Bruising risk assessment advice sheet - 2

Site selection

Site selection can influence tuber bruising at harvest. Potatoes should only be grown on suitable land. When selecting fields for potato production, consider the following points:

- Field shape and size - smaller irregular fields will require more harvester turning which can result in more damage
- Slopes - gradients in a field will make lifting difficult. Harvesting is made much worse with multiple irregular side slopes (sidings)
- Field history - check previous crop to help identify problem areas in the field. In particular, soil depth, soil type, soil compaction, known nutrient deficiencies, weed problems and, burial of high organic matter. If potatoes have been grown previously on the site find out if bruising occurred
- Stone content of soil - shape, size and sharpness
- Soil type (see advice sheet No. 3)
- Availability of irrigation (see advice sheet No. 8)
- Access routes on and off the field for carting potatoes, a rough ride can increase bruising risk!
- Under Single Farm Payment (SFP) land must be kept in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC), soil management is a key cross compliance standard for GAEC. When selecting fields for potato production consider site specific factors, including soil type and field gradients, which may have implications on cross compliance, e.g. sloping sandy field = high risk of erosion and run-off.

ACTION

Where potatoes have been grown previously on the site, investigate if bruising occurred. If bruising did occur consider previous field layout and crop history data to help identify factors that may have contributed to previous crops' bruising susceptibility.

Potatoes are more likely to bruise.....	Potatoes are less likely to bruise.....
.....in a field with shorter runs where more turning takes place.	.....in a field with longer runs where less turning takes place.
.....where excessive organic manures have been applied which can delay maturity and hence affect harvest date.	.....where balanced levels of organic manures have been applied and managed for optimum crop maturity.
.....where manures haven't rotted down and can affect destoning.	.....where most of the stone content of soil can be removed by destoning.
.....where stone content of soil is high due to small stones/flints which cannot be removed by destoning.	.....when soil type throughout the field is consistent.
.....when soil types vary within a field.	