

## Consumers in Philippines Learn U.S. Potatoes Enhance an Active Lifestyle

A Potatoes USA nutrition seminar in the Philippines resulted in positive coverage that is helping create a new image for U.S. potatoes. Held in November 2016, the seminar educated fitness and nutrition bloggers as well as the media about U.S. potatoes, and served as an introduction to Potatoes USA's newly-developed athletic performance messaging. It helped to overcome negative images of U.S. potatoes as fattening, and ensured that nutrition experts and consumers know the dietary benefits of this often-misunderstood vegetable.

Nine bloggers and editors attended the MAP-funded event to learn about nutrition, the U.S. potato industry, and U.S. potato products. They also viewed a cooking demonstration. The nutrition presentation was given by Jeaneth Aro, CEO and Chief Nutritionist of Nutrifit. Her presentation focused on potato nutrition with an emphasis on the characteristics and nutrients essential for improved athletic performance. The recipe demonstration included dishes designed to complement an active lifestyle with potatoes as the key ingredient. The demonstration was conducted by celebrity chef Sau del Rosario, who used recipes created by the Diet Diva. The Diet Diva is a specialized diet delivery service that was awarded the Most Outstanding Healthy Diet Service Provider in 2014.

The event sparked 13 print and online articles, written by the attendees who were writers for health, fitness, and lifestyle sections. The articles included the recipes developed for athletes, facts about potatoes, and information on how potatoes provide nutrition for athletes. Article titles demonstrated the positive value of having a third party such as the media spreading the U.S. potato message. For instance, *femalenetwork.com* titled their coverage "You Should Be Eating Potatoes If You Regularly Work Out" and *BusinessWorld* titled their article "Potatoes Are Not the Enemy." The coverage had an estimated PR value of more than P4.5M or US \$100,000. Consumers in the Philippines appear to be getting the message that U.S. potatoes are not just good to eat, but good for you. Exports have so far totaled 8,687 metric tons, valued at \$4.5 million, during the first three quarters of the fiscal year (July 2016-March 2017). While down slightly from the previous fiscal year, it is still nearly double the level of fresh potatoes exported five years ago.

