



# French Fried Potato Products

## *Background*

In recent years, North American consumers have been eating fewer French fries because of concerns about high calorie and fat content and negative perceptions of both fries and potatoes. As a result, servings of fries at quick service restaurants – which account for about 90 percent of all French fries in the United States – have been in a slow decline. And that slow decline has quickly added up to a lot: about 400 million fewer pounds of potatoes processed in 2009 alone.

Science that shows the nutritional value of French fries has not been published, so influential organizations continue to make recommendations based on outdated assumptions. As consumers turn away from fries based on incomplete or inaccurate information, they are unnecessarily missing out on a food they love and one that provides essential nutrients. For instance, today's French fries provide several key nutrients – including fiber, iron, potassium and vitamin E – that many U.S. consumers may not be getting in adequate amounts. Because consumers often are not replacing French fries with other forms of potatoes, cutting out fries long-term could mean cutting out the benefits of an important vegetable. It also may mean continued negative growth trends for both the potato and foodservice industries for years to come – based largely on misinformation and incorrect perceptions.

## *Challenges*

While French fries continue to be the best-selling side dish in QSRs and the most popular side dish in all restaurants, a growing number of consumers are choosing non-fry sides or no sides at all. Three things are fueling the trend:

- Public health concerns about obesity and being overweight have demonized certain foods, including French fries and other forms of potatoes, discouraging their consumption.
- Media stories and images portray incorrect or incomplete facts about French fries, neglecting to recognize many of the positive changes restaurants and producers have made in recent years.
- There is a significant gap in knowledge between the nutritional value that consumers attribute to potatoes and what they think they know about French fries – the “Fried Gap.”

## *Resolution*

*Increase consumer demand for French Fries* by contributing to a focused effort on the advancement of French fry nutrition and consumer research and education through the Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE) and by reducing Acrylamide levels in fries by advancing development of improved potato varieties through the National Fry Processor Trials (NFPT) initiative.

In order to accomplish this, the USPB will contribute to and participate in the APRE and NFPT efforts and activities that will improve negative consumer attitudes (and thereby consumption) by educating key influencers with accurate nutritional information about French fries and seeking to lower Acrylamide levels in French Fries.

<b>French Fried Potato Products</b>	
<i>Growth Strategy</i>	<i>Productivity Strategy</i>
<i>Increase consumer demand for French fried potato products</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve consumer attitudes about fries</li></ul>	<i>Contributing to and participating in the Alliance for Potato Research and Education</i>
<i>Seek lower Acrylamide levels in French Fries</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advance potato varieties used to result in lower Acrylamide levels of finished products</li></ul>	<i>Contributing to and participating in the National Fry Processor Trials</i>