

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 30, 2022
TO: Fruit & Vegetable Inspection Staff and Industry Members
FROM: Brian Pauley, Shane Larsen
RE: Protocol for Potatoes Destined for Mexican Export

This memo is intended to give specific inspection instructions and guidelines of what must be done to facilitate the issuance of the required phytosanitary certification for potatoes destined for Mexico.

The following protocol is for shipments of potatoes within the 26-kilometer zone:

- 1) The applicant will submit a completed application form (see attached) to the inspector in order to properly identify the lot. This must be presented prior to inspection.
- 2) The inspector will inspect the product to the marked grade. Normal sampling procedures and sample rates are applicable except for items listed below. In addition to this, the following must be noted on the application, or during the inspection process on the notes:
 - The lot must be **free from symptoms of** *Meloidogyne chitwoodi* (Colwnbia Root Knot Nematode), *Meloidogyne javanica* and *Globodera rostochiensis* (Golden Nematode), PVYn, PVYntn, and Mop Top Virus.
 - The potatoes must be washed.
 - The potatoes must be free from soil.
 - The potatoes must show no signs of sprouting.
 - Shipments must be sealed at point of inspection.

Specific notes should be recorded on the notesheet showing any (or lack thereof) of the free from defects listed above. This may be on the reverse side of the notesheet, or on a separate notesheet on sublots.

If the lot meets the requirements of the grade, and has also met the additional requirements above, a certificate, or subplot certificate will be issued after the inspection is complete with the following information in the "remarks" section (see attached):

- A. Applicant states trailer sealed #123456 (The seal number(s) should match the application)

- B. "No external or internal symptoms of quarantine pests of Mexico were observed during inspection process."

After certification, the applicant has the following options to obtain the Phyto:

In the event that a lot will not meet the above, defined requirements, the applicant should be notified immediately. If there is a disagreement between the inspector and the applicant, it should be recommended to the applicant to have a field supervisor come out for a second opinion. Fruit & Vegetable Inspection office should be notified of this as soon as possible.

Potato exports may be made under one of two options below:

Option 1: Certified Seed Potatoes as Table Stock

Seed potatoes certified under the U.S. Export Standard for Seed Potatoes that are exported to Mexico for consumption need no further inspection, testing or survey other than shipping point inspection and adherence to all aspects of standard export protocol.

Grower entry seed falls under Option 1.

Option 2: Individual Truckloads that are not certified seed Potatoes.

These lots must be grown from certified seed. One year out seed is not eligible for shipment to Mexico.

Shipments for export to Mexico will be sampled at the rate of 400 tubers per shipment. Sampling will be conducted in the same manner as under the current inspection procedure (4 bags taken at tailgate inspection, or the equivalent in-line inspection for each truck load, etc.). Samples will be officially inspected for root knot nematodes and bacterial ring rot.

- For root knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne* spp.)

The 400 tubers will have 75% of their surface peeled and the USDA approved inspector will visually examine the peeled potatoes for symptoms of root knot nematode. The shipper will provide personnel for the peeling and adequate light for the peeling area. Adequate lighting will mean at least two 60 watt bulbs directed at the work surface no more than 36 inches from the surface of the inspection table. The shipper will provide the approved inspector the name of the producer and the lot number at the time of the inspection. The approved inspector must approve the inspection facility for adequate lighting, space and worker safety prior to initiation of inspection. Should the inspector observe indications that the potatoes may be infected with root knot nematodes, the shipment will not be certified for export to Mexico

unless tested and found free of Columbia root knot nematode. Subsequent shipments from lots with *Meloidogyne* spp. will not be certified for export to Mexico unless tested and found free of *Meloidogyne chitwoodi*. The laboratory used will be a plant pathology laboratory at the State Department of Agriculture, the State University or other APHIS accredited laboratory.

- For Bacterial Ring Rot (BRR) *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *sepedonicus*

Samples taken for nematode inspection will be cut and examined for symptoms of bacterial ring rot. Because potatoes exported to Mexico must be grown from certified seed, and certified seed address BRR, shipment will not require BRR testing unless symptoms of BRR are discovered during inspection for a shipment.

Shipments with suspect BRR must be tested with the following procedures prior to certification. The shipper will be responsible for costs of shipment of the sample to the laboratory and the costs of testing. If the Exporter elects to not export the shipment, not testing will be performed and this lot will be ineligible for export.

- An additional 200 tuber sample will be taken and sent to an approved laboratory.
- The sample will be washed and the stem ends of the tubers sampled and tested for BRR infection.
- Testing will be done using method(s) adequate to determine whether BRR is present. Elisa, PCR, and immunofluorescent antibody tests may be used as appropriate in the judgement of the bacteriologist.

Should BRR be discovered, the infested lot will be rejected and further shipments from that grower must be tested for BRR according to the same test procedure.

Sprouting and Sprout Inhibitor applications:

The potatoes must be washed and appropriately treated with a sprout inhibitor. The potatoes must be free of soil. Also, sampled and inspected potatoes must show no sign of sprouting. The presence of meristematic growth length of greater than 5 millimeters from the base of the growth is considered a "sprout". The presence of bud swellings measuring no more than 5 millimeters in length from the base of the growth will be considered a "peep" and is acceptable by Mexico. No not refuse to certify if "peeps" are present.

Sprout Inhibitor Application

- Work plan states: "Potatoes will be treated with sprout inhibitor on the packing line two weeks after being harvested in accordance with label restrictions and correct usage of product".
- Potatoes stored for less than three months must be treated with sprout inhibitor in storage or on packing line.

- Potatoes stored for three to five months must be treated with sprout inhibitor in storage and once again on the packing line.
- Potatoes stored for more than five months must be treated twice with sprout inhibitor in storage and once again on the packing line.
- The final application of sprout inhibitor must be done after the potatoes have been washed. Shipper declarations for both certified seed usage and sprout inhibitor treatment(s) may be made on the same document.

Potatoes that have not been treated with a sprout inhibitor are not eligible for export.

The following protocol is for shipments of potatoes beyond the 26-kilometer zone:

All Protocol listed above for within the 26-kilometer zone applies to beyond the 26-kilometer zone (Interior of Mexico) with the following additional requirements.

- 1) Each facility must gain a registration number in order to ship. For registration information contact Lisa Peraino at lisa.j.peraino@usda.gov or cell 303-883-7625 or Brannen Hardy at brannen.v.hardy@usda.gov Ph 501-251-7002 main office Number 501-324-5230.
- Each consumer package of US potatoes for consumption must be labeled with the packing facility registration number in addition to the required statement in Spanish prohibiting planting “Este producto no debe ser utilizado para siembra”. The packing facility registration number is the same as the compliance agreement number which starts with “MPX”. Packages may be directly printed with the facility number or stickered with an adhesive label. **Please note that Mexico has reported problems with the quick lock tabs breaking under handling and the ink rubbing off resulting in illegible information. This method is not recommended but if used, please caution shippers of issues reported. Packages that do not meet the labeling requirements will be rejected.**
- For facilities shipping potatoes to Mexico under both operational work plans, within and beyond the 26 km border zone, consumer packages may display both the packing facility number associated with facility shipping beyond the 26 km zone as well as the shed number assigned to facilities shipping within the 26 km zone. Please note that shippers must still determine the destination of the shipment and ensure the shipment meets the appropriate OWP guidelines for the declared destination.
- Port of entries: Fresh potatoes from the United States destined for beyond the border region are permitted through the following ports of entry into Mexico:

- Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua
- Tijuana, Baja California
- Nogales, Sonora
- Mexicali, Baja California
- Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (not approved)
- Reynosa, Tamaulipas (not approved)
- San Luis Río Colorado (not approved)

Note: Only the first four ports of entry are operational at this time. The other ports will be operational and updated once approved by SENASICA.

This list is current as of 9/13/2022. Check PExD for an updated approved port of entry list. For any clarification, you can consult the ACO at 719-849-8229 or the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Office at 719-852-4749.

Importing companies in Mexico must be registered with SENASICA. Check PExD for an updated approved consignee list. If an approval letter from SENASICA is presented with an importer not listed in the table, please contact Terrance Wells (Terrance.D.Wells@usda.gov) and Eric Longen (Eric.C.Longen@usda.gov) to verify that the shipment can be certified for export to Mexico

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