

# IDAHO POTATO PULSE



Brought to you by the Idaho Potato Commission  
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**Great news! On Friday, USDA announced the purchase of up to \$9 million in fresh potatoes.**



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES FOOD PURCHASES FOR DOMESTIC NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

#### ***Assists Blueberry, Pear, Potato, Peach, and Mixed Fruit Farmers and Producers***

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29, 2010 -- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced USDA's intention to purchase \$29.1 million worth of blueberry, pear, potato, peach and mixed fruit products for federal food nutrition assistance programs.

"These purchases will help stabilize prices and markets, stimulate the economy, and provide high quality, nutritious food to schools and food banks while assisting blueberry, pear, potato, peach and mixed fruit producers," said Vilsack.

USDA intends to purchase up to \$9 million of fresh potatoes, \$8.2 million of peach and mixed fruit products, \$7 million of frozen blueberries, and \$4.9 million of fresh pears and canned pears packed in light or extra light syrup. The department will seek the lowest overall costs by surveying potential suppliers and publicly inviting bids to assure contracts are awarded to responsible bidders.

A number of economic factors have led to surpluses, so these purchases will help alleviate the stress caused by higher inventories and low prices that farmers are receiving for their commodities. In addition, these funds will help support the rural economy by putting revenue into the hands of growers, which can stimulate economic activity at the local level.

These healthy food purchases will go to support the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program, programs that frequently provide food to children in need. Products purchased from today's announcement will come from all sizes of farm operations across the country and will be delivered to a wide variety of Americans.

Government food experts focus on ensuring all purchased food is healthy and nutritious. Food items normally are required to be low in fat, sugar and sodium. The commodities must meet specified grade requirements and be USDA-certified to ensure they meet government standards of quality. USDA purchases only commodities produced in America.

For more information on purchase details, interested suppliers should contact the appropriate Contracting Officer for each commodity program, which can be found on the AMS Commodity Procurement Web page:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/cp>.

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## Calendar

### February

- 8 Ag Trans Workshop, Doubletree Riverside, Boise, ID
- 8-9 2010 Larry Branen Idaho Ag Summit, Doubletree Riverside, Boise, ID
- 10 IPC R&E Committee meeting, 1:30 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, Twin Falls
- 11 IPC Ag Affairs Committee meeting, 10:00 a.m., Hilton Garden Inn, Twin Falls
- 18-25 2010 Potato Industry Leadership Institute
- 22-25 NPC Public Policy Conference, Washington, DC

### March

- 2 United of Idaho Board Meeting, Idaho Falls, ID
- 11-12 USPB Annual Meeting, Denver, CO
- 16-17 IPC Commission Meeting, Eagle, ID
- 18 USDA Portal Training Workshop, Pre-Registration Required University Place Campus in Idaho Falls, ID  
1:00-5:00 p.m., Room 204, Center for Higher Education Building (CHE)