



Sustainable Agriculture Facts ***Growing for tomorrow***

Integrated Management of Late Blight on Potatoes



FIGURE 1.
Spores
developing
on underside
of leaf.

Late blight has been a problem for potato growers in North America since the 1840s. The recent arrival of a new form of the late blight fungus, the “A2 mating type”, is resulting in many new strains of the fungus. These new strains are sometimes more aggressive and some may have overcome genetic resistance in some potato cultivars or be resistant to some fungicides. For example, strains have been found in North America that differ in their response to the fungicide meta-laxyl. Some strains are sensitive to the fungicide and some strains are insensitive.

For effective control of late blight, integrated management **MUST** be adopted by all producers, large and small, including organic farmers, home gardeners and other specialized growers, by pesticide and equipment manufacturers and suppliers, and by government agencies, extension specialists and crop consultants.

Fungicides cannot be used alone for effective control of late blight, but must be used as one tool in an integrated management strategy. Cultural practices are the first line of defense, and forecasting techniques and proper application technology are essential for efficient, targeted applications of fungicides.