

New CEO keen to change focus

POTATOES South Australia Incorporated has appointed chief executive Robbie Davis to introduce new structures to benefit the whole-of-industry value chain.

An agribusiness professional and primary producer with experience in the domestic and international public and private sectors, she says the peak body is committed to “an inclusive focus that incorporates all stakeholders”.

“Potatoes SA must represent and promote the interests of potato industry stakeholders, undertaking research and development – commissioning marketing and consumer education programs – and provide policy advice to government regarding industry issues,” Ms Davis said.

She believes it will be critical to develop and sustain partnerships with stakeholders along the entire value chain for the long-term benefit of the SA potato and food industry.

“My first priority is to be on the ground visiting and speaking with all the seed producers, growers, packers, processors and other stakeholders and getting their feedback, thoughts and ideas about industry

FAST FACTS

- Build focus that incorporates all stakeholders
- Committed to revamping image of ‘humble spud’
- Serious lack of promotion to be addressed

priorities, challenges and opportunities,” she said.

Ms Davis said she would also be working on a considerable promotion of potatoes that had to start with education, from primary school students through to families, in a bid to refute some of the misinformation circulated about potatoes in recent years.

“There hasn’t been a comprehensive promotion of potatoes in more than 30 years and we’ve seen a lot of unwarranted negativity arising from proponents of fad diets targeted at potatoes,” she said.

“We will be working to get messages out on the amazing health benefits of potatoes, including that they are a rich source of Vitamins B and C and potassium.

“There are also low GI varieties available.”

Details: Robbie Davis 0427 084 319



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Renewed confidence as 2012 prices firm

AFTER a tough six months, the South Australian potato industry is looking ahead with renewed confidence as prices firm.

SA Potato Co chief financial officer and Potatoes South Australia chairman Nick Pseudos says the State’s industry has weathered the storms of 2012 and the industry is “moving forward”.

He said growers had largely buckled down, cut costs and improved efficiencies.

“Growing conditions are always a little difficult in various regions at this time of year with frosts

causing damage to crops but, by and large, most areas have produced good tonnages,” Mr Pseudos said.

“Areas such as Mallala and Virginia have planted crops to meet certain windows in the marketplace.”

He says Australia is one of the only countries to enjoy fresh, high-quality potatoes year-round and the challenge now for the industry is to get more potatoes on dinner plates around the country.

Mr Pseudos said SA Potato Co had been working to ‘de-commoditise’

potatoes by branding a new variety: Kestrel. The new white potato is available 12 months of the year.

“Testing by SARDI revealed that it excelled in ‘taste’ for most cooking methods and was the preferred variety for boiling and frying,” Mr Pseudos said.

The company also grows ruby lou, coliban, desiree and white lady varieties on 12,500 hectares in the Mallee, Virginia and Victoria. It produces between 45,000 tonnes and 60,000t annually and processes potatoes at its Mount Barker facilities.

– LIZ COTTON