

THE FUTURE OF POTATO: BIODIVERSITY, FOOD SECURITY AND BUSINESS

World Potato Congress 2018 – ALAP Launch

Lima, 31 May 2017

TALKING POINTS

As part of its **National Potato Day 2017** celebrations, the International Potato Center (CIP) will host an event entitled **“THE FUTURE OF POTATO: BIODIVERSITY, FOOD SECURITY AND BUSINESS”**, showcasing the important scientific developments and technologies of CIP and its partners in fields such as: conservation, plant breeding, production systems, modelling climate change effects, and market promotion and development. The event will also see the official launch of the **World Potato Congress 2018-Asociación Latinoamericana de la Papa (ALAP)**, to be held for the first time in Latin America, with headquarters in Cusco (Peru).

SUMMARY POINTS

- According to Peru’s National Statistics Institute, approximately 23 percent of the country’s population live in rural areas. That means that for more than 7 million people, their main economic activity is based on farming. And 3.65 million of them depend on potato to survive. The facts clearly show the importance of potato as a staple, both for food and for income generation.
- The last fifteen years have witnessed significant developments in Peru’s potato sector. The country has become the main producer in Latin America, with 4.7 million tons per year. Consumption per capita has grown from 65 to 85 kg. Farm prices overall have increased by 55%, and most notably, in the predominantly small producers’ market segment, the sales value of native potato has grown by more than 150%.
- However, these achievements are threatened now by external factors such as increasingly extreme climatic events – floods, drought, frost - rising temperatures, pests and diseases etc. All of which are alerting us to the imminent effects of climate change. In some high Andean areas of Cusco, for example, farmers are having to sow their potatoes at higher and higher altitudes due to rising temperatures.
- All the facts indicate that, in the not so distant future, there will be far fewer possibilities of guaranteeing the conditions and resources we need to meet the world’s food production needs. The situation demands the implementation of new potato breeding strategies, technological innovations for the production of clean seed, moderate use of resources, avoiding unnecessary waste, and early diagnostics that enable integrated crop management.

- With this challenge in mind, CIP scientists focus their breeding efforts on producing high yielding potato varieties with resistance to major pests and diseases, that have a positive environmental impact, can tolerate high temperatures and drought in the face of climate change and, through biofortification, are rich in iron and zinc. This is our contribution to reducing the levels of malnutrition and food security vulnerability in the poorest communities which develop around potato production and consumption systems.
- At the same time, at CIP we promote the implementation of support and management tools, and the training of farmers using participatory methods with a gender perspective. Among these tools and methods, vital emphasis has been given to precision farming using remote sensing for the optimization of resource management - water, soil, fertilizers – and for information gathering in areas which are remote or where access is especially difficult.
- All these improvements and initiatives are aimed at providing better access to the market for producers. They are the links in a chain approach aimed at bringing together the different actors involved in potato production. This integrated chain approach works toward improved production, new product development, and promoting consumption as a way to open up new markets. All these factors have generated a framework, aptly suited to private sector intervention, which translates to effective positioning and market value for potato, especially native varieties.
- In recent years, increased preference from both industry and consumers has led to an opening up of the market in the yellow potato and colored native potatoes sectors. New fresh products have been developed; with better presentations and added value for both local and international markets, generating income opportunities for small producers in the highlands.
- Analysis indicates that the small producers who joined these commercial schemes have improved their income and quality of life. With a view to the future, we are working with climate-smart agriculture criteria, and on supporting health and nutrition as a commercial concept.
- These achievements would not have been possible without the support of Peruvian institutions and authorities prompting the norms, policies and decisions necessary for the strengthening of the sector. A clear example of this is the annual celebration, since 2005, of National Potato Day; an occasion for bringing together and displaying achievements and advances, at the same time as celebrating the enormous cultural and gastronomic value potato holds for Peru.
- Peru's designation as the site for the next World Potato Congress, to be held in 2018, is proof of the dynamism achieved in the sector. Peru was able to successfully compete with other countries having impressive records in potato development, innovation and market opportunities, and finally bring the venue to Latin America for the first time in 30 years.



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- We believe that this global event - which gathers together the world's top experts in research, industry and commerce - presents a great opportunity for Peru to demonstrate its know-how in the sustainable use of potato biodiversity, and to exchange experiences with other countries and find new opportunities for innovation and business. Peruvian authorities have recognized and embraced this opportunity, and are putting their best efforts into making sure that this event really marks a momentous moment in the sector's development.

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EL FUTURO DE LA PAPA: BIODIVERSIDAD, SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA Y NEGOCIOS

31 MAYO
2017

LUGAR: Auditorio CIP
Av. La Molina N° 1895, La Molina

HORA:
10:00 a.m.

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