

## ***Premier Russet*** – Blackleg Concern

At the Othello, WA commercial seed lot trial at the end of June the incidence of black leg in some of the lots of ***Premier Russet***, a new PVMI variety, was noted. Growers wondered if there was a need for concern.

Dr. Mark Pavek, Research and Extension Horticulturist Potato and Vegetable Crops at Washington State University writes

“A few of us that have followed ***Premier Russet*** through many research trials don’t think that this variety is necessarily more susceptible to blackleg than varieties like ***Russet Burbank*** or ***Ranger***; rather seed growers may need to adjust the cultural management of ***Premier Russet*** prior to harvest and storage.

Because ***Premier*** is a new variety that most seed growers are not familiar with, something as simple as increasing skin set/tuber maturity at harvest may go a long way to reducing seed-borne blackleg.

As with many newly introduced varieties, it will take seed growers a few years to adjust their practices to meet the needs of this new variety. When ***Umatilla Russet*** was introduced, dry rot was a huge concern and some seed lots were actually rejected due excessive dry rot. As seed growers became more familiar with ***Umatilla Russet*** and adjusted their management, dry rot became less of an issue.”

July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008