

Potato Cyst Nematode
Stakeholder update
Sunday, August 20, 2006

A federal regulatory work plan for Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) is nearing completion. The work plan will result in a federal order which will regulate the interstate movement of potatoes and other articles from an area surrounding the infested fields near Shelley, Idaho.

While details of the work plan are still pending, growers in the Shelley area are urged to participate in field soil surveys for several reasons:

- Survey data must be collected to make sure that the extent of the PCN infestation is limited to the regulated area.
- Potatoes from fields that have been surveyed and found negative for PCN may be moved with fewer restrictions than potatoes from unsurveyed fields.
- Additional detections of PCN within the regulated area could allow implementation of measures that would prevent further spread.

As the federal order is implemented, the necessity of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Quarantine issued April 27, 2006, will be evaluated and if necessary, state rules may be promulgated to parallel the federal order.

Because of the potential for PCN to be spread on potato seed, it appears to be in the interest of Idaho seed potato growers to demonstrate that their product is free of PCN. This can be done through the official sampling provided by USDA and ISDA. The PCN project is designed to provide survey data covering all seed production areas.

Some foreign and domestic consumers of Idaho potatoes have expressed concern that Idaho production areas are free from PCN. To restore lost foreign markets and retain current foreign and domestic markets, it is important to demonstrate that there is not a general infestation of PCN throughout Idaho. Therefore, the PCN project plans surveys across the entire state's potato production area.

PCN project personnel will have a limited window of opportunity to collect soil samples for survey after harvest. The PCN project will prioritize survey schedules to meet requirements in the proposed regulated area, then seed fields, then production areas. Early sign-up could negate or minimize delays in getting product to market.

LATE SEASON REQUESTS FOR FIELD SAMPLING COULD EXCEED THE CAPACITY OF PCN PROJECT SAMPLING CREWS. PRODUCERS SHOULD SIGN UP FOR SAMPLING AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE PRIOR TO HARVEST.

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.

- 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 in place 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.
- 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.

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 7,355 additional samples taken since the April detection, all have been negative for PCN except for those from the two fields. The 7,355 samples taken since April are from investigations involving 39 production fields, 22 seed potato fields, and 56 facilities. Additional surveillance will continue.

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.