



STATE OF IDAHO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REMINDS ONION INDUSTRY OF CULL ONION DISPOSAL RULES FOR ONION MAGGOT CONTROL

BOISE, Idaho – Sunday, March 15th is the deadline for disposing of cull onions in Ada, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Owyhee and Washington counties, according to Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) rules.

That means there must be no culls – onions deemed waste or not useable for human consumption – on hand at any packing sheds, infields or at animal feed facilities as of the deadline. Onions sorted after March 15th must be properly disposed of within one week. Trucks transporting onions should be covered to prevent spillage along roadsides.

The ISDA publication "Cull Onion Disposal in Idaho" details the various options for proper disposal including pit burial, feeding, composting, spreading, chopping and shredding. The University of Idaho's "Best Management Practices for Pit Disposal of Cull Onions" (publication CIS 1064) is referenced in the rules and is available through the University of Idaho Extension Service. These regulations are aimed at reducing the potential for damage to Idaho's onion crop.

A copy of the cull onion disposal rules, as well as the publication "Cull Onion Disposal in Idaho" and other ISDA rules, can be obtained from the State of Idaho Homepage at: <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/02/0617.pdf>

The larval stage of the onion maggot attacks and destroys portions of the onion bulb, providing an avenue for fungi and bacteria to cause bulbs to rot during storage. With consecutive years of wet springs, the insect has been known to destroy 80 percent to 90 percent of the crop. Onion maggots are frequently found in cull onion piles.

The maggot adult flies emerge in April and May and are attracted to the strong odors given off by sprouting onions and new seedlings. Each onion maggot can destroy up to two dozen

seedlings during its two-week lifespan, so crop damage can be substantial. Culls serve as breeding and egg-laying sites for the adult flies without proper disposal.

These regulations have been in effect for several years with positive results. ISDA has received excellent cooperation from the onion industry in working together in this endeavor. Let us continue to work together to protect Idaho's onion industry.

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