



US Potato Board
National Potato Council

7555 East Hampden Avenue, #412 • Denver, CO 80231 • 303.369.7783
1300 L Street, # 910 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202.682.9456

Contact: **John Toaspern**
Vice President, International Marketing
United States Potato Board
303-369-7783
johnT@uspotatoes.com

US Fresh and Seed Potatoes Gain Increased Access to Thailand

DENVER/WASHINGTON, DC—(October 23, 2009) On August 10, 2009, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced the Plant Protection Research and Development Office in the Thailand Department of Agriculture signed off on import protocols for fresh table-stock and chip-stock potatoes from the United States. On October 13, 2009, APHIS announced the same Thai office completed an import protocol for US seed potatoes from the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California.

These three agreements culminated 18 months of work by APHIS, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the US potato industry—National Potato Council (NPC), United States Potato Board (USPB) and state potato grower organizations. Without these protocols in place, US fresh and seed potatoes were not allowed to enter the country, or faced a set of phytosanitary requirements that were difficult to meet. Now, US fresh and seed potatoes are allowed to enter under a set of standardized phytosanitary requirements that protect Thailand, but also allow trade to occur in a smooth and transparent manner.

For all three products, the Thai government requires importers to first obtain import permits. The allocation of these permits, particularly for table-stock potatoes, has the potential to restrict US exports in the near term; however, the US potato industry continues to work with FAS to seek adjustments to this system.

The seed potato agreement is the first step to opening the Thai market to all US seed potatoes. The Thai government requires a visit to each seed growing area before approving that area for export. Due to timing constraints, the Thais were only able to visit the four listed states this summer; however, they agreed to return in 2010 to review seed production and certification in additional US states so these, too, may be added to the protocol.

The USPB conducts a marketing program in Thailand for chipping potatoes and has been very successful in getting chip processors in the country interested in US chip-stock. At present, the three major processors in Thailand all purchase US potatoes.

Exports of fresh potatoes to Thailand have grown from 92 metric tons (approximately 2,028 cwt) in 2004/2005 to 8,493 metric tons (approximately 187,239 cwt), valued at \$2.8 million in the 2008/2009 July/June marketing year (MY). Total world exports to Thailand in MY08/09 were 30,283 MT (about 679,531 cwt), so US exports to Thailand should continue to grow.

Thailand produces potato chips for markets throughout Asia and grows a substantial number of chipping potatoes. The demand for higher quality seed potatoes will result in export sales from the United States in future years.

The US potato industry sincerely thanks all of individuals who contributed to opening this new market for US potatoes and acknowledges the important role that USDA Technical Assistance for Specialty Crop (TASC) funding played in covering the costs of the Thai officials' seed potato inspection trip.

For more information on the Thai import protocols for seed, table-stock and chip-stock, please contact John Keeling at the NPC JohnK@nationalpotatocouncil.org or John Toaspern at the USPB JohnT@uspotatoes.com.

###

John Toasperm is Vice President, International Marketing, at the United States Potato Board in Denver. The mission of the USBP is to increase demand for potatoes and potato products through an integrated promotion program, thereby providing US producers with expanding markets for their production. John can be contacted at 303-369-7783 or johnh@uspotatoes.com. For complete information about the programs, ROI results, resources and tools available to all members of the industry through the USBP, please visit www.uspotatoes.com. The United States Potato Board—Maximizing Return on Grower Investment.

