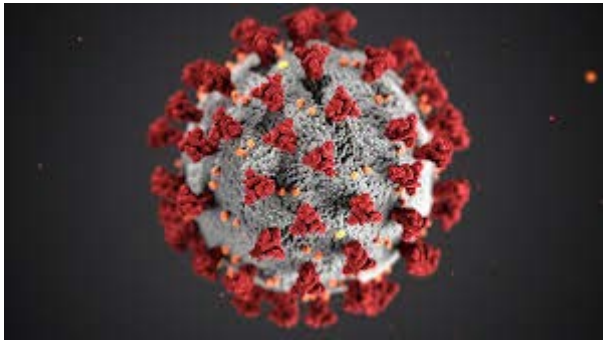


2020 ... a year to never forget!



Terms like *'unforgettable'* or *'unique'* are set to appear more than once in quite a few 2020 annual reports. And anyone active in the potato chain will in the past few decades undoubtedly on several occasions have said *'we've never seen anything like it before'* when the weather conditions drove the growth, harvest or storage of potatoes in our country to surprising developments.

However, we can safely assume that in the potato sector, the year 2020 really will remain engraved on the memory of both the young and old of this generation as something *'completely unprecedented'*.

Not only did the corona pandemic strike at the very heart of the potato sector, but all of the around 7.7 billion people on earth were involuntarily introduced to the coronavirus SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) -CoV coronavirus -2, the virus that can cause the disease COVID-19.

Virologists everywhere determined the everyday activities of the population, steering the political decision-making, so that the economic and social fabric became entangled in a complex web of lockdown measures, some stricter than others. In almost every country, each wave of infection and the accompanying number of admissions to hospital or excess mortality taught us to look to the future humbly and with fear.

Accelerated approval of various vaccines sparked hopes of a "return to liberty", but in March 2021, on the one-year anniversary of COVID-19 in Belgium, it is still far from clear how the summer or autumn of 2021 will look. What is clear, is that this pandemic's impact on society will be felt for several more years.

"Stay in your digs!"

Without question, *the* statement of the year 2020 was made during an extraordinary hearing in the Belgian parliament on 3 March, when the then federal Minister of Public Health, Maggie



De Block, shouted out the historic words: *"Stay in your digs, and throw out anyone with a runny nose. I mean it, ok!?"*

Quite a few people sniggered with pity at the images shown during the news on TV, but the potato sector in our country could see the storm coming. Even before the images of the overfull hospitals in Bergamo (I) changed social life in Europe, the corona outbreak in China and

the other Asian countries had already disrupted the demand for and transport of frozen potato products.

The measures of the first lock-down forced people to stay in and around their home, leading to empty streets and squares everywhere and closed (non-essential) shops, companies and hospitality businesses. The food chain was rightly classified as essential and the #foodheroes continued to produce, trade, process and distribute.

To ensure that this could occur in safe conditions, FVPHouse in collaboration with other trade federations tried to cushion the acute shortage of masks by setting up a group purchase of FFP2 masks, so that the workers in the fruit and vegetable trade and processing sector could continue to work more safely.

Hoarding



population had to rediscover their culinary skills.

The measures imposed by the Wilmès government had a great impact: working from home for everyone who could, along with a new verb that this teleworking led to: 'zooming'. Eating out or at the company cafeteria disappeared, making way for a rush on supermarkets. Not only did this lead to hoarding, with the threat of a shortage of toilet paper looming, but the shelves of the chips department were soon empty. The packers of fresh potatoes could barely keep up with demand since the

Impact on the potato chain

Chip shops stayed open, but even the fact that our national pride and joy was only possible as take-away could not convince the consumer to make massive use of this.

Hard times hit for the majority of the potato chain. The global closure of restaurants, hotels, fast food companies and professional kitchens meant that processing companies that produce frozen or chilled potato products had to adapt their planning. The greater the share of food service in their sales, the greater the problems of the processing companies.



Growers were immediately informed of the decision that – under the motto '*pacta servanda sunt*' – the contracts would be properly fulfilled. Partly as a result of this, trade on the free market came to a complete standstill.

After the previous difficult seasons as a result of the weather conditions, for a lot of growers this led to quite some problems. The recognised inter-branch organisation *Belpotato.be* estimated the volume of potatoes that could not be sold on 1 April at 750,000 tonnes with a financial impact on the companies of 125 million euros.

At the start, however, the 2019-2020 potato season looked very promising. Supply and demand were in balance and the Belgapom quotation followed the (high) contract prices ... until the pandemic threw a spanner in the works.

The European federations EUPPA, Europatat and Copa Cogeca convinced the European Commission to activate crisis article 222 of the Common Agricultural Policy. This made it possible – without approval from the competition authorities – to remove potatoes from the market via the inter-branch organisation and to provide a storage allowance for finished products. Unfortunately, this was not backed with funding, so that it remained an empty shell.

Support for potato growers

And then the inconceivable happened: for the first time in history, potato growers in the Netherlands and Belgium could apply for government support for the – completely unexpected – losses on their free potatoes.

Contracts represent about 60 to 70 % of the potato market, but that also means that the share of free potatoes is still considerable for most growers.

In normal circumstances, this approach allows growers to spread their production risk. Partly as a result of the increased export in processed potato products, in the past few decades this has led to potatoes being considered a crop with a credit balance for arable farmers. In contrast to numerous other rotation crops.



After the Dutch government announced that 50 million euros was being budgeted to compensate the growers with free-market potatoes, the Flemish Minister of Agriculture, Hilde Crevits, followed with the announcement that 13 million euros would be moved from the second pillar of the CAP budget to the first as income support for all arable farmers with potatoes in their rotation. In addition, 10 million euros from the Flemish corona emergency fund was reserved for growers with leftover stocks of free potatoes. In the end, 5.19 million euros of support were paid out.

The Walloon Minister of Agriculture, Willy Borsus, followed his Flemish colleague with a similar support package with a maximum

budget of 10.45 million euros.

Sustainable solution for the Belgian potato mountain

Everyone wondered what to do about the 750-million-tonne potato mountain.

It was necessary to convince the government and consumers that not every potato variety is suitable for every different use.

On the basis of their internal and external properties, potatoes destined for being processed into fries or mashed products often cannot be sorted, washed and packaged and then sold in shops. After all, their higher dry matter content then results in ‘bruising’ under the skin.

The same goes for potatoes that are processed into crisps: they are stored at a higher temperature and have specific requirements.

The problem was that the surplus potato stock was limited to potatoes for processing into fries or mashed products, the majority of which are exported all over the world. ‘Belgian fries’ are gradually becoming a benchmark on quite a number of markets.

These potatoes include the varieties Fontane, Challenger, Bintje, Markies and Innovator.

Action was taken at various levels to make use of them in a sustainable way:

- Food: the Ministers of Agriculture Crevits and Borsus set out initiatives to wash and package as many suitable potatoes as possible for foodbanks. In this way, tonnes of potatoes were distributed amongst people who make use of them.

In addition, there was still quite a demand on export markets in Central and Eastern Europe and Africa.



- Feed: the largest volumes found their way to cattle farmers in Belgium and the neighbouring countries. The hot and dry summer had a detrimental impact on the production of fodder and the potatoes were a welcome supplement.

In both cases, the growers received compensation that formed the basis for the free-market prices.

- Green energy: via *Belpotato.be* talks were held with the sector of the bio-digesters, who generate green energy. Surplus potatoes could also be used in this way. This approach made it possible to avoid potatoes being dumped out over the land, which would not have been a sustainable solution either from a phytosanitary or a technical point of view.

Too Good To Go

During one of the numerous interviews as a result of this situation, a journalist from *Het Nieuwsblad* newspaper asked: “how can we as consumers help the sector?”

Belgapom’s spontaneous reply: “by eating (frozen) potatoes or fries twice a week instead of once” was picked up by [BBC radio and TV](#) and thus ended up with the editors of international newspapers, magazines, TV and radio news. At every hour of the day, the home office of the Belgapom secretariat was asked for interviews that not only made [NBC](#), [ABC](#), [FOX](#) or [CNN](#), but also focussed attention on ‘*Belgian fries*’ and the potato sector in our country in Oceania, Canada and [every European country](#). The subject even made the front page of the prestigious [Financial Times](#).



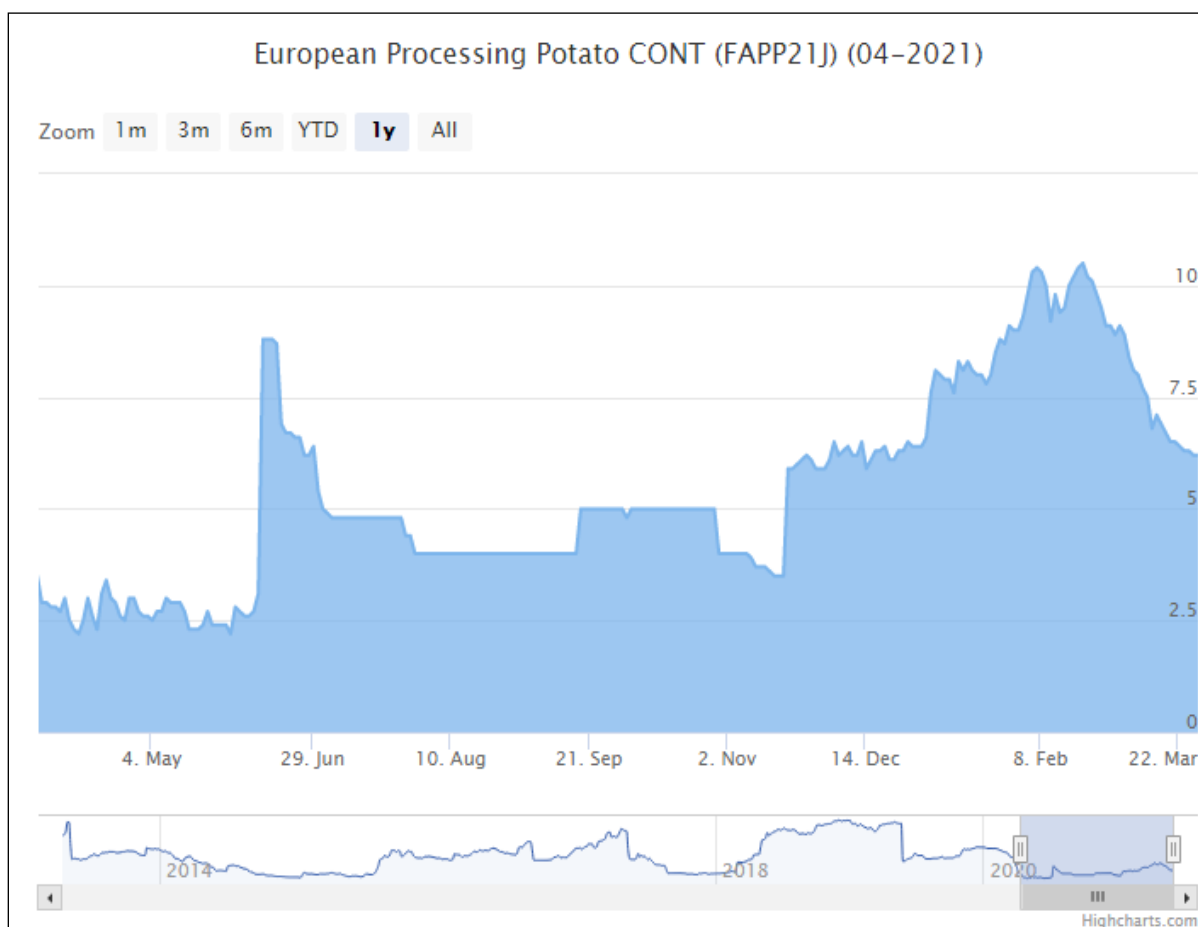
The request for cooperation from the international NGO *Too good to go*, that tries to prevent food being wasted, was also remarkable. By means of their ‘[SOS Patat](#)’ campaign, they called on consumers to buy an additional portion of frozen potatoes, to thus free up space in the freezers to process more potatoes from the stocks. VLAM, ApaQ-W and various supermarkets also collaborated on this campaign.

Repercussions on the 2020-2021 season too

In addition, the corona pandemic came at a particularly bad time for the potato sector: in March / April most arable farmers have already completed their production plan for the coming season and the seed potatoes are waiting to be planted.

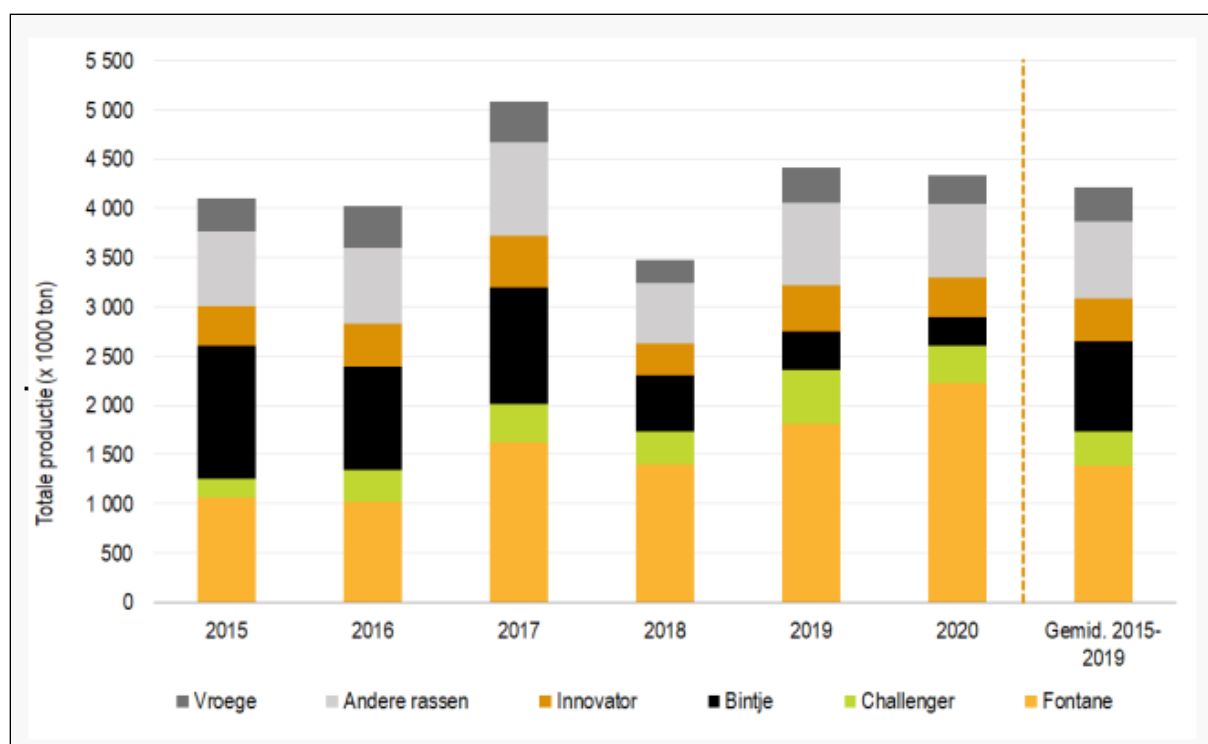
Despite the efforts of a number of processing companies to revise their contracts for the 2020-2021 season in consultation with the growers, the planned acres were pretty much fully planted. After all, few people could have predicted that the pandemic would also keep the markets fully in it grasp in 2021 as well.

That is also why the free-market prices for fries varieties remained extremely low in 2020-2021 as well. Because even if there were not record yields for the harvest, demand from the industry remained low. The April 2021 futures market for potatoes illustrates this below.



The figures for 2020

Production of ware potatoes in Belgium and the EU-5



Source: PCA/FIWAP

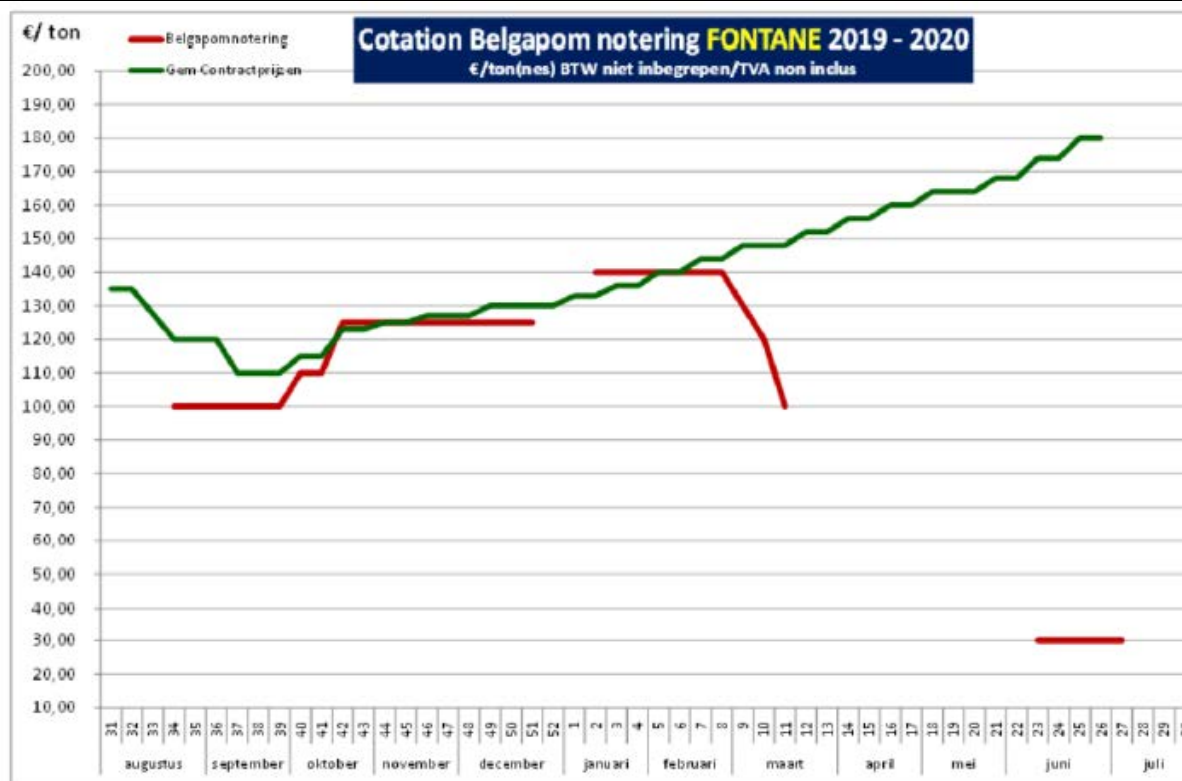
[x-axis: 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2019 2020 Average 2015-2019
 Early Other varieties Innovator Bintje Challenger Fontane
 y-axis: Total production (x1000 tonnes)]

year	2019	2020	actual vs l.y.	5y-avge	2020 vs 5y-avge %
Hectareage					
Annual Variation	3,3%	0,5%			
Total	618.023	621.148	0,5%	577.243	7,6%
Belgium	97.103	97.947	0,9%	91.601	6,9%
Germany	186.000	189.700	2,0%	172.763	9,8%
France	152.720	154.900	1,4%	135.968	13,9%
Netherlands	78.900	77.000	(2,4%)	75.310	2,2%
Great Britain	103.300	101.601	(1,6%)	101.601	(0,0%)

EU 5 Acreage consumption potatoes (excl. Seed and Starch); NEPG Estimate of 1 July 2020

Source: NEPG

Quotations for contracts and the free market



[Belgapom Quotation FONTANE 2019-2020

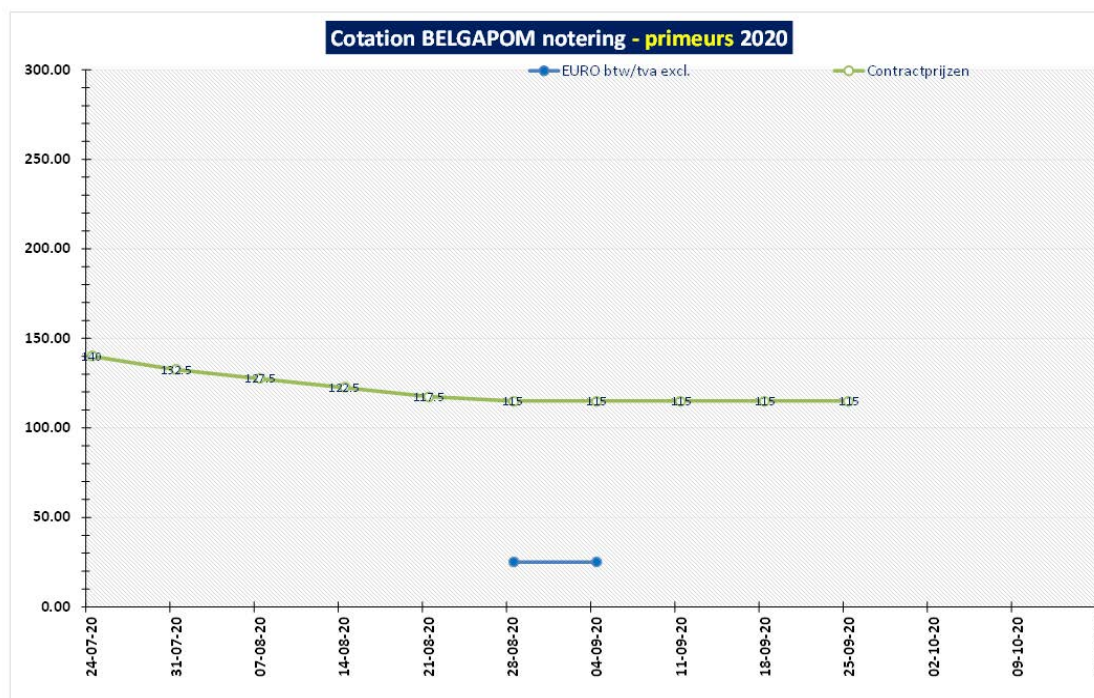
€/tonne ex. VAT

€/tonne

red line = Belgapom quotation

green line = average contract prices

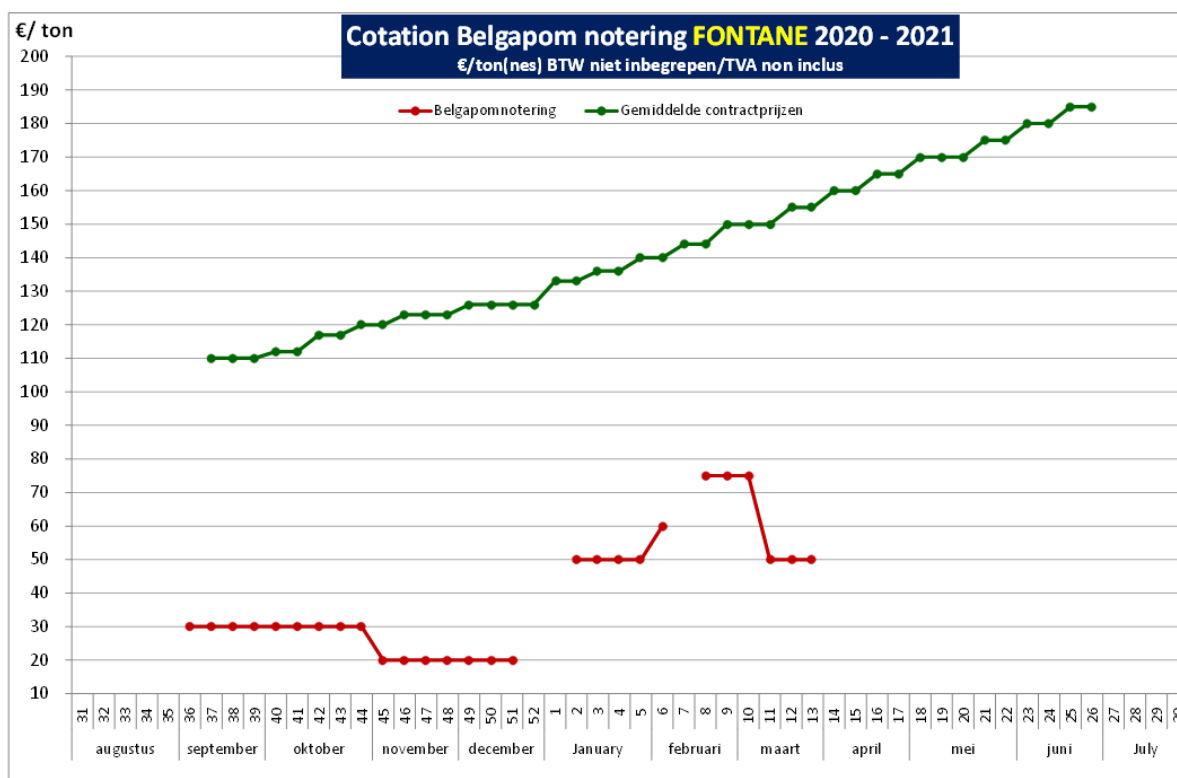
x-axis: August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July]



[Belgapom Quotation – early potatoes 2020

blue = euros, ex. VAT

green = contract prices]



[Belgapom Quotation FONTANE 2020-2021

€/tonne ex. VAT

€/tonne

red line = Belgapom quotation

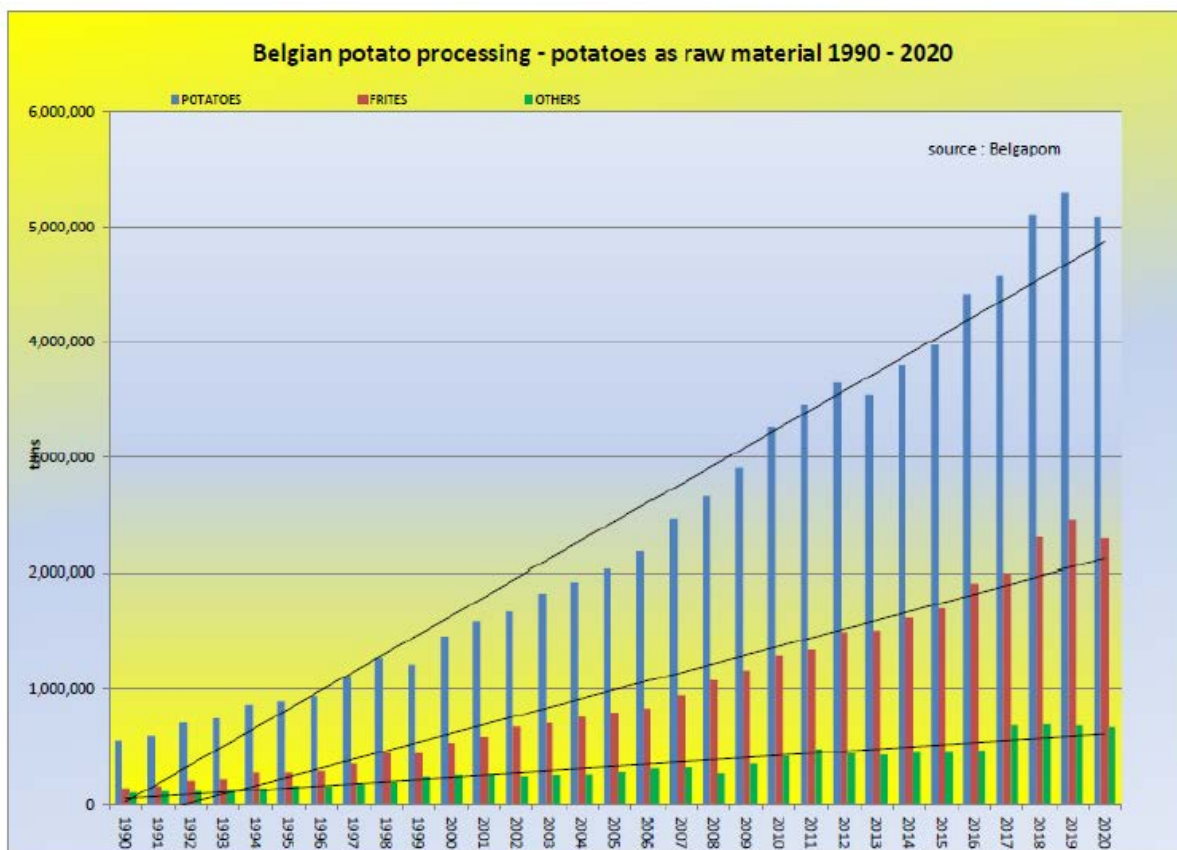
green line = average contract prices

x-axis: August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July]

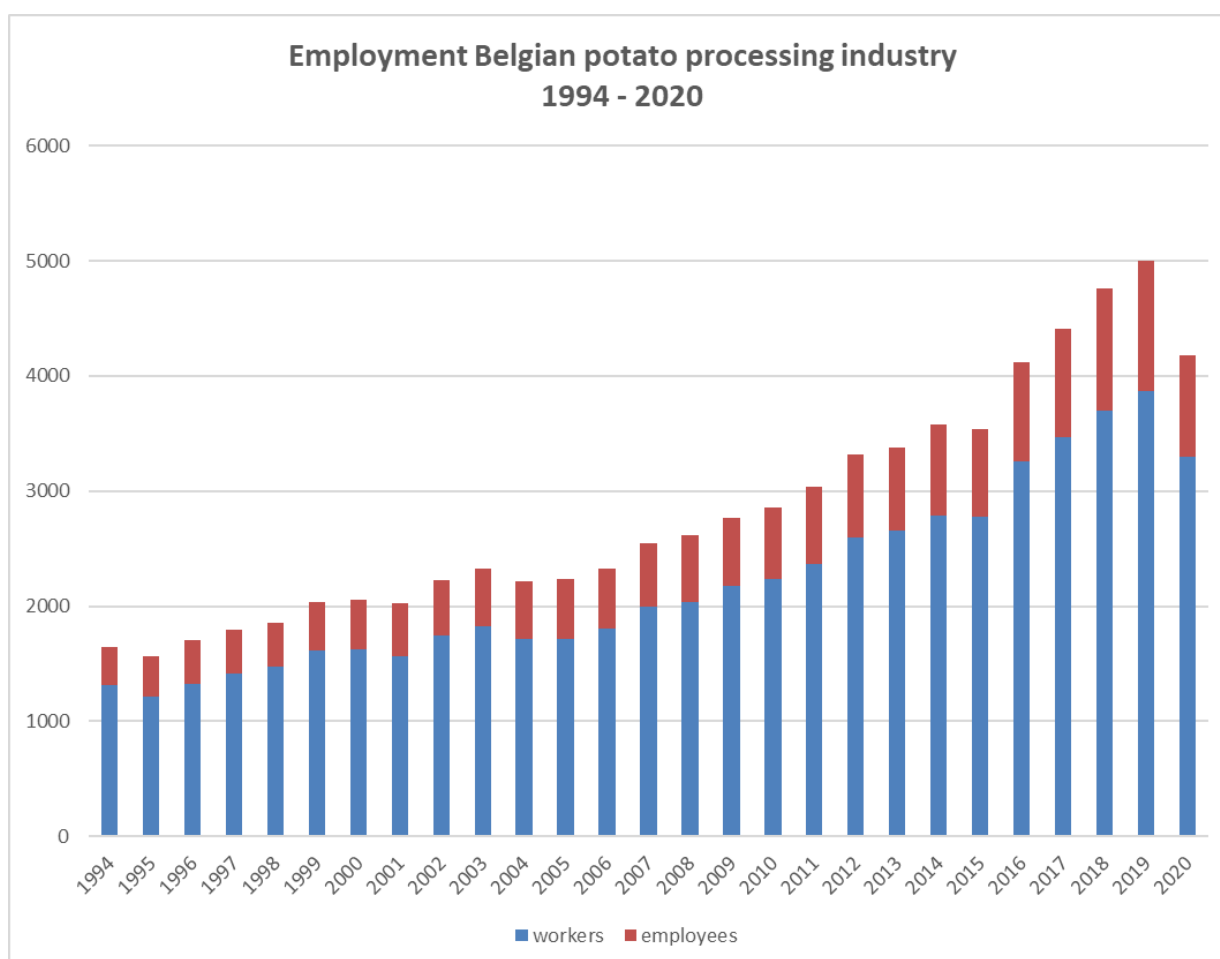
The figures of the Belgian potato processing industry

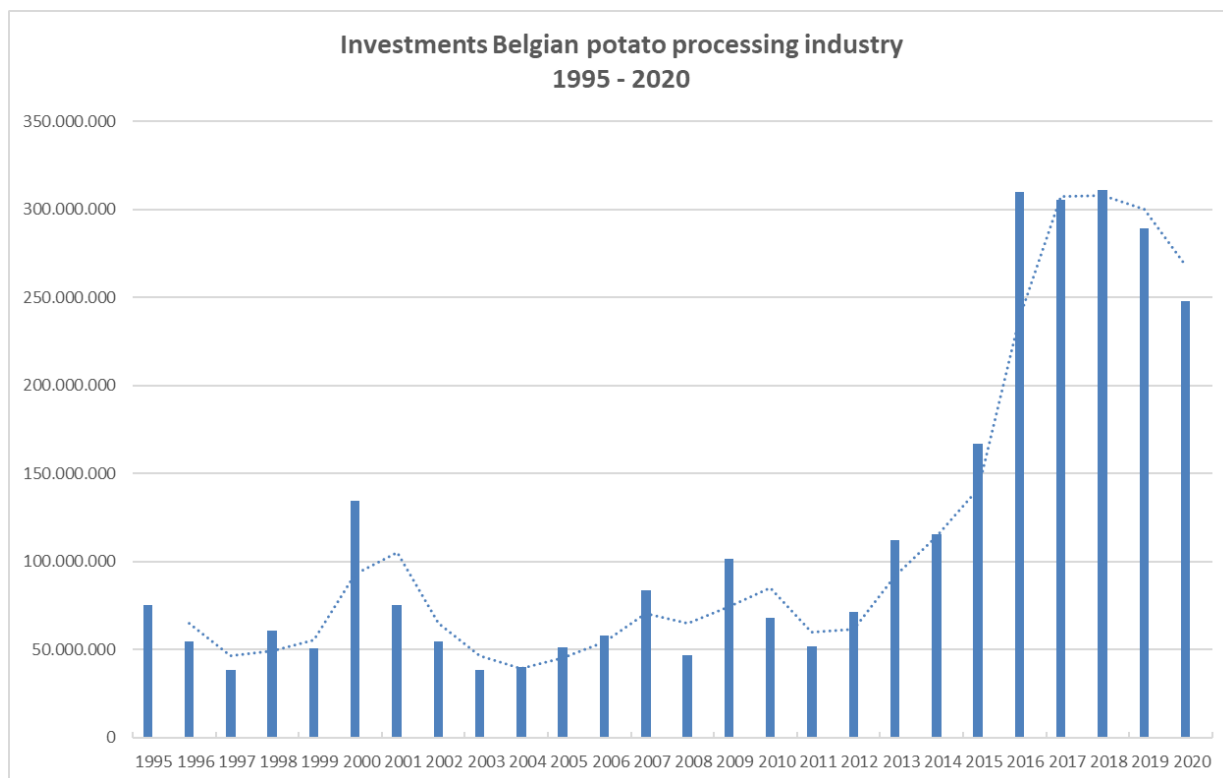
The Belgian potato processing industry in 2018 – 2020

	2018	2019	2020
Number of processing plants	19	19	19
Number of workers :	3.701	3.866	3.298
Number of employees:	1.061	1.135	881
Investments:	€ 310.923.634	€ 289.219.240	€ 248.084.231
Raw material :			
Potatoes :	5.101.522 t	5.295.483 t	5.087.625 t
Flakes :	5.630 t	5.305 t	7.003 t.
Finished product :			
Frozen fries :	2.073.747 t.	2.230.926 t	2.131.715 t
Refrigerated fries :	231.734 t.	230.314 t	164.230 t
Mashed potato products, croquettes, chips, ...			
Flakes and others ,...	695.321 t.	684.810 t	671.037 t



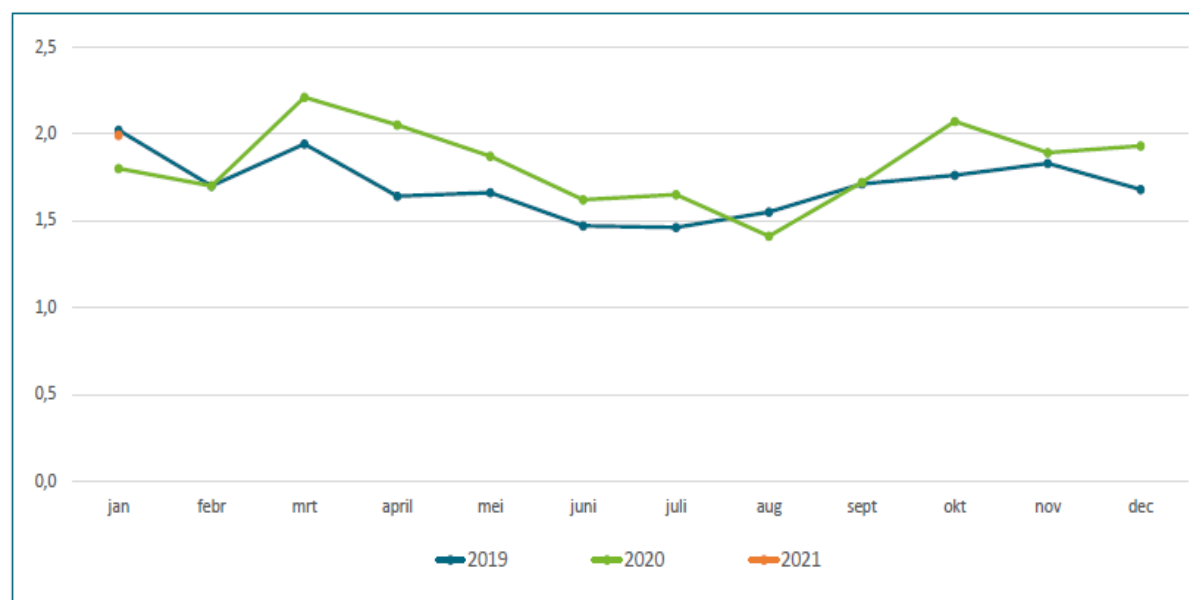
Source: Belgapom



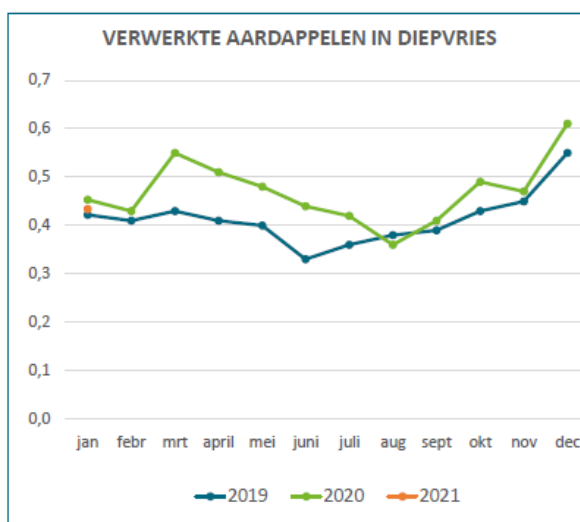
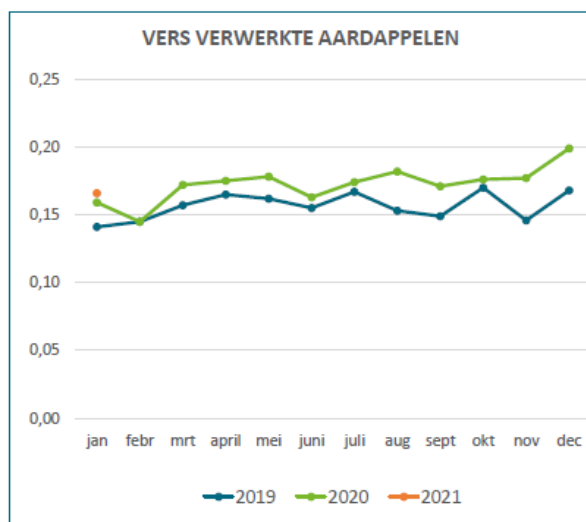


Source: Belgapom

Consumption at home of fresh potatoes / fresh processed potatoes / frozen processed potatoes



[x-axis: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec]

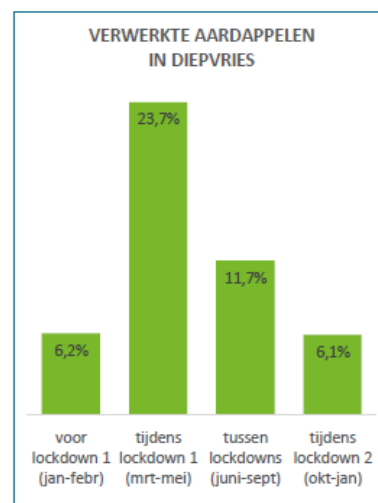
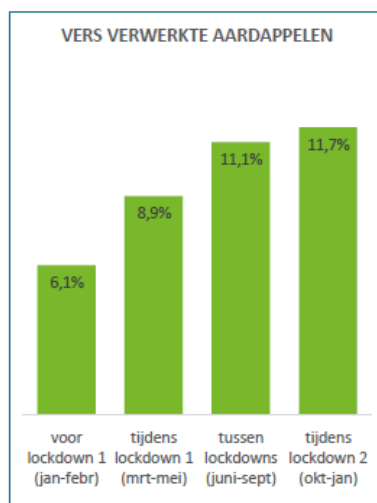
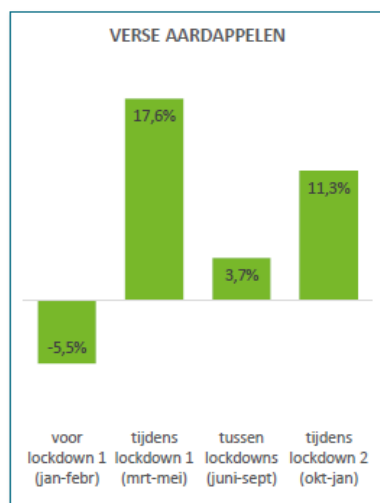


[FRESH PROCESSED POTATOES

x-axis: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec]

[FROZEN PROCESSED POTATOES

x-axis: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec]



Source: VLAM

[FRESH POTATOES

Before 1st lockdown (Jan-Feb)

During 1st lockdown (Mar-May)

Between lockdowns (Jun-Sep)

During 2nd lockdown (Oct-Jan)]

[FRESH PROCESSED POTATOES

Before 1st lockdown (Jan-Feb)

During 1st lockdown (Mar-May)

Between lockdowns (Jun-Sep)

During 2nd lockdown (Oct-Jan)]

[FROZEN PROCESSED POTATOES

Before 1st lockdown (Jan-Feb)

During 1st lockdown (Mar-May)

Between lockdowns (Jun-Sep)

During 2nd lockdown (Oct-Jan)]

2020 Activities

New articles of association and new board for Belgapom and FVPhouse

Both the recognised professional association Belgapom and vzw FVPhouse had to amend their



articles of association due to the Belgian Companies Code that took effect on 1 May 2019.

These changes were more far reaching for Belgapom. After all, the articles of this association that was founded on 8 December 1948 are based on the law of 31 March 1898. The new Code brought this status to an end.

Belgapom opted to become a non-profit association ([vzw](#)), [recognised as a professional association](#).

On the basis of the new articles of association, a [new board](#) was immediately elected, that then from amongst its members re-elected *Marc Van Herreweghe* as chairman and *Ben Muyshondt* and *Hannelore Raes* as vice-chairmen for trade and processing respectively.

After a transition period with Romain Cools as acting CEO, *Christophe Vermeulen* became Belgapom's new CEO on 01/01/2021.

[vzw FVPhouse](#), the umbrella organisation that organises the back office for Belgapom, Vegebe and Fresh Trade Belgium, also amended its articles of association and elected a new board.

Belgapom chairman *Marc Van Herreweghe* was elected chairman, *Bernard Haspeslagh* (Vegebe) vice-chairman and *Peter Nicolai* (Fresh Trade Belgium) treasurer.

On 01/01/2021, *Christophe Vermeulen* succeeded Romain Cools as director.



Belpotato.be, the recognised inter-branch organisation of the Belgian potato sector

The establishment of a new inter-branch organisation for the Belgian potato sector under the name of [Belpotato.be](#) on 20 January 2020 was



an historic occasion. By means of this permanent consultation platform, the Agrofront with Algemeen Boerensyndicaat, Boerenbond and FWA, the Walloon chain organisation FIWAP and the association for the Belgian potato trade and processing sectors Belgapom want to guarantee the future of the Belgian potato chain.

Both the Flemish and Walloon governments have recognised Belpotato.be as an inter-branch organisation.

The day-to-day management consists of chairman *Jean-Pierre Van Puymbrouck* (FWA) and vice-chairman *Steven Decuyper* (Belgapom), assisted by *Amandine Eeckhout* (BB) and *Romain Cools* (Belgapom).

Ben Muyshondt and *Alain Duranleau* also hold seats on the board on behalf of Belgapom.



Kurt Cornelissen (PCA) and *Pierre Lebrun* (FIWAP) were appointed coordinators.

Belpotato.be has the following goals:

- Updating the 2006 recommendation with regard to contracts in the potato sector within the framework of the Laruelle committee for contractual agriculture.
- Improving the transparency of market forces in the potato chain.
- Limiting the risks for the various links within the chain.

- Standardising the quality assessment and valorising the available data.

To this end, 8 priorities were listed:

1. Strengthening the sector's sustainability at technical, environmental, economic and social level.
2. Coordinating research and development in the chain.
3. Optimising the availability of quality seed potatoes.
4. Improving contractual relations.
5. Collecting and disseminating market information.
6. The effect of the disappearance of useful crop protection plant protection products.
7. Coordinating the representation of the potato chain.
8. Strengthening product quality in the potato chain.

On the association's establishment, there was no sign of any *corona* trouble and on election of the board, a number of working groups were created to look in more depth at the issues of contracts, the quality of seed potatoes and replacing the sprout inhibitor CIPC.

Unfortunately, the planning was thoroughly disrupted by the acute market problems as a result of the pandemic's impact on the potato chain.

Belpotato.be tried to conduct a dialogue with the competent federal and regional ministers of agriculture and coordinate the consultations with various other partners in the national and international chain.

Belpotato.be also actively focussed on *communication* with growers, trade and processing via its website.

Enlargement of the price committee to determine the weekly Belgapom quotation

The Belgapom quotation remains a national and international source of information about the ins and outs of the Belgian free potato market.

This quotation, that in 1998 succeeded the national quotation of the then Ministry of Agriculture, was approved by the competition authority in 2009 and – together with the PCA/FIWAP quotation – forms the basket for calculating the cash settlement price of the potato futures market.



For the past few years, every Friday morning, 8 representatives of the potato trade and processing sectors who trade in fresh potatoes on the free market every day, have quoted the most frequently applied price for a number of varieties destined for the production of frozen fries.

On 01/01/2021 this committee was

enlarged with two representatives from the trade and processing sectors to strengthen the broad coverage of purchasing activities.

During the course of 2021, an audit by an independent third party will corroborate the correct functioning of the committee by checking purchasing documents at the companies that participate in the committee.

In this way, Belgapom can increasingly corroborate the correctness of its functioning and quotation, which is essential for the credibility of the quotation.

In 2020, the weekly Belgapom quotation was determined for early potatoes and the varieties Bintje, Fontane and Challenger. The Belgapom quotation only wants to offer a quotation for relevant varieties for which sufficient free trade occurs.

Replacement of the chemical sprout inhibitor CIPC

Since time memorial, the potato sector all over the world has used the chemical sprout inhibitor chlorpropham (CIPC). It ensures that dormancy is maintained in the stored potatoes, without impacting the quality and flavour.

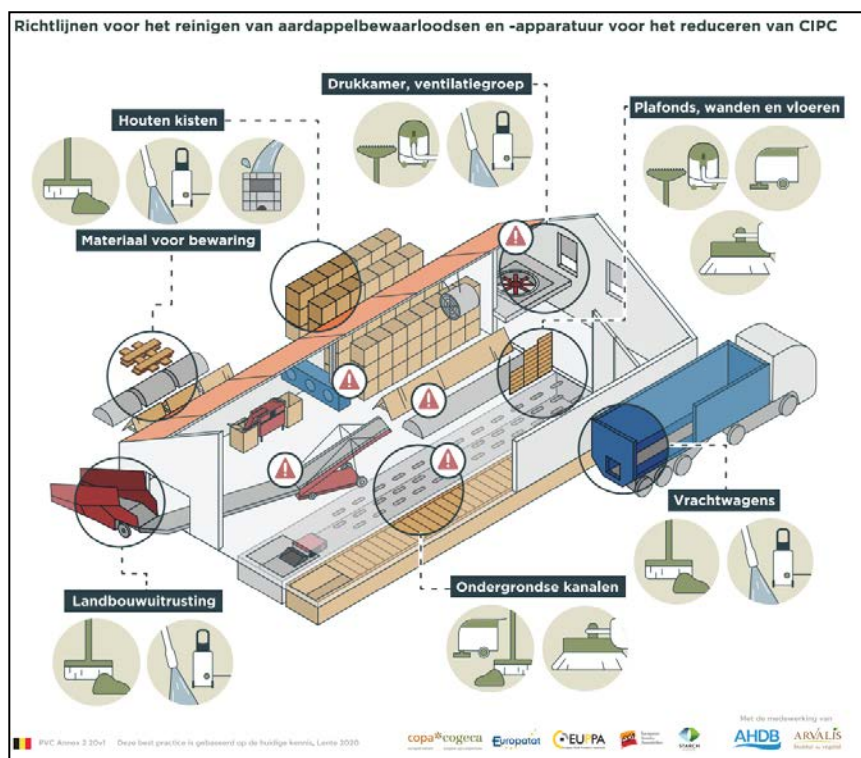
When EFSA questioned the effect of this substance on children's health in a report, the European Commission to ban the substance starting from the 2020-2021 season.

The sector was faced with an enormous challenge and from the start of the discussion Belgapom took control by launching a project called Reskia together with the spearhead cluster of the Belgian food industry, Flanders' FOOD. Storage cells in which various potato varieties were stocked using alternative, natural-based sprout inhibitors were set up with the Flemish research institutes PCA and Inagro.

The project lasted for 3 years and in 2017 the conclusions were published in a [brochure](#).

On 24 January 2020, Belgapom in cooperation with the Dutch NAO (potato trade) and VAVI (potato processing) organised a very well attended workshop in Breda, the Netherlands. The producers or distributors of 1,4 Sight, Ethylene, Argos and Biox-M were invited to illustrate how their products work.





However, the 2020-2021 season showed that there can be a big gap between theory and practice. Many growers had to adapt their storage infrastructure to apply the new inhibitors.

What's more, the right combinations had to be found of the products available, depending on the storage quality of the harvest.

The storage sheds had to be thoroughly cleaned to reduce the residues on potatoes as a result of historical contamination.

To this end, a *cleaning protocol* was drawn up by the European federations of the potato growers, trade and processing, that was approved by the European Commission.

On the basis of the information provided and additional research, the European standing committee on plants, animals, food and feed decided to implement a temporary MRL (tMRL) of 0.4 ppm for CIPC on potatoes for historical contamination starting from the 2021-2022 season. The sector was obliged to provide sufficient information and data to prove that CIPC was no longer being used on potatoes, that the sheds were sufficiently cleaned and that the tMRL was still necessary. After all, the European Commission's intention is to further reduce the tMRL to the detection limit of 0.01 ppm.

During 2020-2021 season, Belgapom started a large-scale sampling plan in which potatoes in almost 1000 potato sheds were sampled and analysed for CIPC by accredited institutes. The results of this are being shared with the European Commission. A similar exercise is also being carried out in the Netherlands and France. The final report will be drawn up by the French research institute Arvalis.

This transition from a chemical sprout inhibitor to organic ones was one of the largest projects in the history of the European potato chain.

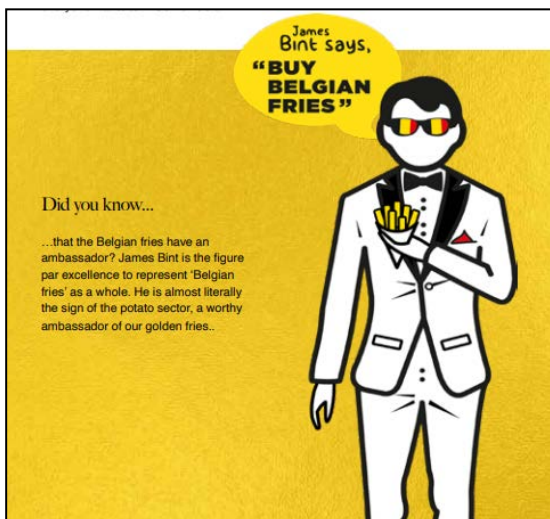
And from it we learned that the potato sector really has moved towards more sustainable production, but at the same time we can see that the EU is not alone in the world. Certain products have not yet been recognised globally which threatens the export of European potato products.

What's more, the EU's approach is apparently different to that of the rest of the world, where the use of CIPS as a sprout inhibitor, which is cheaper and more stable, is still permitted.

Promotion at home and abroad

For years now the Belgian potato sector has focussed on the generic promotion of fresh potatoes in cooperation with VLAM and APAQ-W.

For 2020 and 2021 a new campaign supported by the EU was started by VLAM together with the Irish and French promotion service and Europatat under the name: 'Potatoes, Prepare to be surprised - Europe's favourite since 1536'



The campaign focusses on millennials (aged 18-34) who are autonomous. A mix of activities all geared to this target group is being planned to achieve this.

The younger generation can above all be found online and so the campaign will be conducted there via the [website](#), Instagram and Facebook. Together, the partners invested in 100 contemporary recipes and 40 cooking videos. They demonstrate that preparing potatoes doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming at all and that you



can use them to make trendy and delicious dishes.

When the 2019 Belgian Fries campaign in Southwest Asia ended, VLAM, APAQ-W, Belgapom and 5 Belgian companies with the support of the European Union also focussed on the promotion of Belgian Fries in Asia in 2020-2022. Target countries are China, Japan, South



Korea and Singapore; the slogan being used is 'Go for Gold'.

Unfortunately, here too corona threw a spanner in the works. For example, representatives could not travel to those countries and trade fairs and events were cancelled or postponed.

The campaign itself was also partly postponed even though the local FIT and AWEX offices were collaborated with to set up online and live hybrid events.

James Bint as the ambassador of the Belgian Fries culture is once again the

central figure of these campaigns.

At international level, *US Potato Expo* (15-16/1/2020) was still held in Las Vegas.

For the fresh market, *Fruit Logistica* in Berlin (5-7 February 2020) was the only international trade fair that was still held before the global outbreak of the Corona pandemic crippled all the trade fairs and events.



Interpom



2022.

The entire European potato chain was looking forward to the next edition of the European trade fair for the potato chain in Kortrijk XPO 'Interpom 2020'. But the leitmotif continued here too. Within the framework of the lockdown measures as a result of COVID-19, events such as Interpom were not permitted by the government.

In consultation with the exhibitors, it was decided to move this edition to November 2021, in the knowledge that the normal timing will continue with the edition in November

Without a doubt, the whole potato chain in Belgium and its neighbouring countries is looking forward to the long-awaited meeting with colleagues, buyers and suppliers in Kortrijk from 28 to 30 November 2021.

Vegaplan



The efforts of Belgapom and its fellow federations in the agriculture and horticulture sectors and in the trade and processing of plants and vegetable products to in the form of Vegaplan create an instrument that permits growers, trade and processing to market a product that is food and plant safe and sustainable are undoubtedly sufficiently well known.

The Vegaplan certificate is unique in Europe since it has been recognised by the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) and the IPM (integrated pest management) inspection services at regional level.

At present, the certificate is also equivalent to the VVAK and VVA certificate in the Netherlands and QS in Germany.

In 2020 the final touches were made to [achieve a benchmark vis-à-vis the GlobalGAP crops for processing standard](#), which was duly achieved in March 2021.



In addition, within Vegaplan, a VEGAPLAN^{FR} was developed, that by means of a one-stop audit will allow growers to get themselves certified in the French HVE scheme (*haute valeur environnementale*), an official sustainability certificate that should grant access to the French market. Vegaplan hopes to be the first non-French system to be approved for this. The decision is expected in April 2021.

Export in turbulent times

In the past few years, the export of potatoes and potato products faced hard times. Not only did Brexit lead to more questions than answers, even after the Brexit agreement that was concluded at the end of 2020, but increasing protection with ever-more requirements with regard to phytosanitary certificates did not make import and export any easier.

Veerle Van der Sypt ensures that both Belgapom and FVPhouse have a great deal of knowledge and experience in this area to assist the sector and companies with their administrative and legal

concerns. Veerle is also the editor of a regular FVPhouse Brexit newsletter that keeps interested parties up to date.

She is also constantly in touch with the competent authorities such as the FASFC, customs, Foreign Affairs, FIT and AWEX to look for sectoral and company-related problems together.

A new communication platform



[FVPhouse website.](#)

In 2020, FVPhouse launched a new communication platform. It offers Belgapom members the possibility to save and display their meetings and documents in a personalised way. The platform was integrated in the

Self-inspection guide for potatoes, fruit and vegetables: trade and processing

In 2019, version 4 was published of this important tool for the trade in and processing of potatoes, fruit and vegetables – that forms a bridge with the Vegaplan standard for primary production.

In 2021, a new update for [the guide](#) will be started, headed by *Nele Cattoor*, which will tackle, amongst other things the use of water.

Training courses in cooperation with FVPhouse

FVPhouse is a *Qfor* certified training provider and is also recognised by the Flemish *SME portfolio*.

In 2020, various (online) courses were offered on organic legislation, trend analysis and packaging and also within the framework of phytosanitary licensing.

Christa Dhaese is the contact for this within FVPhouse.

Collaboration with UNIZO and FEVIA

Belgapom actively cooperates with the Flemish federation for SMEs UNIZO and with the Belgian federation for the food industry FEVIA.

Belgapom is part of the UNIZO food platform, which *Romain Cools* chaired in 2020. Belgapom is also part of the social working group and can call on the services of UNIZO's research section.

Within the framework of communicating the corona measures via the FVPhouse newsletter, UNIZO – together with Fevia – provided a lot of relevant information that helped keep our companies informed. Belgapom is also represented on behalf of UNIZO in the SALV (*Veerle Van der Sypt*) and the Flemish Council for the Environment and Nature (Minaraad - *Nele Cattoor*).

Belgapom is furthermore a member of Fevia's governing body and is also part of Fevia's working groups COSOC (social affairs), COVAL (food legislation) and COSCRO (growth) as well as being active in various of its working groups and consultative bodies. On behalf of Fevia, Belgapom is also represented (*Romain Cools*) in the Advisory Committee of the FASFC. As of 01/01/2021 *Nele Cattoor* will take over this mandate.

Belgapom in a European (potato) context

Belgapom is a member of the federation of the European potato processing (EUPPA) and the European potato trade (Europatat). Since being restructured as independent, permanent representatives of the potato trade and processing, both organisations have increasingly represented the sector vis-à-vis the European institutions.

In addition to the membership of individual companies, Belgapom ensures that important information is passed on to its members but it also actively contributes to the functioning of various committees and working groups.

Within [EUPPA](#), the CEOs of Agristo and Mydibel became members of the board and *Ward Claerbout* became chairman of the *trade committee*, that above all handles the approach to the unjustified accusation of dumping practices. The most important accomplishment in this area was the European Commission's decision to open a panel at the WTO against anti-dumping duties imposed by the Colombian authorities on the importers of frozen potato products from various EU member states.



In the meantime, a dossier has also been opened with the South African and Brazilian governments to investigate a sunset review (= extension) of the existing anti-dumping duty. In addition, New Zealand has also started an investigation.



The WTO's ruling in the Colombian case is imperative to call a halt to the improper use of this instrument by a number of countries with protectionist aims.

In addition, under the leadership of Secretary-General *Adriana Nosewicz*, EUPPA is working on numerous technical dossiers in the area of food safety, the environment and sustainability through the

sustainability and food law committees.

Within [Europatat](#), *Ben Muyshondt* was re-elected chairman of the *Packers* committee. The 'staff change' whereby Secretary-General Raquel Izquierdo was succeeded by her assistant *Berta Redondo* and *Romans Vorss* arrived to reinforce the team, did not affect the functioning of the federation. Europatat joined the promotion project 'prepared to be surprised', to bring other member states on board with regard to generic promotion.

With its newsletter, Europatat constantly keeps its members informed of everything at European level that has an impact on the potato chain.



At present, there is an important exercise in the *RUCIP working group* to thoroughly revise the quality regulations, to which rules for expert assessment and arbitration rules are connected. The latest version of [RUCIP](#) now dates from 2021, but the last thorough revision was in 2012.

Except for

the meeting of the "seed potatoes" committee and the "packers" committee at Fruit Logistica in February 2020 in Berlin, all the meetings in 2020 were held online. The congress in June was also cancelled and moved to 2021.





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