

## WHO'S EATING WASHINGTON POTATOES?

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### Recent Changes in U.S. Food System, Population, and Consumption

#### Changes Occurring:

- \* In U.S. food system, fruit and vegetable subsector, and potato industry
- \* In structure of U.S. population:
  - older consumers
  - smaller households
  - movement to South and West
  - increasing incomes
  - multiple earner households
- \* In consumer lifestyles and tastes and preferences
  - exercise enthusiasts
  - diet and health conscious
  - Interested in gourmet cooking
  - demand convenience

#### Affecting general food consumption behavior:

- \* What is eaten - more fruits and vegetables and less red meat
- \* When it is eaten - more snacks
- \* Where it is eaten - more away-from-home (especially fast foods)
- \* What form it is eaten - fresh vs. processed

#### Affecting per capita potato consumption behavior:

- \* Total potato consumption - (120.8 lbs. in 1970; 115.1 in 1980; 124.3 in 1986)
- \* Fresh potato consumption - (62.3 lbs. in 1970; 51.0 in 1980; 49.6 in 1986)

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- \* Processed potato consumption - (58.6 lbs. in 1970; 64.1 in 1980; 74.7 in 1986)
  - Frozen: 44.3 lbs. in 1986
  - Chips and Shoestrings: 18.1 lbs. in 1986
  - Other: 12.3 lbs. in 1986

### Study of Washington Consumers

#### OBJECTIVES:

To evaluate consumer lifestyles, preferences for potatoes and other vegetables, and nutrition knowledge and concerns as they affect purchasing decisions.

#### METHOD OF ANALYSIS:

- \* mail questionnaire sent to random sample of 750 Washington households
- \* response rate: 59%
- \* date: October, 1987
- \* respondent: primary meal planner

#### DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

- |                    |                                |               |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Residence:      | Urban areas                    | - 72%         |
|                    | Rural areas                    | - 28%         |
| 2. Race:           | White                          | - 97%         |
|                    | Nonwhite                       | - 3%          |
| 3. Education:      | Less than high school graduate | - 9%          |
|                    | Completed high school          | - 27%         |
|                    | Some college                   | - 32%         |
|                    | Completed college              | - 15%         |
|                    | Post graduate work             | - 17%         |
| 4. Age:            | (average)                      | - 51 years    |
|                    | (range)                        | - 23-89 years |
| 5. Household Size: | 1 person                       | - 17%         |
|                    | 2 persons                      | - 32%         |
|                    | 3 persons                      | - 22%         |
|                    | 4 persons                      | - 18%         |
|                    | 5 persons                      | - 12%         |
| 6. Sex:            | Female                         | - 66%         |
|                    | Male                           | - 34%         |

7. Employment:
- |           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Full-time | - | 39% |
| Part-time | - | 10% |
| Retired   | - | 33% |
| Homemaker | - | 17% |
| Other     | - | 1%  |
8. Access to Microwave Oven - 75%

RESULTS: Purchase Concerns, Produce Quality, and Potato Consumption

1. Type of fresh potato most frequently purchased:

Russet	-	55%
Red	-	18%
White	-	9%
No preference	-	17%

2. Preferred packaging:

Plastic bag	-	54%
Bulk	-	39%
No preference	-	7%

3. Potato purchase decisions affected by:

Appearance (color, shape, etc)	-	94%
Where grown (Idaho, locally, etc.)	-	29%
Quality (firmness, blemishes)	-	98%
Able to purchase desired amount	-	71%
Price	-	68%
Seeing potatoes through packaging	-	86%
In-store displays and advertising	-	32%
Nutrition information at Point of Purchase	-	23%

4. Description of fresh potatoes in favorite supermarket:

Soft	-	3%
Rotten	-	8%
Green	-	9%
Small	-	13%
Cuts	-	14%
Blemishes	-	14%
Dirty	-	13%
Too many eyes	-	15%

## 5. Description of the "ultimate" potato:

- variety of responses - focusing on skins, size, shape, packaging, color, flavor, varieties, cooking qualities, other qualities.
- choosy consumers - looks like baker (russet), texture of white potato, tastes like red potato; have a pronounced "potatoey" flavor; bakers that can be used for anything.

## 6. Change in household consumption from previous year:

	More %	Same %	Less %
Fresh	24	60	15
Frozen	13	41	43
Dehydrated	13	34	50

## 7. Favorite (At-Home) serving method:

1. Baked
2. Mashed
3. Boiled
4. French Fries

## 8. Favorite alternative to potatoes:

1. Rice
2. Pasta
3. Bread

## RESULTS: Health and Nutrition Concerns

1. Attempting to decrease calorie consumption - 66%
2. MOST important consideration when selecting food for household:

Fat	- 26%
Additives & Preservatives	- 17%
Cholesterol	- 17%
Salt	- 15%
Vitamins	- 13%
Sugar Content	- 8%
Dietary Fiber	- 4%

3. LEAST important consideration when selecting food for household:

Dietary Fiber	- 25%
Additives & Preservatives	- 22%
Cholesterol	- 15%
Sugar	- 11%
Salt	- 11%
Vitamins	- 10%
Fat	- 6%

4. Agreement with selected statements

. Potatoes are an important part of a healthy diet	- 83%
. I reduce potato consumption for weight control	- 25%
. Potatoes are a good source of dietary fiber	- 62%
. I am concerned about the fat/cholesterol content of French-fried potatoes	- 76%
. The food I buy depends on the speed and ease of preparation	- 43%
. Potatoes are more healthy than other foods that I eat	- 41%
. Health is more important than cost of food when making food purchasing decisions	- 79%
. I read nutritional information and ingredients on package labels	- 70%
. Potatoes contain vitamin C	- 52%

RESULTS: Demographics and Food Purchases

- . Female and urban respondents more concerned about being able to purchase exact amount of potatoes
- . Least educated and low and middle income households most affected by price
- . Purchase decisions of lower educated more likely than of higher educated household to be affected by nutritional information at POP

RESULTS: Consumer Health Concerns and Potato Consumptions

Households consuming more fresh potatoes are:

1. more likely to indicate that health is more important than cost in food selection decisions
2. more likely to indicate that potatoes are a good source of vitamin C and dietary fiber
3. less likely to indicate that the food that they buy depends upon speed and ease of preparation

#### RESULTS: Factor Analysis

- . Purpose - Identify common groups of factors depicting the consumer based on response of large number of questions.
- . Four Factors Identified:
  1. Concerns toward nutrition, diet, and the food consumed
  2. Dietary benefits of the potato
  3. Convenience
  4. Potatoes as a healthful addition to the consumer's diet

#### RESULTS: Other Comments

- . Handling of potatoes in supermarkets
- . Less salt and additives in processed products
- . Poor quality potatoes marketed for home folks and priced too high
- . Not harvested carefully - bagged potatoes contain severely damaged and/or rotten potatoes
- . Want other varieties

#### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS:

- . Changing purchasing patterns for fresh and processed potatoes - partially due to health and dietary concerns.
- . Sensitive to quality of potatoes in supermarket (cuts and blemishes).
- . Not too influenced by where potato grown or by displays, advertising, and nutritional information at POP.
- . Usefulness of Results:
  1. Commission - advertising and promotion
  2. Marketers - packaging, quality, type of potatoes
  3. Growers - quality, type of potatoes