

New secretary and first chairman for the NEPG



On January 1st, the NEPG started on a new basis.

The NEPG which till December 31st was a 5 country organisation (EU-05: B, D, F, GB, NL), started on January 1st without the British AHDB. Due to different factors, AHDB decided they would stop being member of the NEPG.

Victor Phaff from the Netherlands stepped down as NEPG secretary at end of December 2020 and is currently replaced by Daniel Ryckmans from Belgium.

Victor Phaff was the 1st secretary of the NEPG and undoubtedly made the NEPG what it now is. Victor joined the informal group of growers and growers representatives in 1999. It was under his leadership that the NEPG got its official name and logo, and later thanks to his input, got an official status as a foundation.

Victor progressively led the informal and loose structure into a better organised and structured institution. The NEPG is now considered as a reliable source of information, not only for growers but for the whole supply chain. During the last years, the media and independent businesses have increasingly taken up and sometimes waited for the NEPG press releases and information.

On January the 1st, part of the official members of the Foundation were renewed and installed. In alphabetical order, the official representatives of the Foundation are Guy Depraetere (ABS representative) from Belgium, Alain Dequeker (UNPT representative) from France, Michael Heintges (for REKA Rheinland) from Germany and Bert Timmermans (for the VTA) from the Netherlands. In addition to these 4 country representatives, 2 other board members were installed: Jaap Botma (VTA, NL) who is the first official chairman of the NEPG and Daniel Ryckmans as new NEPG secretary (Fiwap, B).

Jaap Botma, current VTA chairman, is the first NEPG chairman to be elected as such. He officially started as chairman on July 1st 2020 and will assure this role for at least another 12 months. The idea of having a permanent chairman is to make reinforce the secretary and find out how NEPG could develop in the future.

Daniel Ryckmans has been working for more than 25 years for the Fiwap in Belgium. He started as new NEPG secretary on January 1st.

NEPG starts in a new era

The going of Victor Phaff and the arrival of Daniel Ryckmans coincide not only with a new decade, but also more dramatically in a new period for potato growers and the potato industry as a whole. After more than 20 years of growth and development, 2020 saw the whole potato world shake due to Covid-19. For the first time in decades, potato area could significantly go down in 2021. Markets and prices could still take months to fully recover.

Part of the NEPG development and activity was due to the needs of specialized potato growers who were (and still are) active producers on the free market. In the coming months and years, the role of NEPG as “information gatherer” (free buy prices, contract prices and conditions, area and production statistics, processing activity, import and export figures,...) will remain crucial for the growers throughout the EU-04.

The following organisations are active members of the NEPG (in alphabetical order): ABS (B), FIWAP (B), FWA (B), PCA (B), REKA (D), UNPT (F) and VTA (NL).

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