



ANDRÉ POSTMA, Sales Manager at Selectiebedrijf Kooi, Leeuwarden (NL): 'Checking on what the end user, the ware potato grower, thinks of the variety'



don't have a huge amount of material,' says André Postma, Sales Manager at Selectiebedrijf Kooi.

'We at least give the breeders an indication of what we're looking for. You can almost fill in what's important yourself. You need just about everything, that's the challenge. We're also looking at the problems in our sales areas. In some countries, for example, there's a salt problem, we once had a variety that seemed to be quite resistant to it, but then didn't get through the selection process for other reasons', says Postma. 'We mostly work with table potatoes, so a lot of breeding work is focused on that too. We have the Frieslander, which will be around for many years to come, but you also hope for a combination of a potato that's a good table potato, and also has good frying qualities. Such a dual-purpose variety has also always been our focus', he explains. *Are growers already asking for the replacement of some of their varieties?* 'That depends on the circumstances that are there. There are political

'We have material that comes from the Fobek breeding station, and we work together with a number of hobby breeders. We've now chosen to stop getting new material from Fobek, so that we can focus on the material that's already there. Ultimately, you hope to be able to make a difference in the near future, but unlike the larger companies, we

decisions that also play a role in this respect, think, for example, of the agents package. On the one hand, you have your own preferences and, on the other, there are the specific requirements. If, as a result, there are problems with the storage of ware potatoes, it's useful if you have a variety that responds to that, or one you can improve on', answers Postma. Pointing to a box with a number on the table, a promising variety, he says: 'This is a real French-fry variety. That's a big market, and a whole new market for us too, because we've never yet had our own French-fry variety. That's also something we're looking out for, something we don't yet have. You don't have to have the same thing in your packages ten times, because you'll take the best anyway.' *How do you develop the best new variety as far as the growers are concerned?* 'Well, in the end, they should do well in the field. You may think it's an improvement yourself, but you have to find out how the end user, the ware potato grower, experiences it', says Postma.

JÖRG RENATUS, Managing Director of Europlant International, Lüneburg (G): 'Our focus is the sum of information that enters the breeding station from all sides'

Jörg Renatus doesn't need to think very long about the target question of the 2021 variety show. 'What we focus on are the customers we do business with', is his direct answer.

'Answering the questions of our customers, the potato varieties they're looking for, that should be our focus. As Europlant, we first of all focus on three key objectives, which are resistance, efficiency and stress factors. This will set us to work in all the different segments in which we're looking for new varieties', Renatus responds in the same breath. 'What matters to us most are table, crisp and French-fry potatoes. Our salespeople and agents who are in contact with our

customers collect information about their requests throughout the year. Twice a year, we have extensive consultations with our breeders in which these requests are discussed. It's then up to them to get started, they determine the course', the Director states frankly. 'In fact, our breeders don't just sit waiting at their desks or in their greenhouses for information about sales. They often also go out and about themselves and travel all over the world. For example, to assess and review the various trial fields with customers. So they themselves also collect the relevant information about which properties customers would like to see in their varieties. So it's the sum of information that enters the breeding station from all sides. And

that's how we automatically arrive at our most important focal point and how we determine it. The three key objectives mentioned above have everything to do with that word sustainability. In



HENK FEDDES, Director of Interseed Holland, Dronten (NL): 'I see the fact that we limit ourselves to one segment as our great strength.'

'Looking for topics for breeding activities isn't very difficult at Interseed. That's because we've carefully defined our task', says Henk Feddes. 'We develop varieties exclusively for the processing industry.

'The majority of our products are French fries and a smaller part crisps, and until recently these were mainly grown and sold within Europe. If you, as a breeder, also develop table potatoes, then it's already a lot more complicated, are you growing for domestic or for foreign consumption, export near or far away? Then you already have a lot of issues to focus on in your breeding work. I see the fact that we limit ourselves to one segment also as our great strength. This way, we're quickly building up a lot of knowledge and experience in order to create the most ideal varieties. True, there's also a risk to that, when things go wrong in this one segment, you don't have an immediate

alternative. In a situation like the one we're now experiencing with corona, this can be a pain. Then it's especially important that you can supply reliable varieties that are already popular. This not only helps to prevent sales in your existing working area from falling back, but also ensures that you build up business more quickly in as yet unexplored areas, which for us is outside Europe. And that's what has been happening recently. You won't be surprised that top issues in our breeding work are processing quality and yield. The immediate next point of focus is virus resistance. This is nothing new for Interseed. Our breeding company was already focusing on this years ago, so even before the time it actually became the problem it is today. Was that foresight, luck? The fact is it's currently a strong request from the customer and we can therefore more than respond to it. In fact, when it comes to the range of available varieties, we mainly have a luxury problem. They meet the desired process-



ing quality for many industries and the cultivation-technical preferences for the ware and seed potato growers. So the demand for seed potatoes exceeds the supply. We now have 250 hectares of seed multiplication of our varieties in the Netherlands, but we could use many more hectares. So if you ask about focus, that's what we're also focusing on. We'll simply have to attract more seed producers in the coming years. The Zorba variety is already a success story for many, and now with the Alanis, we have another fantastic variety that the industry would also like to start processing. And it's a variety that will appeal to both the seed potato and ware potato grower. For example, the Alanis requires relatively little fertilisation, is strong on Phytophthora and gives a very good yield. For sales to the processing industry, you can count on a good underwater weight and an excellent frying quality. What particularly appeals to the processors is the high yield of French fries they can get from this variety. That's why the Alanis is of interest not only to manufacturers in Europe, but also beyond. And that brings us back to the beginning of our conversation, with this variety we can go any way we want, for example when things aren't going so well close by.'