



**Maine Potato Board**

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Maine Legislative  
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

We, the undersigned Maine potato producers/processors/dealers, write to you to express our great concern about the importation of potatoes from an area of infestation of the Columbia Root Knot Nematode (CRKN), scientifically known as *Meloidogyne chitwoodi*.

Recently the potato industry was notified that a shipment of seed potatoes was being sent from Colorado to Maine. Colorado has a significant infestation of the CRKN. CRKN is a US Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)/Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulated quarantinable pest and has been found in Colorado in multiple locations/counties throughout the San Luis production area since the 1980s. Chapter 255 states that imported seed lots need to be produced in an area free of Golden Nematode, Columbia Root Knot Nematode, and potato wart in order to be allowed to enter Maine. We have contacted the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry about our concerns, but have been informed that potatoes are already in Maine and are currently in the buyer's possession. The intent of rules such as Chapters 255 and 409 is to prevent disease and pests from entering our State and to protect the Maine potato industry and other agricultural crops.

If this pest is found in Maine, it will have a devastating impact on the Maine potato industry, costing it upwards of hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue and potentially necessary treatments. CRKN also has a wide host range, including other vegetables, grains, ornamentals, and weeds, not only putting those crops at risk as well, but also contributing to its difficulty to manage and eradicate. These potatoes were grown in an area known for CRKN infestation, and the risk is far too great to allow them to be brought into Maine and distributed. Also, we are concerned that if other states and provinces learn that we are importing seed from an infected area, they may shut down trade with us now to minimize their risk, even before it is detected here.

We need your help on this urgent matter and ask that the State of Maine does not allow seed imports from Colorado due to extreme risk to our family farms.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your hard work on behalf of Maine agriculture.

Sincerest thanks,

Maine Potato Board – President: Garrett Hemphill  
Maine Seed Executive Council – Chair: Dominic LaJoie

LaJoie Growers, LLC, Van Buren  
Fitzpatrick-Peabody Farms, Houlton  
Seed Pro, Inc, Crystal  
Giberson Farms, Fort Fairfield  
Clover Leaf Farms, Presque Isle  
Moir Farms, Woodland  
Bell Brothers Farms, Mars Hill  
Thibeau Farms, Fort Fairfield  
Daniel Corey Farms, Monticello  
Miller Farms, Houlton  
Irving Farms, Caribou  
Kyle Blackstone Farm, Fort Fairfield  
Nu-Seed Crop, Island Falls  
Green Thumb Farms, Fryeburg  
Porter Farms, Mapleton  
LaBrie Farms, St. Agatha  
Griffeth Farms, Caribou  
Hagan Farms, Houlton  
Paradis Farms, Frenchville

Three Oak Farms, Sherman  
Porter Seed Farm/MSPB, Masardis  
Crane Brothers Farm, Exeter  
Mount View Seed Farms, Bridgewater  
White Farms, Washburn  
Flewelling Farms, Easton  
Whited Farms, Bridgewater  
Blackstone Seed Farms, Caribou  
Hemphill Farms, Presque Isle  
County Farms LLC/McCrum, Mars Hill  
Guerrette Farms, Caribou  
Kingsbury Family Farm, Bridgewater  
Maine Farmers Exchange, Presque Isle  
Bradstreet Family Farms, Bridgewater  
Double G Farms, Blaine  
Crown Farms, Presque Isle  
West Ridge Farms, Mars Hill  
Staples Farms, Presque Isle  
Jeff & Owen Smith, Inc, Mapleton