

## EU North-Western potato area grows by 4.6%

The total consumption potato area in North-Western Europe, the NEPG area, has been estimated at 578.821 ha, which is 4.6% more than last year and 8.3% more than the 5 years average. All 5 countries increased their potato area, with Belgium on top with 5.4%.

This is based upon the NEPG (North-Western European Potato Growers) country estimations. The NEPG emphasizes that this does not automatically mean that the harvest will increase also, as the yields per hectare are more important for the final harvest than the area.

Almost 750 thousand tons more potatoes are desired due to the growth of the processing capacity and the export of ready product outside the EU, the NEPG estimates that there will be an additional need for raw material of around 750.000 tons for next season. The Belgian processing capacity, especially, is expanding so the extra area here is in line with the increased demand.

### Too early to estimate the yield

According to the NEPG it is still too early to estimate the total harvest. The last few weeks were extremely dry, often with restrictions on irrigation. The upcoming harvest of the Belgian early processing varieties is estimated to be 20 – 25% less than last year. However in spite of the drought the main crop is in good shape, especially in the UK. With the actual return of rain showers there is secondary growth reported which will be monitored carefully.

The weather and growing conditions in the coming weeks will be the determining criteria, taking into account that most of the kilos are grown in July and mainly August. At this moment all scenarios are possible. By the middle of August the NEPG will do a more specific estimation based upon trial digs.

**Lien article :** <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/178275/EU-North-Western-potato-area-grows-by-4.6-procent>