

UK Droughts and potato supply chain – Questions for growers

1. What is the immediate destination of your potato production (supermarket, processors) and what kind of contracts do you have with them (if any)?
2. What % your output is based on forward contracts [i.e. do they have contracts in place for less than; as much as; or more than their contracted amount to the packers- measure of risk attitude]? Do you consider your contract arrangements to be ideal or not and why?
3. What are the conditions and penalties imposed in case you don't reach the agreed yield and/or quality? Have you ever had any penalties imposed/are you aware of any situations where they have been imposed on others?
4. Where is the quality-related cut-off point for acceptance by the main retailers in relation to a drought-affected crop and do they have alternative buyers for low quality crops?
5. When a drought affects your production, are the associated costs and risks shared among the different actors of the food supply chain? How?
6. Are you aware of drought impacts having pushed prices up in the past and can certain stakeholders within the system benefit from these price increases? If yes, 'who is able to benefit and how does the system change in response to the distribution of costs/ benefits associated with drought
7. What strategies can growers apply when you see you are not going to meet the requirements agreed on your contract? Are all producers equally well-placed to employ these strategies?
8. How are the drought risks and costs spread across the different parts of the food supply chain?
9. How did all of these work during the 2010-12 drought (in meeting contract commitments, and reducing penalties, yield losses at the farm, extra costs for your business...)?
10. Has your business implemented changes after the last drought (2010-12) to become more resilient to drought risk?
11. Would you say that the UK potato supply chain is more resilient to droughts now than in the past drought? Why?
12. What key aspects should be improved in the UK food supply chain to be better prepared to face future drought risks?