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Horticulture Australia

POTATOES

Potato Shed Hygiene

Main points

1. Good shed hygiene can reduce the spread of many potato diseases
2. Apply a hygiene policy on your farm
3. Adopt simple, effective cleaning systems in your packing shed
4. Follow a regular cleaning schedule
5. Use disinfectants correctly



1. Shed hygiene & plant disease

Cleanliness in the potato shed is critical for an overall farm hygiene policy. The shed is a possible site for spreading potato diseases.

- In the shed, dust from diseased tubers, dirty machinery and equipment contains organisms that cause disease.

“Prevention is better than cure!”

- Cleanliness is necessary for integrated disease management to be effective
- Dust can also contain fungicide-resistant organisms that can be spread to new areas
- Minimising the dust level in the shed also improves OH&S for shed workers

2. Setting up a shed hygiene policy

a. Implement a hygiene policy for the farm

- Hygiene policy is part of any QA program
- It provides a guideline for you and your workers
- It increases awareness of the ‘need’ to be clean

b. Review the operations in the shed

- Can equipment be relocated to reduce level of dust produced or disturbed ?
- Can the grading area be separated from the storage area ?
- Can you store early and late seed generation separately, or store seed separately according to disease risk ?
- Is the floor sealed to help cleaning ?
- Do you have a wash down area for bins and equipment ?
- Do you have a vacuum cleaner and high pressure washing equipment ?

“A clean farm, clean image is good for business”

c. Reduce the amount of dirt and dust

- Vacuum traffic areas
- Wash down equipment to remove dirt
- Install scrappers on rollers and conveyor belt to prevent dirt build up
- Adopt a cleaning regime and USE it regularly

d. When to use a disinfectant

- When cleaning shed walls and floors at the end of the season
- On boxes
- On seed cutter and grading line during the season, between seed batches



3. Some easy ways to improve shed hygiene

Boxes

- High-pressure wash boxes with detergent to remove debris and soil. Rinse and spray with a disinfectant
- Early generation seed growers should consider managing box use – earmark boxes for early generation stock only

Floors

- Vacuum dirt and dust from floors. Avoid sweeping as it redistributes the dust and increases potential for contamination
- High pressure wash floors between seasons

Walls and roof

- Vacuum and wash where dust collects

Graders

- To clean the grading line, remove as much dirt and encrusted soil as possible along the grading line by vacuuming, scraping and using a brush followed by a high pressure wash. Spray with a disinfectant and leave to dry
- High-pressure wash the grader and associated equipment
- Clean soil from around and on the grader, particularly after grading heavily soiled stocks
- Clean before grading different seed batches, especially if grading healthy seed after diseased tubers



4. Follow a regular cleaning schedule

Here is an example of a shed cleaning schedule :

Shed/Equipment	Boxes	Floors	Graders	Shed/Store	Seed Cutter
Daily		✓			
Between seed batches	✓		✓		✓
Annual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5. Correct use of Disinfectants

- Always READ THE LABEL first before use and disposal (get advice from supplier if necessary)
- Remove soil from the surface first, THEN disinfect
- Always wear recommended personal protective equipment when using disinfectants
- Disinfectants are a 'one shot' treatment, meaning they do not protect the surface treated from re-contamination. Keep the shed clean!

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HAL Project: PT 98018

'Cleaning & Disinfestation Practices for the Potato Farm'

This project has identified management practices on disinfectants and shed hygiene for the potato industry. Funded by your levy.

**Contact Nigel Crump or Dolf de Boer
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For more information please contact your local Veg Cheque facilitator.

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