



19 September 2023

EUROPATAT STATEMENT: CHALLENGING 2023 SEASON FOR SEED POTATOES

The European seed potato industry has a long history of producing and supplying high-quality planting material to European and overseas growers. European exporters deliver seed potatoes all over the world contributing towards food security and healthy diets. The 2023 growing season was especially challenging for seed potato growers which undoubtedly will have an impact on deliveries for the coming export season (2023 -2024).

Different parts of Europe experienced unpredictable and unfavourable weather conditions that have adjusted the usual planting and harvesting schedule of seed potatoes. The EU's Joint Research Centre's¹ has provided regular reports on changing weather conditions and the impact on various crops. Europatat members have reported that due to cold weather and continued rain, the planting of seed potatoes has been delayed in many European countries by four to five weeks or in some cases even longer, which will consequently have an impact on the harvesting dates and yield.

Another challenge of 2023 is the reduction in the acreage dedicated to seed potatoes. The North-western European Potato Growers (NEPG) have issued their press release where they estimated the decrease in seed area by around 5000 ha. only for the Netherlands and France together². NEPG also projected that the seed area would also go down in Germany, Belgium and Scotland. In total, it is estimated the area in Europe dedicated to growing seed potatoes has reduced by 7% compared to the previous season.

Europatat members anticipate that the 2023 season will exceptionally result in a shortage of seed potatoes not only in total volume (especially in seed sizes 28 -55 mm) but also regarding certain classes (E class, which is mostly required by importing countries) and varieties. This will lead to an overall limited supply. In particular, it will have an impact on overseas deliveries. **Therefore, Europatat recommends to countries around the world that rely on the import of EU seed potatoes, to extend for this year the maximum size of traded seed potatoes from the current 55 mm to 60 mm.** This will improve the availability of seed potatoes for export destinations.

For more information or comments, please contact the Europatat Secretariat at secretariat@europatat.eu

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¹ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/monitoring-agricultural-resources-mars/jrc-mars-bulletin_en

² <http://nepg.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/230707-NEPG-final-GB.pdf>



Europatat is the European Potato Trade Association, comprising both national associations and individual companies involved in the trade of seed, ware and early potatoes throughout Europe. Its members include a wide range of traders (including breeders, distributors, storers, packers, importers and exporters) delivering seed potatoes to farmers, raw material to the food industry, and packed potatoes to the retailers and food service sector.



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