



Organic Potato Pest Management Strategic Plan: A Tool to Advance Organic Research & Education



Pest Management Strategic Plans

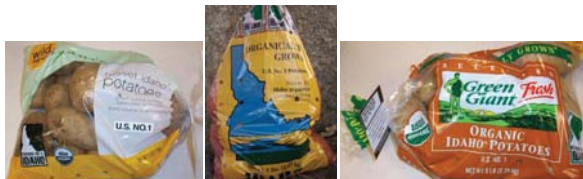
These plans are **developed by producers to address pest management needs and priorities** for livestock and crop production.

The workgroups include farmers, researchers, agronomists, regulators, and other technical experts from a production region.

Workgroup members meet to discuss how they manage insects, nematodes, diseases, weeds, and vertebrate pests. In addition, they identify their research, regulatory action, and educational programming needs. The workgroup votes on the highest priority needs.

With support from USDA and a regional Integrated Pest Management Center, a written plan is produced. **Workgroup members and other researchers, regulators, and educators use the results to better meet the research and education needs of the producers.**

Pest management strategic plans (PMSPs) have been developed for 99 commodities, including alfalfa, bananas, beans, beef (rangeland), blueberries, dairy cattle, hops, lentils, onions, potatoes, sugar beets, watermelon, and wheat.



Most Critical Research Needs

1. Research the **impact of long-term organic soil management on pests and soil health** and how that management helps plants resist pests.
2. Research **organic sprout control in storage**, and discover **potato varieties that have longer dormancy** to further prevent sprouting in storage.
3. Scientifically **evaluate all biological control agents**.
4. Determine how best to **conserve natural enemies** in an organic potato cropping system.
5. Dedicate **long-term organic research sites**.



Outcomes

- ✓ USDA published the first pest management strategic plan for an organically grown crop in December 2008, available at www.ipmcenters.org/pmsp.
- ✓ The 40 workgroup members, including farmers, researchers, and other participants from across five western states, increased their understanding of managing pests, diseases, and weeds in an organic system.
- ✓ Researchers and educators are using the strategic priorities to develop needed research and education programs for organic potato farmers.
- ✓ Workgroup members used the draft strategic plan to document stakeholder need in grant proposals, which helped to secure funding.
- ✓ The information helped farmers in Idaho to triple the acres used to grow organic potatoes.



Most Critical Education Needs

1. Provide a **clearinghouse to disseminate organic potato pest management information** in a comprehensive fashion (e.g., eOrganics). Make sure this information is available in Web-based and non-Web-based formats.
2. Educate growers about which **green manure varieties** are good for managing specific pests.
3. Educate **USDA about the importance of funding organic research**, especially long-term organic research.
4. Educate **growers about the importance of good, clean, certified seed**, and provide them with strategies for understanding all of the information available about certified seed. Educate them about having a plan for clean seed (i.e., not using self-saved seeds and not buying from unknown sources.)
5. Educate **FDA and USDA about the importance, validity, and safety of organic methods**.
6. Educate **growers about soil-building research** (e.g., mulch and compost addition).

Development of an Organic Potato PMSP

- When members of the potato industry decided to update their conventional potato PMSP, they decided to add organic production.
- Because of the emphasis on preventative pest management practices and a systems approach in organic production, the group decided to develop a separate document.
- Organic farmers, researchers, regulators and others met to develop the plan in 2006 and 2008. **Because this was the first plan for an organic crop, the process needed to be modified to better fit the organic system.**
- The organic potato PMSP includes the major organic potato producing regions in the west, including California, Colorado, Columbia Basin, Idaho, Klamath Basin, and west of the Cascade Mountains.

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