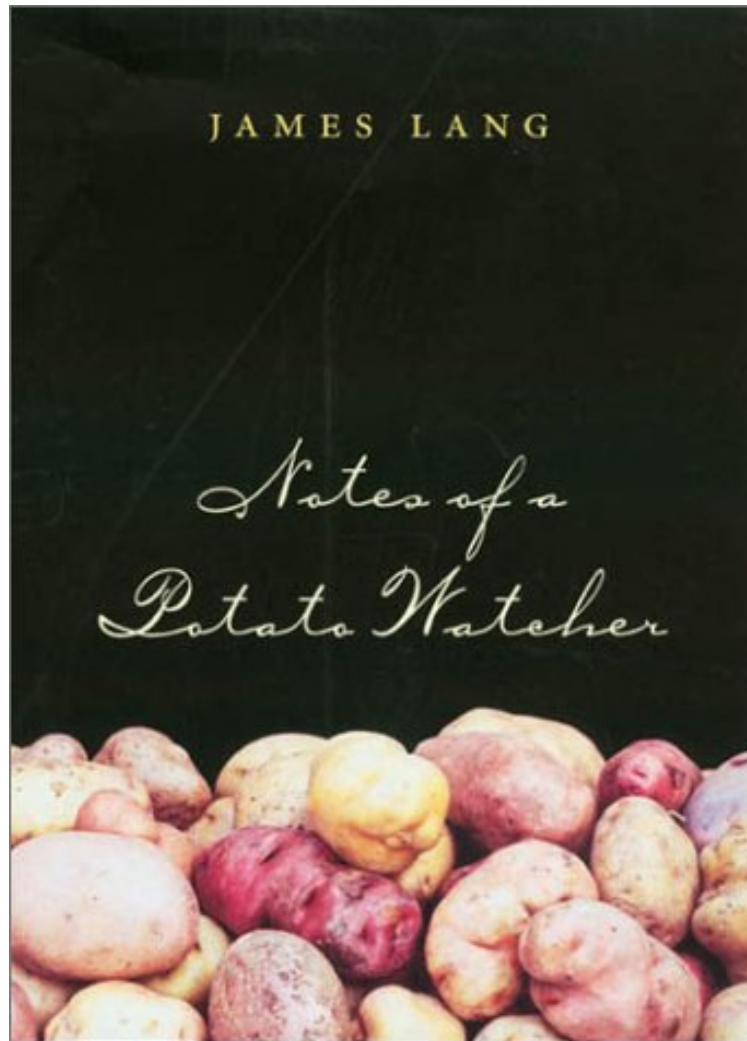


(Mobile book) Notes of a Potato Watcher (Texas AM University Agriculture Series)

Notes of a Potato Watcher (Texas AM University Agriculture Series)

James Lang

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James Lang : Notes of a Potato Watcher (Texas AM University Agriculture Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Notes of a Potato Watcher (Texas AM University Agriculture Series):

The potato has a larger story to tell than its humble status suggests. In this fascinating account of the potato and its role in human historyand the human futureJames Lang tells that story. Combining biology and social science, he describes the origins of cultivated potatoes and how they spread as a staple throughout the world; the many ways to propagate,

store, and harvest potatoes; and the crops potential for feeding a hungry planet. Along the way, Lang also muses on art and agriculture, the stars and ancient peoples, and the cycles of time; he reflects on famine and demography, describes village-based, farmer field schools, and looks at the role the potato plays in feeding China. Native to the New World, the potato was domesticated by Andean farmers, probably in the Lake Titicaca basin, almost as early as grain crops were cultivated in the Near East. Full of essential vitamins and energy-giving starch, the potato has proved a valuable world resource. Curious Spaniards took the potato back to Europe, from whence it spread worldwide. Today, the largest potato producer is China, with India not far behind. To tell the potato's story, Lang has done fieldwork in South America, Asia, and Africa. From the many potato projects studied, Lang learned a simple, direct lesson: how to address basic problems with practical solutions. Whether the problem is seed production, pest management, genetic improvement, or storage, projects take the diversity imposed by place and by farming traditions as a starting point. In agriculture, one size does not fit all. Lang's grasp of the social and technological issues involved is formidable; his revisionist thoughts on the origins of agriculture are convincing. *Notes of a Potato Watcher* explains how to think globally, act locally can actually be applied. Here is a book that anyone interested in potatoes, development, and small farms will not want to miss, a book that explains why the potato was not the culprit in the Irish famine, a book that shows why solutions must begin at home.

About the Author James Lang is associate professor of sociology and former director of the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of four other books, including *Feeding a Hungry Planet*, which is about rice production, and *Inside Development in Latin America*, which is about community-focused, self-help projects.