

# Seed Potatoes: Past, Present & Future



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# Scottish seed potatoes – current situation

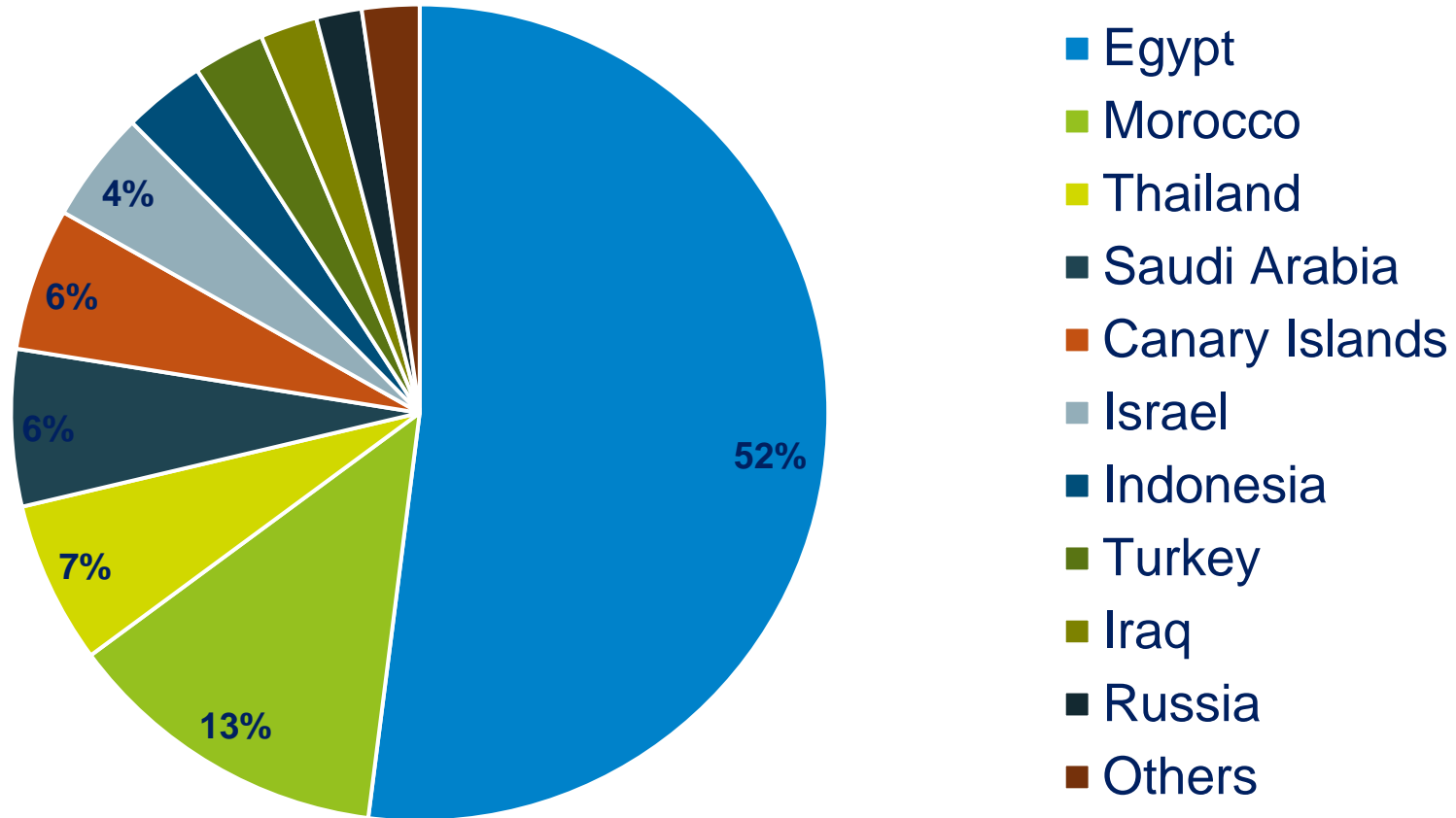
- Approximately 500k tonnes of seed produced in UK mainly in Scotland on around 12k hectares of land in any one year.
- Total available seed land approximately 100k hectares subject to rotation etc
- The UK seed supply chain requires around 400k tonnes of domestic seed to service requirements
- Over 100k tonnes exported mainly to non-EU destinations
- Seed imports into GB around 30k tonnes mainly due to price and/or varietal choice/availability

# High health, High quality

- Our cool, damp climate is disadvantageous to aphid development and results in lower virus pressure than observed in other European countries.
- The Scottish seed potato system is also free of the notifiable bacterial diseases Brown Rot and Ring Rot, which sporadically occur in mainland Europe.
- All stages of seed potato production in Scotland are managed and administered under the Seed Potato Classification Scheme by SASA, who oversee official inspection and certification of seed crops and are the responsible authorities for seed potato health.



# Non-EU Seed Potato Exports 2020/21



# A change for exports



- The EU gave official notification on 28th December 2020 that it will not grant permanent equivalence to GB for the import or marketing of seed potatoes
- The EU indicated that this was because the UK Government did not commit to dynamic alignment with the relevant EU phytosanitary rules
- This has effectively ceased the export of seed potatoes to the EU and Northern Ireland from the 1st January 2021 onwards.

# Post Brexit timeline to date

- End of Transition on 31<sup>st</sup> December resulted in no equivalence therefore no supply to EU from UK
- DEFRA subsequently applied to the EU under article 44 of the EU Plant Health Regulations as under article 44 dynamic alignment is not required. The EU dismissed this request citing a lack of dynamic alignment
- Extension granted for 6 months for seed potato imports from EU to UK until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. However if the extension lapses without DEFRA intervention then the import of seed potatoes from the EU will cease beyond the 1st July 2021.

# Volume of seed potatoes to and from EU

- GB exports of seed potatoes into the EU account for approximately 20% of total seed potato exports with approximately 25,000 tonnes exported annually.
- A further 2,000 tonnes are sold into Northern Ireland.
- SASA have indicated that 15,600t of seed potatoes had been exported in the run up to the 31st December 2020 deadline.
- This is less than the annual average primarily due to some European customers not having adequate storage space and others not placing orders on time.



# Next Steps: Technical, not political approach

- Don't dwell on the past. Seek a common consensus to move ahead
- The aim for all parties is for reciprocal trade to resume asap
- Seeking collaboration across the UK & EU sectors for a technical solution (take out the politics)
- Could the case be argued for a rolling temporary arrangement?
- Collaboration can highlight the real world implications whilst offering a pragmatic solution





# Looking forward



# New and existing market opportunities

- Sub Saharan Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- Central America
- Caribbean
- Post Brexit trade deals with potential export markets?



# Limitations to increasing our export potential

- Reduction in the number of seed growers
- The UK domestic requirement for seed
- Rotational and other legislative restrictions
- Varietal availability
- Loss of land to PCN due to ware growing and shared machinery in seed areas
- Cost of production vs Price received

# Sector Strategy for Scottish Seed Potatoes

- Developing a specific strategy for seed potatoes in light of a range of issues affecting the sector
  - Land availability
  - PCN in soil
  - Acceptability of PCN resistance varieties
  - Support across the supply chain



# Sector Strategy Scope



Thank you