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THE PALETTE-PLEASING POTATO: A NUTRITIOUS INGREDIENT TO MEET NEARLY EVERY DIETARY NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Potatoes rise to the occasion, from vegetarian to gluten-free holiday meal planning

PORTLAND, Ore. – October 17, 2012 – With the holidays quickly approaching and countless gatherings of family and friends about to begin, serving crowd-pleasing dishes can be a challenge, even for the most experienced host. This holiday season, hosts can count on the potato as a flavorful, nutritional and versatile ingredient to meet nearly any dietary need.

“The potato is a ‘workhorse’ of an ingredient,” said Chef Leif Eric Benson, Oregon’s 2010 chef of the year and Oregon Potato Commission public member. “From classic mashed potatoes to potato latkes, the potato takes the challenge out of making memorable holiday meals while also meeting individual guests’ dietary needs.

For example, Benson points to his Potato and Root Mash as a delicious side dish that fits most diets. “It’s naturally gluten-free and vegetarian – and can even be made vegan by omitting the butter and instead adding olive oil for flavor.”

Potatoes are naturally gluten-free, and pack a nutritious punch for vegetarian or vegan diets. A medium-sized potato has more potassium than a banana, more usable iron than any other vegetable and fewer calories than a grapefruit. According to the United States Potato Board, one medium-sized potato with its skin has:

- Zero fat, cholesterol and sodium, and only 110 calories
- 45 percent of the recommended daily value of Vitamin C
- Two grams of fiber, which is eight percent of the recommended daily value per serving
- 20 percent of the daily value of carbohydrates at 26 grams
- 10 percent of the daily value of Vitamin B6

“The versatility, texture and flavor of the potato make it the perfect staple for a host of universally appealing holiday recipes,” adds Benson.

About the Oregon Potato Commission

The Oregon Potato Commission was formed in 1949 to represent the state’s five potato growing regions (Blue Mountain, Central Oregon, Klamath, Malheur and Willamette Valley) in educational, trade development, research, legislative affairs, and public relations activities. Development of sales and markets for Oregon’s potato crop is one of the Commission’s roles. Programs are designed to improve Oregon’s market share in-state and in other prominent West Coast markets. Export markets for processed potato products and, increasingly, fresh potatoes and raw product are also included in market development and promotional programs in the Pacific Rim and other market areas. The Commission’s largest focus is on a series of ongoing research programs in cooperation with Oregon State University. The results of these programs place Oregon among the top in the United States in potato production volume and yield per acre. For more information, visit www.OregonSpuds.com.