



**Animal and Plant  
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# News Release

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**USDA and Partners Launching State National Harmonization  
Program for Seed Potatoes**  
*New Program will Help Increase Trade Opportunities*

WASHINGTON, April 25, 2013—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced the launch of the State National Harmonization Program (SNHP) for seed potatoes. This program is a collaborative effort between APHIS, the National Potato Council, the United States Potato Board, the National Plant Board, and state seed certification agencies.

“The harmonization program launched today by APHIS and its partners is an important tool that will benefit U.S. agricultural trade and the economy,” said Rebecca Bech, Deputy Administrator of APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine. “By working together to harmonize seed certification programs, this country’s potato industry is better positioned to take advantage of trade opportunities.”

Each participating State agrees to follow baseline standards regarding both quarantine and non-quarantine potato pests, creating a framework in which interstate and international commerce can be facilitated.

The new program was first discussed at a 2002 potato summit, where growers, government officials, and industry representatives proposed the idea to harmonize requirements. At the time, state certification requirements for seed potato production varied from state-to-state and each State had to negotiate their own market access based on their individual certification standards.

Nearly all of U.S. seed potato production falls under the newly launched program’s guidelines. Currently, twelve States participate in the program, covering 98.5% of all U.S. seed potato acreage: Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. New York, California, and Alaska are in the process of completing the requirements for entry into the program. Three non-seed potato producing states – Alabama, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia – have also signed onto the program in an effort to demonstrate to trading

partners that their potato industries are following best practices by using seed potatoes that are produced through this program.

The successful SNHP partnership between State and Federal agencies will allow the partners to not only improve trade, but also to deal with future potato pest issues in a coordinated fashion.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America's agricultural exports, valued at more than \$135 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

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