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Demand strong for Red River Valley potatoes

By

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A harvest shortfall late in the Red River Valley potato harvest has disappointed some growers, but overall the valley has a nice crop, according to Ted Kreis, marketing director of the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association.

In 2020, yellow potatoes now account for 28 percent of the valley's fresh crop. "Increasing production of yellow potatoes has been the trend for the last decade or more," Kreis said. Red potatoes still hold a predominant position as the core business for Red River Valley growers.



Ted Kreis

About 90 percent of what was planted this spring was harvested in the valley. “Demand has really picked up overall. All the sheds are busy. Everything is going smoothly now. The lowered supply has pushed prices up some, which is good for the growers and there has been little resistance from the buyers.” He noted an appreciation for customers who returned to source red and yellow potatoes in the Red River Valley this year.

While the season is going well in the Red River Valley, Kreis noted that decreased volume was not spread evenly among the growers and he is concerned about those growers who have suffered. Because of those struggling he was hesitant to rave about the success of this season.

“I’d like to see everybody have a good year.” But, he stressed, “We are very happy that we have a nice marketable crop this year. The color and quality look very good.”

Kreis said the 2020 harvest is larger than it was in 2019, but the red potato volume in the historical sense “is still much lower than it has been. But there’s certainly an improvement over last year.”

When Kreis spoke with *The Produce News*, he had recently learned of the cancellation of the New York Produce Show, where his group had planned to exhibit. This meant that, because of the Coronavirus epidemic, the NPPGA had participated in no major trade shows since December 2019.