

## ANOTHER TRIALLING SEASON



As a progressive seed business, every year, The Higgins Group invests time and money in developing and trialling new seed varieties. The ultimate aim is to produce something new which has improved characteristics over existing established varieties in order to make it a commercial success. This may be by increased yield, improved disease resistance, better storability or a bigger size fraction.

The art of breeding new varieties is full of mystique and magic with a very large amount of luck thrown in.

We use the expertise of M.R.S. to produce the initial crosses. That nuclear stock is planted in a glasshouse for one season, then single plants are bred in the field for one season, with the best replanted in five plant pots for a further year. The attrition rate is very high with less than 5% of the original crosses making it to the two replicated trial sites we use in England.



Our own breeding programme is also targeted to those areas where we have marketing expertise, so 70% of the crosses are processing varieties.

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This approach has been successful, with Olympus, a low acrylamide crisping variety, a good example. We have high hopes for another crisper which was recently national-listed, Lorimer, and a further crisper/chipper, Strachan. Safiyah, a table variety, has been performing extremely well in the Middle East and we are now looking at the domestic packing market as it has excelled in various UK trials.

All the processing varieties are tested for sugars and dry matter at harvest and are then stored at various temperatures and subjected to further testing throughout the storage season.

We believe our approach will continue to deliver outstanding varieties which will offer a competitive advantage to growers and processors and success to our breeding programme.

For further details contact:-

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