

NEPG expects small increase of potato area despite low prices

Despite low prices during this campaign, it's expected more potatoes will be planted for the harvest of 2018 in Northwestern Europe. The NEPG, or North-West European Potato Growers, estimates the growers in the five most prominent potato countries will plant 0.4 per cent more potatoes than last year. The stocks of the current harvest are still high, but because the potatoes will be planted later and the early varieties are expected to be harvested later, the NEPG expects a longer production season than usual for the processing industry. The situation for fresh table potatoes appears to be similar.

It's expected market prices between well-processable potatoes and poorer quality will differ greatly in coming months. The question is if stocks of potatoes that are easily baked will be sufficient to meet the needs of processing. For the poorer qualities, on the other hand, it could become difficult to find enough sales.

Plants

All of the NEPG countries reported fairly late planting. On the continent, the majority of potatoes has now been planted, but in the UK only half has been planted in the first week of May. France, Belgium and Germany report more planted material, while the Dutch area appears to be decreasing by 2.5 per cent. The UK currently has no estimates available yet, so that the five-yearly average has been assumed to calculate the expected planted area in NEPG countries. In total, 0.4 per cent more than last year, but 6.7 per cent more area compared to the average over the past five years, which will be more than enough if the harvest is regular despite growing demand from the processing industry, according to the NEPG. The availability of seed potatoes also boosted the area's increase, as well as the higher demand for contracts by processors and a lack of alternatives for the growers.

According to these estimates, 585,608 hectares of consumption potatoes will be planted. In figures, the harvest would result in four per cent fewer potatoes in the five-yearly yield compared to this season. However, nearly all countries report a decrease in production of fresh table potatoes, because they're switching to growing for industry using varieties with a higher yield per hectare.

In France, Germany and the Netherlands, a trend is expected that will see more plants for potatoes that can be used in the starch industry. These figures have not been recorded in the NEPG estimates.

EU 5 CONSUMPTION POTATOES (Excl. Seed and Starch)

3 May 2018

	2017	2018	actual vs l.y.	5y-avge	2018 vs 5y-avge %
Countries NEPG					
Production (x 000t)					
Annual Variation	19,4%				
Total	29.339	28.170	(4,0%)	26.391	6,7%
Belgium	5.117		(100,0%)	4.279	(100,0%)
Germany	8.720		(100,0%)	7.847	(100,0%)
France	6.180		(100,0%)	5.566	(100,0%)
Netherlands	4.078		(100,0%)	3.752	(100,0%)
Great Britain	5.243		(100,0%)	4.947	(100,0%)
Hectareage					
Annual Variation	5,5%	0,0%			
Total	583.479	585.608	0,4%	548.610	6,7%
Belgium	95.283	96.617	1,4%	84.560	14,3%
Germany	174.400	177.016	1,5%	165.643	6,9%
France	131.640	135.589	3,0%	122.868	10,4%
Netherlands	75.800	73.905	(2,5%)	73.058	1,2%
Great Britain	106.356	102.481	(3,6%)	102.481	(0,0%)
Yield (t/ha)					
Annual Variation	13,1%	0,0%			
Total	50,3	48.1	(4,3%)	48,1	(0,0%)
Belgium	53,7	0,0	(100,0%)	50,6	(100,0%)
Germany	50,0	0,0	(100,0%)	47,4	(100,0%)
France	47,0	0,0	(100,0%)	45,3	(100,0%)
Netherlands	53,8	0,0	(100,0%)	51,4	(100,0%)
Great Britain	49,3	0,0	(100,0%)	48,3	(100,0%)

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Liens articles : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/194311/NEPG-expects-small-increase-of-potato-area-despite-low-prices>