

## **Malaysian Bakeries Convinced to Use Dehy Potatoes in Sweet Buns**

Two major bakery chains in Malaysia were convinced to use U.S. dehydrated potatoes in their sweet bun formulations during the July 2016-June 2017 marketing year, thanks to Potatoes USA's educational program to introduce new applications for this underused potato export category. MAP, QSP and potato industry funding were critical components of this success, which utilized product application research, bakery workshops, retail merchandising and provision of samples to prompt product trials.

In Malaysia, U.S. dehydrated potatoes face strong competition from European dehy manufacturers, who are very active in the market targeting various food manufacturers. The European Union has been very successful in promoting its cheaper product to Malaysia's snack manufacturing industry, where price is a key purchasing factor. Because snack manufacturers were the primary users of U.S. dehy in the past, Potatoes USA refocused its program to help blunt the impact of declining U.S. sales to this group. For a number of years, Potatoes USA's strategy has been to create opportunity in new niches where U.S. dehy's consistency and high quality represent an advantage. The development of new applications for U.S. dehy have included strong successes over the past couple years introducing U.S. dehy in bergedil (croquettes) a popular snack often sold at retail counters, and more recently, in curry puffs. The sweet bun application is just the latest of the new applications created and promoted by Potato USA's program.

During MY 15/16, Potatoes USA completed research on the use of U.S. dehydrated potatoes in sweet buns, which are the most popular items in Malaysian bakeries. The research found that the addition of U.S. dehydrated potatoes improved overall bun softness, volume and resilience. After the completion of the study, sweet bun bakery workshops were conducted in MY 15/16 and MY 16/17, and educational materials were developed to promote the new application. Four bakeries were convinced to carry out product tests for their own sweet bun recipes in MY 15/16, with another eight conducting tests during MY 16/17. Two of those, Berry's Cake House and The Loaf, launched U.S. dehy sweet buns in February 2017.

It was particularly effective to provide the opportunity to the bakers through the MAP-funded workshops to work with the dough and U.S. dehydrated potatoes themselves. Potatoes USA has found that this gives them the confidence to conduct further tests in their own bakeries using the QSP samples. Follow-up with the bakeries through trade merchandising calls helped to answer any remaining questions that they had after conducting the trials using the QSP samples of U.S. dehydrated potatoes.

The usage of U.S. dehydrated potatoes in the Malaysian bakery market is still small but there is good opportunity to grow sales in this segment. Bakeries in Malaysia are always looking for new ideas and ingredients to improve their breads and buns. Meanwhile, the development of new product applications from previous years continues to yield results: during MY 16/17 11 companies in total carried out product trials, including tests for curry puff recipes and breads, while a total of four launched various new items with U.S. dehy.

The increase in usage of U.S. dehydrated potatoes in the bakery and smaller food manufacturing segments have helped increase the volume of U.S. dehydrated potatoes exported to the Malaysia market by 30% to 1,956 metric tons, and the value by 29% to \$2.9 million during the July 2016-June 2017 marketing year.