
FOREWORD

It is my duty and pleasure to welcome you all here today to this Special Potato Agronomy Symposium which is being presented by the Agronomy Society of New Zealand. The Potato Board would like to thank the Agronomy Society for arranging this function in conjunction with the 2nd National Potato Industry Convention.

In the past few months, the potato industry has been criticised through the news media on the quality of potatoes the industry offers for sale to consumers. A lot of this criticism is constructive and we, the potato industry would be wise to take heed. However, some criticism is quite mischievous and harmful to the industry and will do nothing to help the situation.

I believe that the news media have missed the main points concerning the potato industry. For instance, the potato growers of New Zealand have, during the last 10-12 years, undergone a radical restructuring of the industry. Under half of the growers have become redundant with no redundancy pay.

The most important point is, I believe, that today potatoes are the best value for money that the housewife can buy and I want to emphasise that point.

The research sector of the industry must bear some of the responsibility, some of the credit and some of the blame, whichever way you want to look at it, for this present state of the industry.

Over the years I have attended potato growers meetings and the subject of research has been discussed, there have been a few growers who have expressed the opinion that the potato industry does not need research. Every advance has produced more potatoes which has produced a surplus and everybody knows what happens when we have a surplus. I believe this is a negative viewpoint, and I would assure the research people that the majority of the potato growers are looking to you, the scientists, for a greater contribution to the potato industry. I believe the potato industry needs your help and with your assistance the potato industry can face the future with confidence.

Once again I would like to welcome you here today and, Mr Chairman, wish you, and the Agronomy Society, a successful day.

A.G. Wilcox
Chairman
N.Z. Potato Board
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