

Branston Invests £1.7m at Scotland Site

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ONE of the UK's largest potato suppliers, Branston, unveiled the latest fully integrated grading, washing and sizing line at its Perthshire site this week – revolutionising the factory's ability to process high volumes of the crop.

The £1.7 million investment comes in readiness to gear up production to meet the demand of a large long-term supply contract that the company has recently been awarded.

Kevin Imrie, general manager at Branston's Scotland site, is delighted to have introduced the industry-leading production line - featuring a new style of washer and the latest Celox optical grader - to increase the factory's capabilities. He said: "The new equipment - supplied by Haith Group and Newtec - will go a long way to increasing efficiency and output at our Scottish site.

"The line has state-of-the-art washing equipment as well as the latest in optical-grading technology. It reduces the manual handling of crop and enables potatoes to be graded to remove quality defects then sorted into much more accurate size bands ready for packing."

Branston, which has three sites across the UK – located in Perthshire, Lincolnshire and Somerset – has been supplying potatoes to the country's major supermarkets for almost 50 years and is continually modernising and adapting to the evolving food industry.

Kevin continued: "This new technology will create a simpler and more efficient process whereby we will be able to wash, size grade and remove quality defects in one process – handling up to 175,000 potatoes/ 50 tonnes per hour. We have selected the best kit available to give us an extremely efficient process which will benefit our staff, growers and customers.

"Of course machinery is extremely important to our day-to-day running and new technology makes our work a lot more streamlined and efficient for our staff and customers – but we couldn't survive without the support from our growers.

"Currently, we work with 41 growers in Scotland and we are looking to add to this total as the business continues to expand and grow – keeping up with the demand for one the country's most popular crops.

"We have excellent relationships with our growers and we have chosen our sites based on the UK's best potato producing areas. The continued investment in new technology shows our continued commitment to growing our business in Scotland for the long-term benefit of the potato industry here and across the UK."

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