



CLIENT
AMVAC

PROJECT
SmartBlock® Product Launch



CLIENT

AMVAC Chemical Corporation serves a healthy, demand-driven global agricultural market by developing and manufacturing agricultural and commercial products for crop protection, nonagricultural and public health applications. From planting to harvest, AMVAC provides effective and diverse crop enhancement products.

CHALLENGE

A breakthrough post-harvest sprout inhibitor for the potato market, SmartBlock® was introduced by AMVAC in 2013. The patented product, a naturally occurring molecule classified by the FDA as an approved direct food additive, not only safely, quickly and effectively burns off “peeping” sprouts but also restores dormancy. SmartBlock® is a departure from chemical solutions that are entrenched in the market, requiring a change in application timing. In contrast to existing strategies, SmartBlock® is applied after potatoes begin sprouting, making the launch challenge about not only brand awareness but also altering more than 50 years of habit when it comes to storage management.

APPROACH

Woodruff Sweitzer and AMVAC executed a two-pronged approach to meet the challenges of this launch. A creative campaign was pushed into the market to create awareness and break down the barriers connected to sprouts. The “Bald Is Beautiful” campaign – carried out in print, outdoor and applicator support elements – emphasized this change in process by taking sprouting peeps to the extreme and styling “sprout-dos.” This approach allowed for the timing discussion to be addressed head on with humor, enabling growers to be open to key information and consideration of the product. Due to limited distribution of the product, this same theme was carried out through the early adoption of the product for consistency and comfort of message.

The second part of the launch focused on direct grower outreach. Through its relationship with the United Potato Growers of America, AMVAC launched a field-testing program. This put product in the growers’ hands, letting them use SmartBlock® on their worst-case potatoes, showing the product efficacy and safety on sprouts up to five inches. In many cases, the use of SmartBlock® allowed for the marketing of potatoes that would have been destroyed without the product, creating extremely vocal advocates in the marketplace.



RESULTS

This combination of mass media and grower outreach not only created awareness but also created industry leaders that would quell concerns about the application’s timing that could slow adoption. For the first time in history, growers and storage managers contacted publications en masse to voice their support of the “sprout-dos” ad campaign.

Growers don’t just love the marketing campaign: SmartBlock® continues to gain market share. Not only have sales grown by nearly 20 percent year over year, demand has reached a point that AMVAC is looking at expanding the number of applicators trained for product application. This expansion in availability can only increase the adoption of the product further in the coming years.

