

ERRATUM

Pages 233 and 234, Volume 37, No. 7.

Correction: Figures 1 and 2: The description of each figure is correct; the graphs *only* are reversed.

CHIP COLOR TESTER

Medicine and potato processing now have something in common. The same device that doctors use to test for diabetes also indicates whether potatoes will turn into golden yellow or dark brown chips, says Prof. Ora Smith of the New York State College of Agriculture.

The Cornell specialist recently discovered that this device, long used by doctors, can also be used by potato chip chefs in the home, restaurant, or processing plant. The Chip Color Tester is distributed by the Potato Chip Institute International.

Smith explained that darkening of potato chips in cooking is caused by the presence of sugar in potatoes. "The chip tester measures the presence of sugar almost instantly," he said.

The vegetable crops expert described the chip tester as a yellow paper ribbon covered with a chemical that reacts only with sugar. The ribbon is applied flat to one half of a cut potato.

When sugar is present, the ribbon will turn shades of green. The darker the green, the more sugar the potato contains and the darker the chips it will make. If the ribbon remains yellow, no sugar is present and the potatoes will make perfect golden colored chips.

"This is the first chip color test that can be done in just a few seconds," Smith reported. Previously, potato processors had to use lengthy chemical tests to predetermine the color of chips and other potato products fried in deep fat.

A test such as this is essential for potato chips which are acceptable only when they fry to light golden colors, the specialist commented. While French fries and other deep fried potato products are acceptable at darker shades, the chip tester can also be used on them to predetermine their final colors. He said homemakers can use the tester for small batches; restaurants can use it, as potato processors do, for large batches.

There is no need to discard a lot of potatoes if the tester registers a dark green shade, Smith pointed out. The potatoes can be "reconditioned" for processing into perfect yellow chips or French fries.

Smith explained that storing potatoes at temperatures between 65 and 75 degrees F. will lower the sugar content enough after a period of three weeks so that the potatoes will be ready for deep frying.

For longer periods of time, he recommended storing the potatoes at 50 degrees F. and using a sprout inhibitor. When the potatoes come out of storage, the chip tester will indicate little need for further reconditioning because the potatoes will make yellow chips or French fries as they are, Smith said.