



European **Potato** Trade Association



“Exchange of views on the disruption in EU-GB trade in seed potatoes”

European Parliament AGRI Committee

16 March 2022



About Europatat

Europatat represents **traders** in seed and consumption potatoes.

Our membership includes a wide range of business: **breeders, distributors, storers, packers, importers and exporters.**

Our members deliver seed potatoes **to farmers**, consumption potatoes **to the food industry**, and packed potatoes **to the retailers and service sector.**



We represent:

**64 members
in 20 countries**

16 National Associations

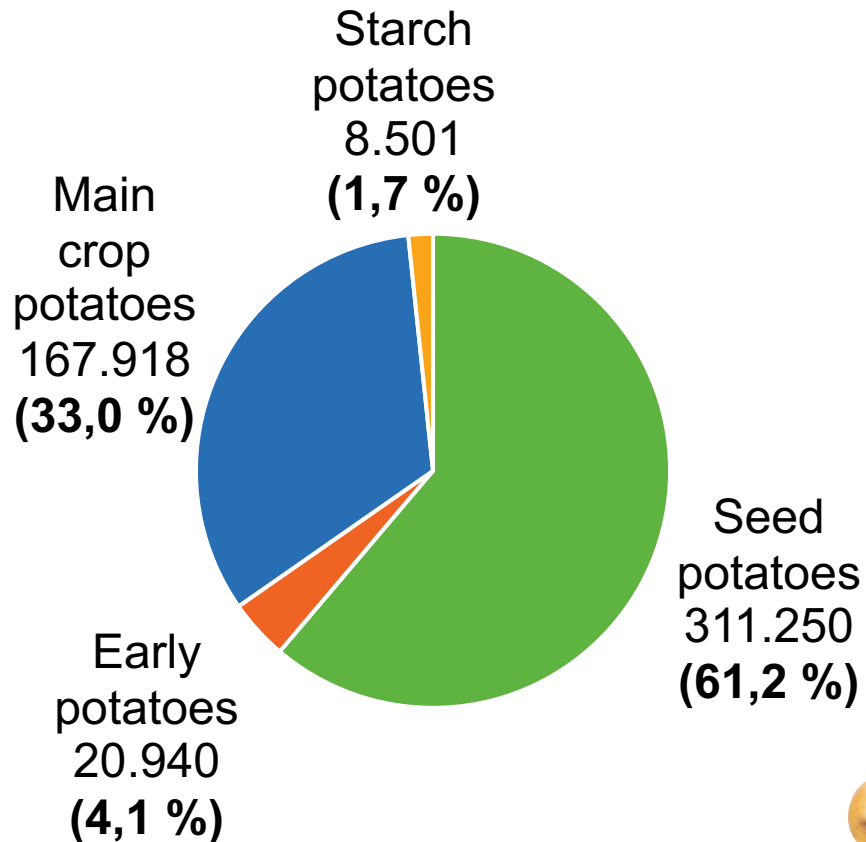
42 Companies

6 Associated Members



EU seed potato export

EU potato exports in value (EUR 1000),
2020



The EU is a net exporter of seed potatoes.

In 2020, our main exporting destinations were:

- Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia and United Kingdom.

Seed potato imports from GB

- Since 1 January 2021, import of seed potatoes from GB **is no longer possible**.
- Before Brexit, GB supplied EU with 25-30,000 tons tons of seed potatoes annually.



Why Scottish seed potatoes?

- High grade Scottish seed potatoes have lower levels of diseases and viruses.
- Scotland applies very high plant health standards (Safe Haven Certification Scheme)
- Scotland produces and markets pre-basic and basic seed potato categories.
- **Seed of certain varieties are only available in Scotland and nowhere else.**

Impact on EU businesses: Ireland



Ireland's potato industry is **heavily** dependent on GB (UK) seed potatoes. Pre-Brexit, Ireland imported 5,000 tonnes each year (79% of all imported seeds).

- Seed potatoes of some **widely used varieties** are available only from Scotland.
- Some **plant health diseases** have been found in the EU, but not in Scotland and Ireland.
- **It is impossible to replace** immediately GB supplies with native supplies - it would be a four-year project.
- Ireland needs a continued access to GB bred varieties because some of them are better adapted to the Irish growing conditions.
- **Transport costs** from mainland Europe are much higher compared to Scotland: 140 Euros/ton vs. 40 Euro/ton.

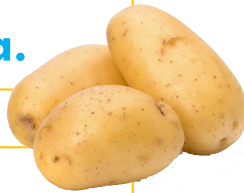
There will be a significant shortage of quality seed potatoes for planting in Ireland in Spring 2023.

Impact on EU businesses



Pre-Brexit, many EU growers relied on imported GB seed potatoes.

- **Brexit has disrupted the work of the Potato Value Chain (PVC): seed companies, breeders, seed growers and ware growers.** Seed productions of PVC on both sides were connected and have suffered, notably for the introduction of new varieties and for basic seed supply. **Many other EU countries imported GB seed potatoes: France, Denmark, Poland, Finland, Slovenia and Czechia.**



Spanish industry has been affected a lot by the lack of GB seeds:

- **Spain** is the second largest EU importer of GB seeds. It imported around **30% of its needs. These seeds were used for further multiplication** creating a significant value for EU potato sector. For the moment, there are no alternatives to Scottish seeds.
- Spanish regions such as **Balearic Islands and Mallorca** have been affected the most. Also, due to this ban growers in Canary Islands lost their subsidies 60 euros/ton.

Impact on EU businesses: Netherlands



Trade between NL and UK is very important. Pre-Brexit annual trade:

- **Export to UK:** 15 to 20 thousand tons / 10 million Euro (excluding licence fees).
- **Import from UK:** 1.100 tonnes.

Brexit has disrupted normal trade for many Dutch companies:

- **Many Dutch companies invested in seed production in Scotland** to supply GB, NL and EU markets with high grade seed potatoes.
- 50% of seeds on the UK variety list are derived from EU breeders of which **90% come from Dutch seed businesses.**
- **Delay in introduction of new varieties to GB.** It is delayed minimum by 5 years due to additional production steps that are required, as only *in-vitro* introduction is possible.

Final remarks:

EU plant health requirements continue applying in GB and there have been no fundamental changes to the regulations surrounding seed potatoes.

GB and EU have mutual disease tolerances which facilitates trade.

We have been informed, UK is not planning to start importing seed potatoes from other countries.

Without an agreement on trade in seed potatoes with GB, certain varieties will become unavailable due to the general lack of seeds.

Seed varieties make an important contribution towards EU biodiversity and food security.



EU seed potato traders are asking for:

- Resume bilateral trade in seed potatoes between GB and EU for **initial period of 3-5 years**. It will allow for EU sector to adjust and come up with alternative source.
- Continue dialogue with the UK Authorities **to find a long-term solution** which allows to resume bilateral trade on a permanent basis. Was there an assessment done on potential risks related to import of GB seed potatoes? Can the Commission share it?

In case there is no agreement at the European level, there will be bilateral negotiations between UK and EU Member States regarding export to GB. **This may lead to misalignment and potential unfair competition issues between countries.**



THANK YOU!



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