

Hammerski Farms Installs Ozone

Generator with Water Injection System

By Tamas Houlihan, Managing Editor

Plover potato farm has the first such system in the U.S. and the largest ever built.



After using ozone to control disease in their potato storages for the past six years, Don and Jon Hammerski were convinced it worked. So they decided to take it a step further, and install the nation's first ozone generator with a water injection system on the grading line at Hammerski Farms' packing shed in Plover, Wisconsin.

"We're always trying to improve the quality of the product that we ship out," Don Hammerski said. "And with all the food safety regulations that are in place and with even more sure to come, I believe ozone greatly reduces the risk of a poor quality potato getting out in one of our bags. We've been using ozone in our storage facilities for the last six years with

very good results. When my son, Jon, and I researched the water injection system for ozone, we felt it would be a worthwhile investment."

"It really does a good job of controlling mold and other diseases," Hammerski said. "Plus, it's all natural—there are no chemicals involved, no mixing, no jugs, no barrels, no nothing. And there is no residue left on the potatoes. I would not be surprised if the industry is **required** to use these systems in the future."

Eugene Mancl of Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Inc. of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, is the regional distributor for Guardian Manufacturing of Cocoa, Florida, which builds ozone



generators. Mancl began installing ozone generators in Wisconsin storage facilities nine years ago. He said growers were impressed with ozone's disease fighting ability.

"We've installed 54 ozone machines in Midwest potato storages," said Mancl. "It works extremely well because it's non-specific. It kills rot, mold, spores, bacteria—it oxidizes on contact and leaves no residue. We saw huge results one year when there was some late blight on the potatoes. It stopped the rot and you could see right where it was occurring after the customer started emptying the storage. It looks like dried up white spots in the pile, and it stopped the bad potatoes from infecting those around them. Growers were able to manage their storages much better because the problems were contained which allowed them to remove the potatoes when they needed to."





Mancl said ozone has proven effective in controlling storage diseases such as late blight, early blight, pink rot, silver scurf, powdery scab, soft rot and mold. It also dries up and controls rot that can result from field frost, warm weather and wet harvest seasons.

Mancl says Guardian's ozone generator with the water injection system is also very safe and effective. Ozone is 12.5 times more soluble in water than oxygen. This allows ozone to dissolve into water at more than eight parts per million (ppm) and can saturate the water with dissolved oxygen following degradation. The water

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