

Teagasc Potato Newsletter

Jan 2018

YIELD DIG RESULTS

The yield dig results for 2017 harvest make for interesting reading; Table 1 shows the results for Rooster which is still the dominant maincrop variety planted while Table 2 gives the results for Kerr's Pink which is still the second most popular variety.

Table 1 (Rooster t/ac)

County	< 50mm	50mm - 80mm	Oversize/Waste
National Average	2.7	19.48	1.91
Meath	2.54	18.61	2.46
Dublin	1.87	20.99	2.07
Wexford	3.76	18.54	1.34
Cork	3.03	20.62	1.12
Louth/Kilkenny	3.12	19.04	1.61

Table 2 (Kerr's Pink t/ac)

County	< 50mm	50mm - 80mm	Oversize/Waste
National Average	4.78	14.97	0.27
Meath/Cork	3.99	15.51	0.45
Louth/KK	4.48	14.38	0.23
Wexford	5.41	15.36	0.23

Good growing conditions throughout the season have resulted in some of the highest yields recorded. In the case of Rooster 2017 is the highest ever recorded yield at 19.48t/ac (48.14t/ha) from the Bord Bia digs, while the yield of Kerr's Pink is above the 10 year average at 14.18t/ac (35.04t/ha). Table 3 shows the average yields for both Rooster and Kerr's Pink over the last 10 years. It is also noticeable that in each of the last

four years that the yields recorded in both Rooster and Kerr's pink are above the rolling ten year average. This may be for a variety of reasons but if the trend continues then the chances of a poor production year which could increase the price significantly look remote.

Table 3; (t/ac)

Year	Rooster	Kerr's Pink
2008	15.17	14.63
2009	13.63	12.66
2010	17.47	15.19
2011	17.33	15.40
2012	12.76	10.24
2013	14.83	14.15
2014	16.53	14.35
2015	18.44	15.28
2016	17.38	14.94
2017	19.48	14.97
10 year Av	16.30	14.18

Table 4 below shows the percentage change from the previous years' yield digs.

Table 4 (% increase or decrease)

Year	Rooster	Kerr's Pink
06/07	-0.07	0
07/08	-0.8	-5
08/09	-10	-13.5
09/10	+28	+20
10/11	-1	+1
11/12	-26.4	-33.5
12/13	+16.2	+38.2
13/14	+11.5	+1.4
14/15	+10.4	+6.1
15/16	-6.1	-2.3
16/17	+12.0	+0.2

While the yields of maincrop are up in 2017 the area planted 7,987 ha is almost the same as 2016 at 7,968 ha. Consequently the overall production for the 2017 crop will be up when compared to 2016, however a significant amount of crop has been moved already. Therefore if consumption remains similar there shouldn't be an oversupply in the market.

Significantly some growers are now diversifying into other markets which should help the ware market. This seems to be a trend that will continue as growers try to reduce the risk of growing one variety.

SEED

Most growers are in the process of either taking delivery of seed or ordering their requirements for 2018. Often the question is asked should I use certified or home saved seed, many growers claim to get similar results. However when analysing the results from two individual years yield dig data it was noticed that 75% of the growers who participated in the Bord Bia yield digs recorded using certified seed in 2017 while in 2013 only 60% of the recorded digs used certified seed, this may help to explain some of the differences in yields between the two years. While certified seed can have issues at times, it should in theory offer a better chance of growing good crops than home saved although this is not always the case. One of the other benefits of using certified seed is that there is traceability of the seed crops so if an issue arises the user can trace

it back through the supply chain.

Home saved seed if produced correctly, can produce similar crops to certified seed. However the most common reasons it doesn't are the presence of diseases and viruses. Planting stock which hasn't been tested for either is taking a huge risk for the sake of a bit of time, effort and some expense.

NIAB in Cambridgeshire carry out a full suite of tests on seed including diseases and viruses. For a full list of tests available and prices see the NIAB site; <http://www.niab.com/labtest/>

Growers should also look at their potential markets for 2018 and look at the trends over the last few seasons. For some varieties the market is shrinking so it would be foolish to plant the same area in 2018 hoping that this will turn around. Look at what other markets are out there and see if there are potentially new opportunities for you to supply. This could help to reduce the risk and also spread workload etc.

UP COMING EVENTS

The National Potato Conference run by Bord Bia, the IFA and Teagasc will take place in **The Red Cow Hotel on Tuesday 20th February**. This is a very important event for the whole of the industry. The event will address a wide range of topics through both presentations and a series of workshops.

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