

Mondstuk van die Suid-Afrikaanse aartappelbedryf • Mouthpiece of the South African potato industry

# CHIPS

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**MANAGING CRISES THROUGH  
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Kultivars wat op  
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# The Heart Mark:

## The most important statement of approval for potatoes yet

By Immaculate Zinde

It is reported that in May 2012, world leaders committed to reducing global mortality rates resulting from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025. At the time, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) were accountable for nearly half of all NCD deaths, making them the world's number one killer (Figure 1).

With the emergence of Covid-19, CVDs have turned into many people's nightmare. The ideal of reducing NCDs by 25% may just be out of reach in the set timeline. The need for the CVD community to unite in the fight against these diseases and reduce the global disease burden, has become increasingly important.

The Heart Mark endorsement programme is part of ongoing efforts by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa (HSFSA) to reduce the number of deaths from preventable heart disease and stroke in South Africa. The endorsement programme forms part of a health-enabling environment, offering consumers a tool that makes choosing healthier foods easier.

### Heart health matters

Even with robust informative campaigns, the press has still managed to find angles that discredit the goodness of potatoes. For this reason, the endorsement of potatoes by the HSFSA as a heart-healthy product when consumed in a healthy manner, with skin on and dressed in quality herbs and spices,

bodes well in efforts to debunk myths and negative perceptions. In a 2019 consumer study, 66% of respondents said they would consume potatoes more often if they knew they were healthy, while 20% of respondents were indecisive, and 14% of the respondents said they enjoy potatoes regardless.

The marketing division of Potatoes South Africa (PSA) intends to utilise the month of September to create awareness through its multitude of digital assets, about the many nutritional benefits of potatoes, especially those linked to managing and curbing heart disease. This will culminate in a 360-degree marketing communication plan on 29 September – World Heart Day. This year's theme is #UseHeartToConnect.

The theme, #UseHeartToConnect, is about using knowledge, compassion and influence to make sure you, your loved ones and the communities you are a part of have the best chance at living heart-healthy lives. It's about connecting with our own hearts, making sure we're fuelling and nurturing them as best we can, and using the power of

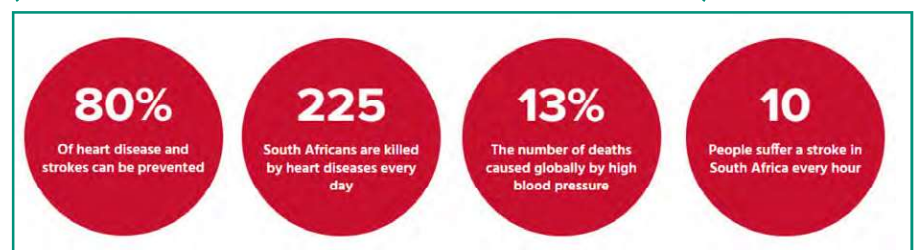


The certificate which confirms that PSA may use the Heart Mark logo on all of its marketing and promotional materials.

digital platforms to connect every heart, everywhere.

PSA's marketing campaign to extract value from the endorsement for 2021 is themed #WeHeartAmazambane which,

Figure 1: Impact of cardiovascular diseases in South Africa. (Source: The Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa).



when loosely translated, means “we love potatoes”. The campaign aims to position potatoes as a heart-healthy food to emphasise the importance of a healthy diet, while showing compassion for

those affected by Covid-19. The division is working closely with the HSFSa to align key messages, identify influencers and roll out a digital campaign alongside media engagement and publicity. These


efforts will be supported by radio and television campaigns between 1 and 30 September 2021.

### How potatoes improve heart health

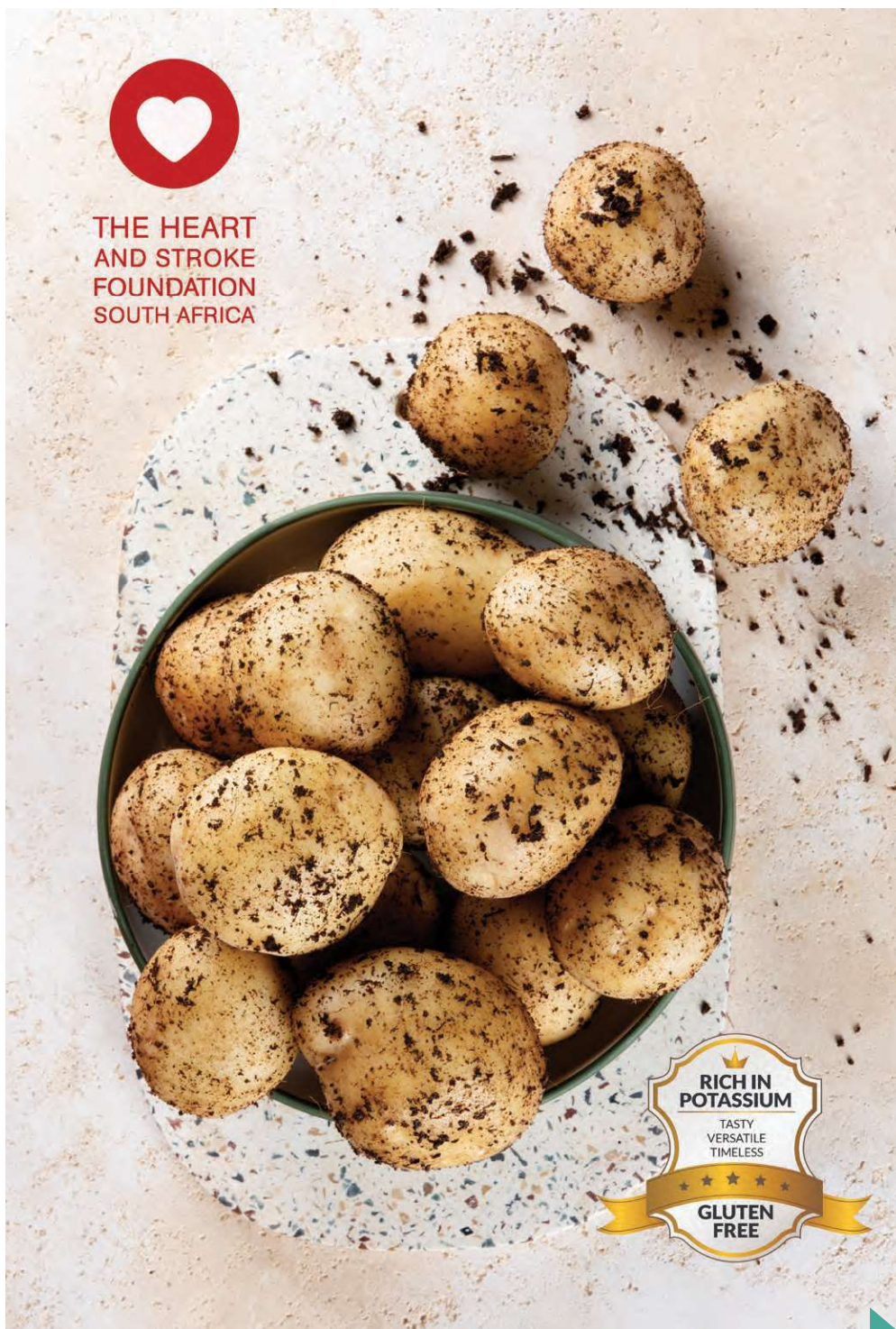
The fibre, potassium, Vitamin C and Vitamin B of potatoes, coupled with the lack of cholesterol, help maintain heart health. Potatoes contain more potassium than any other vegetables. Potassium plays a crucial role in regulated heart rate, smooth muscle contraction, blood pressure control, as well as optimal nervous system and heart function. Potatoes contain significant amounts of fibre, which helps lower the total amount of cholesterol in the blood, thereby decreasing the risk of heart disease.

Some evidence suggests that potatoes might help reduce inflammation and constipation. Although it is not proven that inflammation causes CVD, it is common among heart disease and stroke patients and is thought to be a sign or atherogenic response. Potatoes contain several minerals and plant compounds that may help lower blood pressure.

“The shocking statistics that can be decreased if we are mindful of our health, are testament that something needs to be done. We work towards the prevention of heart disease on the one hand and suggest healthy and nutritious food options on the other, further driving conversation around the role potatoes play in heart health,” says Dr Bianca van der Westhuizen, nutrition science manager at the HSFSa.

“Additionally, we have started a drive through which we aim to achieve a 25% reduction in rheumatic heart disease in those under the age of 25 years by 2025,” adds Dr van der Westhuizen. 

For more information and references, contact Immaculate Zinde at email [immaculate@potatoes.co.za](mailto:immaculate@potatoes.co.za).



Potatoes contain significant amounts of fibre, which helps lower the total amount of cholesterol in the blood, thereby decreasing the risk of heart disease. (Photograph: Rikki Hibbert).