

WASHINGTON STATE POTATO PROMOTION

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Promotion of Washington State potatoes by the Potato Commission started in 1957. This was the first full year of operation after the Commission was organized in 1956.

Promotion or advertising of potatoes was all for the fresh market in those first years. The Commission has since carried on advertising programs for processed potatoes and we will discuss that program later but first we will discuss the present advertising and promotion on fresh potatoes.

WASHINGTON FRESH POTATO SHIPMENTS - BY VARIETY

Variety	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Russets	4993	5001	3059	3044	4016	1908
Norgolds	155	1040	2748	3872	2808	3018
Kennebecs	-	9	42	6	7	2
White Rose	204	138	73	32	42	33
Round Reds	124	119	58	113	78	63
Early Gems	62	-	-	-	-	-
Haigs	-	-	-	-	-	14
Norchips	-	-	-	-	-	7
Total	5538	6307	5980	7067	6951	5045*

* 1970 total is through December 1970 only.

The table above shows the fresh potato shipments by variety. Most interesting is the decrease of Russets and the increase of Norgolds.

The figures shown are in 1000 cwt. To compare these to carlot equivalents, multiply these figures by 2. This would mean the total for 1970 through December equals 11,090 carlot equivalents of 500 cwt. each. The total shown for 1969 for the entire season would convert to 13,902 carlot equivalents of 500 cwt. each. The next table shows the same fresh potato shipments, by the month of shipment.

WASHINGTON FRESH POTATO SHIPMENTS - BY MONTH

Month	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
July	424	466	218	405	96	130
August	1499	1652	1864	1817	1734	2177
September	1547	1822	1689	2244	1613	1370
October	1055	1139	971	970	1331	800
November	220	251	283	568	496	281
December	137	261	242	232	343	291
Sub-total	4882	5591	5267	6236	5613	5049
(Years total						
Including	5537	6307	5980	7058	6951	N. A.
Jan. - May)						

Shipments normally start about July 15 each year. Notice that by the end of October, 70% or more of the years fresh potato shipments have been completed. This leaves 30% or less that are shipped in the 7 month period from November through May. In the table above we have sub-totals after December in order to make comparisons with the figures available up to date in 1970.

The pattern shown here for fresh potatoes has been the same since the Commission has been in affect. In 1957 81% of the fresh potatoes were shipped by the end of October and the 5 - year average before that , 78% were shipped by the end of October.

So promotional efforts have always been concentrated in the period of July through October when Washington has been the major supplier of potatoes in the United States.

There is also a very certain pattern of potato unloads. The Market News service publishes the unload information for 41 major U. S. cities.

The following tables showing Washington top ten unloads cities for each of the last 2 years is interesting.

TOP - TEN 1969 UNLOAD CITIES
Period of July 15 to October 31
1000 cwt.

CITY	WASH. UNLOADS	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL UNLOADS
1. Seattle - Tacoma	368.6	87	421. -
2. Los Angeles	337.9	24	1,411.2
3. New York - Newark	306.2	20	1,556.6
4. Chicago	245.3	18	1,314.2
5. Portland	199.7	70	281.3
6. San Francisco	165.6	20	873.1
7. Philadelphia	119. -	16	717.6
8. Houston	111.8	26	429.1
9. Boston	88.8	12	711.8
10. Atlanta	66.2	8	762.2
	<u>2,009.1</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>8,478.1</u>

TOP - TEN 1970 UNLOAD CITIES
Period of July 15 to October 31
1000 cwt.

CITY	69	WASH. UNLOADS	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL UNLOADS
1. Seattle - Tacoma	1	379.7	90	420. -
2. Los Angeles	2	379.2	28	1,335.4
3. New York - Newark	3	291.4	20	1,419.8
4. Portland	5	212.2	65	322.6
5. San Francisco	6	192.5	23	802.6
6. Chicago	4	187.7	16	1,153.4
7. Houston	8	100.3	20	506.4
8. Philadelphia	7	92.6	14	641.8
9. Boston	9	72.9	11	632.6
10. Atlanta	10	57.1	9	666.2
		<u>1,965.7</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>7,900.8</u>

The following table is a summary of the top ten unloads.

Recap 1970 and 1969 Unloads in 41 Cities
for period of July 15 to October 31
1000 cwt.

	1970	% of shipment	1969	% of shipment
Top - 10	1966.7	44	2009.1	42
Other - 31	628.2	14	730.7	15
Total 41	2593.9	58	2739.8	57
Total Washington Shipments during same period	4473. -	100	4779. -	100
Unload city unknown	1879.1	42	2039.2	43

The above table shows that over 40% of the fresh shipments in this period are unloaded in ten major terminal markets. An additional 14 to 15 percent is unloaded in the other 31 known unload cities as reported by Market News. This leaves the remaining 40% plus of the shipments during this time unloaded in a large number of smaller markets that are not recorded.

The Commission concentrates its efforts in advertising and promotion in the major terminals where the volume is sufficient for Washington potatoes to be identified.

The Potato Commission is now conducting its advertising through the Pacific National Advertising Agency of Seattle. Mr. Frank Horsley is our advertising counsel.

A year ago they developed the theme of POTATO COUNTRY U. S. A. to be used in Washington potato advertising. The theme has been well received and is being more widely used in the industry all the time.

Four 4-color ads were developed using the theme, showing mountains, river dams and green fields. The first such ad made these statements:

POTATO COUNTRY U. S. A.

POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. . . . endowed by nature with Rich Volcanic soil. . . Ideal Climate and Elevation. . . the mighty Columbia River!

POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. . . . enhanced by man with gigantic dams that provide an abundance of pure mountain snow water for scientific irrigation.

POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. . . . fastest growing potato area in the world because it produces the finest high yield, high quality Russet Burbank potatoes.

To follow and compliment that theme the agency developed POTATO EXPERT, U.S.A. This was used in the second ad developed for fresh market advertising and showed a picture of a produce man in a supermarket and made these statements.

POTATO EXPERT, U.S.A.

POTATO EXPERT, U.S.A. ! Is he qualified? He has to be, for shoppers are the most severe critics. That's why he regards POTATO COUNTRY, U.S.A. as an ally. The high quality, high yield potatoes of the Columbia Basin are the result of a unique combination of rich volcanic soil, an ideal climate and pure mountain water captured by the mighty dams of the Columbia. POTATO COUNTRY, U.S.A., fastest growing potato area in the world!

These ads were run in Chain Store Age, Progressive Grocer and the Washington Food Dealer, all of which are grocery trade magazines.

In addition publicity articles were written and printed in these magazines and the Washington Food Dealer's October issue had their front cover for Washington potatoes and a Miss Potato Country, U.S.A. Wonderful publicity in our state for Washington potatoes and the POTATO COUNTRY, U.S.A. idea.

Dealer service men were used this past year to help promote Washington potatoes.

Following is a list of the market areas and the dealer service men who seemed to coordinate promotion in these markets.

Atlanta - Miami	T. H. Erdman
Boston	James Regan
Chicago - Milwaukee	Gil Grigsby
Cleveland - Detroit - Pittsburgh	E. J. Laykun
Dallas - Fort Worth	Morris B. Bentley
Des Moines	Ray Hirschaner
Houston	C. R. (Red) Newlin
Kansas City - St. Louis	Cliff Wasser
Los Angeles - Phoenix - S. California	Ed Baird
Minneapolis St. Paul	John Sever
New York	Lino Marelli
Philadelphia - Wash. D.C. - Baltimore	Bill Holmer
San Francisco - Sacramento	Harry Mebur
Seattle - Portland	C. A. Drury

The dealer service men also helped in a first - time television advertising in 10 markets. The following is a list of the above markets.

Seattle	New York
Portland	Philadelphia
Los Angeles	Chicago
San Francisco	St. Louis
Houston	Atlanta

Store tags were made available on all television spots, which were continued for 12 weeks.

The dealer service men also took orders for display material and forwarded them to the Commission office for shipment.

This resulted in market work being done in 19 markets.

As a result of their work and the Commission's direct mail contact with Chain Stores and Distributors, display material kits were shipped to more than 395 cities in 40 different states.

The Packer and Produce News are trade newspapers in which a series of ads were carried during the major shipping season. These are weekly newspapers directed to the produce buying trade.

In addition to the regular seasonal work done in Los Angeles, it was made a special test market with promotional activities and television carried on for a longer period of time. Further analysis will be made but the 1970 unloads show an increase over 1969.

A display booth is used in promoting Washington potatoes. It was built in Seattle and shipped first to the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Convention at Las Vegas in February 1970. It was later used at the National Restaurant Association Convention in Chicago during May 1970 in co-operation with the Washington Potato Association. It was used at the Grant County Fair & Rodeo in Moses Lake and the Central Washington Fair in Yakima. Now in February 1971 it is in Washington D. C. at United's current convention.

Promotion of potatoes generally has a beneficial effect on both fresh and processed potato products. However, the Commission makes special efforts to promote and aid in the sale of Washington's processed potato products.

Earlier tables showed that fresh potato shipments have held a similar pattern of movement for several years. The following table shows the change that Washington is experiencing in processed potato products.

POTATOES PROCESSED
VOLUME CHANGE IN 6 YEARS

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970 (through Dec.)
Freezing	7,187	8,043	8,298	10,092	13,568	10,088
Dehydration	1,942	3,027	2,344	3,677	5,359	3,239
Potato Chips	520	515	434	342	359	271
Pre-Peeling	196	13	129	159	113	95
Totals	9,845	11,598	11,205	14,270	19,399	14,993

The total processed potato products in 1969 was almost twice the amount that was processed 5 years earlier. The 1970 total of processed potato products is expected to exceed that of 1969.

A special series of ads is carried in magazines published especially for the institutional and fast food service.

The first ad used for processed potatoes was another POTATO EXPERT, U. S. A. ! It is a full color picture of a teen age youth eating a bag full of french fried potatoes. It states the following statements.

POTATO EXPERT, U. S. A.

Experience has sharpened his judgment; so POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A., combines rich volcanic soil, an ideal climate, and pure mountain water, captured by the mighty dams of the Columbia, to give him a better french fry.

He may not be concerned with the reasons behind the natural superiority of POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A., But YOU should be!

The second ad developed for processed products was another POTATO EXPERT, U. S. A. ! This is a full color picture of a Chef holding a tray full of special potato dishes made from processed potato products. This ad states:

POTATO EXPERT, U. S. A.

He may never see his work in an art gallery, but nevertheless, this dedicated artist attempts perfection with every potato creation. It's not surprising that the potatoes he prefers come from POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A., where rich volcanic soil, an ideal climate and pure mountain water captured by the mighty dams of the Columbia produce the finest high yield, high quality Russet Burbank potatoes.

The third and last ad developed for this purpose is another full color picture of a young lady ready to be served in a restaurant and looking at a tray of processed and fresh potatoes. It includes 3 different frozen products, 2 dehydrated products and baked potatoes all ready to be served. The ad makes these following statements.

POTATO EXPERT, U. S. A.

She didn't check the potatoes before they were prepared, but she will be an excellent judge of their quality when they are served. If they came from POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A., you can be confident that rich volcanic soil, an ideal climate and pure mountain water captured by the mighty dams of the Columbia have produced a potato that will win her most sincere approval.

These ads are carried in several magazines and inserted on a staggered basis in order to get the best possible coverage with the limited funds available.

A considerable amount of very good publicity was achieved through the good efforts of the Pacific National staff in preparing and placing articles at the right time.

The Commission serves as a full advertising committee in reviewing and approving advertising plans. They also cooperate with an advisory committee from the major potato processors in developing plans to help promote processed potato products.

The Commission also cooperated with the Washington Potato Association in developing and publishing a brochure on Potato Processing in Washington State. The cover used the four color artwork used in the ads and the theme POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. ! The brochure had several pages of information about POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. and a chart and data on Washington State Potato Productions. Also each processor member of the Washington Potato Association had a page of information about their plant and the products manufactured.

The Commission also produced table tents for restaurant use. These are small cards that fold into a tent, displaying a four color picture of a fresh potato and prepared processed products. The tents when used usually stay on restaurant tables for a considerable length of time.

A bin strip was also made available to stores, to help identify the product. This strip was of such a size that it could slide into the same area used to hold the pricing tickets. The bin strip had the words Washington State Potato printed on it.

For publicity purpose the Commission also produced the label button showing Washington State as POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. , and two different size potato shaped decals in color. These ads had the POTATO COUNTRY, U. S. A. in the center of the potato.

Two trade missions were conducted during the years. The first was with Herschel Heilig and Joe Sorenson, Commission members, with George O'Leary from the office. This group went to New York and went through a different market each day as they returned to the West coast across the Northern part of the U. S. The second was with D. R. Clark, Jr. and Delmar Bouchey, Commission members, with Frank Horsley from Pacific National Advertising Agency. This group went to Atlanta and came back through the southern states into Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Both trade missions reported that they found very little trouble with Washington potatoes. However, they felt the trips were interesting and very worth while in the contacts made with the buying trade and handlers of potatoes in the produce terminals.

Costs of promotion and advertising is paid from potato grower assessments. The total income from assessments in the first years of the Commission were between 75 to 90 thousand dollars. Today the assessment is nearly 500 thousand with over a third being used in advertising and promotion and a similar amount in research programs.