

Vegetable ~~Matters of~~ Fact

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POTATO

Cleaning Potato Machinery

- ◆ **PLANT PESTS AND WEEDS** will spread to new sites on dirty machinery
- ◆ **CLEAN MACHINERY** regularly to reduce the risk of spreading of pests and diseases.
- ◆ **DEVELOP CHECKLISTS** as a reminder to clean critical areas on each machine.
- ◆ **THINK SAFE** before inspecting or cleaning any machine.

Dirty machinery carries soil, seeds, and organic matter which may dislodge when the machine is next used and spread contamination to new sites.

For this reason, **used potato machinery** cannot leave control districts or enter other states unless certified free of soil and organic matter.

Regular cleaning of machinery creates a major protective barrier to the spread of soil-borne pests and diseases like Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN), Bacterial Wilt & Weeds. All equipment should be washed clean with high-pressure water before going to new paddocks.

On completion of cultivation, physically dislodged lumps of soil and debris attached to the machine **before wash down**.

PCN can be transferred in wet soil attached to wheels, tracks or parts of the machine that work in the ground. PCN can also be transferred in **dust** that can accumulate on many parts of the machine - engine bay, cabins and air intakes.

Given the diversity of possible contamination points, it is recommended that you develop **checklists** for each piece of machinery to use as a reminder.

Checklists make the inspection and cleaning process faster & easier, and when completed, dated and signed, form a **record of proof** that the machine has been cleaned to the required standard.



Organic matter lodged in joint



Pay particular attention to bearing ends



Check cleaning of difficult areas



Soil built up on steering linkage

Cleaning Potato Machinery

Routine cleaning will reduce the risk of spreading plant pests and diseases.

Safety

Before inspecting or cleaning any machine, it needs to be made safe. Procedures will vary but manufacturer and business guidelines should always be followed. Common sense should prevail, this includes;

- **Prevent the machine from moving.**
- **Lower raised implements to the ground.**
- **Remove the key so that it cannot be started.**
- **Secure free moving parts which may cause injury.**
- **Never rely on hydraulics when under a machine.**

Covers and guards

Covers, guards and inspection hatches will need to be removed and replaced for cleaning & inspection.

The location and procedures for removing and replacing these items will vary between equipment and operator or workshop manuals should be consulted. Always use correct tools for removing and replacing covers and guards.

After inspecting and cleaning, always ensure that covers and guards are replaced correctly and checked.

Waste disposal

Waste in the form of contaminated water, dust, debris or chemicals will often be left at the cleaning site. Dispose of responsibly.

Where chemicals are used as part of the cleaning process, they must be handled and disposed of according to the requirements on the label or Material Safety Data Sheet.

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Selecting a cleaning site

Machinery is usually cleaned & inspected at or near the job site.

Carefully select the cleaning site to reduce the risk of contaminating adjacent machinery or land.

Make sure your cleaning site is:

- **close** to the worked paddock to minimise spread of soil during transit;
- **agreed** with land owner and provider of service;
- **accessible** in all weather;
- **contained** for safe disposal of waste;
- **away** from water courses or public drains;
- **flat** for safety while working and to reduce run-off;
- **stable** surface to prevent re-contaminating machinery; like a concrete, gravel or well grassed area;
- **access** to suitable cleaning equipment, electricity and water as required;
- **identifiable** for monitoring and controlling any pest that may establish at the site; try to include a distinguishing landmark or GPS location.

Avoid damaging machinery during cleaning. Only use water on equipment that works under the ground and on external surfaces.

For cabins or electronics, prone to water damage, use air, vacuum or manual cleaning equipment.

Machines may need to be regreased or lubricated after cleaning, especially if detergents or other chemicals have been used.

Formal Training

Nationally accredited training in machinery inspection and cleaning is available from DPI-Victoria:

- RTD 2312A:** Inspect machinery for plant, animal and soil material"
- RTD 2313A:** "Clean machinery of plant, animal and soil material"

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