

USDA calculates Idaho potato crop value grew 22.7%

Idaho, the United State's top producing potato state since 1957, reached a new crop high in 2017. According to the US Department of Agriculture, the preliminary estimated value for the Idaho Potato crop is \$1.2 billion, a 22.7% leap from the previous year. Harvested acreage was down 5% and yields were down 1.2%.

Foodservice operators can thank a large crop of quality Idaho potatoes (approximately 13 billion pounds) for continued year round availability. Currently, foodservice accounts for approximately 50% of Idaho Potato sales, including fresh potatoes, as well as processed (fries and chips) and dehydrated potato products.

Americans love their potatoes. In 2017, potatoes overtook tomatoes as the most purchased fresh vegetable (2017 Fresh Trends Survey, The Packer), and chefs across the country menu both traditional and innovative applications to keep their customers happy. At chains, French fry sales are up as more operators offer loaded fries and two fry menus. "Consumers are demanding a broader variety of creative and ethnic foods that would often be too challenging, costly and time consuming to prepare at home. A variety of Idaho Potatoes products and recipe options help operators meet that demand," says Don Odiorne, IPC VP Foodservice/Website.

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