



- Advertisement -

Northland Potatoes skillfully represents Red River Valley potato growers

By

Keith Loria

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[Northland Potatoes](#), which previously was known as the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association, has been promoting the profitability and unity of the potato growers of the adjoining states of Minnesota and North Dakota since its formation 77 years ago.

“We provide advertising, marketing and promotional materials and programs to showcase their quality potatoes. These activities include print and digital media, billboards, trade shows and other events,” said Donavon Johnson, president of the East Grand Forks, MN-based association.

Comprised of more than 250 growers and shippers across the Red River Valley, one of the most fertile farming regions in the world where potatoes are grown on 72,000 acres in North Dakota and 8,800 acres in Minnesota, Northland Potatoes has long acted in the best interest of its grower members.

The Association also handles national issues that are importance to growers. For example, Johnson often meets with other national potato organizations and state growing managers, to discuss important issues that can help those in the industry, including marketing efforts, national expansion and the latest trends.

“Currently, we are working with our federal government representatives and national organizations to include research and marketing funding in the farm bill,” Johnson said.

The current farm bill is slated to expire on Sept. 30.

One of the things most concerning to its members today are all things that reduce the quality and yield of their product including pests, viruses, storage, etc.

“The growers contribute significant dollars to researchers who continue to work on these issues,” Johnson said.

Working in the Red River Valley is a key to success for the growers.

“Our nutrient rich soils are unique in the U.S. potato growing areas,” Johnson said. “These soils produce better tasting and more intense colored potatoes which can be grown in dry-land soils.”

As of Sept. 18, the potato crop in the Red River Valley was looking strong among growers, though it’s very early in the process.

“Some of the process potatoes have been dug and the growers are generally pleased with the size

and quality of them,” Johnson said. “Harvest of the fresh and chipping potatoes is just getting started. Growers are expecting average yields and better in some areas that received more timely and adequate rains.”

Among Northland Potatoes’ members, yellow varieties continue to be popular and most growers slightly reduced some red variety acres and replaced them with yellow varieties.

“Potatoes remain the No. 1 consumed vegetable in the United States, and we expect consumers will continue to love potatoes,” Johnson said, adding that retailers can do their part by running ads frequently showcasing the potatoes to keep things top-of-mind for consumers. The association will continue doing what it can to create a great environment for its members and help potato growers be successful.

[Keith Loria](#)

About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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