

All North-Western potato countries fear drought

Although the area in the 5 largest North Western potato countries increased with 2,2 % towards 611.190 ha, a record, the NEPG (North-Western European Potato Growers) is not convinced that they are heading for average yields.

The condition of the crop is good, however in almost all NEPG growing areas, the drought and water levels are the biggest concern for the growers.



More potato area

Except Great Britain all countries increased their consumption potato area, with Germany at the top with 3,6 % area growth. Here the largest growth was in Lower Saxony. In Great Britain the availability of good seed potatoes changed the expected trend for more area, with seed prices and the previous seasons challenging conditions also contributing.

The planting started on time and under good conditions, however the first growing weeks were to cold.

The actual crop conditions are good, however rain, ground water levels, heat and irrigation capacity are the main topics. Belgium especially has a very low degree of irrigation, only 3 – 4 % of the potato area is under irrigation.

First early liftings

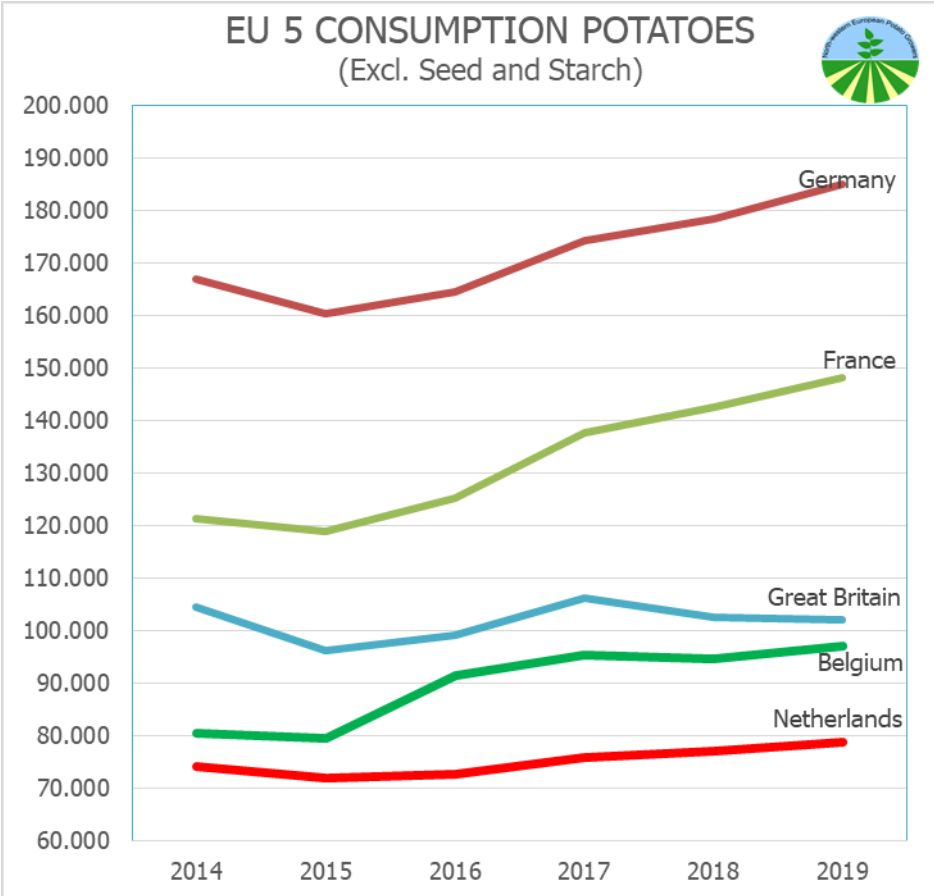
This week the main liftings for early processing have started as the factories are hungry for the new crop. The first indications show average yields in Germany and higher than average for the Belgium early processing varieties. Belgium trial digs show 38 to/ha without irrigation and the German early processing, mainly irrigated reports 42 to/ha average. But, with the drought, first indication is that the first harvested potatoes (the best ones, planted first...) could be the ones with the best yields. Because other fields are bulking less, because of the dry conditions!

Not only the growers, also the Potato Future market indicates fear that the 5 countries do not make the average yield.

The NEPG stresses that in August and September most of the kilos are made and still average yields are feasible, however it is all depending upon rain in the coming 3 weeks. If there is no serious rain it seems not realistic to calculate with an average yield this year.

The supply season to the factories has started and the industry is heading for a long supply season, asking for 8 – 10 % more raw material.

Blight is under the existing dry weather conditions under control, The Netherlands, Belgium and Northern France report Colorado beetles.



Source: NEPG 2019