Strong Roots signal a good start on crops trialled with microbial mix

POTATO crops treated with a specialised microbial biostimulant and soil health product are showing "highly encouraging" signs of early establishment, with recent field images highlighting strong root development, active root growth and a healthy start to the season.

Crop inspections were recently carried out on trial plots treated with Symposium, the specialised mix created by Emerald Research Ltd.

Yorkshire-based Emerald Research officially relaunched and rebranded its original microbial soil improver, Consortium-Plus, launched in 2016, as Symposium in September last year, following three years of field trials and formula improvements.

Photographs taken during the inspections show dense fibrous rooting, fresh white root tips and strong below-ground structure for the treated crops. For potato growers, this early rooting phase is critical, with a well-developed root system giving the plant greater access to soil moisture and nutrients. It also supports early canopy development and helps build the foundation for tuber initiation and bulking later in the season.

Symposium is a microbial biostimulant containing very high levels of active rhizobacteria, beneficial fungi and organic biostimulants. It introduces significant levels of beneficial microbes directly into the root zone, helping to create a more active and supportive environment around the developing plant, according to its manufacturer.

Emerald's CEO Simon Fox said: "Symposium introduces active beneficial microbes into the root zone, alongside organic biostimulants, helping to create the right conditions for stronger establishment. A healthy root system gives the crop the best possible platform to access nutrition, manage moisture and support growth above ground."

He said the species and individual strains used have been researched and especially selected at very high concentrations. Each hectare receives around 70 trillion viable microbes. By bringing together organic biostimulant components and active microbial strains, Symposium is designed to encourage beneficial interactions between the crop, the soil and the introduced microbes. This is particularly important during the early establishment phase, when the crop is setting its potential for the season ahead.

"Root development is not only one of the clearest indicators of how well a potato crop is establishing, but more importantly, it sets the potential for the entire crop. What we are seeing here is exactly the kind of strong, active rooting we want at this stage of the season," said Simon.

The visible root mass in the crops is a strong indicator of vigour. Fine, fibrous roots are especially important because they increase the surface area available for nutrient and water uptake. This is particularly valuable in potatoes, where the crop needs a strong start to support stolon development, tuber set and consistent growth through the season.

Simon said the results are a reminder that crop performance begins below ground and, while canopy growth is often the first visible sign of crop progress, it is the strength and activity of the root system that determines how effectively the plant can feed, hydrate and sustain itself through periods of rapid growth or environmental pressure.

"For growers, the message is clear: A strong start below ground can make a meaningful difference above ground - and these crops are already showing the benefits of introducing beneficial microbes where they matter most - around the roots."

An early maincrop crisping variety planted on April 22nd with a sample dig on May 19th.

A commercial crisping variety planted on March 25th with a sample dig on May 19th.

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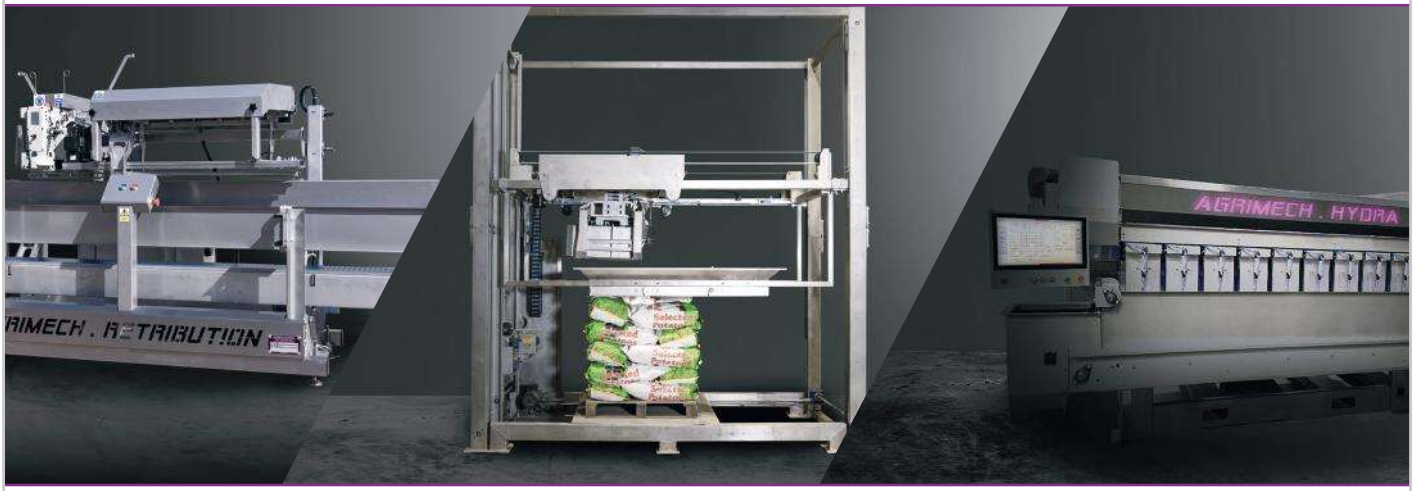

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