



IMPACT ON FLORIDA'S POTATO CROP

ISSUE - A NEW DISEASE IN FLORIDA'S POTATO CROP

- Florida produces two potato crops – one in spring and one in fall.
- Value of Florida's 21,000 acres is more than \$200M/year (2023 NASS)
- In fall 2022, a crop consultant submitted a sample with unusual symptoms and spreading fast to the SPDN regional center lab at the University of Florida
- The SPDN diagnosticians identified the fungus, *Colletotrichum*, causing black dot, a new disease for Florida. This disease can cause defoliation if left untreated, leading to poor yield.



Black dot, caused by *Colletotrichum*.
Photo UF-IFAS Plant Diagnostic Center

RESPONSE

- The crop scout indicated the foliar disease was present on nearly 100% of the fields scouted and routine fungicide sprays were not helping.
- The SPDN diagnosticians tested the isolates for fungicide sensitivity.
- The isolates were insensitive to a common fungicide. Quick response to the consultant changed the course of fungicide applications for the crop, halting disease spread and protecting the \$5M crop.

RESULTS

- Timely educational communications through extension contacts and newsletters ensured all producers in the state were aware of the disease, how to detect it, and how to treat it effectively during a year with especially favorable crop prices.

Great industry-extension teamwork: An experienced scout knew something was unusual and had a trusted lab contact to help with accurate ID. Luckily the lab also was able to test for fungicide insensitivity, all with turnaround quick enough to implement disease management.

– Carrie L Harmon, Co-Director, Southern Plant Diagnostic Network
