

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

**Legislative Document**

**No. 1230**

H. P. 993

House of Representatives, March 15, 1979

Referred to the Committee on Agriculture. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Mahany of Easton.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-NINE

**AN ACT Relating to Potato Quality.**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

7 MRSA § 951-A is enacted to read:

**§ 951-A. Minimum standards for planting**

No potato seed, the product of which is intended for sale, shall be planted in the State in lots of one or more acres unless that seed meets the minimum disease standards of Maine certified seed potatoes as defined by the commissioner. Potatoes planted in violation of this section shall be eligible for sale only as prescribed by the commissioner, and shall be subject to a fine not to exceed 5c per hundredweight harvested, payable to the Treasurer of State and credited without lapsing to the commissioner for the enforcement of this section.

In the event there is not available to be planted in Maine in any year a sufficient volume of Maine potato seed meeting Maine certified seed potato disease standards, in any or all varieties, the commissioner may, upon application of one or more growers, permit seed of a higher disease content to be planted for that growing season.

Each grower shall keep records of seed planted by variety and by fields during the growing season and report planting records as may be requested by the commissioner.

## STATEMENT OF FACT

Fields planted to seed with disease content greater than Maine certified seed are a source of inoculum for virus disease that can be spread to nearby healthy fields. Certified seed, or seed meeting the minimum disease standards of certified seed, helps lower the incident of bacterial ring rot, a bacterial disease that affects at least 10% of commercial potato acreage in Maine. In addition, use of that seed can be expected to increase average yields per acre, improve over all quality, and, as a consequence strengthen Maine's competitive position in foreign and domestic markets.

This proposed legislation would apply only to disease content. It would not prevent planting of potatoes not meeting nondisease specification of certified seed. Determination of quality of seed would be by certified seed inspectors using seed potato certification records of the Department of Agriculture on Maine-grown seed, and unloading inspection records and certification records on imported seed potatoes. No grower who plants seed as provided in this bill will be subject to the penalty should disease subsequently appear in his production.