



NORTH EAST SCOTLAND AGRICULTURE ADVISORY GROUP BULLETIN – 25 NOVEMBER 2020

POST BREXIT POTATO EXPORTS

1 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that the Group notes this report

2 Discussion

2.1 The NESAAG - commissioned 'Land Based Sector in NE Scotland' (2016) study revealed the NE had 51% of the Scottish potato area, with Angus alone accounting for 31%. Although there had been little change in potato production land area since the previous study (2008), the proportion of seed potato production had risen from 74% to 81% in a sector then worth c.£80M to the NE economy.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/18097/facing-the-future-main-report.pdf>

2.2 The prevailing climatic conditions in NE Scotland – challenging for some sectors – nevertheless offer some natural advantages for the production of high health status seed potatoes and over the years local growers have made inroads into valuable export markets in Europe and particularly in North Africa, facilitated by EU trade agreements and the Single Market, arrangements which will cease for UK growers at the end of the Transition Period on 31 December 2020 and which have prompted early shipment of seed potatoes from NE Scotland. Exports to North Africa are usually undertaken in the autumn but Spring consignments to the EU have been brought forward, generating a heavy workload and capacity issues for logistics providers. Beyond 1 January 2021, arrangements for trade in seed potatoes and indeed other commodities remain unclear and it is expected that the UK will be accorded 'Third Country' status by the EU (to be confirmed). EU Plant Health Regulation 2016/2031 prohibits the importation of potatoes from Third Countries unless the country of origin (UK in this case) has been specified and approved by the EU. Any delay in reaching agreement could have implications for local exporters of seed potatoes in 2021 and beyond.

2.3 The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain. AHDB provides technical, marketing, policy and other support to growers. Potato production is a key AHDB sector and a wide array of information is freely available on the AHDB website, ranging from consumer insights to sectoral implications arising from Brexit. <https://ahdb.org.uk/potatoes>

2.4 In late 2019, Patrick Hughes, formerly of SAC Consulting and latterly Head of Seafood Scotland, was appointed AHDB's Head of Export Trade Development for the Potato Sector. He continues to be based in NE Scotland and provides guidance and support for potato growers. The October edition of his 'Countdown to Brexit' is attached as **Appendix 1**. Mr Hughes is unavailable on 25 November but is willing to provide a potato sector update at a future meeting of NESAAG.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 The table below sets out whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because the recommended actions do not have a differential impact upon people with protected characteristics.

5.4 No risks have been identified at Corporate or Strategic level.

Stephen Archer
Director, Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)
17 November 2020

Prepare for Brexit – October 2020

Welcome to the 1st Prepare for Brexit document created specifically for the potato sector. Further documents will be produced monthly in the run up to the end of the transition period.

The purpose of the document is to inform the industry of the immediate actions to be taken prior to the end of the transition period. The document details the first steps to consider when importing or exporting potatoes to the EU beyond the end of the transition period. However, it must be stressed that several issues are the subject of ongoing negotiations with the EU and are currently unresolved.

The UK left the European Union at the beginning of 2020 and in January 2021 the transition period will end and our new relationship with the EU will begin.

The end of the transition period will bring significant changes regardless of whether agreement on future relations is reached. Come 1st January 2021, the UK will no longer be part of the EU's Single Market and Customs Union and will become a "3rd Country" (a non-EU member state).

Since the EU Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 currently excludes the import of potatoes into member states from all "3rd countries", other than those specifically listed within these regulations, exports of potatoes from the UK to the EU will, unless the goods are already in transit, not be allowed after the end of the transition period.

The information contained within this document is intended to assist, rather than act as a definitive legal guide. It is based upon current knowledge and understanding. If in doubt, refer to official government publications and to specialist advisors.

Importing and exporting considerations

To continue importing or exporting products between the UK and EU you **must**:

- Get a UK Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/eori>
- Decide if you want to hire an import-export agent or make declarations yourself.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-to-export-from-great-britain-from-january-2021>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-to-import-to-great-britain-from-january-2021>
- Contact the organisation that moves your goods to find out what information they need to make the declarations for your goods, or if you will need to make them yourself.
- It will only be possible to trade UK potatoes in the EU post transition period, without the UK having been granted equivalence, '**only if they are already in the EU before the end of the transition period, 31st December 2020**'. Therefore, consider exporting potatoes destined for the EU prior to this date.

Importing considerations

- **Importing plants and plant products from the EU from 1st January 2021**
High-priority plants and plant products from the EU must have:
 - a phytosanitary certificate (PC)
 - a pre-notification submitted by the importer in England, Scotland or Wales
 - documentary and identity checks
 - a physical inspection
- Consider whether imported plant goods qualify as “high risk” – these will be subject to full import controls from January 2021. A definitive list is not yet available, but “high risk” goods are likely to include plants-for planting, seeds and potatoes-for-eating. Other plant goods will be subject to border controls from April 2021
- Obtain appropriate phytosanitary certificates for each shipment from authorities in the exporting countries. These documents specify that goods have been inspected, are free from biological risk and conform to UK requirements. Most plants and plant products need a certificate, except for certain tropical species and plants which form part of processed foods
- Give notice to UK authorities of all incoming shipments. Minimum notice of 4 hours for air freight or 24 hours for all other transport modes
- The guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-and-exporting-plants-and-plant-products-from-1-january-2021> currently refers to using the relevant IT system to notify the Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA) of the regulated plants and plant products being imported. The guidance on which IT system will be in place on 1st January 2021 will be updated and published accordingly.
- Prepare for physical and document checks by UK authorities. Initially, these will take place away from the UK border, usually at the UK destination. From July 2021, all checks will take place at the UK order. Frequency and rigour of checks will depend on perceived risk
- Consider routes into the UK – from July 2021, all shipments must enter the UK via specified ports of entry with a Border Control Post capable of carrying out inspections

Potatoes & Brexit – What you need to know

AHDB will be hosting webinars in the coming weeks to help prepare potato growers, importers and exporters for Brexit, and offer insight into what lies ahead of us in a post-Brexit world.

The first webinar on the 3rd November will provide an overview of Brexit's immediate impact on the Potato sector whilst the second webinar on the 4th November will look in greater detail on the issues facing the ware and seed sectors. To register for these please click the following links:

3rd November: Potatoes & Brexit – What you need to know

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7625390625690665999?source=Email>

4th November: Potatoes & Brexit - The impact of “no deal”

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/9058430309660567567?source=Email>