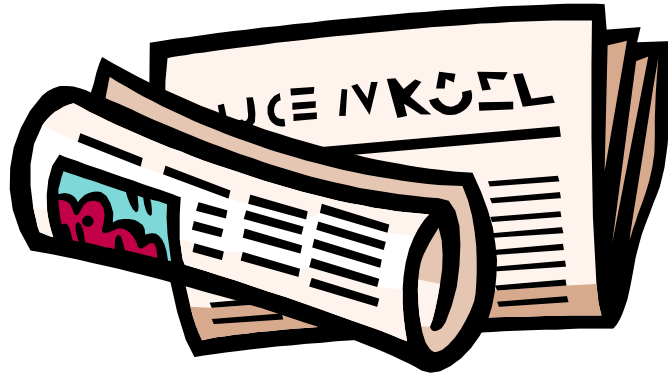


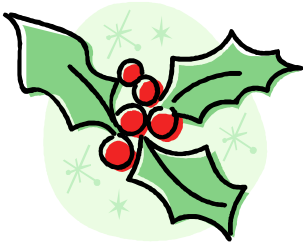
# PRE



Tel. [REDACTED]

Fax. [REDACTED]

**company name and logo here...**



## CHRISTMAS POTATO NEWSLETTER

20<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2000

### Prepared Vegetable Facility

As part of our ongoing diversification programme, the new processing plant was installed in July and was fully operational by August. The facility is an interim stage investment that peels, slices and dices both potatoes and carrots. The customer base of the enterprise includes major food manufacturers such as [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Initial feedback from all customers has been very positive and encouraging

[REDACTED] the plant is now running at maximum capacity on two shifts. We are delighted with our customers' reaction to this new venture and their confidence in us to be able to deliver the quality and service levels expected of a major supplier. Phase two of the project, a new purpose built green field facility, is well under way with a target production run date of August next year.

### Premiere Club

This is the first season of [REDACTED], a formalised arrangement of supply between [REDACTED] and a selection of committed growers (selected on the criteria of size, varietal spread, spread of movement through year, and attitude). So far growers have seen some of the benefits of working closer with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] has seen the benefits of the Premier Club agreement [REDACTED]

### Trade Summary

The market remains bullish, although talk of increased interest in imports by the British Potato Council has caused some people to stop and think. The expectation in the trade last week was that the price would pull back a little but in practice increased Christmas tonnages seem to be holding prices steady. [REDACTED]

## Storage Quality Outlook

We are now well into our programme of [REDACTED] Wash-ups which are used to monitor the quality of stocks out of store, and to help schedule movement of stocks throughout the year. The results of this intensive sampling are recorded on a central database, which can be accessed across the company. This information helps [REDACTED]

In a season such as this it is hard to generalise, but as discussed [REDACTED] some samples are looking better than expected, while others are starting to show traces of black dot and silver scurf, and will need bringing forward in the programme in order to remain of suitable quality.

Material from ambient stores, especially that which was of poorer quality at lifting has not maintained skin finish, and the recent warm weather has prevented effective cooling. Several batches of product have recently been rejected as potential packing material from ambient store. The warm weather is also exacerbating any soft rots that may be present, especially where blight has been found (but not necessarily seen in the field). [REDACTED]

## Pesticide News

The Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) and the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department Agriculture Group have both issued consultation documents regarding proposed amendments to legislation, primarily targeting access to legislation and information.

The key proposals are designed to 'provide access to the public to the great majority of information supplied in connection with the regulatory system'. This would include information on:

- Experimental, provisional and full approvals
- Individual products, groups of products, and active ingredients
- Reviewed, amended and revoked approvals
- Applications for approval which have been refused
- Parallel imports for growers own use
- Applications
- Historic data under the Pesticides Safety Precaution Scheme and the Agriculture Chemicals Approval Scheme.

While the aim of increased transparency in the approvals process is clearly something to be welcomed, any changes obviously need to consider issues such as the willingness of genuine members of the public to gain information via a request system, and the potential misleading use of information by certain parties.

Copies of the consultation document are available from [REDACTED]

There have been a number of changes to the options available to growers for potato seed treatments, following the withdrawal of certain products and the removal of technical support for the sequential use of other products in a treatment regime.

## New Fertiliser Information Published

MAFF has republished its Fertiliser recommendations, commonly known in the industry by its publication number of RB209. The guide, now in its 7<sup>th</sup> Edition has taken some years to update, and the potato section has drawn from discussions from many areas, including a BPC consultation exercise. The new figures are still causing some debate. While the levels for P, K and Mg are still thought to be workable, the maximum recommendation for nitrogen has now been reduced from the previous maximum of 240 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> at an index of 0 on light sandy / silt soils. There are concerns that the new lower limit will be interpreted by some retailers and environmental groups as an absolute limit, while failing to supply sufficient nitrogen to demanding crops (such as Cara) on many lighter silts.

In order to promote the new recommendations, and to help growers and advisors in their understanding, a series of conferences has been organised. Copies of the new recommendations are available from HMSO.

## Quality Analysis

The biggest quality problems in the last couple of weeks have been the postproduction bruising and blackening of Desiree, and breakdown and soft rotting of late lifted and waterlogged potatoes. We have seen sporadic problems with blackening of Desiree

## And Finally...

All of us would like to take this opportunity to wish our friends and colleagues

***A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!***

