COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

of 24 June 1980

on the control of potato ring rot

(80/665/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Articles 43 and 100 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission (1),

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (2),

Whereas potato production occupies an important place in Community agriculture; whereas the potato yield is constantly threatened by harmful organisms;

Whereas, through the protection of potato cultivation against such harmful organisms, not only should productive capacity be maintained but also agricultural productivity increased;

Whereas protective measures to prevent the introduction of harmful organisms into the territory of a Member State would have only a limited effect if such organisms were not controlled simultaneously and methodically throughout the Community and were not prevented from spreading;

Whereas one of the organisms most harmful to potatoes is Corynebacterium sepedonicum (Spieck. et Kotth.) Skapt. et Burkh., the pathogenic agent of the bacterical potato ring rot disease; whereas this disease has occurred in some part of the Community and some limited sources of infection still exist;

Whereas there is a permanent risk to potato cultivation throughout the Community if effective measures are not taken to prevent this disease from occurring, to locate it, to control it with the aim of eradicating it and to prevent it from spreading;

Whereas in order to ensure this, minimum measures must be taken for the Community; whereas Member States must in addition be able to take additional or stricter measures where necessary;

Whereas the minimum measures have to take into account that the disease can remain latent and unobserved in the growing crop and in stored tubers and so can be effectively prevented only by production and use of seed potatoes free from infection, that systematic official surveys are necessary to locate it; whereas there is little if any spread of the disease within the growing crop, that the disease can exist through the winter in self-sown (volunteer) potato plants; whereas the disease is spread mainly by contact of potatoes with planting, harvesting and handling equipment or transport and storage containers, contaminated with the disease by previous contact with infected potatoes; whereas such contaminated objects can remain infectious for some time after such contamination; whereas spread of the disease can be reduced or prevented by disinfection of such objects;

Whereas for the determination of the details of such minimum measures as well as for those other measures taken by Member States to prevent the introduction of the disease into their territory it is desirable for Member States to cooperate closely with the Commission within the Standing Committee on Plant Health set up by Decision 76/894/EEC (3),

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

This Directive concerns the minimum measures to be taken within the Member States against potato ring rot caused by Corynebacterium sepedonicum (Spieck. et Kotth.) Skapt. et Burkh., in order:

— to prevent its occurrence,

— to locate it,

(1) OJ No C 175, 23. 7. 1977, p. 2.
(2) OJ No C 266, 7. 11. 1977, p. 45.
(3) OJ No L 340, 9. 12. 1976, p. 25.

— to control it with the aim of eradicating it,

— to prevent its spread.

Article 2

1. Member States shall conduct systematic official surveys for potato ring rot on tubers of potato (Solanum tuberosum L.) which are harvested, stored or marketed in their territory.

These surveys shall involve at least official visual inspection of selected lots from which samples of tubers shall be taken and cut open.

2. Member States shall ensure that the suspected occurrence and the established presence of potato ring rot in growing potatoes or havested, stored or marketed tubers shall be reported to their official plant protection organization, which shall determine, at least by visual inspection which includes the cutting of tubers, whether further investigation is necessary.

3. Where symptoms of the presence of potato ring rot are found or suspected in the inspections provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2, official testing shall be carried out in accordance with appropriate methods to confirm whether or not this disease is present in potatoes or tubers referred to in paragraph 2.

4. If the occurrence of potato ring rot is suspected in a Member State, appropriate steps shall be taken by that Member State to prevent any spread of the disease pending confirmation or otherwise of the suspicion.

5. The field, store, consignment or lot shall be considered to be contaminated if tests confirm the presence of the disease in a single seed potato or tuber.

6. The extent of the contamination shall be determined by the official plant protection organization of the Member State concerned having regard to sound scientific principles and the biology of the disease.

7. Member States shall inform the other Member States and the Commission immediately of any confirmed contamination and at least once a year of the results of the surveys provided for in paragraph 1.

The details of this information shall be confidential. They may be submitted to the Committee in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 16 of Council Directive 77/93/EEC of 21 December 1976 on protective measures against the introduction into the Member States of harmful organisms of plants or plant products [1].

8. The following provisions may be adopted in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 16 of Council Directive 77/93/EEC:

— the details of the surveys and inspections provided for in paragraph 1 and to be carried out in accordance with sound scientific and statistical principles,

— the appropriate methods for the official testing provided for in paragraph 3,

— the criteria and principles to be taken into consideration when determining, in accordance with paragraph 6, the extent of the contamination,

— the details of the information provided for in paragraph 7.

Article 3

1. Member States shall prescribe that, where contamination which might affect their potato production has been confirmed in accordance with Article 2 (5), seed potatoes may not be certified under Council Directive 66/403/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of seed potatoes [2] unless they derive in direct line from material found free of potato ring rot in tests carried out either officially or under official control according to appropriate methods.

The aforesaid tests shall be carried out:

— either on the plants of the initial clonal selection, where the contamination affects the seed potato production of the Member State or Member States concerned,

— or, in other cases, on representative samples of the basic seed potatoes or earlier propagations.

2. The following provisions may be adopted in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 16 of Directive 77/93/EEC:

— the decision for the total or partial dispensation of individual Member States from the requirements laid down in paragraph 1,

— the period of application of the requirements laid down in paragraph 1,

(1) OJ No L 26, 31. 1. 1977, p. 20.
(2) OJ No 125, 11. 7. 1966, p. 2320/66.