



INTERNATIONAL
POTATO GROUP

"None of us is as smart as All of us" - Anon.

1. INTRODUCTION

The **International Potato Group (IPG)** is the outcome of the **British Potato Council**, now known as the **Agriculture & Horticulture Development Group (AHDG)** and **Potatoes South Africa's** chairpersons who initiated the idea of the formation of a **non-competitive potato group** that seeks to **work together to share skills, knowledge and resources** for the benefit of the group and respective countries participating in the group.



2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The first workshop was hosted in South Africa in 2007. Since then, there have been four additional workshops: New Zealand (Christchurch - 2009), South Africa (Cape Town - 2010), United Kingdom (Ireland - 2012) and China (Yanqin - 2015). The next workshop is tentatively scheduled for the 2018 **World Potato Congress in Lima, Peru.**

3. PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Currently the countries participating in IPG are:

- **United Kingdom**, represented by AHDB
- **New Zealand**, represented by Potatoes New Zealand
- **Australia**, represented by Potatoes South Australia & AusVeg
- **Canada**, represented by Southern Potato Co. & Canadian Horticultural Council
- **South Africa**, represented by Potatoes South Africa



4. IPG FOCUS AREAS

IPG's central focus is strategically placed on potato research & development and potato marketing & promotion. The participating countries use the platform to:

- Exchange information, knowledge, ideas and resources (where synergies exist);
- Debate issues affecting and/or threatening global demand for potatoes;
- Produce valid, significant and measurable solutions to these global issues;
- Develop strategies aimed at positioning potatoes as a food for the future; and
- Develop strategies enabling participating countries to raise the profile of potatoes in their respective countries, thereby leading to increased per capita consumption.



PRIORITY ISSUES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Research and Development

- Crop protection
- Disease management
- R&D technology
- Breeding programs
- Sharing research titles, what is being done and profiling the research leader?
- Factors affecting yields
- Researcher skills audit

Generic Marketing

- **Rebooting the nutritional message of potatoes**

- i. Potatoes & pregnancy
- ii. Potatoes & sport
- iii. Potatoes & diabetes
- iv. Potatoes re Carbs and GI

- **Potatoes & versatility**

- i. Recipes
- ii. Potatoes for every cooking occasion
- iii. Potato varieties
- iv. Chipping with pride & love?

- **Youth Marketing**

- **Growth Strategies**

- i. **Market penetration** – developing and executing top of mind promotions aimed at growing market share through sales promotions, discounts, new information, etc.
- ii. **Market expansion (market development)** - a strategy that can be deployed when selling an existing product to a completely new market segment. Examples include foreign market development, positioning potatoes as a superior carboloading product for sport, educating about non-traditional usages of potatoes such as healing properties & in beauty regimes.
- iii. **Product expansion (product development)** - a strategy used by deploying R&D & technology to innovate and develop new products.
- iv. **Diversification** – finding ways of selling new products to new markets by extending the business model through either related or unrelated diversification.

- **Consumer insights** – perceptions, attitudes, lifestyle, life stage, consumer psychology, etc.

5. DERIVING VALUE FOR PRODUCERS

- The **development of models** aimed at maintaining and/or **increasing returns for growers** (creating a sustainable and thriving industry with **greater gross margins**).
- Understanding the **dynamics of the European market**, particularly the frozen **French fries** challenge.

6. IPG COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Creating **continuous engagement** between IPG members, other than only meeting every three years, is critically important to ensure that there are **joint efforts** to (i) advance the state of **knowledge in the global potato industry** and (ii) ensure that **returns to potato producers are maximised** by addressing the issues mentioned in section 4.

Hence, as a first phase to create such engagement the following is proposed:

Dropbox – to share big documents, images, and other pertinent R&D as well as marketing information. This tool can be used by members of the group to drop information as and when required.

Link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zkr4qozdi0wmza1/AACQfLUkDDrcX9h3wf1REby-a?dl=0>

Skype - For video and audio calls made to address urgent matters and/or catch up sessions. Skype facilities can be used on a monthly basis or as and when urgent matter arise.

Link: <https://join.skype.com/iGbGVnGWsl9e>

Facebook – Page still to be developed. Page details will be sent out once up and running. The page can be used as and when deemed necessary by members of the group to communicate both urgent and non-urgent matters.

Newsletter – once a working rhythm has been established and momentum built in content generation and dissemination, the Secretariat will design a newsletter which will be disseminated on a quarterly basis.

