

Did You Know?

Researchers at the **Eastern Regional Research Center** (ERRC) in Wyndmoor, PA, developed technology that led to one of the most convenient “homemade” food products today—**instant mashed potato flakes**. This technology led to a new industry that changed the way family meals were and are prepared today. Commercial production of instant mashed potatoes first started in 1957, and the industry continued to grow. Today, Americans consume about 130 pounds of fresh and processed potatoes annually, 40 pounds more than tomatoes, the next most commonly eaten vegetable, according to the USDA Economic Research Service.



The technology that ARS scientists developed is used in preparing frozen french fries, instant mashed potatoes and other products like potato chips. In addition, subsequent improvements to the original process to dry vegetables and fruits also led to development of explosion puffing processes. Explosion puffing technology helps seal in flavor and nutrients of fruit and vegetables when dried (or dehydrated), which can then be

later used as a food ingredient in cereals, muffins and other food products.

The American Chemical Society, the world’s largest scientific society, bestowed upon ERRC the honor of National Historic Chemical Landmark status in 2007 for its scientific contributions leading to the development of novel dehydration techniques. These discoveries, and the technologies arising from them, have made possible convenience foods that are enjoyed by consumers worldwide. ERRC’s achievements in food chemistry have improved the overall value of the U.S. potato crop and expanded the use of numerous other agricultural commodities.

Please pass the potatoes!

Potato Facts:

- Loaded with fiber
- Rich in vitamin C
- More potassium than bananas, spinach and broccoli
- No fat, cholesterol or sodium
- Only 100 calories per serving
- 44 billion pounds of potatoes produced in the United States
- 38% of potatoes produced are used for frozen french fries and other frozen products
- Nearly 8 out of 10 consumers eat some form of potatoes 3.6 times every 2 weeks

Source: National Potato Council's 2008 Potato Statistical Yearbook

Please submit story ideas and national award items to Tara T. Weaver-Missick, tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov or call 301-504-1663.