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OREGON POTATO COMMISSION NAMES RECIPIENTS OF INAUGURAL “OREGON POTATOES GOODNESS UNEARTHED GOLD MEDAL AWARDS”

Awards Acknowledge Terroir’s Influence on One of the State’s Most Valuable Crops

PORTLAND, Ore. – February 9, 2012 – The Oregon Potato Commission (OPC) recently recognized several Oregon growers in its first ever “Oregon Potatoes Goodness Unearthed Gold Medal Awards” at the annual Washington-Oregon Potato Conference in Kennewick, Wash.

The overarching goal of the new awards program is to highlight the flavor differences between varieties grown in different regions, according to OPC CEO Bill Brewer.

“Each potato variety starts with its own distinct flavor profile, but a single variety grown in two different regions, or *terroirs*, can produce two totally unique potatoes,” Brewer explains.

The Commission partnered with the American Culinary Federation’s Chefs de Cuisine Society of Oregon to conduct the culinary competition. Potato growers submitted applications in four categories: russets, reds, yellows and specialty varieties. A panel of six professional chefs from Chefs de Cuisine served as the official tasting panel, judging the spuds on taste, texture, appearance and aroma.

“If you thought the concept of *terroir* was unique to wine, think again,” says Chef Leif Eric Benson, Oregon’s 2010 chef of the year and OPC public member. “The judges’ panel was astounded by the differences within each category. The only explanation for these differences is *terroir*— how the soil, climate and other natural elements impact the crop.”

The award-winning spuds came from the following Oregon entrants:

- Strebin Farms (Russet Potato)
- Chin Farms (Red Potato)
- Klamath Basin Research & Extension Center (Yellow Potato)
- Chin Farms (Specialty Potato)

About the Oregon Potato Commission

The Oregon Potato Commission was formed in 1949 to represent the state’s five potato growing regions (Blue Mountain, Central Oregon, Klamath, Malheur and Willamette Valley) in educational, trade development, research, legislative affairs, and public relations activities. Development of sales and markets for Oregon’s potato crop is one of the Commission’s roles. Programs are designed to improve Oregon’s market share in-state and in other prominent West Coast markets. Export markets for processed potato products and, increasingly, fresh potatoes and raw product are also included in market development and promotional programs in the Pacific Rim and other market areas. The Commission’s largest focus is on a series of ongoing research programs in cooperation with Oregon State University. The results of these programs place Oregon among the top in the United States in potato production volume and yield per acre. For more information, visit www.OregonSpuds.com.

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