

Potato cancer in the Smolyan region

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The Regional Food Safety Directorate in Smolyan has placed an area of 10 decares in the territory of the village of Barutin, Dospat municipality, under quarantine for a period of 10 years. The reason for this extreme measure is the potato wart disease. The first cases of the disease were registered as early as 2011 in several villages in Smolyan municipality, when the "Plant Protection" Directorate of the Food Safety Agency established that the infected potatoes came from Turkey and Greece. The disease is caused by a type of fungus and is not dangerous to humans, but it destroys the crop and infects the soil for up to 30 years, experts confirm. Experts tested over 100 potato varieties and found that only two - from Poland - are resistant to the infection. The wart in the village of Barutin is much more aggressive and requires its complete isolation through quarantine. However, approximately 200 decares of buffer zones have been designated within the territory where potatoes of a disease-resistant variety could be planted.

In the lands affected by the disease, the planting and cultivation of potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, and planting material is prohibited for a 10-year period. Also, the passage of domestic animals and the movement of agricultural machinery will be restricted in these areas.

The quarantine applies to a total of seven fields with a total area of 10.1 decares in five locations in the area of the village of Barutin, as is clear from the order of the Director of the Regional Food Safety Directorate, Dr. Sava Bozukov.