



The National PCN Forum

GB Potatoes & CUPGRA

working in partnership to the benefit of the industry.

Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) is potentially the biggest threat facing the whole of the British potato industry and unless it is brought under control it could seriously reduce the future productive capacity of the UK potato sector.

There has been and continues to be a large amount of work being done by different organisations and bodies across GB but currently there is no joined up approach. The PCN Forum will correct that!

To counter the problem and produce a comprehensive strategy for future management of PCN, GB Potatoes working in partnership with CUPGRA have established the National PCN forum. The Forum focuses on bringing together all those from across the industry who have an interest in, or knowledge of PCN and coordinates an approach that will turn that information into a practical industry plan.

The forums interest will include research past and present, future threats to chemical control, breeding of resistant/tolerant varieties and information on trap cropping and bio fumigation amongst other areas to provide the industry with a strategy for tackling the PCN issue in an integrated way.

Meetings have already been held with the steering group creating an action plan consisting of workstreams that require more detailed investigation. You can read the minutes from the steering group meetings in the resources area of the members area.

Mark Taylor, Chair of GB Potatoes comments" PCN is one of the major issues facing the potato sector and without a co-ordinated approach to the pest the industry is under a grave threat of walking into a situation from which it will be difficult to reverse. This is why it is so important that the industry comes together to tackle the problem in a joined up and focussed way. As the voice of the GB potato industry, GB Potatoes is ideally placed to facilitate this forum in partnership with CUPGRA.

It is vitally important that we produce defined goals, realistic timelines and create practical solutions that support the industry. It is not a talking shop, and we will expect to be measured on our outputs".

David Almond Deputy Chair of CUPGRA commented that "CUPGRA are delighted to be working with GB Potatoes to create this Forum and ensure that the industry takes a major step forward in developing a plan for tackling this costly and devastating pest".

The National PCN forum is an open and inclusive group pulling on technical expertise from wherever it is available as well as utilising the practical skills of growers to produce a strategy that is workable in the field. The steering group is the "initiator" to get the forum underway and drive it forwards. Beyond that all interested parties will be encouraged to contribute.

It is essential that everyone in the industry buys in to the outcomes of the forum not only those directly involved but those on the periphery such as Land Agents, Landowners, consultants, retailers, and the supply chain.

Disseminating outputs and information will be essential and will be key to the success of the Forum, which is another area that GB potatoes is uniquely placed to deliver on.

48% of England & Wales and 35% of Scotland's ware land is infected with PCN.

The estimated cost to the GB potato industry is c. £31m. *(source. Matt Back, Harper Adams university)*

PCN can reduce yields by up to 80%. This is a significant loss in a crop that is expensive to grow and requires a high number of inputs.

Seed potatoes must be grown in soil that has been tested and found to have no PCN cysts present.

The area infested with *Globodera Pallida* is doubling every 7 years in Scotland, meaning there is a less land available for producing seed potatoes.

There are fewer resistant varieties available to control *G. pallida* than *G. rostochiensis*.

(Source. PCN Action Scotland.)

It is very important that the whole of Great Britain works together to tackle this growing problem. Work already conducted in Scotland has identified that *G. Pallida* is an increasing problem and is becoming more of an issue than *G. Rostochiensis* as it is more genetically variable.

Only 3% of ware crops and 8% of seed crops grown in Scotland are resistant to *G. Pallida*, demonstrating the extent of the problem.

The Scottish Government has put funding in place creating PCN Action Scotland but there has also been a lot of work conducted across England & Wales as well and it is now imperative to bring these pieces of work together for the good of the GB potato industry

List of partners in the GB PCN Forum.



Fresh Potato Suppliers Association



Harper Adams University

