

Lifestyles



Potatoes on tap for February

February is potato lovers month. Here are a few things to consider about potatoes:

•Low in calories (only 110 per 1/3 pound), potatoes are the perfect food for keeping fit. A medium potato has fewer calories than a one-cup serving of rice or pasta. Remember, this is for a plain potato - butter and other toppings would add calories.

•For low-cal french fries cut potatoes in strips and spread in one layer in pan. Sprinkle with oil; shake pan to distribute oil evenly over potatoes. Bake at 450°F. until golden brown and tender, about 30 to 40 minutes, turning frequently.

•What fat? There's no fat in potatoes - only in the butter or sour cream you top them with.

•Serve a baked potato crowned with your choice of healthy toppings plain yogurt, cottage cheese, sliced green onions, or sunflower seeds for zesty flavor and crunch.

•To bake potatoes, pierce the skin of each spud in several places to allow steam to escape. Bake directly on oven rack or cookie sheet until potatoes are soft when pinched with mitts hands or tested with a slim skewer or fork.

•When boiling potatoes, use as little water as possible - about one inch - to prevent nutrient loss.

•Cook potatoes in their skins whenever possible to preserve nutrients. If you must peel them first, keep peelings as thin as possible. Many nutrients are found close to the skin.

•Short on time? Microwave "Bake" your potatoes. Prick potatoes in several places with a fork. On a double layer of paper toweling, arrange potatoes in a spoke fashion for even cooking. Cook on high for 4 minutes for a medium to large potato plus 1-2

On the Front Burner
Alice Pettitt
Home Economics Agent



minutes more for each additional potato. Allow 5 minutes standing time after removing potatoes from the oven.

To steam potatoes, place a wire rack in the bottom of the saucepan and add water just below the level of the rack so potatoes cook above water.

Potato Peppers

- 1/2 cup milk
- 3 medium green peppers, halved lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons each chopped parsley and sliced green onions
- Paprika
- 3 cups hot unseasoned mash potatoes (about 1 1/2 pounds potatoes)
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In saucepan or bowl mix milk into potatoes; cover to keep warm. Remove seeds and membranes from green pepper halves, in large pot parboil in lightly salted boiling water to cover, about 10 minutes, until crisp-tender. Meanwhile, stir remaining ingredients except paprika into potato mixture. Drain green peppers thoroughly and place skin side down in shallow baking dish. Mound warm potato mixture into pepper cavities; dust with paprika. Bake in 425° oven 10 to 12 minutes until hot through and lightly browned on top.

Potato Garden Soup

- 4 cups tomato juice
- 2 cups cold water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions
- 1 cup instant mashed potato flakes
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, pressed
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped cucumber
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley or chives

In saucepan heat tomato juice just to boiling. Remove from heat; with fork mix in potato flakes. Pour potato mixture into container of electric blender. Add 1 cup of the water, vinegar, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Blend 1 minute. Pour into bowl. Stir in remaining water, tomato, cucumber and onions; chill. Ladle into bowls or mugs. Garnish each serving with parsley.

Microwave Scalloped Potatoes

- 1 1/2 (1 1/2 medium) potatoes, peeled and cut in 1/4 inch slices
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon italian herb dressing
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon instant beef bouillon (optional)
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

Put all ingredients, except cheeses and paprika, into 8-inch round glass baking dish. Cover loosely with plastic wrap. Microwave on high power 4 minutes; remove. Stir. Cover and cook 4 minutes more. Combine cheeses and paprika; sprinkle over potatoes. Cook uncovered 2 minutes more. Let stand 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Boll weevil program seeks support

In a few weeks North Carolina cotton producers will vote on whether to continue support of the boll weevil monitoring program. This monitoring program has served to keep boll weevils from reestablishing in "protected areas" which now include all of North Carolina.

Monitoring payments have supported three areas: (1) pheromone trapping, (2) treatment of a buffer zone to both protect growers within that area and to prevent reinvasions into weevil-free areas and (3) elimination of pockets of boll weevils which may "sneak" back in behind the lines.

Northern Zone (original eradication area): This area includes all northern counties down to and including Sampson, Cumberland and Harnett. Producers there are presently paying \$10/acre.

Ballots were mailed on Friday, January 25, and must be returned to the ASCS office by Friday, February 1.

Growers will be voting on whether they are for or against paying up to \$10 per acre for the next four years (1985 through 1988).

Current USDA estimates put the assessment for 1987 and 1988 at approximately \$7/acre. A 2/3 majority approval is required for passage and continuation of the program.

Southern Zone (new eradication area): This expanded eradication zone includes the remaining N.C. cotton counties, mostly Hoke, Scotland and Robeson, and all of South Carolina. Ballots will be mailed on March 1 and must be returned by Friday, March 8.

This group paid \$25/acre in 1983, \$30/acre in 1984, and will be paying \$20 acre in 1985 for the final year of their eradication program. Producers in this zone will be voting on whether or not to assess themselves for a three-year monitoring program, beginning with a \$15/acre fee in 1986.

Extension News
Willie Featherstone Jr.
County Extension Chairman



followed by a fee of up to \$10/acre in 1987 and 1988.

Current USDA estimates put the 1987-88 amount at \$7/acre.

Expansion Plans: Because of the generally favorable progress of the current program, present plans call for expansion into all of Georgia, most of Alabama, and possibly Florida, beginning in the fall of 1986.

Georgia and Alabama producers will be conducting their own referenda this spring. Successful program expansion into this area would likely increase our own chances for success, as well as lower monitoring costs to producers.

Income Effect of the Program: Votes for continuation of a containment program are similar to agreeing to purchase an investment that will yield returns in the future.

The future flow of returns is equal to changes in costs and returns from the program less the maintenance fee for future protection from reinfestation. The possible impacts on farm costs and returns include increased yields, lower boll weevil control costs, lower overall insect control from more beneficial insects and expanded cotton acreage.

If the cost of program participation in the initial years is too high, the cost of the investment is the lower returns received for planting an alternative crop compared to that received if the land had produced cotton. Otherwise, the cost of the investment is the cost of the initial program to eradicate the weevil.

Estimating Impacts in the Expansion Area: The short term that a boll weevil eradication program has been in affect in the expansion area in North and South Carolina - 1983 and 1984 - makes any estimations about the reductions in costs from the program uncertain.

Preliminary results indicate that the savings in insect control costs will be about \$26/acre annually in North Carolina and about \$36/acre in South Carolina.

These are quite similar to the \$28/acre savings estimated in the trial eradication area.

Therefore, growers in the expansion area can estimate their returns from the program by subtracting the current fee from about \$26 or \$36.

Keep in mind that income from the program will increase if fees fall and higher future returns can outweigh current losses while waiting for fees to fall. Consideration should also be given to the additional income from higher yields and expanded acreage.

Summary of Economic Implications: In summary the boll weevil eradication program reduces costs through lower costs of production and increases income from higher yields and expanded acreage.

Excluding higher yields, a farmer who produced cotton from the start of the program in the trial zone in the northeastern corner of North Carolina would save about \$10/acre in insect control costs.

Once the weevil was eradicated and fees fell, the value of the program increased substantially.

Entering in 1985 returns about \$19/acre after all costs and fees are subtracted. Both of these values are increased by about \$8 when including additional income from expanding cotton acreage.

Therefore, the adjusted yearly returns from adopting the program in 1985 equal \$27/acre after all program fees have been subtracted.

Crop residue helps soybean production

By Donnie R. Harris
District Conservationist

Soybean production for Hoke County appears to have been good for 1984.

Many fields that produced low yields in 1982 and 1983 are showing an increase in production because of adequate rain and sunshine during the growing season.

These fields have healthier plants to support the increase in the number of bean pods produced by the plants.

After harvesting the crop, many of our fields are left with a good cover of soybean residue.

This residue has many advantages for landowners:

- Reduces wind and water erosion

(See SOYBEANS, page 7)



Protected field
This Hoke County field is being protected from erosion by allowing the soybean residue to remain after harvest.

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