

NEW CONCEPTS IN THE RETAIL AND PROCESSING POTATO MARKET AND NEW TARGETS IN POTATO BREEDING

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Grower and industry stakeholders need high quality improved varieties for the fresh and processing market segments. Stakeholders want new varieties suited to the demanding quality needs of each market segment. New varieties are needed which are also resistant to pests and diseases. In the new breeding programme in Europe, stakeholders have always had a key role in potato breeding, evaluation, and variety development efforts.

In the retail segment new varieties with good taste, long dormancy, skin finish, in particular, are in high demand. A premium-priced market exists for novelty varieties with those characteristics. All those characteristics needs to be stable in storage without using antisprout suppressant. Resistance to skinning, netting, and silver scurf are especially important. Novelty varieties (e.g. fingerlings, purple-skinned, blue-skinned, and multi-colored-flesh types) are growing in popularity in the high-value, direct-sale market. The organic sector is also a very rapidly increasing production and marketing segment that would benefit greatly from new varieties with high quality characteristics.

Some tools shall be used during clonal selection in a breeding programme.

In the processing sector the market of french fries and crisping varieties is quite stable and alternative products are in strong development. In Europe the new markets are: fresh-cut and pre-cooked potatoes. In that case the old way of evaluation of breeding material shall be improved using other traits than dry matter (starch) and reducing sugar content. In this case a strong cooperation is needed in fundamental research between food, physiology and genetic scientist in order to understand better the traits to be evaluated during clonal selection.