

News Release

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NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL STATEMENT ON US-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT
Implementation Would Immediately Eliminate Tariffs on US Frozen Potatoes

(Washington, DC – April 6, 2011) – The National Potato Council (NPC) is encouraged by today’s announcement from the White House that a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia has been reached. Under the agreement, the current 20 percent tariff on US frozen and dehydrated potatoes and potato chips will be immediately eliminated.

“As the third-largest economy in Central and South America, Colombia is an important market for US potatoes,” said NPC President Justin Dagen, a grower from Karlstad, Minnesota. “In 2010 alone, US frozen potato exports to Colombia increased by 32 percent—from \$1.8 million in 2009 to \$2.3 million. We applaud the Obama Administration’s efforts to boost exports and economic growth in the US as outlined in his National Export Initiative. We encourage President Obama to immediately send the FTA to Congress for passage and look forward to working with Congress to secure passage for not only the FTA with Colombia, but also the FTAs with Korea and Panama.”

When fully implemented, the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is expected to result in an annual export market for US potatoes and potato products of \$5 to \$10 million.

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The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. Potato growers, along with the U.S. potato industry as whole, directly benefit from involvement in the National Potato Council. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level. The National Potato Council is a voluntary organization supported by quota assessments from state organizations, allied industry memberships and sponsorships, and directly by potato growers through membership dues.