



# Historical, extremely low free buy prices need a chain approach.

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Potato farmers across the NEPG zone have had some tough months and the near future is bleak. Early plantings in good conditions and an extension of the potato hectareage is leading to a record harvest.

In 2024, growers planted 7% more potatoes (+ 37.000 ha) than the year before. This trend continued in spring 2025, with a further increase in plantings: nearly 40.000 additional hectares were devoted to potatoes for consumption, bringing the total area to 608.000 hectares in the EU-04 (BE, DE, FR, NL), 7% more than last year. Based on trial digs across the zone, NEPG expects a record harvest of around 27,3 Mt. This is 2,65 Mt (+ 11%) more than the 2024 harvest.

The increase in hectareage was stimulated by the info disseminated during the last 2 seasons about rising and growing demand from processors and increasing processing capacity, higher contract prices and potato as a profitable crop compared to other crops.

However, this expansion is now being hampered by an imbalance between supply and demand. A significant portion of the harvest cannot be stored, and tens of thousands of tons have already been redirected to animal feed, biogas plants, or composting facilities...

## What lessons should growers draw from this situation ?

The reality is clear: agricultural production costs are among the few that do not decrease, and nothing suggests they will fall in 2026. In this context, after the economic losses many farms are set to face this year, a significant reduction in planted area next year is to be expected. The question is to determine the extent of the decline in hectareage, and the challenge lies in what processors think about it.

We are currently experiencing a true growth crisis: in 2025, a supply crisis, which could very well turn into a crisis of demand as early as 2026 if growers no longer have the economic capacity to keep up. The imbalance between supply and demand began this year, and it is becoming essential to restore balance starting next year.

The NEPG stresses the importance of more and continued dialogue throughout the supply chain.

## The NEPG reiterates: produce what you can in a sustainable way and preserve your resources...

The NEPG has repeatedly stressed that production must meet demand, not run ahead of it. More collaboration and communication are needed throughout the value chain. The sector must clarify and share its development outlook if it wants to avoid a supply breakdown.

For the NEPG, at a time when planting plans are being drawn up: produce what you can sustainably and preserve your resources. Growers must seriously consider producing under economically viable conditions, and not simply according to what processors expect them to deliver. With climate change accelerating, potato cultivation is becoming not only riskier and more expensive, but also putting growing pressure on the natural resources it relies on: soil, water, and biodiversity. Preserving this capital is the essential condition to continue farming successfully in the future.