

Media release
SA Potatoes

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TOP TECHNOLOGY HELPS INDUSTRY GIANT

Australia's leading potato marketer, SA Potato Company, has linked with Compac Sorting Equipment in a move that sees both companies' take a leading position in the industry.

For SA Potato, moving from a mechanical sizer and reliance on other packhouses to the latest technology delivered by a Compac InVision 9000 blemish grader and sizer, has meant both independence and security in the knowledge that they have the latest technology on site.

Terry Brown, SA Potato's Operations Manager, says Compac's grader and sizer offers more efficiency for the 30+ year old company, which washes, packs and supplies potatoes for parent company Fruitorama, commanding a high percentage of the country's washed market.

The investment in technology was important for SA Potato, in an industry that is getting more technology-savvy. It is helping them address industry-wide issues such as over-supply and the corresponding under-cutting, and the efficiencies needed as potato operations decrease, amalgamate and expand.

The industry has changed throughout Australia, says Terry Brown. "Early on we had farmers who built their own packing sheds, but now it's become more streamlined and market-driven and we see fewer and fewer of these as the larger operations offer the economies of scale and throughput."

From a people perspective, being able to replace repetitive and time-consuming processes with smart technology has meant improved staff retention for SA Potato and enabled them to be deployed elsewhere in the operation.

"It's made it a lot easier on the graders, with Compac grading around 70% of our produce. It also ensures absolute accuracy in weight grading."

Compac Australia's Pari Padrevita says South Australia's potato industry is the most advanced in the world, with the latest technology and the quality of its produce. "We are very proud to be able to refer other countries to South

Australia as a reference site; and Compac frequently hosts visiting potato growers who want to see what the world leaders are doing.

“We’re seeing more uptake of technology, particularly as packhouses realise that Compac has a very deep understanding of the product and what packhouses need to handle the peculiarities of Australia’s washed potato varieties.”

Compac graders and sizers are also being adopted in Europe, through its Italian arm, Compac Sorma Europe, with installations in Italy and Germany.

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