



## Lebanese potatoes: better tuber, better gastronomy



When I first traveled to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon to advise local potato producers, I knew nothing about the gastronomic wonders they prepare there with various ingredients including, by the way, the tuber of my interest. The potato is key in Lebanon to make hummus, tabuleh, and some homemade empanadas called kibbet that I was lucky to try. But growing potatoes in Bekaa is not easy. The soil is alkaline, a common condition throughout the Middle East; areas of Spain, such as Murcia and areas of northeastern Brazil. In these soils organic matter is scarce; The cation exchange capacity is reduced, with the presence of calcium carbonate that hinders the uptake of micronutrients such as zinc and iron and water infiltration. It takes a special fertilization that acidifies the soil and helps the plant to take the available nutrients increasing the productivity and quality of the potato. Best thing to do? A mineral nutrition program for alkaline soil with Ultrasol® Magnum fertilizer line by crop and by phenological stages. With this support, Bekka producers hope to continue increasing their production and providing excellent tubers to the sophisticated cuisine of their country and the Arab world. I do not read in Arabic, but, fortunately, the recipes of the stews that I liked most in Bekaa, are in English. I recommend a homelet of potatoes and fennel.