



Above: Will Chase receives the *Farm Business Food Chain of the Year Award* from Nigel Thornton of sponsor Syngenta



Old varieties can often make better crisps than newer ones, says Will Chase

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chips from potatoes that we’ve grown ourselves.”

Conceding that he had briefly considered organic production, he maintains that people are most interested in knowing where what they eat comes from. “In any case, we don’t use any pesticides on our potatoes – they leave here as a finished product, so it doesn’t matter about skin finish or appearance.”

Anyone wanting to keep up-to-date with developments at Tyrrells can register to receive its seasonal newsletter, a professionally produced and attractive publication, or see it on the company’s website at www.tyrrellspotatochips.co.uk.

These communication tools are used to pre-market new products and seasonal specials, such as last winter’s Worcester sauce and sun-dried

tomato flavoured chips. In addition, they provide progress reports on planting and harvesting. Some business analysts might question Tyrrells’ ability to sustain the rate of growth seen over the past 18 months or so, despite the spare production capacity available. Conceding that it’s not going to be easy, Mr Chase believes strongly that the company’s ability to develop innovative new products and

remain completely transparent will continue to stimulate further demand. “You have to keep moving forward,” he insists. “We’re firmly established

now, but we can’t afford to sit back – we need continually to be re-inventing ourselves.”

Moving forward in the foreseeable future will involve experimenting on new vegetables – pumpkin and courgettes, for example – using seasonal produce, and growing some older potato varieties. “Some of them, such as Record and Golden Wonder,” he states, “are rarely grown these days, as their yield potential is limited and they’re quite difficult to grow, but they have so much more taste than many modern varieties.” Preferred varieties for current production, however, include Lady Rosetta and Hermes, and the variety used is printed on every packet. Having said that, the biggest selling line recently has been the parsnip chip.

The *Farm Business Award for Food Chain Business of the Year, 2003*, sponsored by Syngenta, is one of many accolades bestowed upon Tyrrells during its short existence, and is a source of considerable pride to Will Chase and the staff. “It’s a great morale booster,” he says, “and a recognition that what we all do is valued.”

From the main road between Leominster and Brecon, near the village of Dilwyn, Tyrrells Court looks much like any other medium-sized farm in this idyllic corner of Herefordshire. Close up, it has the appearance of a super-efficient, spotless food production facility. Will Chase and his team have come such a long way in a short period of time, one can only wonder where they’ll be in another two years. *Farm Life* will certainly be following their progress. **FL**

