

IYP around the globe

*People observed the International Year
with scientific conferences, potato growers' congresses,
festivals of biodiversity, cooking contests,
art exhibitions, block parties and school events.
Highlights of a global celebration...*



Flowering potato plants are showered with ribbons at a festival in the Andes, Peru



FEBRUARY

JANUARY

India

International expo in Kolkata

The world's No. 3 potato producer, India, helped launch the Year of the Potato with an International Potato Expo in Kolkata. Organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce and the Government of West Bengal State, the expo showcased the potential of India as a hub for potato production and processing. Activities included a two-day conference, field visits, and three days of exhibitions and cultural events. The host state, West Bengal, is India's second largest potato producer, with annual output of more than 7 million tonnes.

Ecuador

A seminar, then a carnival

Ecuador was one of the first countries to form a national committee for IYP celebrations. Events got under way with a workshop organized by FAO and CIP on strategies for small farmer participation in the potato economy. The seminar, attended by delegates from producer organizations, NGOs and local governments, was followed by a potato carnival in the farming area of Alto Guanujo, where 200 people sampled potato dishes and shared the results of a three-year study on the uses of native potato varieties.



Switzerland

Odyssey of the potato in Europe

The International Potato Center in Peru launched a travelling exhibit "The Odyssey of the Potato", which visited 10 European cities during 2008. The exhibit, which opened at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland, on 1 February, illustrated the domestication of the potato in Peru, its introduction to Europe and dissemination worldwide, and its important role today in food security and economic development.

Ireland

Challenge for Irish schoolkids

Primary school children across Ireland received potato seed tubers as part of a "Meet the spuds!" Challenge – a potato-growing competition sponsored by the country's AgriAware Trust, the IYP national committee and the Irish Department of Agriculture. As the plants grew, pupils recorded progress with drawings, photos and written observations. In June, photos of the harvested crop were submitted for final assessment. The eight winning schools received a cash grant.

Canada

Potato technology on show

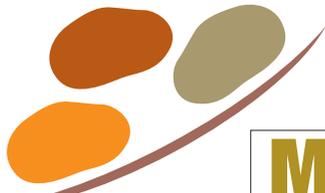
Warming up for the new potato planting season, two of Canada's premier potato-growing provinces hosted conferences and technology exhibitions in February. The New Brunswick Potato Conference and Trade Show featured two days of deliberations on topics ranging from demand prospects to late blight and climate change. On neighbouring Prince Edward Island, the biennial Technology Expo provided a showcase for 100 leading suppliers.

Syrian Arab Republic

Workshop at Damascus University

Damascus University hosted a national workshop on the potato which included presentations on the results of FAO projects to strengthen the Syrian Arab Republic's capacity for virus-free seed potato production using tissue culture, monitor aphid pests of potato, and set standards for seed certification.

CIP



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*New light on a hidden
treasure*

MARCH

United States of America

Gnocchi night in Seattle to raise funds

Sabrina Tatta, a lecturer in Italian Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle, hosted a cooking evening where she prepared *gnocchi* (Italian dumplings made from boiled and sieved potatoes mixed with flour). "The objective," she said, "is to celebrate Italian cooking and raise funds for undergraduate scholarships. We also hope to raise awareness about Italian culture, biodiversity and the potato as a tool for achieving Millennium Development Goals."

Egypt

Potato on display in Cairo

Egypt is the biggest potato producer in Africa, with an output in 2007 of some 2.6 million tonnes. It was, therefore, an appropriate venue for FAO's Near East Regional Conference, which was attended by high-ranking agriculture officials from 32 countries stretching from Morocco to Afghanistan. Between discussions on transboundary animal diseases, pesticide management and climate change, delegates viewed a presentation on IYP and the potato.

Peru

Papa, madre on display in Cusco

French photographer Jean-Louis Gonterre held an exhibition entitled *Papa, madre* at the Inca Museum in Cusco for most of the month of March. On display was a collection of 50 striking photographs taken in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru with the potato – or *papa* – as the central theme. In documenting the age-old cycle of potato planting and harvesting, Gonterre paid homage to the Andean farmers who have nurtured *Solanum tuberosum* and moulded it into countless varieties.

Italy

IYP celebrated in northern Italy

The Regional Agency for Rural Development, in northern Italy's Friuli Venezia Giulia region, organized a potato exhibition during the annual horticulture show in Pordenone. Visitors were offered potato dishes from around the world prepared by a women's intercultural association. The agency also sponsored on 8 March an international potato conference, with participants from FAO, the European Union, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and the Alpe-Adria region.

Argentina

Course in papa production

The agricultural research station at Balcarce, near Buenos Aires, began breeding potatoes in 1940. Today, the station covers some 2 000 ha of land, with a staff of 250, and specializes in research on genetic enhancement, seed analysis, micropropagation and nematology. The station shared its knowledge with agricultural science graduates from Argentina and other Latin American countries through a six-day course on potato production, beginning on 10 March.

United States of America

IYP on the web

Representing 4 000 potato growers, the United States Potato Board says further growth in the industry will come from innovation. To celebrate IYP 2008, the Board bought prime cyberspace – on the Food Network website – to supply busy mothers between the ages of 25 and 50 (among the most active users of the internet) with meal ideas and nutrition information.





Peru

CIP

Global potato conference in Cusco

The historic city of Cusco, Peru, at the heart of the potato's Andean centre of origin, hosted in March one of the major events of the International Year: a landmark global conference on "Potato science for the poor" sponsored by the International Potato Center and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

During the four-day conference, more than 100 of the world's leading authorities on the potato and on research-for-development shared insights and recent research results to develop strategies for increasing the productivity, profitability and sustainability of potato-based systems.

Potatoes seen as answer to high cereal costs

Food scientists are meeting in Cusco, Peru, to find ways of boosting world potato production to ease the strain of surging cereal prices on the world's poorest countries. The conference aims to expand the role of a crop that produces more food on less land than maize, wheat or rice.

Financial Times
27 March 2008

They addressed potato development challenges facing three distinct economic typologies – outlined in the *World Bank's World Development Report 2008* – in the developing world. The first is agriculture-based countries, mainly in Africa, where the poor are concentrated in rural areas and produce potato for home consumption

first and then sale to local markets. CIP and FAO say a priority for these countries is research and technology sharing to support a "sustainable productivity revolution" and to link producers to domestic and regional commodity markets.

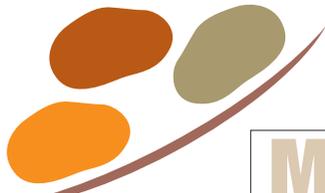
Different strategies are needed for the "transforming economies" of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, where potato systems are characterized by very small, intensively managed farms and by a widening rural-urban poverty gap. The challenge for those countries is to sustainably manage intensive systems, increasing

productivity while minimizing health and environmental risks.

In the urbanized economies typical of Latin America, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, where agriculture plays a reduced role, the challenge is to ensure the social and environmental sustainability of potato-based systems and link small potato producers to new food markets.

Farmer-researchers. Conference participants visited a 12,000 ha "Potato Park" near Cusco, where farmer-researchers have restored to production over 600 traditional Andean potato varieties, providing the genetic building blocks of future varieties.

One of the outputs of the conference has been dubbed the "Cusco Challenge", a year-long dialogue within the global potato science community that will address issues and opportunities in the future development of this essential crop.



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MARCH

Australia

Spud Day, and a recipe book

The Wimmera Home Educators' Group – parents who educate their children at home – has celebrated International Years for Mountains (2002) and for Deserts and Desertification (2006). For IYP, the group held a potato day in the town of Dimboola on 13 March and produced a potato recipe book. Farmers grow cereals on Wimmera's drylands, but are now turning to higher value crops such as olives and potatoes.

Canada

Homage to St. Patrick and "the spud"

Each year on St. Patrick's Day (the feast day of Ireland's patron saint), a group of citizens in Vancouver, Canada, organize a "Homage to the Spud"

celebration in recognition of the potato's contribution to Irish life and culture. Participants bring

dishes in which potatoes are the main ingredient, and prizes are awarded for the most creative dish. The event also serves to raise funds for local charities that support youth outreach services.



APRIL



China

Call for action at potato congress

More than 120 delegates from China and abroad met in Beijing for the ninth China Potato Congress, co-organized by the Chinese Potato Association and the Ministry of Agriculture. Describing the potato industry as vital to national food security and rural development, the Vice-Minister of Agriculture, Wei Chaoan, said action was needed to improve seed potato quality, introduce new varieties and improve processing technology.

Sri Lanka

Potato symposium in Sri Lanka

To celebrate IYP, Sri Lanka's Department of Agriculture hosted a symposium on "Potato: Opportunities and challenges in the new millennium" at its Sita Eliya Agricultural Research Station. Established in 1960, and proposed as a national potato research centre, the station currently produces disease-free planting material and develops early maturing, high yielding varieties adapted to the country's cropping systems.

Netherlands

Patents, potatoes and sharing technology

An international conference was held at Wageningen University and Research Centre on 11 April to discuss "possible tensions" between the practice of public organizations to patent their innovations in the life sciences, and the need to ensure developing countries' access to new technologies. International experts presented their views on this complex issue, with particular reference to the case of potato research at Wageningen, and offered potential solutions to the dilemmas at hand.

China

Progress report on late blight

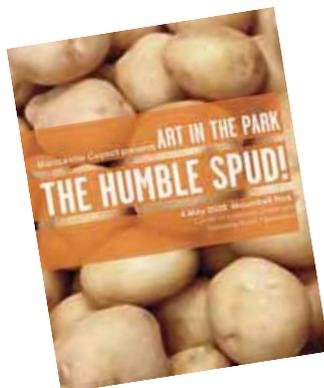
Late blight – the mould disease that caused Ireland's disastrous "potato famine" – remains one of the most destructive diseases of *S. tuberosum*. But the last five years have seen major advances in many areas of research on late blight and its causal agent, *Phytophthora infestans*. Leading scientists met in Beijing for the Third International Late Blight Conference, to consolidate new knowledge and foster greater international collaboration.

Brazil

"Potato's importance to humanity"

Delegates from 21 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean celebrated IYP at the FAO Regional Conference held in Brasilia. The Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, Mohammed Saeid Noori-Naeini, said that through IYP the world had recognized "the importance of the potato to humanity" and the contribution to agriculture of other crops domesticated in the region, including maize, cassava, beans and cacao.

MAY



Australia

Outdoor art "inspired by spud"

Every two years, the city of Sydney hosts a one-day "Art in the park" exhibition of contemporary art. Inspired by IYP, the subject of the exhibition in 2008 was the "humble spud". The curator urged local and visiting artists to contribute "artworks inspired by the potato – potatoes as metaphor, potatoes as subject, potatoes as medium". The day's event included entertainment and workshops for both adults and children.

Peru

First national potato congress

Peru held its first ever National Potato Congress in the city of Huancayo, in the country's central highlands, from 20 to 23 May. Organized around the theme of "Science, art and business", the congress included presentations on potato production, processing, marketing and utilization, exhibits on biodiversity and potato gastronomy, and a visit to the national potato research station at Santa Ana.

France

Potatoes as haute cuisine

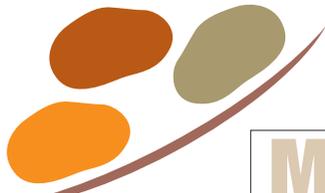
The Cordon Bleu School in Paris held a one-day course on applying French culinary techniques in the preparation of potato dishes. Working under the supervision and guidance of a chef, students prepared five recipes using different types of *pommes de terre*. The students were free to take home and consume their day's work. The Cordon Bleu school, a world leader in gastronomic education, first opened in Paris in 1895.

Bangladesh

Launch of country-wide campaign

As part of IYP, Bangladesh launched a nation-wide Potato Campaign. Jointly organized by the Bangladeshi Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO, the campaign aimed at promoting the potato as part of a diversified diet, and increasing consumption of the country's 2007 bumper harvest of 4.3 million tonnes. The launch was followed by initiatives at district and sub-district level throughout the month of May.





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MAY

China

Potato cuisine promoted in Beijing

IYP representatives distributed promotional materials and mounted a photographic exhibition on the potato at the annual convention of the China Cuisine Association, held in Beijing. The convention was attended by 1 000 people from local cuisine associations, catering companies and research institutes. Addressing visitors, the governor of Dingbian County, in Shaanxi Province – China's main potato growing region – said the food industry should increase investments in the potato.

Slovenia

Monument to the *krompir*

In Slovenia, an association dedicated to pan-frying potatoes with onions unveiled a monument to the potato in the mountain town of Šencur on 25 May. The monument depicts Maria Theresa, the archduchess of Austria (who decreed in the mid-18th century that Slovenian farmers should start growing potatoes) with a tuber in her hand.



B. ZRIMŠEK

Switzerland

Europatat: 60th general assembly

Europatat, an umbrella organization of wholesale potato merchants in 16 European countries, held its 60th general assembly in Bern, Switzerland from 29-31 May. The meeting, which focused on "the potato in the future", featured presentations on the influence of climate change on potato farming, the potential of genetic modification, and the viewpoints of producers and consumers on genetically modified potatoes.

Peru

National Potato Day

Peru celebrated its National Potato Day on 30 May with ceremonies and festivities. In Cusco, local authorities held a native potato gastronomy festival, while in Lima potato growers from 14 regions of Peru gathered for a potato fair in the Park of Legends.

JUNE

South Africa

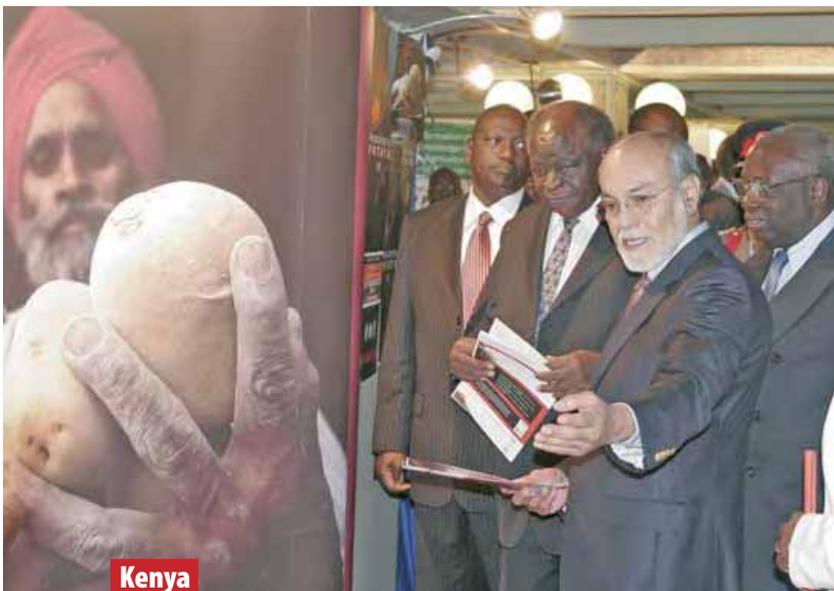
Potato exhibition in Pretoria

The University of Pretoria in South Africa hosted a potato photographic exhibition provided by the Embassy of Peru for the whole month of June as part of the country's IYP celebrations. The potato producers and processors' association, Potatoes South Africa, announced that, in support of the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating poverty, five cents would be donated to charity for every bag of potatoes sold up to December 2008.

Netherlands

All about seed systems

The Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands held a three-week course on seed potato technology, certification and supply systems. The course covered the use of modern technology in both formal and informal seed supply systems in different agro-ecological regions of the world. Relevant examples from the Dutch seed potato industry were demonstrated and discussed.



Kenya

President Kibaki visits IYP exhibit

The President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki (*left*) and FAO's Director General, Jacques Diouf (*right*), toured the IYP exhibit at the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held in Nairobi. They were briefed by Juan Landeo (*centre*), Senior Potato Breeder at CIP's Office for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Republic of Korea

"Month of the potato" festival

With an average summer temperature of around 23°C, the mountainous county of Goesan, in the Republic of Korea, is well suited to potato production. In June, the county's potato farmers invited city dwellers to participate in cooking contests at the annual "Month of the potato" festival. As well as growing excellent potatoes, Goesan is known for its chili peppers and ginseng.

Poland

Potato processing and storage

Top-level experts from the potato science and business communities made presentations at the International Potato Processing and Storage Convention held in Warsaw in June. Topics ranged from pest and disease control strategies to trends in food safety legislation, business opportunities in emerging markets, and GMO risks in the supply chain.

Austria

Potato a "collective heritage"

A report to the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, held in Innsbruck, Austria, said Finland's *lapin puikula* potato was one of many traditional agricultural and food products in Europe that are "a collective heritage resulting from a complex, historical interaction between humans and their environment". The Conference was attended by delegates from 42 countries and the European Union.



FAO

Peru

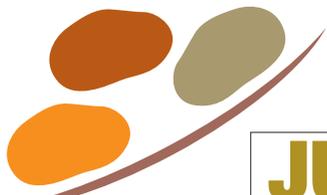
Biodiversity awards for Peruvian farmers

The future of world potato production depends on efforts to conserve and use the rich potato genepool in the crop's centre of origin, Peru. To honour those who have contributed to conserving Andean native potato varieties, the Peruvian government and the national IYP committee awarded prizes to 35 farmers, farming families and communities in Lima on 25 June, which is also Peru's National Farmers' Day.

Ecuador

Potato congress in Quito

With the support of FAO, the Central University of Ecuador hosted in Quito the country's Third Potato Congress, which focused on environmental impacts of potato production, new opportunities for processed potato products and a land suitability assessment. The congress was attended by 380 delegates from 50 institutions.



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JULY

Romania

European Association for Potato Research

Potato experts gathered in Brasov, Romania, in July for the four-day congress of the European Association for Potato Research (EAPR). Lectures, workshops and poster presentations covered advances in genomics and breeding, micropropagation innovations, new insights into crop management, potato product development, climate change, and the changing role of the potato in Central Europe.

United States of America

Maine Potato Blossom Festival

Every year in July, for the past 60 years, the citizens of Maine – where potato is the No. 1 crop – have celebrated the blossoming of the state's potato plants. The year 2008 was no exception: hosted in the town of Fort Fairfield, the festival featured nine days of sports tournaments, music concerts, mashed potato wrestling, an antique tractor show, and a pageant to select the Potato Blossom Queen.



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Italy

Italy's national potato meeting

One of the key events of the International Year of the Potato in Italy was the biennial national potato meeting held in Budrio, near Bologna. The event included a conference on industrial use of potatoes, a technology expo, an exhibition of vintage potato farming equipment, a tractor race and harvesting contest, and a meeting of officials from the country's *patata*-producing areas.



Honduras

Potato brunch in Tegucigalpa

FAO, the Peruvian embassy and a department store chain inaugurated IYP in Honduras with two days of festivities, including a potato brunch, in Tegucigalpa. For the occasion, FAO published a book of 100 potato recipes. The inauguration was followed by a seminar on potato production and marketing in the city of Esperanza, one of the country's main potato growing areas.

AUGUST

Canada, United States of America

Potato harvest festivals

August is potato harvest time in much of southern Canada and northern United States. To celebrate the end of the season, many towns threw a party in honour of *Solanum tuberosum*. Among them: the 36th annual potato festival in Alliston (Ontario), Potato Days in Clark (South Dakota) and Barnesville (Minnesota), and the traditional potato celebration in Manhattan (Montana).

United Kingdom

IYP conference in Scotland

Scotland's contribution to the Year of the Potato was a major conference on improving potato production, held in Dundee on 8 August. Organized by the Scottish Crop Research Institute, the conference was attended by a high level delegation from China. The conference followed the United Kingdom's largest annual potato field event, "Potatoes in practice", held in Dundee on 7 August.

Indonesia

National potato week in Lembang

Indonesia is one of Asia's middle-ranking potato producers, with a 2007 harvest of just over 1 million tonnes. To celebrate IYP, the Indonesian Vegetable Research Institute organized a National Potato Week held in Lembang, western Java, an area famous for its fruits and vegetables. IVEGRI is a partner of the International Potato Center in programmes for the improvement of potato and sweet potato varieties.

SEPTEMBER

MSIRI



Mauritius

IYP event promotes potato production

On the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries and the country's Sugar Industry Research Institute hosted a potato conference and exhibition on 21-22 August. At the conference, the Ministry launched an interactive CD-ROM on potato for farmers and extensionists, with a map of land suitable for growing potatoes and a book of potato recipes.

Canada

Growers raise funds for women's shelter

The farmers' association Potato Growers of Alberta (PGA) took potatoes to the annual Cornfest in Taber, southern Alberta, Canada, in late August. Over the space of two days, the PGA's potato stand sold \$3 000 worth of baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, French fries and potato chips to raise funds for a local women's crisis shelter. The shelter provides free food and lodging to women and children who are attempting to escape from a life of abuse and poverty.

China

Festival at heart of China's potato industry

The county of Xiji, in the mountainous Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region of northwest China, hosted in September the country's biggest annual potato fair. Xiji and surrounding rural counties are the centre of China's rapidly expanding potato industry, with a total production of more than 2.5 million tonnes a year. The county's 2 000 potato processing companies ship potato products throughout China and to markets in Japan, South America and Europe.

Peru

Peru celebrates "bread of the Andes"

La papa, pan del mundo Andino – or, "Potato: Bread of the Andean world" – was the title of an exhibition at Lima's Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia that ran until 31 December. On display were exhibits on the potato's pre- and post-Columbian history, its biodiversity, nutritional value and role in Andean culture, and a series of paintings of Andean farmers by Japanese artist Tadayuki Noguchi (*below*).



Belarus

Art-bulba exhibition in Minsk

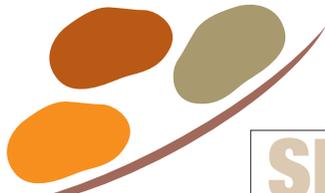
Belarus' State University of Culture organized an art exhibition in the capital, Minsk, dedicated to the *bulba*. "It must be true art when people grow plants purely for pleasure," said the university's gallery director. "Just as the Japanese enjoy watching cherry trees blossom, Belarusians love to plant potatoes in May and dig them up in September". Belarusians eat more potatoes per head than any other country – an estimated 180 kg a year.



United States of America

57th Posen Potato Festival

Polish immigrants who settled in the town of Posen, Michigan, in the United States, brought with them their national passion for potatoes, which grow well in the area's deep, sandy soils. For more than 50 years, the end of the harvest season has been celebrated at the Posen potato festival, which features free concerts, children's entertainment, a potato cooking contest and selection of the Miss Posen beauty queen.



SEPTEMBER

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Slovenia

World Festival of Sautéed Potatoes

Gourmets from Europe and the United States attended the 8th World Festival of Sautéed Potatoes in Crna na Koroškem, in northern Slovenia. The annual event brings together cooking teams who pan-fry tons of potatoes with a variety of ingredients, including goose liver, ostrich, sour cream and walnuts. The



B. ZRIMSEK

festival is hosted by a Slovenian association dedicated to enjoyment of the country's national dish, *pražen krompir*.

France

PotatoEurope 2008

Billed as Europe's "most significant potato industry convention", PotatoEurope 2008 was held in Villers-Saint-Christophe, northern France, on 10 and 11 September. More than 3 000 visitors came to the event, which featured workshops on potato genetic resources, agronomy, soil conservation, crop optimization and sustainability, and demonstrations of innovative harvesting and post-harvest technologies.

POMMES
DE TERRE

5^e

Journées
Internationales

10 et 11 septembre 2008
Villers-Saint-Christophe
Aisne, France

Italy

Sagra della patata in Tuscany

In Italy's rural areas, September is the time for festivals (or *sagre*) that celebrate the fruits of the agricultural year. In potato-growing areas, visitors and locals get together in village piazzas for concerts, antique markets and sporting events, all accompanied by tasty potato dishes, such as *gnocchi*. One of the oldest running potato harvest festivals has been held since 1968 in the town of Oreno, in Tuscany.



United States
of America

VALLEYFEST

A potato-shaped hot air balloon

The annual Spokane ValleyFest in Washington, the United States, honoured the potato with a variety of activities, including the launching of a potato-shaped hot-air balloon and a community "hunger run" to raise money for the Spokane Valley Food Bank. This year, the Washington Potato Commission donated half a tonne of potatoes for sale at the festival. In 2007, Washington's potato harvest was 4.6 million tonnes.

Germany

Potato dumplings celebrated in Thuringia

The German state of Thuringia is famous for its potato dumplings and the potato dumpling museum which opened in 1999 in the town of Heichelheim. In September, the Heichelheimer Potato Foundation hosted the state's annual potato festival, where celebrities harvested tubers, and visitors enjoyed a range of attractions, including a photography exhibition, a competition for the longest potato peel, and lots of potato dumplings.



OCTOBER

Finland

"Potatoes today and in the future"

Peru's embassy in Helsinki celebrated IYP by hosting a potato photography exhibition, a sampling of potato dishes and a lecture on "Potatoes today and in the future", which was delivered by Jari Valkonen, an award winning plant virologist at Helsinki University. The event was co-sponsored by Finland's Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. In 2007, Finland produced 680 000 tonnes of potatoes.

Spain

Potato science links Europe, Latin America

The 3rd Spanish-American Congress on Potato Research and Development was held in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, in October. The congress, which aimed at forging closer ties between the potato sectors in Latin America and Europe, addressed recent developments in genetic improvement, genetic engineering, micropropagation of seed potatoes, industrial processing and quality marketing. The congress was held as part of "Potato week".

United States of America

Living with potatoes

To raise awareness of the importance of the potato for world food security, the College of Agricultural Science and Technology at California State University, Fresno, hosted an international symposium on "Living with potatoes" on 7 October. The event provided a global forum for potato growers, researchers, processors and equipment suppliers who are interested in promoting sustainable potato production.

Ukraine

The latest on potato pests and diseases

The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and Ukraine's plant quarantine service organized a European phytosanitary conference on potato and other arable crops in Chernovtsy in October. The meeting reviewed the latest EPPO standards for potato, and discussed major pest and disease threats, including wart disease and cyst nematodes. It also examined emerging pests of the Solanaceae family of plants.

Australia

Irish potato famine remembered

During the Irish "potato famine" of 1845-1850, more than 4 000 female orphans were shipped to British colonies in Australia to work as servants. To commemorate the 160th anniversary of their arrival, an Irish-Australian historical society hosted a week-long event in Galong, near Canberra, entitled "Far from famine". The programme included workshops, Irish music and dancing, a tree planting ceremony and a commemoration service.



Rwanda

Potato celebrated on World Food Day

Rwanda's national IYP committee celebrated the International Year of the Potato in conjunction with World Food Day in the potato-growing district of Nyabihu on 16 October. Rwandans had much to celebrate: the country is among sub-Saharan Africa's biggest potato producers (1.2 million tonnes in 2007), and potato consumption stands at a high 125 kg per capita per year.



FAO

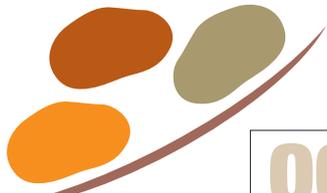
United Kingdom

Sausage and mash

People in Lincolnshire, in the east of England, are so proud of their distinctive "Lincolnshire sausage" that they are seeking to register the name to protect it from imitations. And since the sausages are usually served with mashed potatoes – and Lincolnshire is one of the United Kingdom's biggest potato producers – the organizers decided to celebrate both foods together, at the Lincolnshire Sausage and Mash Festival on 25 October.



IBAN



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OCTOBER

Turkey

Harvest day in Anatolia

With its hot, dry summers and cold winters, Anatolia's central plateau is Turkey's most important potato producing region. It is also the site of the country's National Potato Research Institute, at Niğde, which is responsible for potato breeding, producing virus-free seed potatoes, conducting research projects and training potato farmers. In October, while the region's potatoes were being harvested, the institute held a field day in honour of the International Year.

NINA ARETZ



Democratic Republic of Congo

Big day in Mbanza-Ngungu

IYP in the Democratic Republic of Congo culminated on 29 October with a potato festival organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO in Mbanza-Ngungu, in the province of Bas-Congo, from where potato farmers supply markets in Kinshasa. During 2008, the national IYP committee publicized the International Year with TV spots and radio programmes, and made a video on potato cultivation.

NOVEMBER



Peru

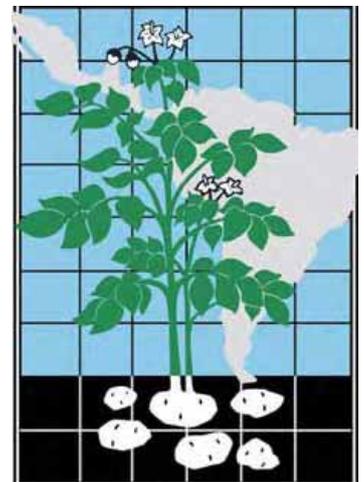
Potato food festival by Lake Titicaca

The city of Puno sits by the side of Lake Titicaca in Peru, at the centre of origin of the cultivated potato. To celebrate the International Year, Puno's Regional Agricultural Department sponsored in November a food festival at which special guests of honour were the potato and *tunta*, a dehydrated potato product. Activities included a contest among the city's restaurants for the best potato dish.

Argentina

Latin American potato congress

The Latin American Potato Association, which links producers, researchers, extensionists and processors, held its 23rd annual congress in Mar del Plata City from 30 November to 5 December. Sponsored by Argentina's National Agricultural Technology Institute, the congress aimed at disseminating research results and technological innovations and fostering ties between private and public sectors in the region.



DECEMBER



Italy

Potato on display at FAO, Rome

As lead agency for observation of IYP, the Food and Agriculture Organization ended the International Year with a potato exhibition in its glass-domed atrium. The exhibition consisted of three separate displays: one, in Italian "The magic voyage of the potato", provided by Italy's Friuli Venezia Giulia region, CIP's travelling exhibition "Odyssey of the potato", the winning entries in the IYP World Photography Contest, and paintings of Andean farmers by Tadayuki Noguchi.

Belgium

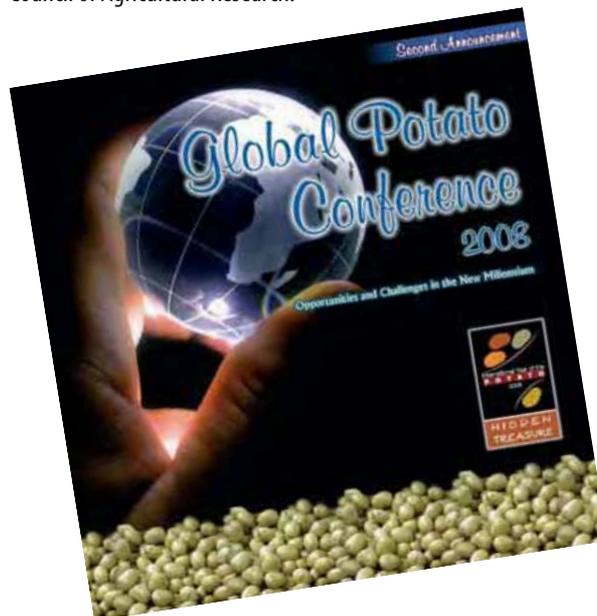
Prizes for potato quality

Winners of the Belgian Potato Quality Award received their prizes at Belgium's Interpom trade fair in Kortrijk in December. The awards are given each year to potato farmers and processors who have improved the public image of agriculture in general and of potatoes in particular. Interpom also featured exhibits covering the entire production chain, from crop protection to processing.

India

Global conference marks end of IYP 2008

The task facing potato scientists is to enhance productivity, quality and added value at a time of diminishing availability of land and water, new biotic and abiotic stresses, and fast changing consumer preferences. Those challenges were to be addressed at a Global Potato Conference organized in New Delhi by the Indian Potato Association, India's Central Potato Research Institute and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.



G. THOMAS

New Zealand

The story continues...

The biennial World Potato Congress will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2009. With the theme "Nourishing our future", the four-day congress will review the latest developments in crop management, environment and energy issues, food and non-food processing, and food safety and quality. More than 500 delegates, representing the potato industry in both developed and developing countries, are expected to attend.