

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. It is an honor to participate with all of you in declaring 2008 as the International Year of the Potato. For a farm boy from Wisconsin, this is an awesome and exciting opportunity. I am a potato farmer from Wisconsin in the North Central part of the U.S. and the current chairman of the US Potato Board.

I represent approximately 4,000 potato growers from across the US. We are passionate about potatoes. We believe in potatoes. Potatoes are an excellent source of nutrition for all people – high in potassium, vitamin C, and fiber. The US potato industry feels that the nutrition message is the foundation of our marketing program.

As a potato farmer/grower, I am also committed to providing people with healthy and nutritious food necessary to lead a healthy and productive life. I understand that not all countries in the world have the food supply that we have. Every day there are millions of people that go to bed hungry and malnourished. In the US we have problems with overeating and obesity as well as hunger. In many other countries, people are starving and looking for help.

I have personally been blessed growing up in America and being able to farm, grow potatoes, and market them in the US. I have also been blessed because I have had the opportunities to travel; including two trips to Nicaragua where I have worked in a small village along the Rio Coco River to help rebuild homes, schools, and churches destroyed by Hurricane Mitch in 1999. It was my privilege to get to know these people, work with them, and learn about their needs and concerns. It was a very rewarding experience to live and work with them to rebuild homes, and also to understand their food production challenges and

opportunities. I have continued to have contact with the people from this village and I look forward to learning and working with them to improve health and economic conditions in their village and country. Being able to grow enough food is important to them and to all of us gathered here today.

What can we do working together? The US Potato Board is committed to continuing research regarding the nutritional and health benefits of the potato. Current projects include research on satiety, blood pressure, and weight management. In addition, research continues at the state and national level on new varieties, disease resistance, and improved techniques to grow, store, and package potatoes.

The USPB is partnering with the School Nutrition Association to launch a School Wellness Grant Program to help public schools improve consumption of fresh healthfully-prepared potatoes and provide access to physical activity. The USPB has also worked with celebrity chefs Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough to develop new recipes for potatoes with an international focus. And lastly, the USPB will be sponsoring the Healthy Mr. Potato Head balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade coming up in November. For more information about potatoes, go to [www.healthypotato.com](http://www.healthypotato.com) or [www.potatounderground.com](http://www.potatounderground.com).

I hope that we can work together to share this information and that the long-term result is that more people can benefit from eating potatoes. I look forward to 2008 and the International Year of the Potato. Thank you for your attention and I welcome any questions you may have.

**Larry Alsum**, Chairman, U.S. Potato Board