THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
Cooperative Extension

Integrated Pest Management Program
Houlton Road, P.O. Box 727
Presque Isle, ME 04769

PEST ALERT

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Dear Grower,

Late blight has been found on several diversified vegetable farms in the Knox and Lincoln County area of southern Maine. On these farms, late blight is being found on both tomato and potato plants. Late blight has been detected in a community garden in the Waterville area. Potato late blight has also been found in a small field in the Old Town area of Penobscot County. In Aroostook County, a positive find has been made in one field in the Ft. Kent area; a find has also been made in Ft. Fairfield, one field in the Easton area and several fields in the Houlton-Hodgdon area.

We strongly encourage all growers to be carefully scouting their potatoes at this time. Please remember that when scouting for potato late blight, scouting the low areas of a field where fog may tend to hang or areas of a field that stay shaded are excellent places to look. Please also be aware that if long distance dispersal of spores is involved, ridges that could catch windblown spores and areas behind tree lines where spores could drop in, similar to snow piling up behind a snow fence, are also excellent spaces to explore.

If late blight is found, we strongly encourage growers to contact their neighbors. This will allow your neighbors to be aware of the situation and undertake any additional practices they deem prudent.

If suspicious symptoms are found please be sure of the diagnosis before implementing additional actions. Plant samples can be taken to the Pest Management Office in Orono or the Presque Isle Extension office for identification.

Please call the "Hotline" for updates.

Sincerely,

James D. Dwyer
Crops Specialist

Steven B. Johnson
Crops Specialist

James F. Dill
Pest Mgmt. Specialist

Regular Features

Aphids:

Potato aphid populations in untreated potatoes are beginning to build. This week our scouts have found one untreated field with 14% of the plants with potato aphids. Water pan traps are reporting minor activity at this time. We encourage seed growers to be scouting for aphids at this time.

Recommended Economic Thresholds

Seed: 10% of plants with aphids, or 1 winged Green peach aphid
Processing/Tablestock: 50% of plants with aphids,
or 1 winged Green peach aphid

Colorado Potato Beetle:

Our scouts are finding in some locations a mix of small and large larvae as well as adult beetles. In some locations we are finding Colorado potato beetles on plants that were treated with a systemic at time of planting. In these cases, the insects seem to be only in the upper portions of the plant, and are not at threshold levels. The only fields in our scouting region approaching threshold levels were not treated at time of planting.

Recommended Economic Threshold

Adults: 25/50 plants surveyed
Large Larvae: 75/50 plants surveyed
Small Larvae: 200/50 plants surveyed

European Corn Borer:

Most European corn borer moth trap counts have dropped significantly from last week, however, one trap in the St. John Valley collected 137 moths this week. One other trap in central Aroostook also rose significantly. Variability seems to be the norm with corn borer populations. Cooperative Extension Sweet Corn IPM Program, which operates in the southern part of the state, is also reporting markedly less activity this week. We are, however, recommending that growers scout carefully for egg masses if any moth activity is being detected in your field.

Recommended Economic Threshold

1 egg mass found for every 15 plants surveyed

Disease:

Some areas are currently reporting a 7-day fungicide schedule, but with the continued frequent shower activity, all areas could easily change back to a 5-day protective fungicide spray schedule.

As part of our effort to track the potato late blight, we are sending samples of all late blight finds to the USDA Soil and Water Laboratory in Orono for typing. If late blight is found, we would appreciate samples being brought to our office or the Pest Management Office in Orono.

With many fields in blossom or coming into blossom we may see some botrytis beginning to show up. When potato blossoms drop, many times we will find the blossom sticking to the leaflet. This dead blossom tissue provides an ideal situation for botrytis to develop. Botrytis can easily be confused with late blight. Please have any suspicious plant samples identified.