

Press release NEPG – June 2019



North Western European potato area increased

Based upon a provisional estimation of the NEPG (North-Western European Potato Growers) the area in the 5 largest potato countries increased to 609.000 ha of consumption potatoes. The largest ever. Although it is not the final area figure (final figures will be published at the beginning of July), the estimations show a growth of 2,4 % compared with last year and 8,4 % compared with the 5 years average. All potato countries on the continent show growth, with France and Belgium at the top. The fear for lack of seed potatoes to grow to more area was not so realistic (more smaller sizes used, more seeds cutted, ...), even if prices have increased. Also production costs, due to higher seed costs and sometimes higher land rents, will probably be higher than those of last year. For Great Britain it is still too early to make a first estimation, so here has been calculated with the 5 years average. However, any growth in area may be capped by last year's challenging season and high seed prices.

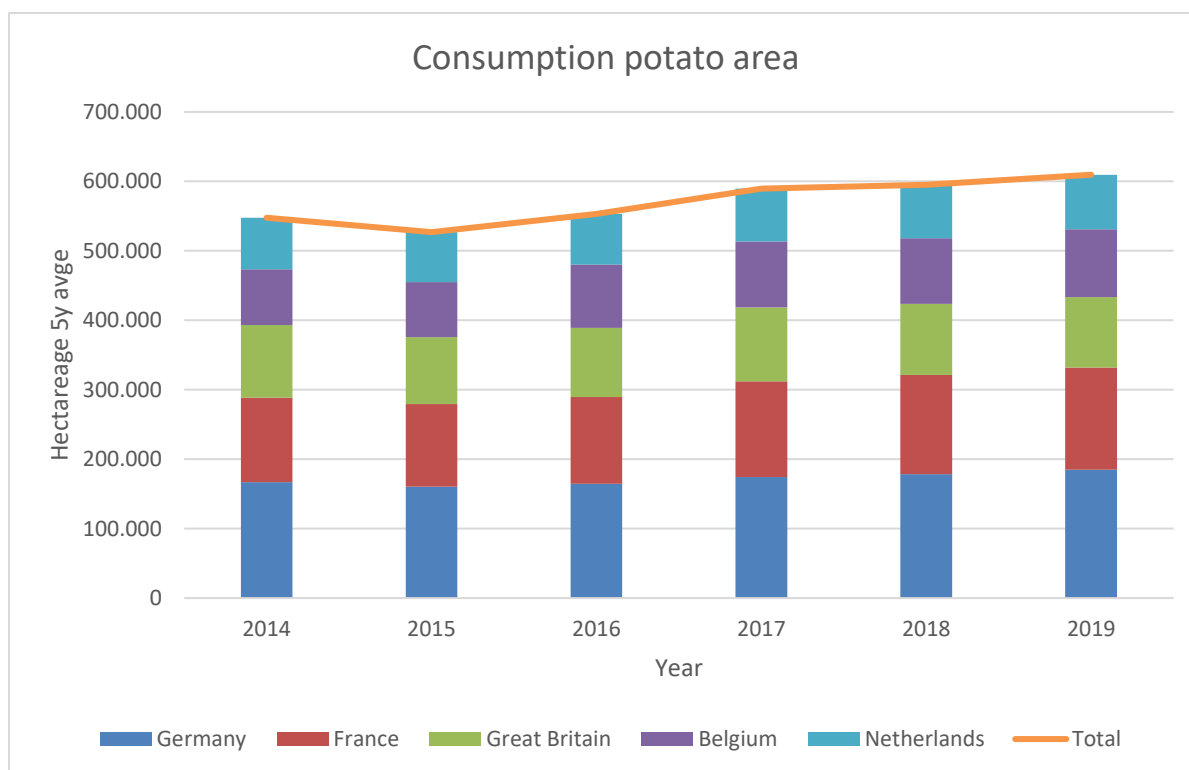
Early planted crop

In all 5 countries the planting was earlier, however due to the cold start of the growing season the crop is now on an average level. The early processing potatoes in Germany and Belgium will be harvested mainly during the middle of July (with the first ones, on very low volumes, at the end of June) which is one week later than average.

During the last NEPG meeting the members agreed that the growth of the area is in line with trend of the growing demand for processing and export. The NEPG emphasized that it is always the yield and not the area that will make the final harvest quantity, and the growing season is still long. As there will be no carry over of the 2018 harvest, the next potato season will be longer than usual and might need more potatoes. The actual extreme low amount of free potatoes in stock and the one-week later arrival of the early processing harvest will be a challenge for the processing industry as they are hungry for raw material.

Water is the critical point

All countries see large challenges for the water situation, as the levels in reservoirs and wells, and ground reserves are much lower than average. Rain is needed for the crop and to guarantee the possibility for irrigation there were possible. Some restrictions have already been taken.



Source: NEPG 2019

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Actual vs Ly.	5y-avge	2019 vs 5y-avge %
Hectareage 5y avge	562.508	562.508	562.508	562.508	562.508	562.508			
Annual Variation	3,0%	(3,8%)	5,0%	6,6%	1,0%	2,4%			
Total	547.633	526.961	553.118	589.559	595.270	609.615	2,4%	562.508	8,4%
Belgium	80.434	79.504	91.368	95.283	94.429	97.587	3,3%	88.204	10,6%
Germany	167.100	160.416	164.500	174.400	178.500	184.750	3,5%	168.983	9,3%
France	121.410	118.890	125.250	137.720	142.710	147.000	3,0%	129.196	13,8%
Netherlands	74.089	71.900	72.800	75.800	77.150	78.500	1,7%	74.348	5,6%
Great Britain	104.600	96.251	99.200	106.356	102.481	101.778	(0,7%)	101.778	0,0%

Source: NEPG 2019