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Agriculture in the Stevens Point Area

Agriculture in America's heartland brings much more than food to the market. It creates jobs, influences communities, and generates a unique local culture. Here in the Stevens Point Area, known as the Central Sands, it provides a sandy soiled landscape ideal for vegetable production.

Get down to the roots of it.

Potatoes grown here in the golden sands aren't your ordinary spud. Here potatoes have a livelihood all their own. No matter the variety, potatoes are a cause for celebration with the annual Almond Tater Toot. Learn how this powerful agricultural product is grown and processed in Central Wisconsin by the Midwest's largest vertically integrated potato supplier, at the Russet Potato Exchange. Explore more of the science behind the end product by visiting the Hancock Agriculture Research Station, or touring Heartland Farms the nation's largest of potatoes to Frito-Lay.

Fueling more than food.

Think manure is just fertilizer? Discover how innovative practices are turning the endless supply into energy, fueling homes, businesses and the Ocean Spray Cranberries processing facility, one of the world's largest cranberry processing plant in the world.

The true local flavor.

Discover the true flavor of Central Wisconsin and taste the locally grown seasonal produce at the downtown Stevens Point farmers market May through October, a staple in the community for more than 150 years. Understanding and utilizing the local flavor is more than a fad – it is a major part of our local economy. More work to connect local growers to the community has been taking place through the Central Rivers Farmshed, who produces the Central Wisconsin Fresh Farm Atlas and provides educational workshops throughout the year.

Just the facts.

It ranks first in the state of Wisconsin for production of potatoes, sweet corn, and processed snap beans and ranks second in green peas and carrot production. The region is home to more than 1,000 farms and over 280,000 acres used for agricultural production.

In addition to vegetable production, Milk serves as a major agricultural niche with 12,900 cows producing 27 million gallons of milk annually. Portage County serves as host to 3,700 head of beef cattle and 5,000 hogs annually. Not to mention it also produces \$16.3 million in grain and \$8.8 million in cranberry output each year.

Farms in Portage County, 99% of which are family owned, cover 55% of the county's land. Agriculture pays over \$32 million in taxes and accounts for \$1.11 billion in business sales (more than 18% of the county's economic activity).

On a national level, Wisconsin leads the United States in the number of organic dairy and beef farms. Wisconsin ranks first in the nation for production of cheese (2.6 billion pounds), ginseng (gross income up to \$20 million), cranberries (4.4 million barrels), snap beans (301,000 tons), milk goats (46,000 head), and oats (7.1 million bushels). It ranks second nationally for production of milk, milk cows, carrots, and peas.