

## Reducing Food Waste in Ontario's Produce Industry EarthFresh Foods – A Case Study

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As part of the Ontario Produce Marketing Association's (OPMA) food waste reduction initiative, Value Chain Management International (VCMI) worked with EarthFresh Foods and growers to identify ways to reduce waste by increasing the quality and value of table potatoes, from field to consumer.

The case study, the first of four being developed during the project, describes how tools and techniques presented at workshops hosted by OPMA help businesses reduce all types of waste. This is because food waste is a visible symptom of wider opportunities to improve business performance.

The case study describes causes found to influence the production, handling, storage and grading/packing of table potatoes, and how these causes can be managed to enable table potatoes to be marketed strategically. This results in producers and downstream businesses having the opportunity to increase revenues and reduce costs in ways that are not otherwise possible. Examples of what is achievable from proactively managing the determinants of quality and value include the fact that a 29 per cent increase in pack-out rate\* equates to a 74 per cent increase in grower margin. On a 50,000 lb load of potatoes, this amounts to a \$6,000 increase in grower returns. Potatoes typically cost \$4,000 an acre to grow.

Tom Hughes, President of EarthFresh, stated, "EarthFresh is very pleased with the results of the OPMA potato study undertaken in cooperation with Value Chain Management International. We feel that everyone can improve their potato operations in some way. This study shows how important it is to try to do even the little things correctly; and that, if you succeed, the rewards can be very substantial. Thank you to both VCMI and the OPMA for producing such an inspiring report."

Click [here](#) to access the full case study.

The three remaining case studies in development include those of a retailer, distributor and producer/packer. Updates will be made as the project progresses at [theopma.ca](http://theopma.ca).

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\*Pack-out rate is the percentage of potatoes from a specific shipment (usually a 50,000lb load) that meets customers' specifications. Potatoes that do not meet customer specifications for size and quality are called the culls. The more culls that are graded from a shipment due to size and quality issues, the lower the pack-out rate.

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