High hopes for British seed potatoes in Kenya

Official potato trial seed sent to Kenya has passed initial lab tests and is now growing well in three locations.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) have been working together to open the Kenyan market to GB seed with a bilateral agreement signed by the Scottish and Kenyan governments late last year. Since then, there has been a significant amount of work behind the scenes to transport, test and plant seed on Kenyan farms.

AHDB’s Head of Crops Export Trade Development, Rob Burns, said: “Before commercial growers can access the market trial seed needs to be tested and grown over two seasons in at least three geographical locations in Kenya. Fortunately in Kenya there are two growing seasons annually so we hope to reach the end of this process and open up the market fully by early 2018.”

A total of ten varieties have been sent for trialing, four free varieties - Hermes, Atlantic, Cara and Russet Burbank – and six commercial varieties provided by the James Hutton Institute. The varieties selected are processing varieties which are expected to thrive in hot, dry conditions.

Most farmers in Kenya (95%) use poor quality home saved seed and grow as little as ten tonnes of potatoes per hectare. The GB seed currently being trialed should not only be healthier but should produce 40-50 tonnes of potatoes per hectare.

SASA’s Export Liaison Officer, Jackie Gibson, said so far the GB seed planted in Kenya was doing well with full emergence on all three sites.

She says: “The good news is that the crops are looking really well, we have full emergence on two sites.”

“"The government officials in Kenya have been great to work with and both sides are keen to see commercial seed approved for import. We’re confident this is the beginning of a strong export partnership.”

Meet British seed growers on the AHDB stand at Potato Europe
Page 2–3

Secretary of State for Scotland at Fruit Logistica
Page 4

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Importers and growers looking to buy high health, high quality seed are invited to visit AHDB Potatoes GB seed stand at Potato Europe (Emmeloord, Holland, 13–14 September). Our stand helps international seed buyers and importers connect with experienced exporters of quality British seed.

As usual the AHDB stand will host some of the biggest and most progressive companies from the British potato industry, offering the ideal chance to build new relationships and explore potential business opportunities. GB seed exporters will also be present on the AHDB stand to welcome new and existing contacts, ensuring visitors have one central meeting place which showcases the best of British seed.

Rob Burns, Head of Crops Export Trade Development, said: “British seed potatoes are rightly renowned across the world. Not only are they high health and quality, they are also diverse, we have a great range of varieties which thrive in a range of conditions.”

Come see us on the AHDB GB seed stand:

**Breeder/exporter**

**Caitness Potatoes** is a company that owns and runs potato farms for many generations. It is based in Scotland, one of the most naturally disease-free seed growing regions in Europe.

Caitness Potatoes works hard with its customers around the world and with their different market places, continuously striving to provide both quality and superior characteristics and seed potatoes of the highest specifications.

**Caitness Potatoes Ltd**

26 York Place, Perth
Scotland, PH2 8EH

**Contact:** Stephen Hole
**Tel:** +44 (0) 1738 446 723
**Email:** enquiries@caithnesspotatoes.com
**www.caithnesspotatoes.com**

**Breeder/exporter**

Cygnet PEP’s development program tests new varieties in wide ranging conditions from the desert heat of north Africa and the middle east, to the warm humid conditions of south east Asia and the relatively varied conditions across Europe.

Cygnet PEP’s main seed producers and facilities are based within the safe haven of Scotland where high grade seed is grown, graded, quality controlled and exported.

**Cygnet PEP Ltd,**

Blairfield, Milnathort, Tayside, Scotland UK KY13 0SG

**Contact:** Alasdair MacLennan
**Tel:** +44 (0) 1577 867 997
**Email:** alasdair@cygnetpep.com
**www.cygnetpep.com**

**Breeder/exporter**

Cullen Allen can trace its trading history back to 1870 and is one of the longest established potato businesses in the UK, specialising in production and marketing of seed potatoes from Scotland and N. Ireland.

The firm works closely with ware potato suppliers to market local potatoes and imported new potatoes from Cyprus and Spain, offering seed and table potatoes, export and import services, breeding expertise, variety trials, new variety marketing and mini-tubers.

**Cullen Allen Ltd**

8 Wandsworth Drive, Belfast BT4 2BJ

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**Email:** eddie.craig@cullenallen.co.uk
**www.cullenallen.co.uk**

**Breeder/exporter**

Greenvale AP is one of the UK’s leading potato companies with state-of-the-art pack houses, trading offices in the major potato growing regions of the UK as well as specialised early potato production in Jersey and Cornwall.

Greenvale AP has its own breeding partnership, growing operation, storage solutions, thriving seed export business based in Scotland and provides first class technical support to its growers and customers.

**Greenvale AP Ltd,**

Springfield, Burrelton, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, Scotland PH13 9PJ

**Contact:** Niall Arbuckle
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**Email:** niail.aruckle@greenvale.co.uk
**www.greenvale.co.uk**
Crop research/Breeder
James Hutton Limited is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the James Hutton Institute, a world-leading centre for potato breeding and research. James Hutton Limited breeds potatoes for a range of commercial companies for both the fresh and the processing markets. Current successful varieties include Lady Balfour, Vales Sovereign, Genson and Mayan Gold.

James Hutton Limited also offers a comprehensive range of services to the potato industry including the development of plant pathogen diagnostics and research into potato diseases.

**James Hutton Ltd,**
Errol Road, Invergowrie, Dundee, Scotland DD2 5DA

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**www.huttonltd.com**

Government/institutions
SASA, a division of Scottish Government, provides science and advice for Scottish agriculture and is the certifying authority for seed potato production in Scotland. Additionally, SASA liaises with importing countries regarding phyto-sanitary conditions for potato export and conducts scientific activities supporting the Scottish potato industry.

SASA’s activities include high-tech diagnostic services and potato research programmes.

**Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture,**
Roddinglaw Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH12 9FJ

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**www.sasa.gov.uk**

“Potato Europe offers a wonderful opportunity to meet exporters and talk to the experts about your requirements for seed, varieties and technical information.”
Secretary of State for Scotland highlights importance of exports at Fruit Logistica

On a visit to AHDB Exports stand at the international food trade show Fruit Logistica in Berlin, David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, said expanding Scottish and British food exports should be a key priority for the industry.

He said: “I was really impressed with the AHDB presence at the show and by the success and ambition of the businesses exhibiting on the stand. Growing our exports of fresh produce will be a key part of our economic growth. Events such as Fruit Logistica offer a fantastic opportunity to create and develop new business contacts and open up new markets to Scottish companies.”

Fruit Logistica is one of the biggest international trade shows for fresh produce with more than 2,500 exhibitors and 65,000 trade visitors gathered from over 150 countries.

The AHDB Exports stand, organised by AHDB Horticulture and Potatoes, showcases the excellence of horticulture and potatoes grown in Britain, with growers and science organisations also exhibiting.

This year there were seven external organisations on the stand: James Hutton Ltd, the Isle of Ely, A.C Goatham, Angus Soft Fruits, JEPCO, Bedfordshire Growers and SASA, each working hard to raise the profile of British produce and expertise with the international market.

A highlight of the show is the GREAT British Reception hosted by AHDB Exports, with Tony Sims, Director, Department of International Trade, Germany, in attendance.

Echoing the Secretary of State’s emphasis on increasing exports, Tony said:

“British products have an excellent international reputation and we are keen to see overseas exports of these continue to grow. Our seed potatoes, for example, are high health and high quality and our horticultural products are, as yet, just a tiny part of a huge global market. There are huge opportunities there and we are keen to support producers to make the most of them.”

AHDB Exports, along with GB exporters, will once again be exhibiting at Fruit Logistica in 2018.

Useful web links
Potato Variety Database (GB): varieties.ahdb.org.uk
Independent Variety Trials: https://www.sasa.gov.uk/variety-testing
Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA): sasa.gov.uk/seed-ware-potatoes/potato-exports

Dates for the Diary
10 August 2017
Potatoes in Practice, GB’s largest potato technical field event, Dundee, Scotland.
13–14 September 2017
Potato Europe, GB seed potato and science exports pavilion at Europe’s largest international trade event.
22–23 November 2017
www.bp2017.co.uk
7–9 February 2018
Fruit Logistica, GB potatoes and horticulture exports trade stand.

AHDB Potatoes events:
potatoes.ahdb.org.uk/events

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