
- Advertisement -

IPC helps foodservice operators make changes to meet COVID-era challenges

By

Rand Green

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Portability, profitability, innovation and menu simplification. Those topics were the themes of a webinar presented by the Idaho Potato Commission as part of Restaurants Rise, an initiative launched in May by Nation's Restaurant News and Restaurant Hospitality. The initiative has included live virtual events to aid restaurants and the foodservice industry in reimagining and resetting their businesses in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We had Chef Adam Moore on the webinar demonstrating some of the ways that operators could utilize Idaho potatoes in creating portable, profitable, innovative dishes," said Alan Kahn, vice president of foodservice for the commission. "I spoke about what we offer in our programs and the background of the IPC, and Adam brought our potatoes to life" by demonstrating how operators could utilize the products to meet their current needs. "We had several hundred operators that were on the webinar."

The commission will also feature Moore, an Australian who has been billed as one of the world's top corporate chefs, in the Chef's Corner of its newly launched e-newsletter, The Latest Dish. The newsletter will "address operators' current needs and offer resources that we can help them with,"

Kahn said.

As with the foodservice industry, the IPC has reimagined its own programs in response to the current foodservice industry environment. “Given operator profit challenges, one of the things we wanted to highlight was the profitability that Idaho potatoes can offer the operator, particularly when they are dealing with things like the new restrictions,” Kahn said. As part of that effort, the commission has introduced a new online potato recipe profitability calculator.

“We also have a brand new how-to video on making fresh-cut French fries, which dovetails into the profit calculator because French fries can be very profitable for an operator,” Kahn said. “The new video is designed “to help them create better fresh-cut French fries.”

Fresh-cut fries, prepared in the back of the house, “are not for everybody, just as frozen fries are not for everybody,” he said. “However, even when you factor in the additional labor, they are still a highly profitable food item on the menu.” The video shows “how simple and easy it is to make fresh-cut fries” and “how to do it the right way.”

The commission has modified its distributor promotional guidelines for this fall, “recognizing the changes in the levels of business that foodservice distributors are doing now vs. pre-COVID,” he said. “We have adjusted our promotions so that the distributors are still incentivized to promote Idaho potatoes even during the pandemic.”

The commission developed six new foodservice ads for the 2020-21 campaign, which begins in September. The ads will appear in foodservice publications both in print and online and focus on “menu items that would be profitable, portable and innovative for operators,” Kahn said.

Training for distributors, which was previously presented in person by the commission’s three foodservice promotion directors — Armand Lobito, Stanley Trout, and Matt Brigotti — are now offered via video conference.

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