Potato Market and Consumption

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ABSTRACT

Potato, or as it is called the “bread of the poor”, is a traditional product and the fourth world’s largest consumption culture after rice, wheat, and maize. Potato contains vitamin B6 (32%), starch (26%), copper (22%), vitamin C (22%), magnesium (19%), phosphorus (17%), fiber (15%), pantothenic acid (13%), and other ingredients. Americans eat on average 35 kg of frozen potatoes per year: 19 kg of fresh potatoes; 8 kg of potato chips; and 6 kg of dehydrated potato products. The global monthly consumption of potato per capita is 31.3 kg. A greater consumption per capita is in Europe with 87.8 kg/capita. Residents of cold countries of Eastern Europe are the biggest consumers of potatoes in the world. China is the largest producer in the world (75mil / year), but it is not the largest consumer per capita. The volume of international potato trade is smaller than the volume of production. Only 6% of potato production reaches trade market worldwide. Trade in processed potatoes is increased, and with higher rates exceed fresh potato trade. It passes from fresh consumption to processed consumption. Developed countries are those which provide markets with these processed products, earning high rate of profits. Processed potatoes make up 64 percent of total US potato consuming. Kosovo has a great potential to produce potatoes, but there are some obstacles such as small domestic consumption and the market in general. In this article, the factors that affect consumption are explored, which as a consequence increase the production.

KEYWORDS
Consumption, Fresh Potatoes, Nutritional Value, Perceptions of Potatoes, Preferences, Processed Potatoes

INTRODUCTION

Potatoes, or as it is called the “bread of the poor” is a traditional cultivating product. As a typical agricultural product potato is characterized by a wobble in the market prices as a result of supply and demand swings. Price is the main factor to influence the supply and demand. It is the supply and demand that affects the price. Information regarding the price of the market is asymmetric, known in the economy as the “Model Cobweb”, emerging market surpluses and shortages. Another problem is the protection of local production by various countries through the trade policies.

Potato is a plant of great importance for the human food, the food industry, and the animal husbandry. Potato serves as a raw material for the industry in the production of many valuable products like alcohol, starch, dextrin’s, glucose, gum, and many other products (special inks, artificial silk, perfumes, plastics, etc.). The chemical composition of potato tubers varies depending on the cultivar, weather conditions, and technology of cultivation, storage conditions, and so on (Ramollari, 2010).
According to the US Department of Agriculture, potato is a number one vegetable in the US culture and the fourth world’s largest consumption culture after rice, wheat, and maize. Potato health benefits cannot be denied because of its nutritional value. A kilogram of potatoes provides 800 calories.

Historically, Americans use fresh potatoes, but since 1950 the use of processed potatoes increased. According to the USDA, in 2000, participation of processed potato consumption in general consumption was 64%, while in 1960 this participation was 35%. Americans eat averagely 35 kg of frozen potatoes per year, 19 kg of fresh potatoes, 8 kg of potato chips, and 6 kg of dehydrated potato products (Szalay, 2017).

In the food ranking system, potatoes are qualified as a good source of vitamin B6 and a good source of potassium, copper, vitamin C, manganese, phosphorus, niacin, dietary fiber, and pantothenic acid. Potatoes also contain a variety of Phyto-nutrients that have antioxidant activity. Potato contains vitamin B6 (32%), starch (26%), copper (22%), vitamin C (22%), magnesium (19%), phosphorus (17%), fiber (15%), pantothenic acid (13%) vitamins B3 (WHfoods, n.d.).

Potatoes are a very popular source of food. Unfortunately, most people eat potatoes in the form of fried and fatty foods, potato chips, etc. Baked potatoes are typically loaded with fats like butter, sour cream, melted cheese, and bacon bits. These can make a baked potato a potential contributor to a heart attack.

Baked potato is food with very low calorie and high fiber content resides, which offers significant protection against cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

A medium potato provides 6% of the recommended daily value for iron. Iron is the main component of hemoglobin that carries oxygen to all the body parts (PotatoGoodness, n.d.). Potassium is important dietary factor that helps lower blood pressure. Potatoes are a good source of potassium (potato has more potassium than a banana). A medium potato with skin provides 620 mg or 18% of the recommended daily value (DV) of potassium (potato ranks among the 20 vegetables and fruit with potassium). Potassium is a mineral (part of every cell of the body), that helps to regulate fluids and mineral balance in and out of cells Doing so, helps maintain normal blood pressure. Potassium is also vital for the transmission of nerve impulses.

Potato contains a component called kukoamines. According to scientists at the British Institute for Food Research, kukoamines causes blood pressure decrease. Medium potato (in size) contains more than one and a half milligrams of vitamin B6. It makes the potato to be a subject with high food nutritional value and a health promoter. Vitamin B6 is involved in more than 100 enzymatic reactions. Enzymes are proteins that assist in chemical reactions where vitamin B6 virtually is wide in the human body. Vitamin B6 creates human cells. Vitamin B6 plays several important roles in the human nervous system and one of these roles is a neurological activity (brain cells). Vitamin B6 plays an important role in cardiovascular protection. Food rich in vitamin B6 helps to keep at low levels the dangerous molecules called homocysteine. A potato offers more than 3 grams of fiber, but fiber in potato is mostly on its skin. If you want reduce cholesterol, prevent colon cancer and supportive effect in the gut fiber, you should eat unshelled potatoes. Vitamin C helps the body’s immune system. Potato is a good source of vitamin C (contains 45% daily value) has more vitamin C than a medium tomato (which has 40% of the daily value).

Potatoes should be stored in a dark and dry place in temperature 7-10 °C. Potato should not be exposed to sunlight because this could induce the development of alkaloid solanine toxin.

If potato is stored in the refrigerator, its starch content will turn into sugar giving them an undesirable taste. Potatoes should be stored in paper bags.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CONSUMPTION OF POTATOES

At the international markets, the trade potato volume is smaller than the volume of production. According to FAOSTAT (Google, n.d.) only about 6% of potato production at world level reaches the trade market. However, the trade of processed potatoes is increased and exceeded with higher rates.
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