

Oifig Faisnéise  
Áras Talmhaíochta  
Sráid Chill Dara  
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Tel: (01) 607 2802  
Fax: (01) 662 1165



Press/Information Office  
Agriculture House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

E-mail: [info@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:info@agriculture.gov.ie)  
Website: [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)

---

**PRESS RELEASE**

---

21/14

18<sup>th</sup> February 2014

**HAYES WELCOMES POTATO PROMOTION PLANS**

Speaking at the National Potato Conference, Tom Hayes, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Horticulture, today welcomed the investments made by the potato growers and packers over the years in order to remain competitive and develop market share. These have included new equipment and technologies to improve quality of output, while minimising production costs and inputs. The Minister particularly welcomed the fact that all stakeholders involved in the Irish potato industry have recently committed to preparing an application for EU co-funding to support a €1m potato promotion campaign over the next 3 years.

Referring to the current market situation, the Minister said *“Potato growers have experienced difficulties marketing this year’s crop due to a combination of increased acreage, a good growing season and excellent harvesting conditions, coupled with changing market conditions and the diversity of choices now open to consumers. To stimulate demand, the industry needs to invest in a structured promotion campaign to drive increased consumption of potatoes in the long term.”* He continued by saying, *“Promotion is now the way forward and the industry should invest in information and promotion measures to stimulate consumer demand for our national Irish crop.”*

The Minister outlined his support for a structured promotion campaign to reflect the versatility and health benefits of the potato under the EU Promotion Regime. Once approved, the European Commission will co-fund promotion programmes up to 50% of eligible costs.

The Minister went on to say *“I look forward to receiving an early potato promotion campaign submission to my Department and its onward transmission to the EU Commission for approval, where it will have every chance to obtain EU co-funding. Given Bord Bia’s marketing expertise together with the co-operation that is now clearly evident from all sides of the industry, I believe the proposed 3-year promotion campaign will have the potential to significantly lift potato consumption once successful in obtaining EU funding”* he concluded.

**Notes for Editors:**

- In 2013 Ireland’s 540 commercial potato growers produced almost 10,000Ha. of potatoes. DAFM estimates this resulted in a national yield of ~360,000 tonnes.
- An increase in potato planting in 2013 combined with a reasonably good growing year and excellent harvesting conditions has lead to a surplus of potatoes on the Irish market.
- The main potato variety grown in Ireland is Rooster accounting for 60% of production in 2013. This was followed by the varieties of Kerr’s Pink (10%), Queens (7.5%), Golden Wonder (3%), Records (1%) and “other varieties” (19.5%).
- Rich in carbohydrates, potatoes are a fantastic fuel for our bodies. Unadulterated and unprocessed, they are a source of starchy energy in our diets.
- Potatoes are virtually fat free (0.1% fat) and have almost twice the amount of fibre as the same serving of brown rice. In addition Potatoes are low in calories, contain no cholesterol and represent an excellent source of a number of vitamins and minerals.
- For more information on potatoes nutritional value and recipes visit: <http://www.potato.ie/>
- The EU scheme for the Promotion of Agricultural products usefully supplements and reinforces national schemes run by Member States by boosting the image (generic) of agricultural products in the eyes of consumers. Subject to approval, the European Commission will finance programmes to a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the campaigns (eligible costs). These EU information /promotion programmes are carried out under Regulation (EC) No 501/2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 3/2008 on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries. Further details are available on the Departments website at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/promotionmarketing>
- Ireland has previously run a number of programmes under the Promotion Regime for the dairy, meat, eggs and horticulture sectors. Current campaigns underway include:
  1. A three year Dairy programme developed by seven member states (Ireland, Austria, Belgium, France, UK (NOI), Netherlands, and Denmark) to increase milk consumption based on the single concept of the nutrient richness of milk. The programme is managed by The National Dairy Council and has a budget of €16m.
  2. A three year Mushroom programme to promote mushrooms on the UK and Irish markets, addressing the decline in mushroom sales and increasing consumption. It is co-ordinated by Bord Bia on behalf of the Irish and UK mushroom industry and has a budget of €2.7m
  3. A three year programme to increase the consumption of farmhouse cheese and dairy was developed by the Netherlands, Ireland and Germany. The ‘Discover Farmhouse Cheese’ programme is managed by Bord Bia on behalf of CAIS, the Irish Farmhouse cheese Association and has a total budget of €1.4m.

**ENDS**