



## **Potatoes: More area, less harvest, uncertainty**

***For the 5 leading potato countries the NEPG (North-Western European Potato Growers) estimates a total harvest of 24,91 million tons consumption potatoes, against 25,31 million tons in 2015. In spite of the area increase of 4,8% the harvest is expected to be 1,6% lower.***

In the NEPG area enormous variations in yields and quality are found, by area, however, also by variety. Mainly in the variety Fontane for example a large percentage of growth cracks is found, and overall the NEPG expects more tar than average. The dry matter content is very high, which makes the potatoes vulnerable for bruising, especially in dry harvest conditions. The processing yields are good with the high dry matter. The lower proportion of large tubers combined with the dry matter content however may degrade the transform coefficient. Overall Germany is still expecting an average harvest. Belgium shows the lowest outcome with 5,8% lower harvest than last season in spite of the large area growth of more than 12% here. In France, The Netherlands and Great Britain overall production is also forecasted to be lower than average years.

The NEPG stresses that due to low yields and very dry soil conditions the harvest is behind schedule with most of the potatoes still in the fields, which increases the risk of bad harvest conditions.

### **5 years average**

Compared with the 5 years average the harvest is 2,2% lower, while 3,6% more potato fields were planted. The flooded areas or fields with rain damage during the beginning of this season are included in these figures.

### **Higher production costs in 2016 and higher wastage**

Due to the very high blight pressure and to the lower than average yields, cost of production per ton or ha will be higher than those of last years. Sometimes about €300 more per ha due to blight protection. The difference between gross production

and net production will also be higher than usual (due to cracks, greening and other quality issues).

### **Market prices**

Potato prices on the free market are still quite firm after last season, and may be supported by the lower production this year. However, growers with contracts might have difficulties because of the lower yields and possible quality penalties, which causes lower profitability. This would also mean more demand from processors on the free market.

EU 5 CONSUMPTION POTATOES (Excl. Seed and Starch)					
19 September 2016					
year	2015	2016	actual vs l.y.	5y-avge	2016 vs 5y-avge %
Countries NEPG					
Production ( x 000t)					
Annual Variation	(11,2%)	(1,6%)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.314</b>	<b>24.914</b>	(1,6%)	<b>25.474</b>	(2,2%)
Hectareage	532.836	0			
Annual Variation	(3,8%)	4,8%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>526.961</b>	<b>552.036</b>	4,8%	<b>532.836</b>	3,6%
Belgium	79.504	89.379	12,4%	75.870	17,8%
Germany	160.416	165.228	3,0%	163.927	0,8%
France	118.890	125.250	5,3%	116.834	7,2%
Netherlands	71.900	72.979	1,5%	71.274	2,4%
Great Britain	96.251	99.200	3,1%	104.930	(5,5%)
Yield (t/ha)	47,8	(0,1)			
Annual Variation	(7,7%)	(6,0%)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,0</b>	<b>45,1</b>	(6,0%)	<b>47,8</b>	(5,6%)

