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### **Washington and Oregon Potato Industry Working to Open Japanese Chip Market**

MOSES LAKE, WA--The Washington State Potato Commission and the Oregon Potato Commission are working cooperatively with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to open the market in Japan for Washington and Oregon chip potatoes. Officials of the two commissions recently returned from Japan with confidence that Japanese trade barriers on Washington, Oregon and U.S. chip potatoes won't be permanent if the two commissions can work through some quarantine issues.

Unlike some foreign markets where consumers must be introduced to potato snacks, Japanese consumers already have a strong appetite for potato chips and other potato based snack foods. And snack foods are becoming more popular in that country.

Because of climate and related reasons, Japanese potatoes don't store as long as potatoes in the United States. As a result, Japanese potato growers produce fewer potatoes than their market demands on an annual basis. Consequently, Japanese producers of potato snacks typically cannot run at full capacity on a year-round basis.

Japanese potato growers have traditionally opposed entry of U.S. fresh potatoes into their market. However, the new proposal by Oregon and Washington may lessen resistance from the Japanese potato industry as it is limited to processing potatoes for chips and easier to control from a quarantine standpoint.