
Strong growth in the export of seed potatoes to Cuba

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Cuba is importing a lot more seed potatoes from the Netherlands this year. The fourth ship with seed potatoes (harvest 2019) has recently left for Cuba. The expectation is that exports will continue to grow in the coming years, says Jan van Hoogen, Director of Agrico.

The export of Dutch seed potatoes to the Caribbean island over last year's harvest comes to around 16,000 tonnes. In the past three years, this has fluctuated between 8,000 and 10,000 tons. Jan estimates that a third of Dutch exports are made by Agrico.

Small buyer

According to figures from the Dutch Potato Organisation, the worldwide export of Dutch seed potatoes of harvest 2018, came to 714,000 tons. Within Europe, the most important customers are Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain. Outside of Europe, they are Algeria and Egypt. With 16,000 tonnes this year, Cuba is still a relatively small customer in comparison.

Delivery early in season

Potato cooperative Agrico, exports to 85 countries. According to Van Hoogen, Cuba is a small importer in terms of sales. "But we cherish all countries. That certainly applies to Cuba, because this country wants to receive seed early in the season. For our sales planning, this is an advantage. "

Export growth expected

Van Hoogen expects that exports to Cuba will continue to grow in the coming years. "Cuban potato growers still work a lot with local seed potatoes. Our starting material delivers a significantly higher production. However, our sales to the island depends on the budget that the Cuban government makes available to buy seed potatoes. "

High phytosanitary requirements

Cuba has high phytosanitary requirements. Every year a group of inspectors comes to the Netherlands to check the seed potatoes. They also visit Dutch growers. The group will stay six weeks in the Netherlands to complete their inspection.
