

What's New

A regular series of advertorials for new products and services

Cover 'n Gro despite weather

A Whangarei-based company is offering a light weight poly-propylene cover to commercial growers. Cover 'n Gro is said to be handy for berryfruit, a range of plant seedlings, lettuce and other field grown crops.

The product's material is UV stabilized, and due to its extreme lightness can lie directly over seedlings and plants. Cover 'n Gro is re-usable and strong, and is also suitable for covering cloches. In winter, this cover should effectively protect plants from light frosts (to -5C). The company says that germination of seed beds can be optimised with Cover 'n Gro though into the spring.

For more information, contact George Plesky on 0-9-437-3196 or e-mail plesky@paradise.net.nz



Gawler River site a world leader

It's an industry that is struggling against over-supply and prices that would look more at home in 1985 than 2005, but despite this, potato growing and packing continues to be the backbone of the Australian vegetable industry.

It's also the domain of diehard individuals like Basil Mondello at Gawler River Produce, a company with more than 36 years under its belt and regarded as one of Australia's major packhouses.

He believes the answer lies in technology. Following extensive development of technology for the potato industry in Australia by Compac Sorting Equipment, Gawler River chose to install an eight lane Compac InVision 9000 blemish sorting system this season.

This marks the first sale of a fully integrated Compac InVision 9000 blemish sorting system for potato packing anywhere in the world.

"We put in eight new lanes of machinery from scratch and said we wanted it up and running in ten days. Everyone said it was impossible, but together we got it done and we haven't looked back.", said Basil

The blemish grader has been running for three months and consistently putting through 22 – 25 tonnes of washed potatoes an hour; more than double Gawler River's old mechanical sizer.

"It was running so well that we were tempted to push it along to see what it could do. We've given it a good workout running up to 30 tonnes an hour, and even putting through 17 tonnes on four lanes – and they were just flying through - so there's clearly bigger capability than we expected."

The investment in Compac technology has helped Gawler River reduce labour by 30-40% and improve production by 20-30%. These were key factors in Basil's decision to take the step, along with a desire for improved accuracy and better quality sizing- both big issues for the industry as supermarket chains become more specific in their requirements.

But, as the Gawler River site shows, Compac's blemish graders cope well with the range of Australian washed potato varieties and I believe we'll see more installations quite quickly as pack houses rise to meet the external demands of big supermarkets as well as the internal, bottom line-driven requirements of more production at less cost."

For more information, contact: Compac Sorting Equipment Ltd, PO Box 13516, Onehunga, Auckland. Ph: 0-9-634 0088; E-mail: info@compacsort.com

