

Big players tackling waste

WASTE REDUCTION

FOUR of the largest potato producers in Australia will sink nearly \$1 million into ways of utilising waste spuds.

Over the next three years, The Mitolo Group, Zerella Fresh, Thomas Foods International Fresh Produce and The South Australian Potato Company are aiming to convert 100 per cent of their potato waste into commercial benefit.

The four companies have entered a partnership with the Fight Food Waste Co-operative Research Centre (CRC), in conjunction with industry association Potatoes South Australia and the University of Adelaide.

Research and development will go into saving up to 100,000 tonnes of potatoes currently going to waste every year.

Potatoes South Australia chief executive, Robbie Davis, said it was a fantastic opportunity for South Australia as the largest potato-growing state.

"We are seeing up to 40pc of potatoes rejected because they do not meet retail specifications," Ms Davis said.



WASTED: Research and development will go into saving up to 100,000 tonnes of potatoes currently going to waste every year.

"At the same time Australia is importing 20,000 tonnes of potato starch each year, and it just doesn't make sense that we're not using these huge volumes of potatoes for alternative purposes."

A large focus of this project is the potential development

of an Australian potato starch industry which would provide additional revenue for Australian potato companies; potentially \$1000 a tonne for extracted starch instead of the current value of \$0-10 a tonne for the waste.

"Potato starch is used

broadly across the food industry, from bioplastics and packaging, to coatings and adhesives," Ms Davis said.

"We also want to use the waste from the starch, so after extracting the potato starch, there will be further opportunities using the residual

waste from this first stage."

The University of Adelaide's professor Vincent Bulone is leading this research project from his analytical centre for complex carbohydrate analysis, Adelaide Glycomics.

The project is in line with

the University's industry engagement priority on agri-food and wine.

Fight Food Waste CRC CEO, Dr Steven Lapidge, said he was thrilled to have such a transformational project underway so early in the Fight Food Waste CRC's journey.