As the most widely grown and consumed vegetable in the U.S., potatoes can have a huge impact on the economy, the environment, and human health. Potatoes are a popular food choice because they are filling, palatable, nutrient-dense, and affordable, and the international market for frozen potatoes, French fries, and potato chips is booming. The value of potato production in the U.S. totals over $4.3 billion each year, with over $1 billion in exports.

Improving potato varieties is key to sustaining this important crop. Since 1947, researchers, breeders, and farmers have used seeds and data from the U.S. Potato Genebank to conduct potato research and cultivate new, desirable potato varieties. A group of researchers coordinates the genebank and supports its efforts by improving techniques and tools for collecting, analyzing, and preserving potato specimens from around the world. A diverse genebank means that researchers, breeders, and farmers will have the resources they need to overcome potato production challenges and sustain the crop for future generations.

### Benefits of Genebank Research & Potato Varieties

- **Potatoes with higher yields, higher nutrient levels, and better adaptation to diverse growing areas could help combat world hunger.**
- **Potatoes with 10 times the concentration of appetite suppressant could help address obesity from overeating, which racks up healthcare costs of $210 billion each year in the U.S.**
- **Potatoes with strong resistance to zebra chip disease can prevent profit losses, which can be as high as 50% in the U.S.**
- **Growing potatoes that do not turn green could avoid crop losses of 10% or more.**
- **Potatoes better suited for processing make better chips, fries, and frozen potatoes. Per capita, Americans eat over 70 pounds of processed potato products each year.**
- **Potatoes with the desirable yellow color support chip and fry processing facilities that are economic drivers and job suppliers in many communities.**
- **Potatoes with high levels of folate can protect against birth defects, heart disease, and mental health problems.**
- **Potatoes with high levels of antioxidants can reduce the mental health effects of lead poisoning in children.**
- **Potato may help slow prostate cancer growth.**
- **Strokes kill 100,000 Americans each year, costing over $12 billion. Potatoes with high levels of potassium could reduce hypertension, a major stroke risk factor.**
- **Parasite-resistant potato varieties do not require harmful, expensive chemical fumigation, saving U.S. farmers $20 million each year.**
- **Providing farmers in developing countries with more marketable and nutritious varieties could help create healthy populations and economic and political stability, lowering the need for foreign aid.**
- **Strokes kill 100,000 Americans each year, costing over $12 billion. Potatoes with high levels of potassium could reduce hypertension, a major stroke risk factor.**

### Want to know more?

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