

# Potato industry targets trendy Paleo diet

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
EO Media Group

The U.S. potato industry has taken umbrage with a popular dietary fad, which is based on the premise that humans ate healthier during the Stone Age than following the advent of agriculture.

The Paleolithic diet — coined by Colorado State University emeritus professor Loren Cordain — promotes foods that would have been available to hunter-gatherers more than 10,000 years ago, such as grass-fed meat, wild game, nuts, fruits and non-starchy vegetables.

In addition to processed foods and salt, the popular diet frowns upon some of the major commodities produced in the Northwest, including potatoes, cereals, dairy, sugar and legumes. Cordain reasons the foods weren't present during the Paleolithic Period, and humans, therefore, haven't adapted to eating them.

Cordain vows Paleo dieters achieve weight loss, reduced diabetes and diseases, increased energy, fewer allergies, better digestion and increased muscle. Critics counter that modern foods, developed over centuries of selective breeding, don't resemble Paleolithic foods. They also note the diet's conspicuous absence of Stone Age dietary staples — such as rats, mice, squirrels, stripped bark, insects and lizards — and question the wisdom of emulating an ancient people who typically died in their 30s.

The potato industry — still seeking to improve consumer perceptions affected by the low-carbohydrate Atkins diet craze — recently launched a campaign highlighting the importance of the spud's protein, vitamin C, potassium and carbohydrates to athletic performance.

"I think a lot of people are really getting tired of all of these really restrictive diets and are more interested in learning how to eat properly in a way they can work into their lifestyle, based on the basic ideas of moderation and good diversity," said John Toasperm, chief marketing officer with Potatoes USA.

The organization has been publicizing a paper critical of the Paleo diet, published in the December issue of



Sagar Sathuvalli, a potato breeder with Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, shows off potato varieties in November 2014.



Michaela Ewing flips potato flatbread while grilling it for the crop up dinner at HAREC in August 2016 in Hermiston.

the American College of Sports Medicine's Health and Fitness Journal. The author, Katherine Beals, an associate professor in

Utah State University's Department of Nutrition and Integrated Sociology, has consulted for Potatoes USA in the past, though her

paper wasn't commissioned by the industry.

During the peak of the Atkins diet's popularity, Beals conducted a clinical

study finding its benefits were short-lived, and weren't sustainable beyond a year. She has similar suspicions about the Paleo diet, and her recent paper found no scientific basis to support eating like a caveman.

Beals, who serves on the committee that ranks the best and worst diets for U.S. News & World Report, recommends diets that don't restrict food groups, but rather promote consuming a broad variety of foods in moderation. She emphasizes exercise is often overlooked in diets, and people's survival depended on being active in the Stone Age.

"I find it irritating that people are making money off of unsuspecting consumers that are truly looking for a way to become healthier and lose

weight," Beals said.

Cordain, who credits his mentor Dr. S. Boyd Eaton with developing the concept for the Paleo diet in a 1985 "landmark" paper, said 25 scientific reviews confirm its long-term effectiveness.

"Millions of people worldwide have been following the Paleo diet for more than a decade, suggesting that it is indeed sustainable and healthy," Cordain said.

Cordain points out that USDA-sanctioned vegan diets also restrict entire food groups, and USDA guidelines support Paleo diet goals of reducing consumption of refined grains and sugars, as well as processed foods. Furthermore, he said the vitamin content of wild and domestic plant and animal foods is nearly identical.

## MEAT CUTTING & CUSTOM PROCESSING

BEEF • PORK • SHEEP  
• WILD GAME PROCESSING • CURING  
SMOKING • JERKY • SMOKED SAUSAGE



**E.O.M.S.**  
EASTERN OREGON MOBILE SLAUGHTER  
253 Hermiston Ave., Hermiston, OR 97838  
(541) 567-2011

## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!

Thank you to my loyal customers.

## DESERT COBBLER SHOE & BOOT REPAIR

• Purses • Belts • and Much More!

120 NE 3rd St. • Hermiston • 541-567-2008

- IRRIGATION ENGINEERING
- WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- WATER RIGHTS & WELL DESIGN
- CONSTRUCTION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- WIRELESS NETWORK ENGINEERING

(541) 567-0252 IRZ.COM

**IRZ ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS**  
A LINDSAY COMPANY

Optimizing Water Resources Through Technology

ONIONS FRESH FROM OUR FARM DAILY.

**RIVER POINT FARMS**

FARM-FRESH ♦ SUSTAINABLE

115 W. Hermiston Avenue, Suite 240 Hermiston, OR 97838 | Office: 541-567-4781 | www.riverpointfarms.com

**RUGGED, RELIABLE, RED ... AND THAT'S NO BULL!!!**

**Bonney's PRESENTS:**

**Branson TRACTORS**

**BULL RIDING TOUR**  
May 13th 2017  
AT THE UMATILLA CO. FAIR GROUNDS

0% Interest All Models

www.BonneysAg.com 541-922-1213 OPEN MON - SAT

OR UP TO **\$4000 CASH REBATE**