

KARNAL BUNT QUARANTINE INFORMATION

QUARANTINE PLACED ON WHEAT AND WHEAT SEED FROM ARIZONA

Search begins for Arizona durum wheat in Utah

Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson signed an emergency order, March 28, 1996 imposing a quarantine on the movement of grains and other possible host materials into Utah from areas affected by the fungus, Karnal bunt. The Utah quarantine is adopted from a federal quarantine by reference which was signed by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. The areas under quarantine include: the state of Arizona and certain areas of New Mexico and Texas.

Karnal bunt is a fungal disease of wheat, durum wheat and triticale which was detected in durum seed grown in Arizona in March, 1996.

Commissioner Peterson also is calling for a statewide survey of wheat and wheat seed products in Utah to detect the presence of the Karnal bunt fungus.

The UDAF and the USDA- APHIS are requesting that Utah wheat farmers and wheat seed dealers check their inventory immediately for wheat or wheat seed purchased from Arizona suppliers during the past several months. Infected durum wheat varieties are: Reva lot #1 or #2 and Durex lot # 1.

Please report the discovery of such wheat to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food at (801) 538-7123. The USDA pledges to reimburse farmers/dealers for any losses.

The action is prompted by a USDA quarantine placed on Arizona, as well as four counties in New Mexico and two counties in Texas. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman declared the discovery of Karnal bunt fungus an "extra-ordinary emergency" after the fungus was detected March 8 in two durum wheat seed lots in Arizona. Since then the fungus has been detected in New Mexico and Texas.

The UDAF's role in this effort is to work with other state and federal agencies so Utah can be reasonably certain that it remains free from Karnal bunt fungus, and that infected grain does not enter the state.

Karnal bunt is a disease of wheat, durum wheat and triticale (a hybrid of wheat and rye). The disease affects both yield and grain quality. It adversely affects the color, odor and palatability of flour and other foodstuffs made from wheat. It does not present a risk to human health. To date, Karnal bunt has been confined in four varieties of durum wheat -- Reva, Ocotillo, Durex, and Kronos. Durum wheat, a speciality wheat crop, comprises only 4.7 percent of the total wheat produced in the United States in 1995-96.

The USDA has cut off wheat shipments to 21 countries that mention Karnal bunt in their phytosanitary requirements. Wheat prices took a quick dip after the fungus was confirmed. The U.S.'s wheat export market is valued at about \$4.9 billion, and the US is the world's leading wheat exporter, accounting for one-third of world wheat exports. Utah's 1995 wheat crop is valued at \$39.9 million dollars, the highest value for that crop in several years. Utah wheat farmers raise very little durum wheat, and the likelihood is low that Karnal bunt fungus is present in the state. Farmers and dealers should be aware of the possibility of cross contamination of the various wheat varieties, and they should be alert to contamination through contact with railroad cars, trucks, farm machinery, etc.

The USDA said it believes this is a localized find of Karnal bunt, and emergency quarantines have been put into place on those infected properties, seed, farm equipment, planted wheat and soil associated with the infected wheat. In addition, USDA has established a scientific panel that met March 14 in Arizona to

review and update the existing emergency plan. The panel is also investigating how the fungus was introduced.

Karnal bunt was first reported in 1931 in the Indian State of Haryana in wheat-growing areas near the city of Karnal, from which the disease gets its name. Since then, it has been found in all major wheat-growing areas of India, as well as in Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Karnal bunt may have been present in Mexico since 1970 and has been well established in some areas in northwestern Mexico since 1982. Until recently, the disease was not known to exist in the United States.