

BOSTON POTATO Co LTD
 PREPACK, GRADING & MARKETING
 FOR POTATOES

Boston Potato Company Ltd

Supplier Newsletter

Boston Potatoes - Investing for the Future

Boston Potato Company has recently undertaken significant investment in the factory to increase capacity in line with customer demands.

This has involved the installation of a completely new packing line, as well as a major upgrade to an existing line.

The new line has the capacity to wash and pack approx 23,000 tonnes in its first year, and has been fitted with flexible packing machinery, allowing it to handle both 'roll stock' and 'form-fill' packaging types. This means that it can cope with different products from both the new potato and maincrop lines, allowing it to be used to capacity throughout the year, despite any seasonal variations in order patterns.



LEFT: The barrel washer on the new packing line at Boston Potatoes.

Our existing dirty packing line has been upgraded by the addition of a washer and bypass belt which improves its flexibility. The packing end has been upgraded to allow both pre-packed

'roll stock' and loose flow lines to be handled.

Together, this investment has increased our packing capacity by over 20% and illustrates our commitment to the potato industry in the UK.

The lines were installed by Herbert Engineering and our own engineers in early December, and were operational just in time for Christmas, where the additional capacity & flexibility came in very useful.

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Seed Deliveries and RUCCIP Rules

While most seed is likely to have already been delivered, we felt that it might be useful to remind our suppliers to check *all* seed deliveries carefully *before* unloading to ensure that the goods delivered are as described, and are free from any problems.

Under RUCCIP rules you have 6 working hours to register any concerns with seed potatoes delivered by road. Any loads received that are found to be outside the agreed description should not be unloaded.

Boston Potato Company Ltd will not routinely inspect seed purchased from ourselves or our agents on delivery at the customer. However, in the event of a specific query, our Agronomist will be happy to come and inspect a particular batch or delivery.

If you have any queries on seed deliveries in general, please do not hesitate to contact or

Suppliers are always welcome

In the months before Christmas we had the opportunity to show many of you round our packing facilities at Kirton Holme near Boston.

We value these visits as a chance to explain our operation, and how our factory differs from others you may have seen.

We'd like to remind you that our suppliers are always welcome to visit us and look around. Simply give us a call to sort out the details.

VARIETY REQUIREMENTS AND PLANNING

As our business continues to grow, the planning of raw material supply becomes more important. Many of you will have already spoken to Jeremy and/or Richard about your production plans for next year, and in many cases this has resulted in areas or volumes being agreed with suppliers.

We hope this will help to accommodate your requirements in terms of movement periods and planning, while giving us increased security.

Following this exercise we hope to view much more crop in the field and in store for the 2004 harvest year, and once planting is underway,

we will be contacting you to arrange visits. In the meantime, following feedback from the last newsletter we felt it would be useful to give you an overview of our customer's current variety requirements for their products.

White Potatoes

Whites and Bakers account for the bulk of our volume, with the main varieties being *Estima* and *Marfona*. *Saxon*, *Sante* and *Cara* make up the balance, with the popularity of *Saxon* increasing. *Remarka*, *Orla*,

Melody and *Vales Sovereign* are also acceptable to all of our customers.

One key change for the 2004 growing season is that *Pentland Squire* can no longer be used in products.

We have a limited market for *Pentland Squire* and *Nadine* with other customers, but as these are not used by all, tonnages are limited. Therefore we'd ask you to please advise us if you are growing a significant quantity of either of these in 2004.

The normal size splits for white varieties are 50-65 mm and 65-85 mm, but we can sometimes find outlets for <50 mm depending on quality.

Red Potatoes

Desiree remains the main red variety we pack, however for general red packs, *Shannon*, *Claret* and *Red Gem* are also acceptable. Not all of our customers accept *Romano*, but we have some markets for it. The most common size split for red potatoes is 50-70 mm.

Loose-skin New Potatoes

Maris Peer and *Carlingford* account for the bulk of produc-

tion, although other varieties are approved. Please speak to us about any specific crops. There is a wide range of products that utilise loose-skinned potatoes, with size ranges from 20 mm up to 55/60 mm.

Set-skin Salad Potatoes

Maris Peer, and *Nicola* are the main varieties used for these packs. Please speak to us about exact variety/size requirements for salad crops.

Specific Named Varieties

Maris Riper (50-65 mm), *King Edward* (60-65 mm), *Desiree* (50-70 mm) and *Charlotte* (25-40 mm) all have named packs with at least one of our customers. The usual sizes required are shown in brackets, but these may vary according to product, customer and season.

Please remember that this article presents a guide for use when planning crops, and does not represent a direct summary of any customer's specification. Actual size requirements may be subject to change.

In the future we will consult with suppliers as to any forthcoming changes as soon as we are aware of them.

VIVALDI and ALMERA

Following successful crops and trials of these varieties in previous seasons, we are continuing to increase production of these varieties in line with our marketing strategy.

Vivaldi is gaining a lot of following, and we are expanding our area of production this season. Crops are generally targeted at the 50-65 mm size.

Almera is a promising new variety. Following successful trials in 2003 we have increased the area in 2004. The required size is 50 mm +, with most of the crop aiming for the 65-85 mm baker market.

KEY POINTS FOR 2004:

- **Pentland Squire no longer acceptable for our main customer.**
- Some new varieties added to list.
- Increasing the UK area of *Vivaldi*.
- Most varieties remain unchanged.

★ Boston Potatoes Team Star Award ★

To reward our staff who are so important to our continued success, Boston Potatoes introduced the Team Star Award towards the end of last year.

This reward for commitment and performance is open to all contracted staff with a full attendance record for the month in question.

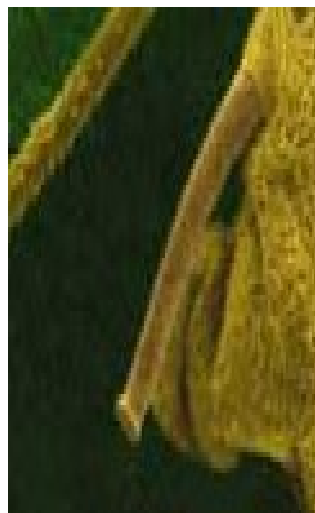
Staff are selected by votes from their colleagues and managers.

The winner receives a Weekend Break to Europe together with £250 spending money. The two runners up each receive £200 in vouchers.

The scheme has been well received since its establishment, with the past winners being:
and

The next winner will be announced shortly.

Can you identify this?



Now that the holiday season has passed and many of us have overindulged in the festive spirit, we thought it might be good to get the old brain cells working.

Therefore we thought we'd pose a question, which is simply this... "What is shown in this photograph?" All will be revealed in the next issue.

P.S.: The picture has been stretched, just to make things a little bit harder!

CROP PROTECTION PAGE



Fungicide Use Survey

Dow AgroSciences and potato-crop.com are currently canvassing opinions on blight control strategies and product use. They are seeking the opinions of both advisors and growers in the UK industry, to get a thorough understanding of this key area. If you would like to get involved, please contact your local Dow AgroSciences representative, or (Mobile: _____, e-mail: _____).

Support the NRoSO

The National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO) now has well over 3,500 members according to the December 2003 edition of *Spotlight*, the BASIS Newsletter.

Annual membership of the scheme is £15 per head, and members undergo Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This is similar to the way in which BASIS Registration works for advisors and

agronomists.

Members of the NRoSO will have to collect 30 'CPD Points' over a three year period. Points are awarded for attending training sessions and for receiving information from other sources. By choosing an ongoing CPD scheme, rather than a one-off exam members of the NRoSO should keep up to date with best practice.

Both _____ and _____ are members of the BASIS Professional Register, for which they must collect CPD points.

The NRoSO forms part of the Voluntary Initiative. Details and membership application forms can be obtained by telephoning _____, on the web at www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk or <http://nroso.nptc.org.uk/>

Pesticide Disposal Campaign

The Voluntary Initiative's *Obsolete Pesticides Disposal Campaign* began on 14 November 2003 and runs until the end of March 2004. This represents the best opportunity to remove obsolete pesticides from farms. Having obsolete products in store is illegal, and may result in prosecution, as well as failure to comply with assurance schemes such as Assured Produce. The HSE has already said that it may conduct random audits of farm chemical stores in the summer of 2004. Full details (including participating waste contractors) can be found on the VI's website at <http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/disposal/default.asp>.

1. Identify what expired products you have (The 31st Dec 2003 was the use-up deadline for many products withdrawn under the EU review).
2. List the appropriate MAFF/MAPP Nos. for all expired stocks.
3. Call one of the waste disposal contractors participating in the campaign.
4. The contractor will provide a quote for the job. To keep costs down, requests will be logged and amalgamated with others in the area into a 'milk round'.
5. Once collected, the contractor will provide a confirmation note as evidence of professional waste disposal.

Syngenta Product Meetings

Syngenta are holding a number of Grower meetings to discuss the application and stewardship of pesticides at planting, particularly Nemathorin. These will also allow you to answer any questions you may have about Amistar application. The venues which have been confirmed so far are:

7th January: Barnham Broom, Norwich.

20th January: The Postchers Inn, Kirton Holm, Boston.
22nd January: Ludlow Racecourse

If you would like more details, or to book a place, please speak to your local Syngenta representative, or contact (Mobile: _____, or e-mail: _____).

Use of Aldicarb for 2004

Please remember that Aldicarb (Temik 10G) MUST NOT be used on potatoes supplied to Boston Potato Company Ltd. The only derogation is where it is required for the control of free living nematodes where there is a history or strong risk of Spraying in crops. If this is an issue for you and you would like to use Temik, **please consult us first.**

All of our potatoes are included

in routine residue analysis, and any unaccounted-for residues can cause severe problems for the whole supply chain.

There are a number of nematocides available, which should be selected according to target, and used as part of an integrated control programme. If you would like more information, please contact



Below & right: Don't be caught out with obsolete pesticide products. If in doubt about a products' approval status, please call.



Recent Vivaldi Press Coverage

In the last issue we said that the variety Vivaldi was attracting strong consumer recognition and media coverage.

This has continued in recent months with articles in several publications, including *Olive* and *BBC Good Food Magazine*. Vivaldi also had a mention in *The Times Magazine*. These articles raise the profile of Vivaldi

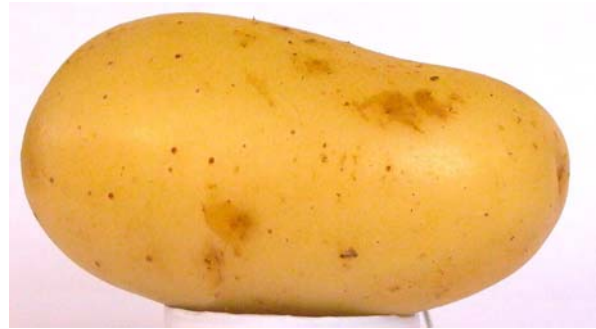
as a named variety, and the recipe ideas are designed to compliment the versatile cooking characteristics and prove the superior eating qualities of the variety, which in turn helps to drive repeat purchasing of the variety.

We have included a copy of the most recent article from the *BBC Good Food Magazine* with this newsletter,

and more activity is planned in 2004, including an article in a major tabloid newspaper.

We've always keen to hear how these articles are received, so if you spot a refer-

Above: Vivaldi is a bright potato with a fantastic taste.



ence in a newspaper or magazine, please let us have your feedback.

Meet the Technical Team

Hopefully by now I have met, or at least spoken, to most of you. In order to give you a better understanding of our business, I asked each member of the technical team to introduce themselves as briefly as possible.

I remain the first point of contact for supply related technical issues.

I began my career working for the Albert Fisher Group in Scotland, where I moved from soft fruit & carrots to potatoes. I joined Boston Potato Company nine months ago from where I was Technical Manager for the account. My role is to improve our knowledge of the crops that are supplied to us, and to help suppliers with any technical issues they may have. I'm married and when not walking my dog

I joined the company in November 2002, after previously working for British Sugar, and . Born and bred in Lincolnshire on a farm, I went to school in Branston before studying at Harper Adams . I work closely with Sainsbury's to improve store handling of product and oversee our imported suppliers. Outside interests include shooting and working my pair of mad spaniels.

I'm the newest addition to the team, joining in Dec 2003, from where I covered brassicas and stone fruit as QA/ Technical Manager. I previously worked in other sectors of the food industry after graduating from the University of Lincolnshire. My main role is to ensure the assessment of loads at intake and the quality of



Left to right:

finished product leaving the packing site whilst managing the QC team. When not at work I can usually be found with my event horse which I compete March through October.

My background is practical agriculture and farm management. I had 12 year working in the seed potato industry and joined Hoche in 1997 as Technical Manger, providing technical expertise to our customers and suppliers. I currently head the Technical Team but I have set up a team to carry the company forward. and will take on all day

to day management decisions later this year and will report directly to (MD). I will reduce my working week to three days and concentrate on special projects from August.

I have been with the company for 18 months, coming from a role in Retail Management & Training. My main role in the Technical Department is to check Field Records and analyse quality information. I also collate statistics, arrange MRL sampling, and give support to the other members of the team.

BPC WATER MANAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

The British Potato Council is actively raising the profile of the new EU Water Framework Directive, improving water management, and raising the profile of the new Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) process.

This is a large area, and the number of different threads mean that people often switch off from what can be a less than sexy subject. However, the new EU Framework adopts the management of river basins as the building blocks for a coordinated approach to the protection of surface and ground water, covering environment, chemical & quantitative protection as well as influencing other uses of water. The main goal of the new legislation is to make 'Europe's waters cleaner' while 'getting the citizens involved'.

It is this public consultation that

the BPC is encouraging growers to get involved with. The Water Framework Directive was adopted into UK law on 22nd December, but the UK has until 2012 to reach full compliance under the legislation.

Despite the fact that agriculture uses a mere 0.8% of the total water used, it forms a key part of the review process, not least because every abstraction licence is now up for review, and the criteria for licences are changing.

So, what can you do to protect this vital resource? Firstly, if you haven't already done so, check out the Water Management section of the BPC's website at www.potato.org.uk. This provides a summary of what is happening, as well as lots of links to other relevant sites, including the Environment Agency, the EU, and the

UK Irrigation Association.

The EA is managing the Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) process, which will eventually see a management committee set up for every water course. Their website will help you to identify which catchment/s you farm in, and whether a committee has already been established. From this you can make contact with the farming representative to make your views and needs known. Many committees have still to be set up, and the BPC is keen to ensure that as many agricultural representatives as possible come from the potato sector. More information on how you can get involved is available from the BPC, the EA, or your local water company. You can also obtain water audits from your local water company website.

The UK Irrigation Association (UKIA) is holding a conference on 24th February, which represents the ideal opportunity to become more familiar with how these changes could affect you. The BPC has also negotiated a discount rate for levy payers. For more information on the conference or any other aspect of water management, please contact info@ukia.org.uk (Tel: [01223300000](tel:01223300000), e-mail: info@ukia.org.uk).

Hopefully by demonstrating best practice and improving ongoing communication with the Environment Agency, the industry will be in a stronger position to make its case and preserve necessary water use to continue to produce quality crops.

NOTE: The information provided above is given in good faith. However, always check legal requirements with an expert.

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Thanks for the feedback...

Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback (both written and verbal) on the last newsletter. We have tried to respond to many of the comments we received with this issue, including those about the print quality. Hopefully these have been addressed with this issue.

We are in the process of organising a

grower meeting, and as soon as we have more details we will pass these on. We look forward to a successful season for the whole industry.

As always, if there is anything you would like us to cover in a future issue, or if you have a specific query you'd like to discuss, please feel free to contact us.

**EVERYONE AT BOSTON POTATOES
WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR
SUPPLIERS A HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR IN
2004**



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