



Export mission

Investment £19K. Return £696K

Challenge

Seed Exports from Britain, in particular Scotland are increasing. There has been a 47% increase in tonnage exported in the last 10 years, to over 101 000 tonnes¹. Of the seed exported, currently 75% (75 000t)¹ goes to countries outside the European Union, mainly in North Africa and the Middle East. This presents challenges for seed growers and export companies because official import conditions are not set by the European Union, but the destination country. These standards are often much stricter than those set in the EU, often not scientifically justifiable and even used as trade barriers.

Potato Council Activity

Seed export growers and companies are creating significant demand in many of these non-EU countries, but are unable to influence plant health and ministry of agriculture officials in these countries. To combat this, Potato Council works closely with Scottish Government to act proactively where possible to identify key officials overseas, increase their knowledge and confidence in seed production from Scotland and to negotiate improvements to import conditions. This is done with the aid of Inward and Outward Missions. Countries are selected through dialogue with export companies, and the Potato Council's Seed and Export Committee.

The ability to know who to ask, as well as successfully request an extension is an example of the work Potato Council funds to improve seed exports.

Case Study – Egypt

Egypt is by far the largest destination for seed exports, with 40 000 tonnes (40% of all seed exports)¹. However, it has some of the strictest import conditions. In 2007/08 when export strategy moved to a more proactive approach, Due to its market share Egypt was prioritised as the most important market, and in need of closer ties at official level. To date 3 Inward Missions (2007, 2008 and 2010) have been carried out with key officials coming to Scotland to meet Scottish Government officials and the seed sector and 2 Outward Missions (2008 and 2010) where Potato Council and Scottish Government have travelled to Egypt to discuss improvements to trade. Prior to this activity no direct contact existed between Scottish and Egyptian officials, with all dialogue from Egypt

going through the EU, Defra and then to Scottish Government. This resulted in no communication beyond official letters addressing with problems.



Total cost of mission work in Egypt 2007 - 2011 = £19 000². More information on Inward and Outward Mission involving Egypt can be found here www.potato.org.uk/seed-export/country-information

To meet the growing season, seed is exported to Egypt in November / December. There is an official cut-off for all shipments to leave Scotland of 5th January. This is implemented by the Egyptian government to ensure seed potatoes are available to Egyptian farmers when they need them.

The 2010 winter weather was severe with high levels of snow fall. Preparation and shipment was severely delayed for many growers and exporters, such that exporters sought Scottish Government and Potato Council to request a 10 day extension to the official 5th January deadline.

Tonnage exported post 5th January 2011 was 3 482 tonnes³. The value of seed to seed grower levy payers is in the region of £200/t⁴. The value of the tonnage shipped as a result of the extension is 3 482 x 200 = £696 400.

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Source of Information

1. Potato Council collated seed export tonnage (yearly exercise)
2. Potato Council business plans 2007-2011
3. SASA* data on Phytosanitary Certificates issued for Egypt post 5th January 2011 Phytosanitary Certificates (PCs) have to be issued for all seed exports to non-EU countries. SASA issue them for Scottish seed. SASA have provided the tonnage of PCs issued for Egypt after 5th January 2011. This amounts to 3 482 tonnes.
4. Data do not exist to put an average ex-farm seed price for seed exports. However, it is accepted within industry that seed for export currently realises £180 - 250 / tonne ex farm. Whilst the average ex-farm value for seed to Egypt can be debated, a conservative figure of £200 / tonne has been used for this calculation.

* Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture www.sasa.gov.uk