

Brussels, 24 October 1966

IP(66) 115

PRESS RELEASEPotato pest control

The Commission has submitted to the Council two proposals for directives concerning control of potato wart and potato-root eelworm.

The Commission had sent to the Council of Ministers on 1 April 1965 a draft directive concerning precautions against the introduction into the Member States of organisms harmful to plants. When this proposal was examined in the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee it was suggested that the Commission should take more effective measures as regards pest control at Community level. The above-mentioned draft directives are in response to this suggestion.

Potato yields are constantly jeopardized by pests and all protective measures against the introduction of these into the Member States would have only limited effect if pests were not simultaneously and methodically combated in the Community as a whole and if their spread were not prevented.

*Synchytrium endobioticum*, the agent of potato wart, and potato-root eelworm are among the organisms most harmful to potatoes. They are viable anywhere in the Community and have already appeared in most Member States. Minimum arrangements must be laid down to combat these pests effectively within the Community. The drafts leave it open to the Member States to apply additional or more stringent measures in their respective territories.

The chief arrangements envisaged in the two drafts concern contaminated areas and batches of potatoes and clear belts around those affected by wart.

As it is difficult to lay down in regulations specific methods for ascertaining the degree of contamination by *synchytrium endobioticum* and by eelworm and the resistance of the different species of these pests, reference is made to the international methods in use.

A list of varieties of potatoes which examination in the different Member States has shown to be resistant to one or more strains of *synchytrium endobioticum* or of eelworm will be published annually by the Commission, which will confine itself to the varieties allowed in trade.

The Member States are required to take the necessary action to comply with the present directive within one year of its notification.

The proposals are made in pursuance of Article 43.