

POTATO CYST NEMATODE – EFFECTIVE HYGIENE PRACTICE

Risks

Potato cyst nematode and other pests and diseases can be spread on seed tubers, in soil associated with boots, machinery etc, and in waste from table potatoes.

Only certified seed tubers should be grown.

Machinery and vehicles should be washed before they are moved to a different farm.

Contractors and their vehicles may pose a significant contamination risk.

Good hygiene practice

A short checklist is a helpful way of identifying what needs to be cleaned on each piece of machinery. Tires, wheel wells, and any parts of the machinery which are in contact with the ground are the most important and obvious areas, but the checklist should also include any out of the way or hidden areas.

The washing procedure for machinery and vehicles is as follows:

- Dislodge any large clods of soil from the machinery before leaving the field.
- Drive the machinery directly to the washing area, avoiding other fields if at all possible.
- Wash with a high-pressure hose or water blaster if there is no known risk of PCN in the soil.
- Wash comprehensively and steam clean if the equipment has been used in a field which is known to be infested with PCN.
- Follow a checklist for each piece of machinery to ensure every part has been cleaned.

Other vehicles

Soil is easily picked up by vehicles driving through farms. As well as this, when crops are transported soil can be dropped onto roads and then picked up on the tires of passing vehicles. This soil can then contaminate other farms. Try to minimise the number of vehicles which enter your fields and be particularly wary of vehicles which have visited other properties which may be infested with PCN or other diseases (such as the vehicles of merchants, agronomists, or contractors).

Grazing animals

Animals grazing on pasture can pick up and transport soil and plant material, which can be particularly concerning when reject potatoes are used as stock food. Growers should be aware of this risk when choosing stock feed and when livestock are moved between fields.

Leased land

Farm hygiene is particularly important when land is leased as records may not be available of the previous crop history. Get as much information as possible on the history of the land, particularly regarding potato cultivation, whether potatoes have been fed out on the block, and the results of any PCN testing.