

PEST ALERT



PLANT QUARANTINE/PRODUCE INSPECTION UNIT MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

HOPE GARDENS,

KINGSTON 6,

JAMAICA

February 2, 2010

Emergency Notification regarding the importation of Irish Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) seeds from the Netherlands and Belgium

The international press has reported a new pathogen causing blackleg-like symptoms, leaf rots and tuber soft rots in Irish potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) seeds and ware. The pathogen is said to be more aggressive than *Pectobacterium atroseptica* and is a close relative to *Dickeya dianthicola*. The name 'Dickeya solani' has been proposed by researchers in Netherland for this strain of the *Dickeya* spp previously called *Erwinia chrysanthemi*. The pathogen has already established itself in a number of European countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Finland, Poland and Spain).

In response to this alert, Jamaica has issued an emergency notification restricting the import of Irish potatoes not certified free from 'Dickeya solani' from the Netherlands and Belgium in order to prevent the entry and establishment of 'Dickeya solani.'

NATURE OF THE CONCERN

A new strain of *Erwinia chrysanthemi* (now renamed *Dickeya* spp) has emerged as a common major threat to potato production. The new strain has been reported to be highly aggressive causing disease within three days even at low inoculum levels and with total collapse at warmer temperatures (above 27°C). 'Dickeya solani' is not known to occur in Jamaica, but has been reported in major seed potato exporting countries. Approximately 95% of the potato produced in Jamaica is propagated from imported seed potatoes. Two of the major seed potato exporters to Jamaica, the Netherlands and Belgium, have been reported to have the pathogen. It was reported that losses due directly to 'Dickeya solani' in the Netherlands reached £25M in 2007. Seed potato is liable to carry the pathogen in trade/transport and detection of the pathogen at port of entry is extremely difficult.

JUSTIFICATION

The Plant Quarantine/Produce Inspection Branch authorized by the Plant (Importation) Control (Amendments) Regulation of 2005 Part I Section 5¹ and in accordance with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standards (ISPM 1& 13), prohibits the importation of Irish potato not certified free of 'Dickeya solani.' Due to the potential devastating economic impact this aggressive pathogen may pose, this emergency notification becomes effective immediately.

As of March 2, 2010, all importation of seed potato into Jamaica must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate with the following additional declaration 'Potato seeds are free from 'Dickeya solani''

This emergency notification will remain in effect until a pest risk analysis for 'Dickeya solani' is completed.

¹Plant (Importation) Control (Amendments) Regulation of 2005 Part I Section 5 states 'no plant, plant products or plants for planting (other than those specified in Part II of the First Schedule) shall be imported into the Island except in accordance with the terms of an import permit granted by the Chief Plant Quarantine Officer'