



## News Release

**WWF-US**  
World Wildlife Fund  
Toxics Program

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### **USDA Honors Successful Eco-Potato Partnership: WWF, Wisconsin potato growers, and University of Wisconsin researchers congratulated for efforts to improve the environment**

Washington, DC – A unique partnership between World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Wisconsin potato growers, and university researchers is being recognized today as a recipient of the Department of Agriculture's prestigious "Secretary's Honor Award."

Secretary Ann Veneman will present the award to the Eco-Potato Partnership, honored for "Maintaining and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment," at a noontime ceremony at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center. The six-year collaboration between the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA), the University of Wisconsin (UW), and WWF has resulted in the accelerated adoption of integrated pest management systems and reduced reliance on toxic pesticides, and has led to the establishment of *Protected Harvest*, an independent eco-label.

Wisconsin potatoes are the first product certified under the *Protected Harvest* label and are marketed under the brand *Healthy Grown*. In order to qualify for the Protected Harvest seal, specific crop management practices must be employed that reduce use of toxic pesticides, improve soil and water quality, and protect wildlife habitat.

"WWF is thrilled about the success of the Eco-Potato Partnership and pleased that the Department of Agriculture supports the work of conventional farmers who are finding ways to reduce their environmental impact while remaining competitive," said Jason Clay, Vice President of WWF's Center for Conservation Innovation and member of Protected Harvest's board of directors.

United by the goals of preserving natural resources and maintaining economically viable farming systems, WWF, WPVGA, and UW teamed up in 1996 to help educate growers about using more biologically based pest management systems. Since then, the collaboration has developed a measurement system and methodology on which the standards of Protected Harvest eco-label are based.

"The Secretary's Honor Award is a result of a true partnership – a farmers' association, a university, and an environmental organization bringing together their varied expertise to work toward a common goal," said Clay. "Through the work of the WWF/WPVGA/UW collaboration, we hope to help the entire potato industry become more sustainable."

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This news release and associated material can be found on [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)

World Wildlife Fund, known worldwide by its panda logo, leads international efforts to protect endangered species and their habitats and to conserve the diversity of life on Earth. Now in its fourth decade, WWF works in more than 100 countries around the globe.



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Editors' Notes:

1. The Secretary's Honor Award is awarded for six different categories (one award per category). The categories are: Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for United States Agricultural Producers; Promoting Health by Providing Access to Safe, Affordable and Nutritious Food; Maintaining and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment; Enhancing the Capacity of all Rural Residents, Communities and Businesses to Prosper; Operating an Efficient, Effective and Discrimination-Free Organization; and Homeland Security (get exact title from Jeff Wyman)
2. For more information on Healthy Grown brand potatoes, visit: <http://www.healthygrown.com/index.htm>

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