

X-Ray Seed Images

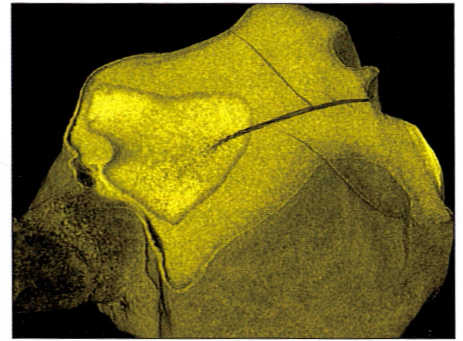
Computed tomography can reveal the internal structures of a seed kernel

One of the most intriguing exhibits at the ASTA 2008 Seed Expo in Chicago in December was the North Star Imaging CXMM™ Coordinate X-Ray Measurement Machine.

In simplest of terms, it is an indus-

trial X-ray system that produces 3D images in the same manner as a medical CAT (computed axial tomography) scan.

With a price tag in the six figures, the CXMM may be beyond both the needs and the means of most seed companies.



CXMM™ X-ray image of sweet corn seed.

With that in mind, NSI offers in-house inspection services at their headquarters in Minneapolis, MN, which is well within the budget of many seed companies.

The exhibit provided a glimpse into some of the top-end equipment used in the high-stakes game of seed technology development being played in the labs of the world's leading universities and biotechnology companies.

No Hidden Secrets

The CXMM is a computed tomography system designed for measurements and three-dimensional applications. Using its X-ray vision, the machine provides very high resolution images (50x higher than that of a medical CAT scan) complete with internal and external measurements.

On display at the Seed Expo were images of a dried kernel of sweet corn. With just the click of a key on the computer's keyboard, the seed image rotated to provide an enlarged 360° external view of every wrinkle and crease in its gnarled coat.

Another image revealed a crack in the seed coat, complete with length and width measurements.

"For some researchers, the information provided by the CXMM more than justifies its cost," says Chris Damhof, marketing coordinator for North Star Imaging.

Joe Funk, editor

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