

THE MANY FACES OF MOLD IN HISTORY



THE GREAT POTATO FAMINE

In 1845, Ireland's population totaled 8 million people, 4 million of which were enormously dependant on potatoes as a food source for humans and animals alike.

A period of rain, which lasted from May 1845 until March 1846 provided textbook conditions for the reproduction of the fungus *Phyophthora Infestans*. The fungus grew on the leaves of the potato plants causing entire field to rot within weeks.

Farmers were forced to use their uninfected seed potatoes for food and were therefore unable to plant a new crop for the next year. Starvation quickly spread throughout Ireland; three and one half million people died from starvation and disease or were forced to leave the country.