

# Producing Potatoes for the Washed Trade



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# Producing Potatoes for the Washed Trade

**A**lmost all potatoes sold in supermarkets are now in the washed form. This major change in the marketing of potatoes means that growers also have to make changes in the production of the crop. These start with the selection of the correct variety: Rooster is the one most in demand.



## Seed

- Use Certified Seed as a high yield of large tubers (50-80mm) is required.
- Dress the seed before planting with Pencycuron (monceren) to prevent Black Scurf and Silver Scurf on the daughter tubers. Disease blemishes on the skin are unacceptable.



## Land

- Ley ground is the best, otherwise keep as near ley as possible
- Better skin finish and better yields come from fresh land
- Large 82-86 cm drills help to retain moisture better and prevent greening.

## Fertilisers

- Work to a soil test. Ensure enough potash to reduce bruising
- High nitrogen applications will delay harvesting
- Magnesium levels, if too low can cause premature death of the haulms.



## Burning Off

- Don't burn off until there are some signs of natural die-back in the haulms
- In a dry season, beware uptake of diquat into the heel end of the tubers.

## Early Harvest

- Early harvesting is always desirable as it gives a more disease free skin finish but:
  - Skins must be mature
  - The tubers must have lost contact with the parent plant.



## Damage

- Mechanical damage and bruising are the cause of serious losses in washed potatoes.
- Harvesting late in cold wet soils is to be avoided
- Cushion all tuber drops during harvesting and grading.

## Tuber Dressing

- Tubers should be dressed going into store with T.B.Z for the control of Gangrene, Silver Scurf and Skin Spot



## Curing

- For long term storage, proper curing is essential.
- Ensure proper set skins at harvesting
- Dry tubers as quickly as possible after harvesting.
- Warm tubers to 14°C for 14 days to cure wounds
- Then lower temperature by half a degree per day, down to a holding temperature of about 5°C, depending on variety.

## Storage Temperature

- Hold at 4 - 6°C
- Inspect potatoes in store regularly
- Warm potatoes for two days before handling or grading.

For more information on producing or storing potatoes for the washed trade, contact your Teagasc Potato Adviser or Teagasc Office.