

North Western potato area increased slightly



The NEPG, North-Western European Potato Growers, estimates that the area for consumption potatoes increased with 0,5% compared with last year towards 621.148 ha. Under the actual circumstances, this is considered as too much, however, the COVID-19 situation arrived at the moment that growers already ordered their seed potatoes and rented potato land, too late for an area reduction.

Most of the increase is in Germany and France where it seems that transfers from processing to table potatoes have taken place. The Great Britain figure has been from the five-year average, as this is not split yet without seed potatoes.

The NEPG stresses that it is always the yield and not the area that makes the volume of the upcoming harvest and it is still too early to estimate these yields. The dry conditions at the start of the crop cycle may well have already limited the potential available.

Worldwide situation

This season there are, according to the NEPG, much more questions and conditions to give the market a direction.

The next year's market will not only depend on the growing conditions of the crop in the big 5 potato countries in Europe. United States potato area has gone down by 5%, so what will the North American harvest be, and what influence will that have on the worldwide export of potato products?

The first part of the growing season was too dry, and tuber count and yields of the earlies in Germany are lower than usual. It is expected that less early processing potatoes will be harvested (effect of a very dry spring, a cold spell which frost some of the fields, lower tuber count), and most growers have decided to harvest normally and not to wait too long. Several contracts were even cancelled by the processing industry.

Many questions remain unanswered... the biggest one being: What will the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic be on the markets in the coming months? Last but not least, how well are growers prepared for longer (and costlier!) storage without the use of CIPC which is now banned throughout Europe? As most of the kilos in the crop are grown later in the summer the NEPG will come with a first crop estimation early September.

North-Western European Potato Growers – 07th of July, 2020

NEPG chart for publication

EU 5 CONSUMPTION POTATOES (Excl. Seed and Starch)

1 July 2020

year	2019	2020	actual vs l.y.	5y-avge	2020 vs 5y-avge %
Hectareage					
Annual Variation	3,3%	0,5%			
Total	618.023	621.148	0,5%	577.243	7,6%
Belgium	97.103	97.947	0,9%	91.601	6,9%
Germany	186.000	189.700	2,0%	172.763	9,8%
France	152.720	154.900	1,4%	135.968	13,9%
Netherlands	78.900	77.000	(2,4%)	75.310	2,2%
Great Britain	103.300	101.601	(1,6%)	101.601	(0,0%)