
- b. Biggest source of food information for consumer is the food editors of daily and weekly newspapers. They'll be sent:
 1. Potato story ideas
 2. Potato recipes
 3. Photos
- c. The magazine food editor
 1. These editors will get special attention from personal contacts to educate them on potatoes so stories, features, and recipes can be developed.
- d. Radio
 1. An agency home economist will visit 10 major radio market areas and appear on talk shows
 - a. Tell our potato story
 - b. Promote recipes
 - c. Promote a potato diet booklet
 - d. Home economists

Will receive potato-oriented materials for their use.
 - e. Medical-dietetic communities

Both groups will get information on the true story about potatoes--how to incorporate them into a sound medical diet.

f. Teenagers

These young buyers of tomorrow will learn the potato story through home economic classes and youth-oriented magazines.

g. Grocery trade

An educational program will keep them informed of the pre-selling job being done on their potato consumers and information on potatoes and potato handling care.

Trade Relations

Besides information released to trade newspapers and potato growing area newspapers, special mailings in the form of newsletters and newspapers will go to the entire potato industry. It is imperative that the entire trade be informed of the promotion program. In turn, the NPPB hopes to receive inputs from the industry so the best possible program may be conducted and coordinated with all interests.

The objective of the program is to support the generic potato. This will provide an umbrella consumer communications program that will complement all regional, state or other promotional programs. Through hard work and working together, we cannot fail. How can we help but create more demand and hence greater returns to all?