



British
POTATO
Awards
2023

Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists
The Old Swan, Harrogate



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EVENT SPONSORS



NUFARM is a provider of agronomy solutions and herbicides. As a global crop protection and seed technology company, it has been helping growers fight disease, weeds and pests for more than 100 years.



MCCAIN Foods is the UK's largest manufacturer of frozen potato products. As well as having its own seed business in Scotland, it has a team of expert agronomists and works closely with 250 British growers.



GRANTHAM-based machinery manufacturer Farm Electronics offers complete crop storage systems for potatoes, onions and vegetables. The company specialises in refrigerated cooling, ventilation and electronic control systems and automated controls.

CATEGORY SPONSORS



INTRODUCTION

Juliet Loisselle, Awards Host and Publisher, Warners Group Publications

It was, as always, a pleasure and honour to host and celebrate excellence within the British potato industry at the 2023 awards event.

Challenge is something those involved in the growth and supply of potatoes are well used to facing head-on while scientific advances, new resistant varieties and technological enhancements are continually helping us to adapt to those challenges. Manufacturers work hard to bring machinery enhancements that ease the processes of irrigation, harvesting, cleaning, sorting and packing while the whole supply chain is working hard to meet sustainability expectations and more.

The evening was all about rewarding companies and individuals across the sector, who, over the past two years, made standout contributions in each of these areas.

As those who attended the awards will be aware, Potato Review magazine, The National Potato Industry Awards and the British Potato Event are now all under one roof with Warners Group Publications. This means we can ensure you get the most comprehensive coverage, support and range of updates on the sector as a whole and we're looking forward to the next chapter!



Stephanie Cornwall, Editor, Potato Review

POTATO Review magazine seeks to keep the whole industry informed about what's happening in the potato supply chain. Over the past five years, we've sought to widen our coverage and provide an end-to-end news conduit that keeps the whole industry up to date with latest developments, trends and insights.

Sharing good practice is a key theme and the launch of the British Potato Industry Awards (formerly known as the National Potato Industry Awards) has provided an excellent opportunity to highlight this and reward those making valuable contributions. It's a delight to be involved.

Just as Potato Review has grown in size and content, there has been an increase in awards entries and categories.

Winners were chosen after tough deliberation by the independent panel of judges and should be justly proud. Those who received Highly Commended awards were incredibly close, with scores being almost neck on neck.

All the finalists and nominees are achievers within their own right, having made enough of an impression to receive at least one nomination. So, to all those who took the time to put forward nominations, sponsor the event, or join the celebration dinner – congratulations and I hope to see you all at the next event in two years' time!



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ROD'S RETURN

Welsh comedian who impressed TV and sporting personalities also finds favour with British potato industry members.

ROD Woodward, the Welsh comedian whom Peter Kay describes as “a young Dave Allen” was back to host the 2023 National Potato Industry Awards.

Rod is the son of Welsh sports writer Karl Woodward, the longest-serving journalist for the national newspaper of Wales, The Western Mail and his wit has found favour with many TV and sporting personalities.

Bob Monkhouse described him as “the best of the new bunch”, while Barry Cryer said he is “a brilliant young comic with great style and repose”. Former English footballer and

manager, Jack Charlton, said he was “the best in the business” while author and former MP Jeffrey Archer said he is “a super comedian”.

One of the few performers ever to be invited back to the Royal Variety Performance, Rod has written for and presented on BBC 2W and fronted his own radio show.

After he hosted the National Potato Industry’s last instalment in 2021, he brought the house down and organisers were asked by many of those attending if he could return for the next event. His popularity was even greater than that of football legend Kevin Keegan who hosted the awards’ launch event in 2019.



THE JUDGES

THE British Potato Awards event would not be possible without our independent panel of judges, who give their time voluntarily to assess each entry in every category.

This year they had their work cut out, with some really close scoring. Organisers have paid tribute to their diligence and time they put into this, before subsequently arriving at clear and worthy winners.

This year, the panel of judges consisted of the following:



Jim Godfrey OB

Jim is a former NIAB Board director and Director of RJ & AE Godfrey, a family farming business in North Lincolnshire. He has also served as Chair of The Potato Marketing Board and on the committees of the Scottish Crop Research Institute, Sentry Farming Group plc and the International Potato Centre (CIP) amongst others. Jim was awarded the OBE for services to agricultural research in Scotland in 2002.



David Nelson

For the past 33 years, David has served as Agronomy Director for Branston Ltd, one of the UK's largest potato suppliers. Fondly known by some as 'Dr Potato', his skill set includes potato physiology, potato diseases and their control, breeding and variety development, agronomy in UK and warm climates, integrated crop management and more.



Mark Taylor (Chair GB Potatoes Organisation Ltd)

Mark is a Director with his wife Jo in Agrimark Consulting Ltd based in South Lincolnshire. Previously he was Director at Fenmarc Produce Ltd supplying fresh potatoes and root veg for 28 years. Currently sitting on the governing body of GB Potatoes, Mark is also Chair of Nene Potatoes Ltd, Chair of the Fresh Potato Suppliers Association, NED Caledonia Potatoes Ltd and Board member with British Growers.



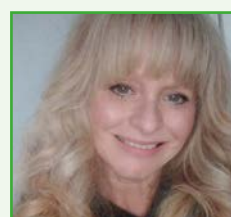
Jon Rooke

Jon is President of the British Potato Trade Association (BPTA) and hails from North Yorkshire. For the past decade Jon has been UK Seed Supply manager for potato breeding company HZPC. Prior to that he was Own Growing Manger for Greenvale AP, supplier of fresh and organic potatoes.



Paul Coleman

With more than 38 years' experience in the potato industry, Paul is Managing Director at Crop4Sight, a company that provides data-driven solutions to potato growers and processors which he co-founded. Prior to that he spent 23 years as Technical Director at Greenvale AP Ltd. He is also Director and shareholder at Restrain Company Ltd, whose ethylene system helps to suppress sprouting in potatoes, which he co-founded from an R&D perspective in 2005.



Stephanie Cornwall

Stephanie has held the position of Editor for Potato Review since joining its parent company, Warners Group Publications, in 2018. She has overseen its growth in content and readership, as well as the launch of its website and associated e-letters. Prior to joining Warners, she was Editor of magazines covering fast-moving consumer goods, packaging and retail and worked in public relations for companies including agricultural machinery group AGCO.

BRITISH POTATO INDUSTRY AWARD

Effectively a 'lifetime' contribution to the potato industry, there were six worthy candidates shortlisted for this award, who have made continuous efforts and impacts on the British potato industry during the 2021-2023 period.



WINNER:

Adrian Cunnington

Adrian has been at the forefront of potato storage research for a generation, running trials, managing the Sutton Bridge facility and providing detailed advice to growers around the country. He is internationally recognised as a leader in the field of storage.

FINALISTS:

Walter Simon: A grower and advocate for potatoes for more than 40 years. Now retired from growing, he has been actively promoting positive messages around potatoes.

Andy Alexander: A respected figure in the UK and beyond who has spread knowledge and encouraged improvements in all aspects of potato agronomy.

Debbie Winstanley: A key collaborator who has worked across multiple supply chains and through CUPGRA to ensure work continues on the most relevant issues of the time.

Nick Cesare: A mechanical handling expert with four decades of supplying robotic and automated packing and palletising lines to growers, packhouses and food processors this year.

Peter Peebles: A Perthshire native who has worked in the potato seed industry for more than 40 years and is well regarded throughout the Scottish seed industry and in international circles.

GROWER/GROWING MANAGER OF 2022-2023

With such strong entries in this year's grower category, judges also awarded a Highly Commended in addition to the winner's award, and paid tribute to the other finalists.



WINNER:
Nick Taylor

Nick has been commended for his commitment to improvement, experimentation and collaboration with researchers, agronomists and other growers to find sustainable and resilient solutions in the sector. Farming 395 acres of potatoes in Shropshire, his collaborations have included two Innovative Farmers field labs - one on trap cropping to reduce potato cyst nematode and another exploring alternative control of wireworm. An organic farmer, integrated pest management and selecting blight-resistant varieties are core to his business.



Highly Commended
Sophie Bambridge

Norfolk grower Sophie farms 800 acres for the French fries/frozen market and has full industry engagement with GB Potatoes, CUPGRA, NIAB, McCain, Greenvale, virus and PCN various working groups. She is felt to be an exemplary model of a young mother forging a path in a predominantly-male industry and leading by example, providing a site for regenerative potato production projects and more.

FINALISTS:



Bradley Sykes

Growing for the French Fries and frozen products market on around 1,000 acres in Yorkshire, Bradley set up on his own with no farming background and is one of the largest potato growers in Yorkshire.



Chris Suckling

Farming 600 acres in Suffolk, Chris has made a notable impact by raising public awareness about potato growing, helping charities, and providing a community service.

AGRONOMIST AWARD

Agronomists are the cornerstone of successful potato growing and many were deemed to have made a note-worthy impression over the past two years. Again, the judges had their work cut out choosing a winner, with more than one nomination for each of the finalists detailed here. After much deliberation, Eric Anderson was chosen as the ultimate winner, with John Sarup being Highly Commended.



WINNER
Eric Anderson

Eric has shared his wealth of knowledge, ranging across soil health, nematodes, nutrition, crop health, blight control and desiccation over the past two years, and has helped many to weigh up all the risks and plan the most economical route to a profitable crop.

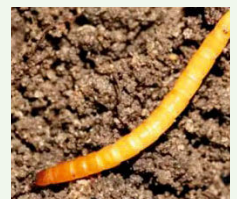


HIGHLY COMMENDED
John Sarup

John is felt to have contributed an alternative perspective to 'standard' potato production, providing a three-dimensional perspective of soil, the environment and crop growth. He is an advocate of advanced crop nutrition and biostimulant use based on trial results and works to disseminate this information to all growers.

FINALISTS
Martyn Cox

Working tirelessly in the pursuit of understanding of wireworm, Norfolk-based Martyn has helped the industry to raise its game when it comes to monitoring and managing.



Andy Alexander

Norfolk agronomist Andy has given wise council to many, sharing his knowledge of all potato agronomic matters from seed and irrigation, through to storage and skin quality.



Andrew Goodinson

Andrew offers agronomy and strategic advice across a range of farms in Herefordshire covering 14,000 hectares.



BEST YOUNG ACHIEVER

A newly-introduced category for 2023, this award seeks to recognise those aged from around 18 to 30 within the past two-year timescale who have made a notable impact within the potato industry.

Candidates were drawn from within growing, supplying, research and agronomy. Both the winner and Highly Commended candidates were felt to be contributing something that will benefit the sector as a whole, while the five other finalists were praised for their determination and personal achievements.



WINNER
James Pitman

James is a PhD researcher using metabolomics to decipher the metabolic activity underpinning potato sprouting, and translating this insight into development of novel sprouting suppressants. His research findings are being used to inform novel sprouting suppressant development.



HIGHLY COMMENDED
Dom Hill

Dom is a PhD student studying the physiological responses of potatoes to drought stress using 3D imaging techniques. Over the past four years he has conducted important research into how potato varieties respond to drought stress on a physiological level as part of a BBSRC-funded Waitrose Collaborative Training Partnership with Branston Ltd.

FINALISTS
Kieran Hardy

Fields person & Trials Day Manager Kieran joined Wholecrop Marketing Ltd in November 2021. Since then, he has gained the confidence of its grower base and established the trials day as one of the best in the country.



Joseph Mowbray and Thomas Carter

Lincolnshire-based Joseph and Thomas founded Tom's Potatoes, supplying potatoes to markets and chip shops which has grown over the past two years into a successful enterprise that delivers daily to markets from London to Tyneside.



Bradley Sykes

First-generation grower Bradley was felt to be a great example of how hard work and determination reaps rewards for entrants to the industry and was guest speaker at the Future Farmers of Yorkshire Spring Debate.



Joseph Marshall

Research and Development Agronomist Joseph stood out as an excellent student and now manages applications at the largescale Potato Blight Platform site in Derbyshire.



GALLERY





GALLERY





BEST ENVIRONMENTAL OR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Working to create a less energy-intensive but more cost-effective practice is an ongoing challenge. There have been some noteworthy accomplishments made in terms of environmental and sustainability terms over the past two years. Judges awarded a 'Highly Commended' as well as a winner in this sector and were impressed by the work done by all the finalists.

WINNER

Crop Systems Ltd (SmartSolaTM)

This control system can cut the cost and the carbon footprint of potato storage, to the benefit of both the business and the environment. It enables store operators to optimise the use of home-generated green energy and minimise the use of bought-in electricity.



HIGHLY COMMENDED KP Snacks

The company has partnered with Sustainable Futures and a number of its UK potato farmers to measure on-farm greenhouse gas emissions through the Cool Farm Tool, and to understand potential opportunities for emissions reduction. It has also been piloting the use of cover crops in potato production.

FINALISTS:

Marcus Palmer – Algifol:

Marcus (MJP Supplies), brought to the UK market a seaweed biostimulant which is improving root structures and disease resistance within potato crops. Manufactured in Germany, Algifol is made from brown algae gathered from the ocean, dried and refined through special processes.



Simon Fox – Emerald Research:

Simon has worked tirelessly with international and UK research institutions developing an optimised soil analysis system. In the past two years, the system has been developed and more potato growers have benefited environmentally and economically.



STORAGE/REFRIGERATION ACHIEVER

Many companies and individuals are making notable impacts on potato storage and we were keen to hear nominations for those who had made breakthroughs in this area over the past two years.

This newly-introduced category attracted some impressive entries, and led to a 'Highly Commended' being awarded as well as a winner.

WINNER Tim Kitson

Tim has supported both Lamb Weston and the Lamb Weston potato supply base by getting 'under the skin' of storage sites, supporting development of new in-store technology. He has been a key player in the potato storage sector for more than 27 years and is often introduced as 'the potato storage specialist'.



HIGHLY COMMENDED Ray Andrews /Crop Systems Limited:

CSL's SmartSola™ control system can manage up to 10 stores at the same time, directing energy to the one that needs it most.

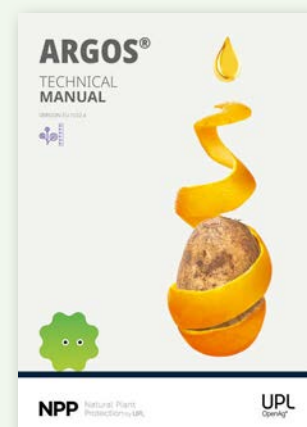
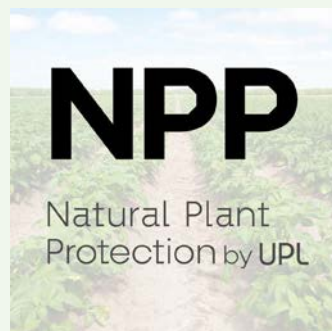
FINALISTS: Farm Electronics Ltd

The company developed the COOL5 system which uses EC ventilation fans to achieve optimal air flow and energy-efficiency for potato storage as well as using a limited amount of natural refrigerant (R290) and features Vision Controller.



UPL Ltd

The company's Fazor (maleic hydrazide) and Argos (orange oil) products for potato storage in the market have become two of the sector's critical products for potato storage.



BEST INNOVATION 2022-2023

The past two years have seen some notable innovations aimed at improving various stages of the potato supply process and judges enjoyed reading about them all.

WINNER

DIG (Data Intelligence for Grower)

A data management and stock control platform (Data Intelligence for Growers).



HIGHLY COMMENDED

IPM Potato Group (Buster)

A PCN-resistant variety developed by IPM Potato Group Ltd.

FINALISTS:

The SmartSolaTM

A control system for potato stores developed by Crop Systems Limited.

Honesty®

A new liquid tuber treatment produced by BASF.

BAS657

A late blight fungicide produced by BASF for growers.

TuberLog

An Electronic Potato which reduces losses caused by bruising, developed by Martin Lishman Ltd.

Meloidogyne fallax control

Technology, protocols and genome sequencing work developed by Fera Science Ltd.

Aponic Limited

A vertical farm that sprays nutrient solution onto roots developed by Jason Hawkins-Row

Bulk Potato Slider Detector System

A system developed by Fortress Technology.

MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENTS

MACHINERY manufacturing never stands still! Companies are always endeavouring to streamline and improve processes, and the past two years have been no exception.



WINNER Grimme GB430

GRIMME's introduction of a sliding axle to the GB 430 has made it a more viable belt planter.



HIGHLY COMMENDED AVR Ceres 450/Maschio

A NEW development to AVR's Ceres 450, combined with the Maschio power harrow, aims to increase usage of soil cultivation and planting of potatoes in one passing, especially in stone-rich areas.



FINALISTS PACE bag/weigh/seal system

The upgraded system from Pace Mechanical Handling Ltd uses Servo Drive technology and the latest touch screen displays, working together with an online gateway system.

Puma 4.0

Upgrades to AVR's harvester include Comfort Drive and Autosteer function for increased ease of use and accuracy.

Python

This newly-developed twin conveyor for high capacity, product-friendly transporting of potatoes from the receiving hopper to the store loader, was developed by AVR.

GEN 3 VARITRON 470

With this latest version of the VARITRON 470, growers now have the option of a four-man picking platform. This is the first four-row self-propelled harvester GRIMME has ever produced with a four-man picking platform.

SELECT 200

New features introduced last year to this GRIMME trailed potato harvester include a telescopic axle, VarioDrive, redesigned MultiSep, Active Steering, longer main web, SmartView Camera system, CCI Controls and MyGRIMME connectivity.

BEST MARKETING WORK/ BEST MARKETING CAMPAIGN

GOOD marketing strategies can build awareness and business openings. Whether it's encouraging more people to make a career in the industry, improving consumer awareness, launching a new product or offering a new service, such campaigns help keep the British potato industry thriving and judges decided to award a Highly Commended as well as a winner in this category.

WINNER

Potato House Grow Your Own Potatoes (GYOP)

This primary school potato growing initiative was originally launched by AHDB but over the past two years has been taken to new heights while being run by Andrew Skea/Sue Lawton/ Potato House with a strong marketing campaign.



HIGHLY COMMENDED Kids Country

The educational arm of East of England Agricultural Society) campaign promoted hands-on learning experiences about potato growth and supply for children.



FINALISTS

Super Sagitta

HZPC's #SuperSagitta marketing campaign on Twitter received an enthusiastic response. Mugs were sent out to those that purchased and grew the variety and posted photos.



Natural Plant Protection brand

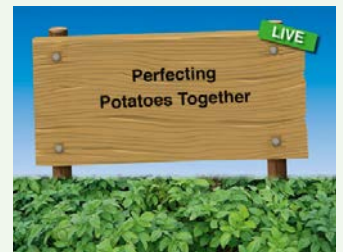
The marketing of UPL's Natural Plant Protection brand took a transformative approach to marketing biopesticides and biostimulants.

Maincrop Potatoes

Having diversified into a programme with a Geersing potato specialist to breed sustainable varieties resistant to blight and use of lower inputs, this merchant/packer has used social media extensively and engaged in community awareness-raising practices, such as meeting the local MP, to explain the industry and promote everything it has to offer.

Perfecting Potatoes Together

Over the past two years this BASF campaign has sought to establish a network that would collaboratively support each by sharing interesting stories, news and events.



Golden Kings

A disruptive pack design and three-tiered free-standing display unit were created to market Greenvale AP's new brand of potato.



HESCOTT-MEREDITH MEMORIAL AWARD WINNER

Science and research are a key element in aiding potato growing practices, helping battle pests and disease, creating new tolerant varieties and improving storage methods. This award category was newly introduced for 2023 and four stood out as potential candidates for this award. The ultimate winner received his award from Stephanie Cornwall, Editor of *Potato Review* magazine, sponsor of this category.

WINNER

Harry Duncan

Harry has mentored countless PHD students throughout his career. He has maintained close collaboration with researchers and the whole industry, on subjects including CIPC distribution, analyses, contamination and stewardship. Although retired, Harry continues to share his valuable knowledge and experience.



FINALISTS

Andy Evans

A key contributor to research on aphid-borne viruses in potatoes and management of potato cyst nematode (PCN).



Philip Burgess

Lead consultant and researcher for scottishpotatoes, whose career has spanned both research and commercial production of seed and ware potatoes.



Martyn Cox

Regarded as an industry legend, having spent the best part of his working life studying wireworm and helping the industry learn how to manage and control the pest.



Thank you to everyone that attended,
sponsored and took part in the
British Potato Industry Awards 2023.
We'll be back in November 2025 – visit
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potato-industry-awards](http://www.potatoreview.com/national-potato-industry-awards)**
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We look forward to seeing you in 2025!