

Brush polisher for potatoes



A series of vegetable brush polishers that have been widely used to clean carrots, parsnips and other root vegetables, is now being used within the potato sector.

The machinery makes use of a different technique to conventional barrel type polishers, which rotate as vegetables pass through the drum. In the New Generation Polisher the brushes are located in a 'U' formation which oscillates, with each rocking motion turning the crop over to give full contact with the revolving brushes, according to manufacturers Tong Peal.

The new machine is available initially as a three-metre length model with ten brushes, capable

of handling up to 10 tonnes/hour within a stainless steel construction. Tong Peal says that demonstrations will be taking place in the main UK growing regions from this month.

Tong Peal's sales manager, Barry Ledger, said: "With a conventional washer only the produce in the bottom half of the barrel is cleaned and polished and so the top section of brushes are not in contact with the crop.

"Our Spanish partners, Martin Maq have developed a more efficient means of polishing which has less brushes meaning fewer working parts, a much simpler drive mechanism and therefore less maintenance costs."

Potato success for Cropaid

Horticultural antifreeze product Cropaid has undergone trials showing it to be successful in protecting potato plants from frost.

An Adas study exposed a number of potato plants to frost in a cabinet, with those treated by Cropaid NPA shown to be less severely damaged than those left untreated. On average, Cropaid NPA treated plants experienced 57% leaf area lost compared with 73% for untreated.

In tests Cropaid treated plants were found to emerge approximately one day ahead of untreated. This is said to indicate more rapid growth of sprouts after planting in a cold soil. There was also some indication that Cropaid advanced growth stage, and at six weeks emergence, increased vigour score.

Cropaid has also been shown to be effective in strawberry plants, and trials are expected to take place on a range of other horticultural products.

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