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For Immediate Release

**U.S. Potato Board To Give \$25,000 In School Wellness Grants To Promote  
Healthy School Nutrition Environments**

**Denver, CO.** (July 14, 2007) – The U.S. Potato Board (USPB) has supported nutrition education in schools for decades. In its newest educational initiative, the USPB will team up with the School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) of the School Nutrition Association to launch its first-ever School Wellness Grant Program. Ten (10) grants of \$2,500 each will be awarded to public elementary schools in the United States for equipment and/or educational programs that will help move children toward healthier diets and improve their overall wellness.

With childhood obesity at epidemic proportions and the initiation of school wellness policies across the country, many school nutrition program directors are faced with finding healthful, tasty vegetables their students will actually eat. At the same time, schools want to provide outlets for physical activity to help children be healthier and more active. The USPB’s grant program is unique in that it allows schools to allocate funds toward the improvement of either the nutrition or physical activity of students – or both – whatever their students need the most.

Ruth Jonen, School Nutrition Specialist, President of the SNF says, “We need more partners like America’s potato farmers, who provide the extra assistance schools need to serve healthy meals kids will enjoy during the school day.”

The USPB developed this program for schools as they’re the ideal environment to positively impact health behaviors in children. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the agency that administers the National School Lunch Program, approximately 31 million students eat a school lunch on any given day during the school year and participation is climbing steadily.

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In fact, for many children, school meals contribute one-third of their nutritional intake and can be the most important meal of the day.

Potatoes have been a beloved staple in school foodservice operations because of their appeal to children and nutritional content. The USDA's nutrient standards for school lunches requires meals to follow the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommendations and provide, on average throughout the week, at least one-third of the daily recommended allowances for protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C.

A medium (5.3 oz) potato has 110 calories and almost half (45%) of the Daily Value (DV) of vitamin C. A skin-on potato has 2 grams of dietary fiber and is a good source of vitamin B6 (10% DV) and potassium (18% DV). According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, children and adolescent's intake of potassium is so low that potassium is a "nutrient of concern." The fact is, potatoes rank highest for potassium content among the top 20 most frequently consumed raw vegetables and the top 20 most frequently consumed raw fruits, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"With the health issues facing kids today, the U.S. Potato Board wants to help schools get the resources they need to prepare healthy potatoes that kids love," says Larry Alsum, chairman of the USPB. The USPB has developed a host of healthy potato recipes in foodservice portions to help foodservice directors everywhere put healthy and popular potatoes on school lunch plates. They can be downloaded at [www.healthypotato.com](http://www.healthypotato.com).

School administrators, foodservice staff, teachers, and parents are invited to submit an application for the USPB's School Wellness Grant Program on behalf of their elementary school. Applications are now available [www.healthypotato.com/health.asp](http://www.healthypotato.com/health.asp) or [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org) and must be completed by April 15, 2008. Grant award recipients can spend awarded grant money toward foodservice equipment for the healthful preparation of fresh or processed potatoes; physical activity equipment, such as for use on the campus playground or during physical education programs; or development or execution of nutrition or physical activity educational programs. Winners will be announced at the 2008 School Nutrition Association Annual Conference.

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The U.S. Potato Board was established in 1971 by a group of potato growers to promote the benefits of eating potatoes. Recognized as an innovator in the producer marketing industry, the USPB was one of the first commodity groups to develop and use a nutrition label that was approved by the FDA. Based in Denver, CO, the USPB represents more than 4,000 potato growers and handlers across the country. For more information about the USPB and its programs, visit [www.healthypotato.com](http://www.healthypotato.com).