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## PRODUCE NEWS & UPDATES

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**PRODUCE NEWS** 

## Potato Farmers, Specialty Crop Growers See Record \$2.5B in USDA Funding

Kam Quarles, CEO of the National Potato Council and a co-chair of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, spoke with The Packer about the challenges and opportunities facing U.S. potato growers.

At a time when potato and other specialty crop farmers face a multitude of challenges in an increasingly competitive market, some relief came this week from USDA to the tune of \$2.5 billion dollars. To learn more about the current climate of challenges and opportunities for U.S. potato growers, The Packer spoke Wednesday with Kam Quarles, CEO of the National Potato Council and a co-chair of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance.

**Editor's note: The following has been edited for length and clarity**. You've described the combined USDA's Farm Service Agency's Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) and the reconciliation bill or "Big Beautiful Bill's" \$2.5 billion cash allocation to specialty crops as "mind blowing." Let's start with MASC. What can you tell us about how this came to be and how it's impacting farmers? **Quarles:** This all started in back in November of last year. Congress recognized that growers — Title 1 growers, or what we call the program crops — were dealing with some historic economic challenges around production of their commodities.

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