

*“The potato is on the frontline in the fight
against world hunger and poverty.”*

Jacques Diouf
Director-General, FAO

The International Year

*The IYP mission: to raise awareness
of the importance of the potato
– and that of agriculture in general –
in addressing issues of global concern,
including hunger, poverty
and threats to the environment*



Радна 1240 26.11.17



Why potato?

“A United Nations international year once actually meant something. But what to make of the International Year of the *Potato*?” So began a scathing editorial in a Canadian online daily, which joked that IYP might result in a “Declaration of the rights of potatoes and other starchy edible tubulars”. The editorialist revealed a lack of familiarity not only with botany – the potato is a *tuber*, not a “tubular” – but, above all, with the potato’s place in agriculture, the economy and world food security.

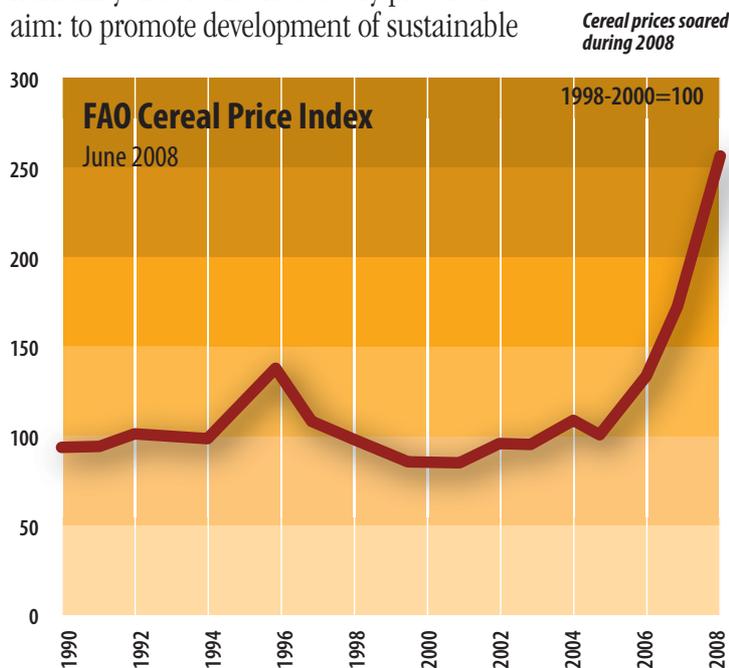
The potato is already an integral part of the global food system. It is the world’s number one non-grain food commodity, with production reaching a record 325 million tonnes in 2007. Potato consumption is expanding strongly in developing countries, which now account for more than half of the global harvest and where the potato’s ease of cultivation and high energy content have made it a valuable cash crop for millions of farmers.

At the same time, the potato – unlike major cereals – is not a globally traded commodity. Only a fraction of total production enters foreign trade, and potato prices are determined usually by local production costs, not by the vagaries of international markets. It is, therefore, a highly recommended food security crop that can help low-income farmers and vulnerable consumers ride out the turmoil in world food supply and demand.

In Peru, for example, the government has

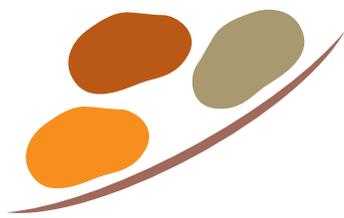
acted to reduce costly wheat imports by encouraging people to eat bread that includes potato flour. In China, the world’s biggest potato producer, agriculture experts have proposed that potatoes become the major food crop on much of the country’s arable land. India has plans to double its potato production.

Food of the future. The International Year of the Potato has raised awareness of the potato’s fundamental importance as a staple food of humanity. But it also had a very practical aim: to promote development of sustainable



potato-based systems that enhance the well-being of producers and consumers and help realize the potato’s full potential as a “food of the future”.

Over the next two decades, the world’s population is expected to grow on average by more than 100 million people a year. More



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treasure*

than 95 percent of that increase will occur in the developing countries, where pressure on land and water is already intense. A key challenge facing the international community is, therefore, to ensure food security for present and future generations, while protecting the natural resource base on which we all depend. The potato will be an important part of the efforts to meet those challenges, for four reasons.

Potatoes are a truly global food

The potato has been consumed in the Andes for about 8 000 years. Brought to Europe by the Spanish in the 16th century, it quickly spread across the globe: today potatoes are grown on an estimated 193 000 sq km of farmland, from China's Yunnan plateau and the subtropical lowlands of India, to Java's equatorial highlands and the steppes of the Ukraine.

Potatoes feed the hungry

The potato should be a major component in strategies aimed at providing nutritious food for the poor and hungry. It is ideally suited to places where land is limited and labour is abundant, conditions that characterize much of the developing world. The potato produces more nutritious food more quickly, on less land, and in harsher climates than any other major crop – up to 85 percent of the plant is edible human food, compared to around 50 percent in cereals.

Potatoes are good for you

Potatoes are rich in carbohydrates, making them a good source of energy. They have the highest protein content (around 2.1 percent on a fresh weight basis) in the family of root and tuber crops, and protein of a fairly high quality, with an amino-acid pattern that is well matched to human requirements. They are also very rich in vitamin C – a single, medium-sized potato contains about half the recommended daily intake – and contain a fifth of the recommended daily value of potassium.

Demand for potatoes is growing

World potato production has increased at an annual average rate of 4.5 percent over the last 10 years, and exceeded the growth in production of many other major food commodities in developing countries, particularly in Asia. While potato consumption has declined in Europe, it has increased in the developing world from less than 10 kg per capita in 1961-1963 to almost 22 kg in 2005. Consumption of potatoes in developing countries is still less than a quarter of that in Europe, but all evidence suggests it will increase strongly in the future.



STEFANO ROLETTTO

Background

The potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) originated in the Andes of South America. It was appropriate, therefore, that the initial impetus for declaring 2008 as the International Year of the Potato came from the Government of Peru.



Flag of Peru

At the biennial Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in November 2005, the Permanent

Representative of Peru proposed – and the Conference adopted – a resolution that sought to focus world attention on the importance of the potato in providing food security and alleviating poverty. The resolution was transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the aim of having the UN General Assembly declare the year 2008 as the International Year of the Potato (IYP).

The Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly accepted the resolution in December 2005, and invited FAO to facilitate the implementation of IYP 2008. The resolution noted that the potato is a staple food in the diet of the world's population, and affirmed the role that the potato could play in achieving internationally agreed development objectives, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

IYP concept

The International Year of the Potato aimed at raising the profile of this globally important food crop and commodity, giving emphasis to its biological and nutritional attributes, and thus promoting its production, processing, consumption, marketing and trade.

Celebration of IYP 2008 presented a unique opportunity to make a valid and effective contribution towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals:

✱ **Food security – improving access to safe and nutritious food.**

IYP focused global attention on the need to reach the vulnerable with solutions that reduce constraints, create opportunities, improve productivity and reduce risks in the farming systems on which they depend.

Despite the great increase in global food production over the past half-century, many individuals and communities – mainly in rural areas – do not have physical or financial access to food year round. Undernourishment places vulnerable people in a downward spiral of bad health that frequently ends in death. Furthermore, HIV/AIDS and social and political conflicts have disrupted access to traditional sources of nutrition, thereby creating large groups of at-risk individuals. Many developing countries face a “double burden” of malnutrition: the persistence of undernutrition, along with a rapid rise in overweight due to unhealthy diets associated with urbanization. The



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Millennium Development Goals to which IYP contributed



Goal 1: Eradicate
extreme poverty and
hunger



Goal 4: Reduce child
mortality



Goal 5: Improve
maternal health



Goal 7: Ensure
environmental
sustainability



Goal 8: Develop a
global partnership
for development

cultivation of nutrient-rich potatoes can contribute to improved diets thus reducing mortality rates caused by malnutrition. As well as improving food security, such action will inevitably improve the health of target populations, especially women and children.

✱ **Poverty alleviation**

IYP focused global attention on the need to alleviate poverty by increasing incomes and linking farmers to markets.

Many farming families are caught in a “poverty trap” in which limited livelihood options conspire to keep them poor. Those livelihoods often need either slight or radical reworking to provide consistent income that enables the family to move – and stay – out of poverty. Local markets, once safe from outside competition, now face increased penetration from a wide range of suppliers due to globalization and urbanization. Learning to innovate and engage with markets, and to become more competitive, are challenges for small scale farming families. In order to compete in regional and global markets, they need yield-improving and input-saving technologies to help close the persistent yield and cost gap.

✱ **Sustainable intensification of potato-based farming systems**

IYP focused global attention on solutions for sustainable intensification of farming systems that will stop or reverse the loss of natural resources.

Most of the world’s farms are less than 2 ha in size. In sub-Saharan Africa and many parts of Asia, farms are still shrinking and may continue to do so for the next several generations. As farm size shrinks, many farming families are switching from grains and legumes to root and tuber crops to meet subsistence and income goals. Farms with declining area are being managed more and more intensively, leading to soil erosion and ecological imbalances that encourage pest and disease outbreaks.

✱ **Sustainable use of biodiversity**

IYP focused global attention on the range of actions needed to protect, conserve and utilize potato diversity.

To overcome the multiple challenges of plant pests and diseases, low yields, natural resources degradation, and drought and climate change, potato-based agricultural systems need a continual supply of new, improved varieties. That implies access to the genetic resources contained in the totality of potato biodiversity, which needs to be conserved, and at the same time, made available to researchers and breeders in a responsible and equitable way.



Participants at the launch of the International Year of the Potato, at UN Headquarters in New York. From left: J. Godfrey, Chairman of CIP; R. N. Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General; S. Kerim, President of the 62nd session of the General Assembly; J. Diouf, Director-General of FAO; I. Benavides, Minister for Agriculture of Peru and L. Mérorès, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

Launching the International Year

The International Year of the Potato was officially launched at United Nations headquarters in New York on 18 October 2007. The day's celebrations included the official launching ceremony, held in the ECOSOC Chamber, a special supporting event for IYP partners, and an exhibit on potato and IYP for the general public.

The official launching ceremony was held in conjunction with observation of World Food Day 2007, with the theme "Right to food".

It was attended by high-ranking United Nations officials, representatives of country missions to the UN, members of the IYP Informal International Steering Committee,

representatives of the US "potato community", and 300 schoolchildren from the Washington DC area.

Following the official launch, a special event was held in the ECOSOC Chamber for

IYP partners, including governments and major international organizations, public and private sector organizations, NGOs and civil society.

The IYP exhibit was held from 16 to 19 October. It included IYP information materials, potato plants provided by Cornell University, plastic replicas of tuber biodiversity from CIP, information on nutritional aspects of potato, and a video and photographs on potato from Peru.

Spud we like

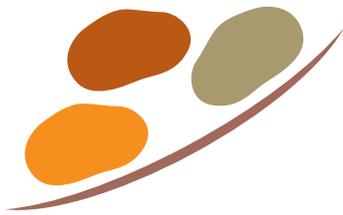
The United Nations hopes that greater awareness of the merits of potatoes will contribute to the achievement of its Millennium Development Goals. It is always the international year of this or month of that. But the potato's unusual history means it is well worth celebrating...

The Economist
28 February 2008

Tremendous opportunity

The declaration by the United Nations of 2008 as the International Year of the Potato will provide multiple opportunities to publicize the role of the potato as a staple food for everyone.

El Comercio
18 October 2007



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Key Partners

As the lead organization for IYP, FAO drew on its expertise in potato development, its experience in facilitating other International Years (Rice 2004 and Mountains 2002), and its regional, liaison and representative offices across the world to coordinate a global awareness and action campaign. It also sought to involve the entire “potato community” in observation of the International Year.

International partners

- ☛ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- ☛ Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)
- ☛ International Potato Center (CIP)
- ☛ Bioversity International
- ☛ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- ☛ Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR)
- ☛ The European Union (EU)
- ☛ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Donors

Funding for IYP implementation was provided by:

Governments

- ☛ Ireland
- ☛ Italy
- ☛ Spain
- ☛ Switzerland
- ☛ Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy

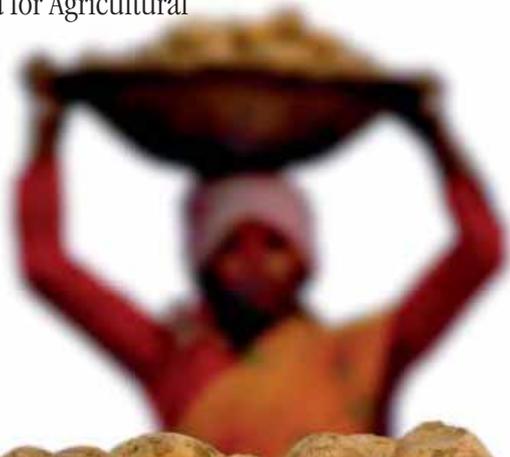
Private sector

- ☛ HZPC Holland
- ☛ McCain Foods Ltd
- ☛ Nikon Europe
- ☛ J. R. Simplot
- ☛ United States Potato Board

Informal International Steering Committee

Implementation of IYP 2008 was guided by an Informal International Steering Committee, made up of representatives of government, potato producers and the potato industry. For a full list of committee members, see page 136.

PIVAL ADHIKARY



IYP information products



HIDDEN TREASURE

The IYP logo was created by Italian graphic designer Giancarlo de Pol. During 2008, the IYP Secretariat approved more than 650 applications for use of the logo



www.potato2008.org
Rated the most popular United Nations educational website



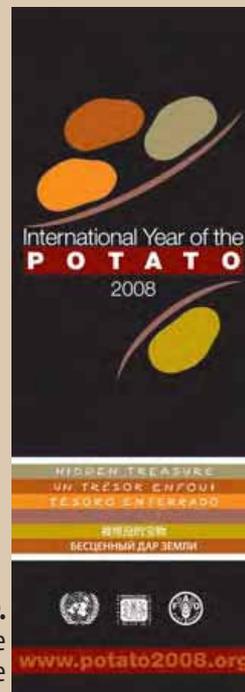
Video. Published in 8 languages – Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish



Factsheets. FAO specialists compiled 10 technical factsheets on key issues



Brochure. Some 6 000 copies were published in six languages



Poster. More than 5 000 copies were distributed worldwide

National Participation

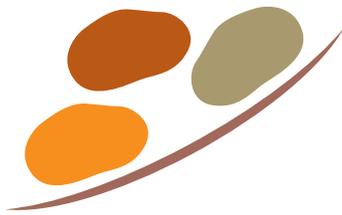
A key objective of the International Year was the creation of national committees that would promote IYP observance and, in developing countries, lay the foundations for long-term potato development programmes. Some examples:

Belgium. IYP celebrations were organized by a task force with representatives of input suppliers, potato growers' associations, the processing industry, distributors and consumer groups, and delegates from regional governments.

Bolivia. The Ministry of Rural Development, Agriculture and Environment formed a national committee with representatives of FAO, government departments, the national seed potato enterprise, the potato producers' association, research and training institutes and NGOs.

China. IYP observation was coordinated by a committee representing FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, the China Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the Chinese Cuisine Association, the Peruvian embassy and CIP's liaison office in Beijing.

Ireland. The committee included representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Irish



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Food Agency, the Irish Potato Federation and Irish Farmers' Association, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, the Agri-Awareness Trust and the Food Safety Authority.

Nepal. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives created a committee representing the Ministries of health, population and water resources, departments of agriculture and food technology, the National Agriculture Research Council and Potato Development Programme.

Peru. For IYP, the Peruvian Government established a National Multisectoral Commission with an executive team composed of delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FAO and CIP.

Pakistan. Coordinated by the National Potato Programme, the IYP committee consisted of representatives from the Agricultural Research Council, potato seed companies, processing industries, NGOs, farmer associations and provincial research organizations.

South Africa. The IYP steering committee included delegates from Potatoes South Africa (the national growers and processors' association), the National Department of Agriculture, FAO, the United Nations Information Centre, the Embassy of Peru and the University of Pretoria.

Syrian Arab Republic. The national committee represented the General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research, the General Organization for Seeds Multiplication, and directorates of plant production and agricultural extension.