

# IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Website: [www.idahopotato.com](http://www.idahopotato.com)

## President's Report By Frank Muir

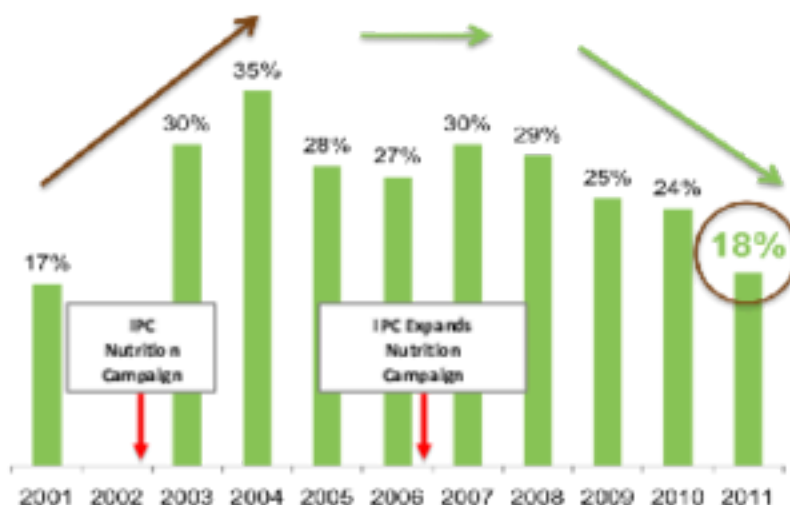
Recently the United States Potato Board (USPB) released the results of its 2011 Attitudes and Usage Study (A&U) and the findings are extremely positive for the entire industry.

**In summary, consumers are eating more potatoes than they were several years ago and most importantly, their negative attitudes toward potatoes have shifted dramatically.**

I wanted to take a moment to recognize the leadership role the Idaho® potato growers, shippers and processors took during the height of the Atkins craze, one of the most challenging battles the industry has ever fought. I believe your ongoing support of the IPC's landmark nutrition campaign, which was followed in suit by the USPB and other potato-growing states, played a pivotal role in changing consumers' negative attitudes about potatoes.

The chart below, "Net Negatives," was included in the USPB's A&U Study and depicts the change in consumers' negative attitudes toward potatoes over the last seven years. As you can see, negative impressions of potatoes were at a all-time high of 35% in 2004 due to the popularity of the Atkins Diet. In the fall of 2003, to combat the low-carb diet craze, the IPC changed its marketing strategy and launched an integrated, nutrition-focused television advertising campaign in major markets along with a national public relations program. The IPC enlisted Denise Austin as the Idaho® potato spokeswoman and began communicating the importance of including Idaho® potatoes in your diet in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The result: Net negatives began to drop and then stabilized for four years.

In 2007, the IPC significantly increased its advertising budget (as a result of an Idaho industry-supported tax increase) and for the first time started airing its television commercials featuring Denise Austin **nationally**. The result: The net negatives declined at an accelerated rate and today are at their lowest level (18%) in more than a decade.



USPB's 2011 Attitudinal Survey: Net Negatives

The A&U study was designed to assess and track potato attitudes and usage among U.S. female heads of households.

While many factors contributed to the decline in Net Negatives, the IPC's nutrition-focused advertising and public relations programs have been the most significant and consistent over the past seven years in communicating the health and nutrition benefits of potatoes to consumers.

I know we are all relieved that low-carb diets aren't generating headline news anymore. However, let us not forget how quickly and easily a fad such as a diet can cripple an entire industry. That is why it's more important than ever that we continue with the same strength and tenacity to communicate all the nutritional benefits of potatoes and even more importantly, remind consumers to always look for the "Grown in Idaho®" seal.

I greatly appreciate all your continued efforts and support.

## Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

As outlined below, the effort to keep potatoes in school feeding programs is extremely important. Please take the time to go to the website [www.potatoesinschool.com](http://www.potatoesinschool.com) and tell USDA to do the right thing.

There are many other important issues that we are working on as well. Clearly the reduction in federal and state funds will require all of us to re-evaluate our priorities. We will continue to work to advance industry priorities in a responsible manner.

## Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

### April 13 is Deadline to Submit Comments About Potatoes in School Lunch; Have you Submitted Yours?

*The following excerpt was sent out by the NPC:*

The time has come to stand up for potatoes, and every one of us needs to do it.

**We all believe the health of our nation's children is a top priority.** Meals served to children in schools are a core component to the nutrition available in the United States. However, the USDA has recommended the reduction of certain vegetables, *including potatoes*, in schools. The proposed rule on Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs would limit the weekly servings of potatoes, corn, peas and lima beans to a single cup in school lunches and would eliminate all these vegetables in school breakfasts.

**Taking potatoes out of schools is wrong for kids.** The USDA proposal is based on outdated data about the potato products served in schools and is inconsistent with the recommendations of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines. If the current proposed guidelines are implemented, they could have serious unintended nutritional consequences that would reduce rather than increase vegetable consumption.

The potato industry needs to unite and take action TODAY.

- **Submit** your own comments to USDA.
- **Discuss** this important issue with your local school districts, school foodservice directors, PTA or parents organization.
- **Contact** your local media with this information.
- **Tell** your doctors, nutritionists, anyone one who might be concerned about the health of today's school children.

The more voices USDA hears in support of keeping potatoes in schools, the more likely they are to listen.

I'm making this easy for you. Visit [www.PotatoesInSchools.com](http://www.PotatoesInSchools.com) (or click the link below) and go to the tab labeled: "[Tell USDA: KEEP POTATOES IN SCHOOLS.](#)" There you will find links to comment forms, sample comment letters, relevant facts about potato nutrition and a list of activities on how to spread the word.

## Calendar

#### April

- 5 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 6-8 IGSA Spring Swing, Mesquite, NV
- 7 IGSA Board Meeting, Mesquite, NV
- 12-13 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 14 Lean Manufacturing for Produce Packers Seminar, Idaho Falls, ID (Signup required)
- 15 NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to April 1.

#### May

- 2-4 United Fresh Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA
- 12-13 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 13 NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to May 1.
- 14 Annual IPC Marathon, Boise, ID
- 18 USPB Webinar: Eliminating Barriers to Fresh Potato Sales, Noon-1:30 p.m. CST

#### June

- 10 NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to June 1.
- 14-15 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 22-24 NPC Summer Meeting, Grand Forks, ND

#### July

- 11-14 USPB Summer Meeting, Columbus, OH
- 26-27 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 29-31 PMA Foodservice Convention, Monterey, CA