



PEST RECORD - THE NETHERLANDS

Symptoms of *Epitrix sp.* on Fresh ware potatoes from Portugal

1. Introduction

As part of an official specific survey, fresh ware potatoes originating from Portugal with clear symptoms caused by *Epitrix sp.* were recently detected at a storage facility of an import company in the Netherlands. Specific surveillance in the Netherlands was initiated this year following completion of a pest risk analysis at the beginning of 2010. Surveillance of potato crops as well as monitoring of incoming consignments from Portugal is ongoing.

Details of the symptoms on the consignment

The consignment of ware potatoes from Portugal consisted of approximately 44 tons of the varieties Annabelle and Nicola. Approximately 0.5% of the consignment demonstrated clear symptoms, evenly distributed throughout the consignment. According to the operator many more symptoms were observed on some consignments some three years ago. These consignments were no longer suitable as table potatoes and were processed for industrial purposes or fodder. The symptoms consist of feeding damage by larvae of *Epitrix sp.* All symptoms appear to be relatively old in view of callus overgrowth of the galleries (see pictures 1 and 2). The consignment contained approximately 300 kg. of adhering soil. In total 40 tubers and 3 kg. of adhering soil were analyzed by the National Reference Laboratory. Apart from other insects in the adhering soil, no life stages of *Epitrix sp.* were detected.

Pest status: Absent – specific surveillance is ongoing.

2. Impact

Most of the negative impact is due to the impact on cosmetic quality, as *Epitrix* damage does not affect gustative quality. Because of quality requirements for tubers to be marketed, this can nevertheless cause lot rejection.

3. Phytosanitary measures and phytosanitary risk

At the present time measures foremost focus on inspection of a limited number of incoming consignments of fresh ware potatoes from Portugal and specific surveillance of potato crops on fields surrounding the importing company. Out of some 10 companies importing fresh ware potatoes from Portugal, in total 6 companies have been selected for the specific surveillance in view of nearby fields which are used for potato cultivation. In case of newly arriving consignments, inspectors are informed by the company and may examine the consignment. All potato crops within a radius of 1 km of these import locations are targeted for crop surveillance. The surveillance on crops is carried out during the period half July until half August because any feeding damage on the crop caused by *Epitrix sp.* can best be observed during this period.

Detection of the organism by inspection or testing is difficult, especially for larvae and eggs. Also adults are difficult to detect in case of large consignments of ware potatoes. At the present time decision making on additional measures for preventing entry and spread of *Epitrix* is pending in view of the considerable uncertainty of the distribution of the organism in Europe. Furthermore, eradication of the organism is considered almost impossible in view of its survival potential on soil and weeds of the *Solanaceae*.

4. Background information

EPPO data sheet *Epitrix similis*, 2009-02

NL PRA on *Epitrix sp.*, 2010 (unpublished report)

Figure 1: Fresh ware potatoes with symptoms of *Epitrix* sp.

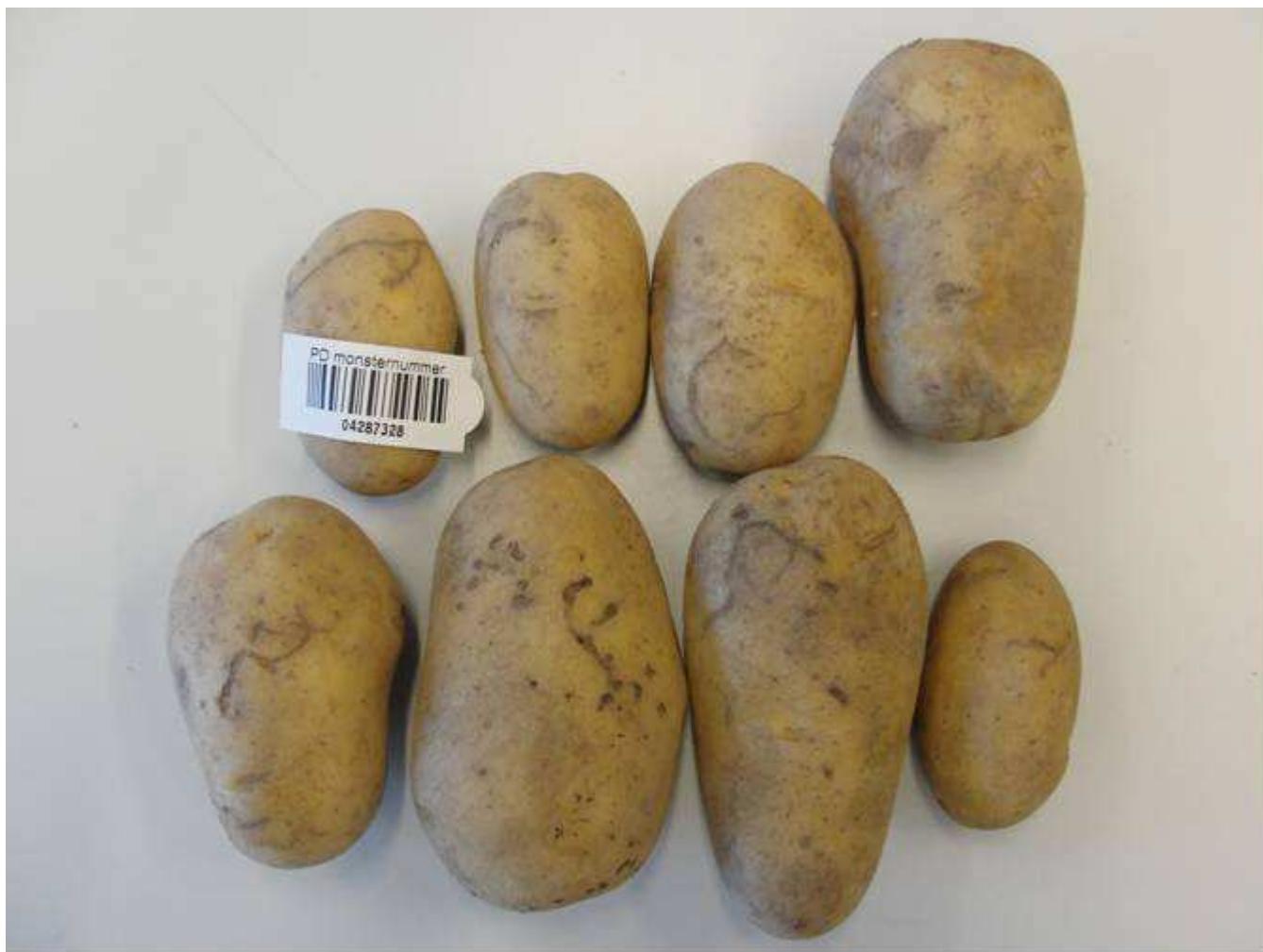


Figure 2: Close-up detail.

