

# Potatoes in Practice 2009

## Seminars

### **‘Control of Potato Cyst Nematodes: an update on the implementation of the new EU Directive’**

**Jon Pickup, SASA, Roddinglaw Road, Edinburgh EH12 9FJ**

Directive (2007/33/EC) was passed by the European Council on 11 June 2007. This new PCN Directive replaces the previous 1969 Directive, laying out a legislative framework appropriate for the control of a quarantine pest across the European Union. It comes into force on 1 July 2010 and its aim is to minimise the spread of PCN with all potatoes that are planted after that date. Key points include a harmonised methodology for soil sampling which will be applied to classified seed potatoes and any other potatoes that will be moved from the place of production for planting. This will require more resources to be devoted to field sampling and laboratory testing. The 2007 Directive will also permit ware potatoes to be grown on infested land under an officially approved control programme.

Some of the provisions of the new PCN Control Directive are obligatory, whilst others allow some flexibility for local implementation. The Scottish Government consultation of 6 March to 5 June 2009 provided stakeholders with the opportunity to express views on various options in those areas where flexibility is available.

### **‘Store Management for Energy Efficiency’**

**Rod McGovern, Consultant, Environment and Design, SAC Consulting, Craibstone Estate, Bucksburn, Aberdeen AB21 9YA**

This session will discuss aspects of potato store management which will help to contain energy costs. Knowing how much energy is being used; ensuring efficient use of ventilation and refrigeration equipment; focusing on where the energy is being used and avoiding the main management pitfalls, will keep energy costs to a minimum. Much work has been done by the Potato Council and others on energy in potato storage. The location and results of this will be discussed. Solutions include: improving insulation, reducing air leakage, ensuring good uniformity of ventilation, checking the refrigeration coils, keeping the condenser coils as cool as possible, and minimising the demands on the fridge unit when boxes are loaded into the store. Alternative sources of energy generation which may be attractive to store managers will also be considered so reducing reliance on electricity from the National Grid. Wind energy is the most obvious source of power but for mixed farms that have access to food wastes biogas may be another option. Re-use of the heat extracted from the fridge may be an option in some situations if the grading area, warming facility or other area needing heat is located nearby. However care is needed to ensure that this does not decrease the efficiency of the fridge unit, forcing it to use more power to keep the potatoes cool.

### **‘Prospects for protecting potatoes – responding to pesticide regulations’**

**Rob Clayton, Potato Council**

The full Potato Council-funded ADAS report on the impact of the Pesticides Directive (91/414) is now available and the industry has made considerable progress in the last twelve months in terms of equipping growers for a reduced pesticide armoury.

This seminar brings growers up to date with the strategic planning that has been carried out on their behalf and looks at the scenarios and implications going forward. Focusing on the core areas of blight control, PCN management, weeds and slugs, the seminar will look at the research priorities and where funds will be concentrated to ensure growers retain access to practical solutions.

### **‘Onward into battle: *Dickeya* gets the upper hand’**

**Ian Toth, SCRI**

*Dickeya* spp. (formerly called *Erwinia chrysanthemi*) has been an increasing problem for potato production in Europe

for over 40 years. However, in the last five years some countries have seen a five-fold increase in financial losses (totalling over 25 million Euros in some cases) and up to a third of seed tubers lost or down-graded as a direct result of *Dickeya* contamination. To counter-attack, major new research initiatives are being set up. But is it too little too late? Do we in Britain have the necessary defences to stop the spread of *Dickeya* or might we also be too late? What implications does this have for those involved in seed imports and exports, as well as domestic seed and ware production, and what can the Potato Council's "Safe Havens Scheme" do to help protect the high health status of British seed? The latest findings and research on *Dickeya* in Europe will be discussed.