

Maine approves 3 genetically engineered blight resistant potatoes that reduce pesticide use

With little fanfare, the Maine Board of Pesticides Control unanimously approved ... the registration of three new types of genetically engineered potatoes that have been developed by a major Idaho agribusiness company.

The move means that the J.R. Simplot Co.'s Russet Burbank, Ranger Russet and Atlantic potatoes could be planted in Maine fields at any time. These potatoes were created by adding genes from a wild potato plant and are designed to be resistant to late blight, the disease that caused the mid-19th century Irish Potato Famine and which remains a problem today.

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[T]he Simplot potatoes are different [than GMOs], according to the company. They are not transgenic, because they only contain genes from potatoes — both from cultivated species and from a wild potato species from South America that provides protection against certain strains of late blight. Although the Simplot potatoes have been genetically engineered, it would have been possible to breed them via the traditional method of cross-pollination.... [B]ecause late blight is a disease that is present in Maine potato fields, a product which allows farmers to sharply curtail fungicide application might be desirable....

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Genetically engineered potatoes approved for Maine](#)