

SITUATION SUMMARY

On April 19, 2006, officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced the detection of potato cyst nematode (PCN), *Globodera pallida*, a major pest of potato crops. This was the first detection of the pest in the United States. The nematode cysts were detected during a routine survey of tare soil at an ISDA grader facility in eastern Idaho. In that survey, more than 3,500 samples were analyzed, and only one was positive. That survey, conducted as part of Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS), is designed to demonstrate that areas are free of exotic nematodes or, if they are present, to detect them as soon as possible after their introduction into domestic production systems. In response to the detection, Canada, Mexico and Korea shut off importation of potatoes from Idaho. Japan cut off importation of potatoes from the U.S.

On June 13, 2006, soil samples collected from a 45-acre field in northern Bingham County tested positive for PCN. On July 12, 2006, a soil sample from a second 60 acre field in Bingham County tested positive. Between September 27 and October 30, 2006, five additional fields within close proximity to the two initial fields were confirmed positive for PCN. These findings are not surprising because of the fields' proximity to already-identified positive fields. ISDA and APHIS officials continue to believe the PCN infestation in eastern Idaho is isolated because of the more than 38,000 samples taken in 2006, all have been negative for PCN except for those from seven fields in close proximity. The 2006 samples are from investigations involving 224 production fields, 459 seed potato fields, and 58 facilities. Additional surveillance will continue.

On August 28, 2006 APHIS issued a Federal Domestic Quarantine Order to prevent the spread of PCN through regulatory authority provided by Section 412(a) of the Plant Protection Act of June 20, 2000, as amended and the State of Idaho issued a parallel State Rule in support of the Federal Order. These regulations established restrictions on the interstate movement of certain regulated articles from Idaho and designated a regulated area identical to the Idaho Department of Agriculture quarantine, established April 27, 2006 restricting the intrastate movement of regulated articles. The Federal Order also established conditions for interstate movement of regulated articles.

The goals of APHIS and ISDA in the Potato Cyst Nematode Response and Recovery Program are to:

- Prevent the spread of PCN
- Delimit the current infestation
- Eradicate the infestation
- Restore lost foreign markets
- Preserve current markets.

UPDATES AND RELATED INFORMATION:

- A trace of seed sources for the positive fields did not yield any evidence that seed was the source of infestation. Over 90% of the 2006 Idaho certified seed potato crop was surveyed and found negative for PCN.
- Other sources of introduction such as imported farm equipment, nursery stock, foreign flower bulbs, and other soil bearing items were investigated without providing any leads as to the origin of the infestation.
- Surveyors sampled other fields that are located near the positive detections or have common equipment, tenants or workers.
- Additional unassociated fields are being surveyed in eastern Idaho and a plan for a statewide survey is being developed.
- The positive fields are under federal restrictions (no more potatoes to be planted, no soil to leave and equipment to be cleaned). A surrounding regulated area is restricted for the movement of soil and other articles that could spread PCN.
- ISDA and USDA have agreed on a program to treat fields tested positive for PCN. The program includes pre-treatment sampling, fumigation, planting with a cover crop, and post harvest sampling for up to two crop cycles per year. Growers will be asked to enter into an agreement with the PCN project to accomplish the activities related to eradication of PCN from infested fields including access, tilling, irrigation and planting. The PCN project will provide cover crop seed, fertilizer and application and weed control.
- Canada has removed its prohibition on the importation of nursery stock from Idaho provided that the plants come from outside the regulated area.
- Canada and the U.S. have entered into an agreement for the import and export of seed potatoes based on a specific protocol for survey and certification. Idaho seed potatoes from outside the regulated area would be eligible for export provided they meet the protocol requirements. Potatoes for consumption may be exported to Canada from both within and outside the regulated area.
- Japan has reopened its market after temporarily suspending importation of all varieties of chipping potatoes from the U.S. in April, 2006. The potatoes may only be shipped from Arizona, Wisconsin, Oregon, California, Colorado, Texas, New Mexico, North Dakota, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Maine and Washington, provided that potato fields are certified free of PCN prior to export and the potatoes are washed before exporting. Before Idaho is eligible to export chipping potatoes to Japan, the state must complete a comprehensive PCN survey. Currently, all U.S. chipping potatoes exported to Japan must be grown from seed potatoes produced outside of Idaho. APHIS will continue to work with Idaho and Japan to allow for the export of chipping potatoes from Idaho, and the use of Idaho seed in crops destined for Japan.
- Korea still prohibits the importation of potatoes from Idaho due to PCN.
- Mexico has reinstated the importation of potatoes from Idaho provided that they meet certain conditions and are grown outside the regulated area. Conditions include field sampling for PCN prior to potato planting.
- Idaho and national potato industry officials continue to work closely with ISDA and APHIS to encourage cooperation by growers, packers and processors to insure that surveys are conducted swiftly and efficiently.