



Potato area must go down! The necessity of a medium term approach for the potato sector.

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NEPG reiterates the need to reduce potato hectareage in North-western Europe. However, this adjustment must be economically viable: producers cannot produce and sell below their production costs.

With just a few months to go before the end of the 2025-2026 season, NEPG is calling on processors to communicate their end-of-season requirements quickly and clearly. For producers, it is not economically justifiable or viable to keep volumes in storage without commercial visibility.

Competitiveness and sustainability

While everyone agrees that European manufacturers must remain competitive in the global market for processed products, this objective cannot be achieved at the expense of the sustainability of the European model. In addition to the strong, long-standing relationship between producers and processors, it remains essential to continue focusing on the development of more resilient varieties that are less subject to climatic constraints (inputs, water, etc.) and on the seed production of these varieties.

The sector's long-term viability requires a balanced and respectful approach between all links in the chain.

Contractual oversight

NEPG urges producers to exercise caution when signing contracts. With contract prices known, benefits from producing potatoes will come from free buy potatoes: thus the importance of limiting the area, even if abundant seed is available!

Although most fear a decline in volumes and therefore focus solely on securing a contract, the new varietal and quality requirements must be fully understood by all. In addition, potato producers should only plant what they reasonably believe they can sell at a decent price.

Any purchase offer without a clearly defined price should be rejected.

Stocks of free buy potatoes could end up on fields

Volumes that are not contracted or that have quality defects may not find a buyer. Producers must be aware of the technical, health and environmental consequences of any potential storage clearance onto fields. Alternative outlets must be considered first (animal feed, methanisation, donations to associations).

Production costs and sales of processed potatoes

On the industrial side, greater visibility on sales of processed products would reflect real industrial needs and guide producers. On the producer side it will be important to reduce area and costs. Although the price of seed potatoes has fallen slightly, an increase in production costs (energy, fertilizer, diesel) is to be expected if the conflict in the Middle East continues.