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Winning with data: IPC resources can help retailers

Underneath the Idaho potato brand's fun-loving exterior, a wealth of hard data backs up the sassy spud's enduring consumer appeal. The Idaho Potato Commission's vaunted number-crunching capabilities can help every retailer maximize produce profits and move more potatoes, said Mark Daniels, [Idaho Potato Commission](#) retail promotion director-Southeast/Central.

Daniels said he believes in showing retailers precisely how they can benefit from adding Idaho potatoes to their mix, and he has seen the resulting success stories in produce departments throughout his region. "We have our quarterly data analyses on the IPC website, and that's the 30,000-foot level," he said, "but we love digging down to the retailer level to really see how we can help them in their specific market."

At Salisbury, NC-based Food Lion, which has more than 1,000 supermarkets in 10 states, Daniels helped bring Idaho potatoes back to the stores in 2024 by showing the company new opportunities for growth, he said.

"Food Lion has done a great job of keeping their stores updated, so I knew they had a lot to gain from offering Idaho potatoes to their customers," said Daniels. "We did a deep dive analysis and presented it to their category managers at several points in time. Through that analysis, we found that 8-pound jumbo Idaho potatoes showed a huge opportunity for them."

Food Lion tested an 8-pound jumbo Idaho bag promotion in early spring 2024, said Daniels, and "it did really well so they extended it through the summer and made it a regular item. It surpassed their expectations," he added.

"This was an exciting opportunity to offer Idaho potatoes in stores across our footprint," said Chris Dove, vice president, produce at Food Lion. "Our goal is to always ensure we provide fresh, affordable produce to our neighbors."

Daniels said other retailers have also profited from newfound knowledge thanks to a timely IPC data analysis. "We recently did a data category review for a retailer in the Central region and found out that a decision they made [in 2023] wasn't a good decision," said Daniels. "The IPC data validated that they needed to go back to selling their previous brand. It took them three or four weeks to make the change, and it ended up being a huge win for them, with IPC data backed up by real-life results."

Not every category review yields such a dramatic outcome, said Daniels, but IPC data is a valuable free resource that retailers can leverage in whatever way best meets their needs. “Sometimes they’re just wondering what the issue is with a particular problem area, and this data helps them pin it down,” he said. “We’re giving them new information they can use.”

IPC promotional funding and other resources can help retailers capitalize on data insights, said Daniels. For example, the 2024 crop size profile is larger, he explained, so IPC is working with retailers to help promote larger-size spuds.

“We do a lot of promotional funding for retailers, and a lot of times it can be tied into supporting a specific promotion they want to do,” he said. “IPC promotion directors can help integrate promotional funding with opportunities revealed by the retailer’s data analysis, and then measure the outcome after a promotion.”

The IPC website provides downloadable resources for retailers including point-of-sale kits, retail advertising guidance, certification marks and nutrition information, seasonal and sports clip art, bagged potato photos, and more than 1,700 recipes with high-quality color photos.

“Our IPC resources help create a win for the retailer and for Idaho potatoes,” said Daniels. “At the end of the day, that’s what we’re all about.”

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