Introducing Blazer Russet (A8893-1)

This recent release from the UDA-ARS Potato Improvement Program for the North Western United States is generating considerable interest amongst growers looking for a more easily managed, earlier maturing alternative to Russet Burbank for both fresh markets and processing. Blazer Russet produces a small upright plant with a moderate set of uniform-shaped, smooth, lightly russeted tubers. In trials conducted throughout the United States, yields of Blazer were equivalent to Russet Burbank in regions with a short growing season but lagged behind Burbank and Ranger in areas with a longer season. The main strength of Blazer is its superior tuber appearance – it produces a much higher % of tubers packing out as #1's than other cultivars, making it a strong alternative to Burbank in the fresh market. The processing characteristics of Blazer are also excellent – with specific gravities and processing colors similar to Russet Burbank. Blazer is resistant to sugar ends and other forms of heat stress but is moderately susceptible to hollow heart.

Blazer appears to be exceptionally resistant to both common and powdery scab, is moderately susceptible to PVY and PLRV, but appears to be quite susceptible to early blight. Tubers are also susceptible to bacterial soft rot and fusarium dry rot and growers may need to take some extra care in seed selection and preparation for planting. Blazer has good expression of foliar and tuber symptoms of infection by bacterial ring rot.

Relatively little work has been conducted as yet on the agronomic requirements of Blazer. Because of the sensitivity of the seed to rot issues, the crop should be planted at the correct depth into relatively warm soil. Fertility requirements are anticipated to be equivalent to or slightly lower than Burbank. Blazer appears to tolerate post-emergence application of metribuzin. Blazer stores well at standard temperatures, however it breaks dormancy 40-50 days earlier than Burbank.

In trials conducted in Saskatoon in 2007 Blazer had higher yields than Shepody or Burbank at both 90 and 120 days. Fry colors for Blazer were superior to the standard cultivars at both harvests, but its chip colors were inferior to Shepody.

Source : Stark et al (2007). Amer. J. Potato Res. 84: 447-457.