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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEALTHY GROWN BRAND: THE WWF/WPVGA/UW COLLABORATION STORY

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The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA), and the University of Wisconsin (UW) have worked since 1996 to identify and accelerate adoption of pest, crop, and farm management practices that would reduce the ecological footprint of potato production in Wisconsin. The project designated targets and timetables for the elimination of specific high-risk pesticides while increasing the adoption of biologically based Integrated Pest Management (bioIPM) systems for the industry. Through this effort, the Wisconsin potato industry achieved a 21 percent overall reduction of toxicity in the system from 1995 to 1999 (toxicity values for each pesticide are determined by the relative environmental and human risk they pose), and a 37% reduction of 11 specifically targeted high-risk pesticides. Other collaboration goals include ecosystem restoration, biodiversity, and soil and water quality efforts.

Recognizing that bioIPM systems and other best management practices (BMPs) have to be ecologically and economically sustainable, collaboration partners committed to identify market based incentives to reward grower's progress in reducing the environmental impacts from potato farming. Therefore, in August of 2000, the Collaboration started work on a fresh market potato eco-standard. Collaboration measurement methods provided a solid foundation its development. In 2001 a new ecolabel, Protected Harvest, owned by an independent non-profit organization was introduced. Wisconsin potatoes are the first product certified under the Protected Harvest label and are marketed under the brand "Healthy Grown". The WWF panda logo on Protected Harvest certified bags draws consumers attention to the stringent production standards required for certification. This year (2002) marks the second growing season for "Healthy Grown"/Protected Harvest potatoes.

For more information about the project, visit the Collaboration website at <http://ipcm.wisc.edu/bioIPM>.