

## **Purina Launches First Pet Food with US Potatoes in Mexico**

A major pet food manufacturer launched the first pet food containing US dehydrated potatoes in Mexico, a milestone in tapping a potentially huge subsector in this market. The launch was a direct result of Potatoes USA's marketing program, which began targeting the pet food manufacturing industry several years ago. MAP funds have been used to carry out a product application study to clarify specific advantages of dehy in pet food formulations, and also funded trade education to introduce pet food manufacturers to dehy's potential. QSP funds have been used to provide samples. Prior to Potatoes USA activities, U.S. dehydrated potatoes were not even on the radar as an ingredient among Mexico's pet food manufacturers. The pet food campaign is part of Potatoes USA's objective of developing new export sales by spurring product innovation and channel diversification.

As one of the main pet food manufacturers in Mexico, Purina offers about 10 different brands for dogs and cats. The company is known for its commitment to innovation and quality products, making it a good fit for U.S. dehydrated potatoes, which are often more costly than other ingredients, but can provide nutrition and other benefits such as no gluten. In discussions with Purina, Potatoes USA has shared results of its studies using US potato flakes as a part of the ingredients for pet food, and has provided technical support, consultancy and product samples for the company. As a result, in mid-2019 Purina launched a premium pet food product containing approximately 7% US standard potato flakes. Called *Pro Plan Sensitive Skin*, the product is targeted for dogs with skin and fur problems.

This launch could be the first of many because as pet owners become increasingly concerned about their pets' nutrition, companies are offering them a wider range of specialized products. This creates an opportunity to market US dehy's special attributes as an ingredient to a fast-growing segment. Mexico ranks as the world's fourth largest consumer market of dog and cat food in volume terms. By value, it was the eighth largest consumer market with sales approaching \$3.6 billion in 2017. Total pet population in 2017 was estimated at nearly 27.47 million pets with 83% of Mexican households possessing a pet. The Mexican market for pet food reached 1,215 thousand tons in 2017, with a value of 68.9 thousand million pesos. In 2017, the most remarkable trend was the price increase of pet food products, which registered around 11.3% value growth. Thus, the launch of a specialized product with US potatoes by an influential manufacturer represents an important achievement in a growing and increasingly profitable market.