



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & RURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY
28 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0028

SETH H. BRADSTREET, III
COMMISSIONER

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GOVERNOR

ROBERT I. BATTEESE, JR.
DIRECTOR

March 2, 2010

Dear Tomato Seedling Supplier,

The Maine Legislature has directed the Maine Department of Agriculture to require notification of any tomato seedling shipments sent to Maine businesses during 2010. We are seeking your cooperation so we can monitor and inspect shipments, keep the Maine retailers advised of any pest outbreaks, and take any other actions to prevent the pest problems we encountered last year.

During the 2009 growing season, Maine experienced a dramatic increase in late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) outbreaks on tomato and potato crops. Potatoes represent the largest agriculture crop in the state and the industry has an economic value of \$540 million. Late blight was traced to tomato seedlings from out of state sources sold at retail outlets across the state, and this pathway was determined to have contributed to the increased incidence of the disease. There is a high level of interest in addressing this problem and we are hoping that this simple notification request will eliminate the need for more burdensome requirements in the future.

To comply with these requirements, please provide the following information regarding shipments of tomato seedlings:

- Destination of shipments to Maine, including physical location address
- Amount/number of seedlings shipped
- Date(s) of shipments

The information should be sent to me via:

Email: ann.gibbs@maine.gov (preferred),

Fax: 207-287-7548 or

Mail: Ann Gibbs, State Horticulturist
Maine Department of Agriculture
28 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333

We do not feel this should impact your ability to sell plants in Maine, but it will allow us to keep track of shipments and hopefully reduce concerns about your plants. Again, thank you for your cooperation and please contact me with any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

E. Ann Gibbs
State Horticulturist