

The Potato News

Empire State Potato Growers Inc.



From left to right: College of Agriculture and Life Science's Dean Kathryn J. Boor talks growth chambers with Senator Thomas O'Mara, while the USDA's Stewart Gray looks on.

Photo Credit: Matt Hayes, Managing Editor & Social Media Officer, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Senator O'Mara announces \$1.2 million for the nation's only quarantine research facility for potato pest Golden Nematode

There's nothing golden about the golden nematode. Currently quarantined to eight counties in New York State, this potato pest first discovered in New York State in 1941 is so destructive that, not controlled, it can lead to total crop failure. Additionally, the pest is so persistent in soil, living up to 30 years and almost impossible to eradicate, that if it were to

spread to other parts of the country it would compromise domestic and international trade as embargoes against any agricultural commodity that comes in contact with soil (e.g. all nursery, turf, root, and tuber crops) would be put in place.

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Get dates and registration details for important winter meetings.

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While the collaborative effort involving Cornell University, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) has kept the threat at bay for the past seven decades through quarantine, regulations, and developing resistant potato varieties and management plans, the recent discovery of a new race of the golden nematode threatens the continued success of the quarantine program. But \$1.2 million in new funding from the State of New York to upgrade Cornell's quarantine facility, the only one in the nation, will ensure that the Empire State's and the nation's potatoes are protected from the devastating pest.

"I am very grateful to work together with several of my Senate Majority colleagues to assist the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences make this critical investment in enhancing, modernizing and upgrading its Golden Nematode Quarantine facility," said Senator Tom O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "New York State's potato growers are among the nation's leaders, include the growers I represent in Steuben County

who are a mainstay of an agricultural sector that accounts for thousands of jobs and more than \$70 million in annual production value. We cannot risk the survival of our potato growers because we fail to contain the golden nematode that is the industry's greatest threat."

The detection of the pale cyst nematode, a cousin to the golden nematode, in Eastern Idaho in 2006 resulted in an immediate ban on interstate commerce of potatoes and other agricultural crops shipped in or contaminated with soil at harvest from the infected areas. Canada, Mexico, South Korea, and Japan stopped importing potatoes from Idaho for a period of time, with Japan still banning potatoes from the state as of 2016. The work of the partnership research program between Cornell and USDA ARS is to prevent such an occurrence from happening in New York State.

"I applaud Senator O'Mara and all of the state senators who recognize the importance of the golden nematode quarantine facility and thank them for their invaluable support," said Kathryn J. Boor, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "In addition to supporting our extension efforts in helping New York

farmers prosper, this facility also illustrates federal, state and university cooperation, all working together to protect the nation's produce and economic viability."

To control the pest, Cornell breeders have developed 22 nematode-resistant potato varieties. The first, Peconic, was released in 1966; the most recent, Waneta and Lamoka, in 2011. Walter De Jong, associate professor of plant breeding and genetics, in collaboration with USDA molecular biologist Xiaohong Wang, also a courtesy associate professor of plant pathology and plant-microbe biology, conducts the potato breeding research. Additionally, Wang runs the quarantine facility and an ARS-funded research program which works to understand the biology of the nematode and to develop novel nematode control strategies.

The golden nematode also attacks tomatoes and other plants related to the potato, including eggplant. The 2015 valuation of U.S. tomato production was \$2.7 billion, according to the USDA.

"Cornell University's efforts over the past 70 years to contain the organism, and to conduct the research and development that will always

Continued...

be the front line of protection for our growers and growers throughout America, has been remarkable," continued O'Mara. "This upgraded facility will ensure that Cornell's enormously important work on behalf of one of New York's key agricultural industries will be carried on effectively and successfully."

O'Mara also noted that he worked in partnership with State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (R,C,I-Smithtown) and Senators Ken LaValle (R-Mount Sinai), Betty Little (R,C,I-Glens Falls), Mike Nozzolio (R,C,IP-Seneca Falls) and Catharine Young (R,C,I-57th District) to secure the state funding to assist the first phase of the facility's renovation.



Potato Show & Tell December 9

Walter De Jong is planning the Annual "Show and Tell" about advanced potato selections at the Plant Breeding field house on Caldwell Road in Ithaca, NY on Friday, Dec. 9th.

As in years past, lunch will start at 11:30 am and the discussion will begin as soon as possible after lunch to review the clones. Grower participation in the past at these sessions and personal experience with these clones has been valuable in knowing what to do with each of them. DeJong encourages growers to come, contribute and bring anyone else you think would be interested.

For more information contact Walter De Jong, Assoc. Professor, Cornell University, 607.254.5384, wds2@cornell.edu



POTATO D.C. FLY-IN STANDING UP FOR POTATOES ON CAPITOL HILL

FEBRUARY 13-16, 2017
THE MAYFLOWER HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Hear top political analysts provide insiders' perspectives on national politics and policies
- Meet face-to-face with congressional lawmakers and key staff to communicate industry priorities
- Dialogue with influential administration officials and regulators on real life farming practices
- Master advocacy techniques to communicate effectively with federal decision makers

NationalPotatoCouncil.org

Long Island Ag Forum – January 12

The 37th Annual LI Ag Forum is set for Thurs., January 12 from 2:00pm - 5:00 pm at the Suffolk County Community College, Riverhead, NY. Pesticide recertification credits will be offered and registration for the event costs \$30/pp (before Jan 6) and \$45/pp (after Jan 6). Registration is not open yet but they can register by calling Melissa Elkins at 631-727-7850 ext. 341.

Participating growers can expect the following topics to be covered:

- **Golden Nematode Program – Deregulation and Rotations Explained**, Daniel Kepich, USDA APHIS PPQ and Mr. Chris Logue, Director Division of Plant Industry, NYS Ag and Markets
- **Management of Blackleg Caused By Dickeya**, Dr. Amy Charkowski, Professor and Head, Biological Sciences and Pest Management, Colorado State University
- **Challenges with Controlling Wireworms and White Grubs in Potatoes**, Dr. Thomas Kuhar, Professor and Extension Vegetable Entomologist, Virginia Tech
- **Tuber Necrosis Viruses in Potato**, Dr. Amy Charkowski, Professor and Head, Biological Sciences and Pest Management, Colorado State University
- **Potato Variety Trial Highlights**, Sandra Menasha, Vegetable/Potato Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension/Suffolk

Empire Producers Expo - January 19

The 2017 Empire State Producers Expo will take place on January 17-19 at the OnCenter Convention Center in Syracuse, NY. This annual show combines the major fruit, flower, vegetable, and direct marketing associations of New York State in order to provide a comprehensive trade show and educational conference for New York producers, as well as neighboring states and Eastern Canada. In years past over 100 presentations were given by Cornell Cooperative Extension personnel and highly regarded speakers from across the country. Panel discussions feature some of the top industry experts and growers in New York. Between educational sessions, attendees can visit the trade show featuring over 150 commercial vendors and non-profit exhibitors.

The Potato Session, Thurs., Jan. 19th, focuses on fresh market production and is being organized by Chuck Bornt, CCE Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program. DEC credits will be available.

SESSION TOPICS INCLUDE:

- **What we've seen and what we like from our potato variety trials** –*Sandy Menasha, CCE Suffolk County, and Chuck Bornt, CCE Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program*
- **Dickeya blackleg: The newest disease threat to potatoes** –*Margaret McGrath, Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology Section, School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University*
- **Managing Colorado Potato Beetle and Potato Leafhopper** –*Brain Nault, Entomology, NYSAES, Cornell University*

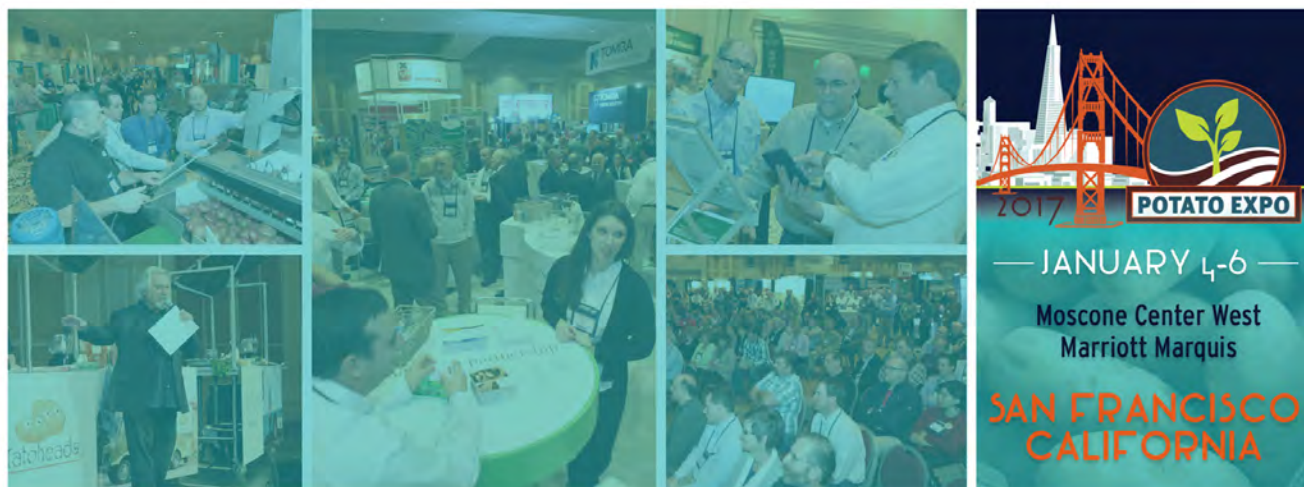
There are a few additions to this year's program by offering opportunities for intensive training during Expo in the form of specialized workshops.

2017 Becker Forum: GAPs/Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Training: one of the first producer trainings to meet the requirements of Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will be offered during the Becker Forum on Jan. 16, in Liverpool, NY. This 7-hour training will provide the required training for farms to meet the Produce Safety Rule.

GAPs Day 2 – Writing Your Own Food Safety Plan Workshop on Jan. 17.

The complete Expo program will be mailed in early December. The program and online preregistration will also be available at:

<https://nysvga.org/expo/information/>⁴



Top 10 Reasons to Attend the Potato Expo

#10 Enjoy the Culture of San Francisco: The San Francisco "street party" will showcase the ethnic diversity of San Francisco neighborhood foods, but take time on your own to explore neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, Little Italy and more!

#9 Meet with Researchers at the PAA Potato Research Poster Sessions: Stop by to meet with the researchers to find out how they are addressing current challenges and preparing the industry for the future.

#8 Make the Most of Your Time in San Francisco: This is the first Potato Expo in the City by the Bay. Maximize your trip by attending the pre- and post-Expo meetings put on by potato industry groups.

#7 Learn About Hot Topics and Current Trends at the Expo Stage: Hear industry experts discuss trends in agriculture at the Expo Stage on the Trade Show floor.

#6 Make Your Dreams Come True: Jim "The Rookie" Morris, who became a major league pitcher at age 35, will share his strategies for success and why you, too, should never give up on a dream.

#5 Find Solutions at the Cutting-Edge Trade Show: Visit the largest ever exhibit space for Expo showcasing cutting-edge technologies, innovations, and services for the potato industry.

#4 Explore Megatrends and Best Practices for Your Business: *Forbes* Editor Rich Karlgaard will bring thought-provoking and actionable ideas that will help you "future proof" your organization and investments.

#3 The Spud Nation Throwdown Returns: The second annual cook-off style event promises an exciting fusion of tastes, cultures and flavors as international chefs incorporate potatoes into dishes inspired by their distinctive culinary experiences.

#2 World-Class Experts in Potato Production, Global Trends, and Marketing at Breakout Sessions: Learn about emerging issues in the marketplaces at the Chip, Fresh, Process, International and Seed Breakout Sessions- designed by growers.

#1 Create Connections with Potato Industry Partners: With numerous opportunities for networking with key decision-makers across the North American potato supply chain, you are sure to make new connections and business leads!



John Keeling, National Potato Council, watches as potatoes are unloaded, while Thom Ayers, Ayers & Gillette, Pike, talks with Blair Richardson, Potatoes USA

New York has grower representatives on the Board of Directors of Potatoes USA and the National Potato Council. Growers who are interested in learning more about these organizations can contact your grower reps or Blair and John directly.

Potatoes USA

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National Leaders tour Western New York Farms

Western New York potato growers hosted a one-day tour for national leaders in early October. The tour was designed to give Blair Richardson, CEO, Potatoes USA and John Keeling, CEO, National Potato Council an idea of what the growing region looks like, the challenges and advantages NY growers face and an overall view of the areas' industry. The group toured the following farms: Hofmann Farms, Springville; McCormick Farm, Gainesville; Ayers and Gillette Farm; Mahany Farms, Dansville; Meyers Farm, Cohocton; Cory Mark Farm, Wayland. The day started early and ended with a late dinner at the Glen Iris Inn,

Letchworth State Park, Castile.

Growers had the chance to share their insight and input on state and national issues with Richardson and Keeling. The national leaders' goal was to develop even stronger relations with New York potato farms by visiting this production region and meeting with growers. They learned more about the issues growers are focused upon and about regional concerns faced by NY farmers.

The trip was a great success and plans are underway to visit other NY production areas in the future.



Blair Richardson, Potatoes USA, Corey Mark, potato grower Wayland, and John Keeling, National Potato Council are intrigued by Mark's video of rock picking.



New York State Agriculture Sets a New Standard

Introducing NYS Grown & Certified Program

We are committed to helping New York State's agriculture industry grow and thrive. With extensive research showing people would buy more (74%), pay more (49%), and favor food (96%) bearing the New York State Grown & Certified label, participating in this program is a winning proposition. It's a simple way to show consumers your agricultural product is among the best in the state.

What is the program?

New York State's agriculture industry is one of our greatest assets. New York State Grown & Certified will lead the nation in providing consumers with transparent and meaningful information about the agricultural products they purchase while also promoting you – New York State's producers.

Why should I join?

Participating in New York State Grown & Certified tells buyers that you adhere to higher standards in safe handling and environmental responsibility. Shoppers will know that your product is safer, fresher, and produced in ways that protect the environment.

What are the benefits?

By becoming New York State Grown & Certified, you gain access to the following benefits:

- Statewide ad campaigns aimed at restaurants, institutional buyers, and retail consumers
- Use of the New York State Grown & Certified label and marketing materials
- Presence on the New York State Grown & Certified website that lists qualified producers

Food Safety

New York has some of the best fruit and vegetable producers in the nation who take great care in producing foods that are safely handled and are doing so in an environmentally sound way. An annual audit certifies that producers operate using safe food handling practices and those practices are deemed acceptable by the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. These audits verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored as safely as possible to minimize the risks of microbial food safety hazards.

What do I need to be a part of it?

Producers interested in learning more about or joining the New York State Grown & Certified program should contact the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 1-800-554-4501, Option 3, or email NYSGrownAndCertified@agriculture.ny.gov.

Expanding NY's Farm to School Programs

43% of state schools reported participating in farm to school activities



ALBANY — Hundreds of New York school districts are increasing children's consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and helping students learn about food production through farm-to-school programs, but the growth of these programs may be limited by various challenges, according to a report issued today by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. DiNapoli released his report when he toured the Gov. George Clinton Elementary School garden in Poughkeepsie.

DiNapoli's report, "Locally Grown: Farm-to-School Programs in New York State," details hurdles school districts face when creating and sustaining such programs. For example, schools face constraints involving staffing and facilities and challenges in purchasing the food.

The report also outlines federal and state initiatives that are intended to encourage farm-to-school programs. New York state's Farm-to-School Program, created in 2001, is run by the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the State Education Department. In 2015, Ag and Markets awarded close to \$325,000 in grants to help build capacity for farm-to-school programs in six areas of the state. The 2016-17 enacted state budget included \$550,000 in funding for such initiatives. Federal and state funds are key sources of support for school lunch and breakfast programs. This year's state budget includes \$1.1 billion in federal funding and \$34.4 million in state funds for these programs.

According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture national census of farm-to-school programs, 298 districts in New York, or 43 percent of state school districts, reported participating in farm-to-school activities.

Over the years, the food industry has moved to a system that relies on transporting products long distances and may not track where foods come from. The programs described in the Comptroller's report found ways to access foods from local producers including new procurement tools added in state and federal laws to assist schools in this effort.

The report describes how six school districts around New York are working to address challenges and bring these programs to their students. For example:

Poughkeepsie City School District provides locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables for families of children in their summer feeding program.

- Broome-Tioga BOCES has arranged for regional food bank trucks to pick up local apples that BOCES provides to its constituent schools; the food bank's "fee" for this service is apples for its customers.
- Rondout Valley Central School District volunteers glean local farm fields for broccoli and other produce, and then process and freeze the resulting harvest in school kitchens for students' lunches.
- Buffalo City School District emphasizes student engagement in its farm-to-school program, working with a local youth development organization to set program goals and implement its Farm-to-School grant. Buffalo also partners with a nearby college for program evaluation.

DiNapoli's report describes the challenges farmers can face in entering a farm-to-school market and competing in school food procurement. Farmers may not be aware of the publications in which schools post their request for bids, or may not be familiar with other aspects of the procurement process such as billing complexities. The expense of complying with food safety processes can also be a barrier, particularly for small vendors.

DiNapoli outlines a set of suggestions for districts and policy makers to consider in building on the statewide farm-to-school program infrastructure, including:

- Looking to boards of cooperative educational services, which in some areas support farm-to-school programs, as a source of expert advice or an organizational home for efforts to emphasize local food purchases;
- Providing training in planning and implementing successful farm-to-school programs to school district personnel; and
- Supporting joint purchasing agreements among districts through the state Farm-to-School grant program and examining the role of farm-to-school as regional food hubs grow across the state.

Opportunity: Recover Costs, Help New Yorkers in Need

Looking for secondary market opportunities for unsold food? In order to provide New Yorkers in need with fresh, nutritious food, Food Bank For New York City, the city's major hunger-relief organization working to end hunger throughout the five boroughs, must procure millions of pounds of produce every year – with a goal of more than 14 million pounds from New York State farmers this year alone. Food Bank can purchase your slightly blemished or irregularly sized produce on the secondary market, at less than wholesale cost, and will cover freight. Cased/bagged produce ranging from 10-50 pounds is ideal; bulk bins may also be accommodated in some cases.



To learn more, please contact Food Bank For New York City Director of Food Sourcing; Lee Cheney at lcheney@foodbanknyc.org or 917-797-3692