

Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)
Stakeholder Update
(7/25/06)

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.

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. The second positive finding was not surprising because of the field's proximity to the already-identified positive field. ISDA and APHIS officials continue to believe the PCN infestation in eastern Idaho is isolated because of the more than 5,400 additional samples taken since the April detection, all have been negative for PCN except for those from the two fields. Additional surveillance will continue. The 5,400 samples taken since April are from investigations involving 17 production fields, 21 seed potato fields, and 54 facilities.

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
- Restore lost foreign markets
- Preserve current markets.

Updates and related information:

- ISDA and APHIS continue to search for the original PCN source. A trace of seed sources for the first positive field has been completed, but did not yield any helpful information. Investigation into seed sources for the second positive field is progressing. Investigators continue to examine other possibilities for introduction

of PCN into Idaho, including imported farm equipment, nursery stock, foreign flower bulbs, illicit potato seed importation, and other means.

- Surveyors continue to sample fields that are located near the positive detections and/or have had common equipment usage, ownership/tenants and/or fields that have contracted similar field operations.
- Additional unassociated fields are being surveyed in eastern Idaho and a plan for a statewide voluntary survey is being developed.
- The new nematology lab in Twin Falls should reach full sampling capacity in a few weeks, speeding the survey program.
- The two positive fields are under federal restrictions (no more potatoes to be planted, no soil to leave and equipment to be cleaned). Plans are being developed to provide safeguards when the current crop of potatoes from the second positive field is transported to a nearby processing plant.
- Canada, Mexico and Korea have stopped importation of Idaho potatoes. Japan has stopped importation of U.S. potatoes.
- Officials from ISDA and APHIS continue to work with trade partners to inform them of the PCN response and recovery program in Idaho. Both agencies are answering Japan's questions about the PCN situation in Idaho in an effort to reopen the Japanese market to U.S. chipping potatoes.
- Canadian and Japanese agricultural officials are planning visits to Idaho in August to review progress in the PCN Response and Recovery Program.
- 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 delimiting surveys are conducted swiftly and efficiently.
- APHIS, ISDA and University of Idaho are developing an informational outreach program which will address best sanitary management options to prevent the spread of PCN. The target of this outreach will be the farming operations preparing for harvest and field operations, as well as potato packing and processing plants and any businesses that involve the incidental movement of soil.

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