

U.K. AND EUROPEAN REVIEW THURSDAY 14th MARCH 2024

Love: Oceans of emotions surrounded by expanses of expenses.

NORTHERN EUROPE

The European April 2024 Futures position has had very few trades this week and closed unchanged at **€39.50(£338.00p.t)** last night.

Physical prices in all sectors have steadied. Buyers for the main processors are still showing interest for immediate delivery and forward purchases but activity in all sectors of the free buy market has declined.

Buyers in the fresh sector note the arrival of Egyptian new crop which is “two weeks earlier” than normal.

Prices for processing are quoted from £300 for varieties like Fontane up to £335p.t for Innovator.

Export demand has decreased due to the recent hike in pricing although there is ongoing good demand from France for best quality Agria to Spain for “fresh fries” at £340 up to £380p.t ex.

Planting of the early crop is delayed by the very wet soil conditions but better progress is reported now in South West France.

World Potato Markets reports that potato stocks in Canada on March 1st were at the highest ever level and 20% higher than last year. In the U.S., where there was also a very large crop, exports of French fries are 10.6% lower than January last year. Imports are reported to be increasing due to the strength of the USD.

MEDITERRANEAN NEW

Cyprus – Stocks are now clear but the first container of Winter and Spring crop should arrive before Easter.

Majorca – Growing conditions are excellent and the first Gwenne will be lifted over the weekend for transport to the U.K.

EARLY CROP

Jersey – There has been a small amount of progress this week but planting is still significantly delayed. The forecast for next week is “changeable” again and planting has moved on to stronger soils which will take longer to dry out.

First liftings of the outdoor crop should be available by Easter.

Cornwall – There was limited progress at the end of last week until the rain arrived and growers are just starting to get going again on the lightest soils today. January plantings are now emerging well.

Pembroke – Dry for a day at the end of last week when varieties including Rocket and Accord were planted but no progress since and it is raining today.

The East – Some progress at last on the lightest sands in Suffolk at the end of last week and planting is on the go again today. Stronger soils are “absolutely saturated” and will take time to dry out. Varieties planted to date include M.Peer and M.Piper but also M Bard for early chipping and Desiree.

Shropshire – A very small amount of planting last week but 30mm of rain last weekend has again stopped work

Ayrshire – Planting started last weekend for a brief period but there is now heavy rain again. Earliest growers have “25%” of the crop in the ground.

W/S MARKETS/ TRADE

Sellers continue to try to force prices higher and there are increased delivered in quotes for washed whites and bakers and salads for next week.

Best Washed whites in 25kgs are £560 and £680p.t delivered with very best at £720p.t. for 45mm + including Melody. 60mm + washed whites are quoted at £770p.t delivered.

There is more interest for **washed reds** and supplies are becoming harder to find.

Mozart and Manitou are from £600 with best at £680p.t.up to £770p.t delivered.

Bakers are firm and steady movement is reported. **Values for 40's** range from £13.50 per 15kgs up to £15.00 and exceptionally £15.50 including Lanorma and Orchestra

Select frying varieties are holding with values for the very best edging higher.

Values range from £450 with very best Agria and Markies at £480 and exceptionally £520/£550p.t

Mids are holding firm with some increased quotes for best quality. Values for 35 x 42mm are from £8.00 to £8.50 with best at £9.50 and exceptionally £10.00 per 10kg for 35 x 45mm M.Piper in the East.

SEED

There are further reports of short delivery of seed of frying varieties this week. Low tuber count is also noted on a number of samples.

“After several phone calls”, growers affected have only succeeded in finding small quantities of M.Piper seed.

EXPORT/IMPORT

Export to the Canaries has now ground to a halt. Egyptian new crop is arriving which “fries well, is clean and is €200p.t cheaper” than frying samples from the U.K.

Shipping issues have apparently delayed the first arrival of Egyptian new crop.

Demand for imports for packing is still being maintained with buyers looking primarily for whites from France at around £550/£560p.t delivered and bakers at £600p.t delivered.

There has also been more interest this week in reds at up to £480p.t delivered.

PACKERS

Salads -Very best quality samples are in demand at up to £580p.t ex including M.Peer.

Secondary samples which have high levels of Black Dot and are not easy to move at around £300p.t. **First Israeli set skin new crop** are due to arrive in two weeks time.

Maincrop – Quality packing samples have been in good demand as buyers source for immediate use but also try to cover requirement going forward.

Prices for whites are holding at £450 up to £500 with very best at £525 in the East.

There have been **more enquiries for reds** in a range from £485 up to £500p.t ex.

Buyers are looking for **quality M.Piper** at up to £500 and £600/£625 but values also range from £400 and £450p.t ex depending on quality

FRYING / M.PIPER

Demand for best quality samples, mainly in the East, has shown signs of improvement this week but growers with quality stocks in other areas also report some renewed interest.

Buyers are keen to secure supply further ahead but also to stock up for Easter and before land work starts. Samples which are not the best are still slow to move and for these there is strong resistance to any talk of price increases. Heavy rainfall of 20 to 30mm in early areas has also bolstered confidence.

Prices in the West range from £430/ £450 including Marvel, M.Piper and Markies and up to £480 with best at £500 and £520 including Markies and Agria.

In the East, values range from £450 up to £480 with more sales now in the range from £500 up to £520 and £540/£550 for best including Sagitta, Markies and Agria.

There have been more reports of **imports of frying quality Fontane from Belgium** equivalent to around £450p.t ex grading in the U.K.

French fry processors have been making **more positive enquiries during the week** with quotes ranging from £300 up to £450p.t ex depending on quality and outlet.

Peelers quote values in a range from £280 up to £320.

FUTURES

European processing April 2024 closed today unchanged at **€39.50(£337.00p.t).**

Sterling has been trading at **85.4p** to the Euro. **€/£117.00**