

## The North of England Potato Event 2011.

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September was not only the first day of the Higgins Group BRC audit but also the day of the North of England potato event, surely Graeme wouldn't double book himself again!

Well he did, so this year the Higgins Variety Trial plots at the Askham College of Agriculture venue would be manned by Rob Herbert and Simon Pyper. A brief dig took place as the varieties were put out on display ready for the throng of visitors, at one point toward the end of the digging, it was rumoured that it may be raining down at Simon's end as he was so wet.



Olympus



Hermes

After the plots were placed and expertly arranged for all to see it was off to the refreshment tent where the obligatory bacon sandwich and cup of coffee were consumed with great delight, even more so as they were free.

Our intrepid representatives headed back to the plots to greet the inquisitive visitors and gladly answered any questions on our splendid looking varieties. The varieties themselves looked very well in the most part, with only two of the trials not showing any real potential, these had not shown any promise at all and it came as no surprise that one of these was a Satellite cross, a particularly low yielding variety itself.

The rest of the trial varieties looked very well in both yield and marketable size compared to the control varieties included and also the other varieties demonstrated by many of our competitors. Let's hope that these are the varieties of the future. It was good to see that the hard work done by the breeding department in Longhillock certainly, in this case looks to be being rewarded.

Unfortunately, the ideal harvesting conditions for both potato and grain, coupled with the warm weather and threat of rain throughout the day contributed to a very poor turnout again, with very little representation from the farming community. So for the second year running it was a rather disappointing event, with trade representation far outweighing the visiting public, indeed the influx of two bus loads of fresher students from Askham Bryham must have been a welcome sight for the lady with the counter on the gate.



It's really as shame that this event again didn't live up to the expectations of the organisers and it's something they must think hard about as to the ideal timing for such an event, It is a valid event which could be of use to all concerned if marketed and placed at the correct time.