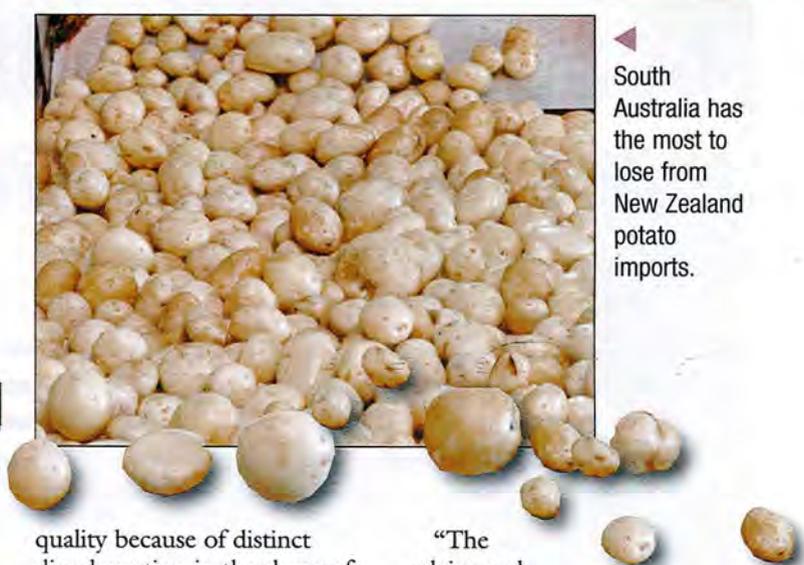


NZ imports sure to devastate Aust potatoes



South Australia has the most to lose from New Zealand potato imports.

FAST FACTS

- Disease spread by *tomato-potato Psyllid*
- Estimated NZ losses \$120m
- Pest Risk Analysis out of date

POTATOES
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

the voice of the potato industry in south australia

nation's largest producer with farmgate production worth \$206 million.

"SA also produces 80 per cent of the nation's fresh washed potatoes."

The disease is spread by the tomato-potato Psyllid (a flying insect) and through live plant matter, including potatoes.

Estimated losses in the NZ industry because of the disease total about \$120m. It has also had a devastating effect on production in United States.

Infestation by the bacterium results in a downgrading of

quality because of distinct discolouration in the shape of brown/black stripes and death of the plant.

Most solanaceous crops are affected by this complex.

Ms Davis said very little was known or understood about the insect host (Psyllid) and the bacterium.

The importance of the disease and severity of its effects were clearly reflected in the millions invested in researching it since its occurrence overseas.

"There is no cure and there are no resistant varieties," Ms Davis said.

"The proposed regulations in the DAFF Biosecurity Draft Report for the review of import conditions for fresh potatoes for processing from NZ are not sufficiently stringent and offer next to no protection for the Australian potato industry.

"The advice and supporting Final Pest Risk Analysis lack rigour, objectivity, and basic scientific method.

"There is also selective presentation of data. The Pest Risk Analysis is also out of date (2009), given the short time the disease has been identified and the large volumes of research undertaken since then."

Ms Davis said Australia must maintain its food security and biosecurity by preventing the importation of exotic pests and diseases.

Potatoes SA will provide a submission on behalf of its stakeholders to DAFF and Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig. It is also encouraging individual stakeholders to express their concerns.

Details: Robbie Davis 0427 084 319

POTATOES South Australia chief executive officer Robbie Davis says the national industry faces yield losses of up to 50 per cent if Biosecurity Australia grants market access to fresh New Zealand produce.

The potential introduction of zebra chip and other pests and diseases could devastate Australia's crops.

Ms Davis said the importation of fresh potatoes from NZ for processing, which includes french fry and potato chip production, will be a "disaster waiting to happen".

"It will have enormous repercussions throughout the potato industry value chain, particularly in South Australia," she said.

"In SA, potatoes represent the largest horticulture contribution to gross food revenue and the State has the most to lose from importing NZ potatoes because it is the