

CROP-AID PROVIDES FROST PROTECTION

ACCORDING to an interim report on trials carried out by ADAS, seed potatoes which were treated with a 'natural plant antifreeze' emerged a day ahead of untreated tubers and developing plants were more resistant to frost damage. The seed (Swift) was chitted to encourage rapid emergence and was shallow planted at the beginning of March in a silt soil at Terrington St Clement, Norfolk.

Plots were covered with fleece until full emergence when the initial seed treatment was followed up with a foliar application of Cropaid NPA. Growth measurements were taken a month later and on May 26th when six test plants were dug up and potted prior to exposure to frost in a cabinet at -3.5°C for 2 hours and 30 minutes.

While there were no statistical differences in emergence between untreated and treated plants, analysis of the data set as a whole showed that those treated with Cropaid were consistently ahead. Untreated plants had fewer leaves per stem though measurements of stem height were similar for all plots. After exposure to frost, all test plants showed signs of

damage but those treated with Cropaid appeared to be less severely affected (an average of 57% leaf area was lost compared with 73% for the untreated).

ADAS concedes that the frost resistance test was not carried out in ideal conditions and it is stressed that the data were not subjected to statistical analysis because there were too few replicates. The distributor of Cropaid claims that product activity is best demonstrated where plants are exposed to a gradual temperature decline.

The report on the trial concludes, nevertheless, that the results provide evidence of product activity to back up data from an earlier study which showed that Cropaid had improved frost resistance in strawberry plants. The effect on emergence indicates more rapid growth of sprouts even though seed was planted in cold soil some five weeks earlier than normal for the Terrington site. There was also some indication that treatment advanced growth stage (evident from increased leaf numbers) and vigour.

For details Call Cropaid Ltd on 01702 296888.