



# Potato growers do not always realize how much costs and risks potato growing means.

Gembloux, 03-12-2024

Most potato farmers across the NEPG zone had a lot of luck during October and beginning of November to finish harvesting. Even though some of the harvesting was done in very difficult and expensive conditions. Some of the harvested crop, be it because of quality issues during the summer or bad harvesting conditions, stored only for a few days or weeks, and then had to be evacuated. But overall quality is good, with high enough Under Water Weights and lengths. During destocking, higher tara (greens, rots...) have nevertheless to be taken into account.

2024 yields (43,8 t/ha) are 0,6 t/ha under the 5 years average (44,4 t/ha) as well as the average yield of last year (44,4 t/ha). Range yields throughout the NEPG zone were very different, going from less than 20 t/ha to up to more than 70 t/ha. This mainly in function of planting dates. The total EU-04 hectareage expanded by 37.700 ha (+7,2 %) and the total production rose by 6,9 % to 24,6 million tons (+ 1,6 million tons). At the same time, processors needs are also higher.

EU-04 CONSUMPTION POTATOES (Excl. Seed and Starch)									
Nov. 2024 year									
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	actual vs l.y.	5y-avge	2024 vs 5y-avge %
<b>Countries NEPG</b>									
<b>Production (x 000 t) 5y avge</b>	21.654	21.502	22.104	22.652	22.120	22.730			
<b>Annual Variation</b>	13,0%	3,8%	(3,3%)	(4,6%)	6,5%	6,6%			
<b>Total crop</b>	<b>22.649</b>	<b>23.502</b>	<b>22.722</b>	<b>21.682</b>	<b>23.094</b>	<b>24.609</b>	6,6%	22.730	8,3%
<b>BE - Belgium</b>	4.406	4.335	4.249	3.962	4.428	4.309	(2,7%)	4.276	0,8%
<b>DE - Germany</b>	7.998	8.555	8.329	7.995	8.444	9.196	8,9%	8.264	11,3%
<b>FR - France</b>	6.536	6.915	6.895	6.045	6.863	7.729	12,6%	6.651	16,2%
<b>NL - Netherlands</b>	3.708	3.696	3.248	3.680	3.359	3.375	0,5%	3.538	(4,6%)
<b>Hectareage 5y avge</b>	461.253	475.755	494.068	502.886	508.356	513.753			
<b>Annual Variation</b>	4,1%	1,3%	(4,6%)	2,5%	2,3%	6,9%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>515.541</b>	<b>522.275</b>	<b>498.010</b>	<b>510.616</b>	<b>522.324</b>	<b>558.414</b>	6,9%	513.753	8,7%
<b>BE - Belgium</b>	97.921	96.985	89.649	92.355	96.253	100.677	4,6%	94.633	6,4%
<b>DE - Germany</b>	186.000	189.700	183.060	189.000	191.910	209.000	8,9%	187.934	11,2%
<b>FR - France</b>	152.720	158.590	153.913	152.590	158.677	170.244	7,3%	155.298	9,6%
<b>NL - Netherlands</b>	78.900	77.000	71.388	76.671	75.484	78.493	4,0%	75.889	3,4%
<b>Yield (t/ha) 5y avge</b>	47,1	45,3	44,8	45,1	43,6	44,4			
<b>Annual Variation</b>	8,6%	2,4%	1,4%	(5,5%)	3,1%	(1,4%)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,9</b>	<b>45,0</b>	<b>45,6</b>	<b>43,1</b>	<b>44,4</b>	<b>43,8</b>	(1,4%)	<b>44,4</b>	(1,4%)
<b>BE - Belgium</b>	45,0	44,7	47,4	42,9	46,0	42,8	(7,0%)	45,2	(5,3%)
<b>DE - Germany</b>	43,0	45,1	45,5	42,3	44,0	44,0	0,0%	44,0	0,0%
<b>FR - France</b>	42,8	43,6	44,1	39,2	43,3	45,4	5,0%	42,6	6,6%
<b>NL - Netherlands</b>	47,0	48,0	45,5	48,0	44,5	43,0	(3,4%)	46,6	(7,7%)

## Higher production costs in field and storages.

Overall 2024 production costs where higher than in 2023. On average, these costs have gone up by a minimum of 1.000 €/ha. In many cases it was very much higher. Certainly in cases with a lot of additional costs concerning seed handling (cutting, chitting, drying and cooling before planting) and/or with more expensive control of late blight in field. Potatoes storage this season will also be more expensive, not even talking of higher building and machinery costs now and in the near future.

## Potato farmers face multiple new or more difficult issues.

With extremely high late blight pressure, the need to use 2 or more compounds per spray (due to resistant and/or new late blight strains), the loss of some active matters, the very difficult and prolonged

planting and harvesting season, emergence of new problems (i.e. edible nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus* and Stolbur, a phytoplasma) in different growing regions, growers face ever more risks and expenses.

Seed availability, most of it in hands of the processing industry, and more difficulties to hire land on a yearly basis does not help growers either.