

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

“Jersey Royal Potatoes”

PDO () PGI (*)

1. Responsible Department in the Member State

Name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
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2. Group:

Name: Agriculture & Fisheries Committee
Address: Howard Davis Farm
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Tel:
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Composition: producer/processor (430 approx) other ()

3. Type of product:

Vegetables Class 1.6

4. Specification

4.1. Name Of Product:

“Jersey Royal” (known also in the plural Jersey Royals and in the shortened form Jerseys or Royals)

4.2 Description:

Foliage

Habitat:	Medium spreading and open
Colour:	Dark green, flossy with trace of pigment
Stems:	Medium number, straight and branched
Leaf:	Medium size, open, trace of pigment
Primary Leaflets:	Small and narrow
Secondary Leaflets:	Many and large
Leaflet Surface:	Smooth with wavy margin
Buds:	Dark
Flowers:	Few white and short stalk
Sprouts:	Blue and sparse

General Description

First early grown for early production in Jersey. Produces yields of uniform long oval tubers. Medium – low dry matter. Firm cooked texture. Market – new season ware.

Tubers

Long oval with yellow skins. Skin texture tough. Medium – deep eyes.

It has a unique taste that enables it to obtain a market premium over other early potatoes and this is recognised in market reports.

It has the property of being able to retain its flavour for several days, although in common with many other varieties of early potatoes, the skin greens on exposure to sunlight. While the Jersey Royal is carefully handled by packing depots the potato is able to stand up to some mishandling: an important factor to Island growers where the produce has to be exported by sea to its market place. This important attribute was clearly demonstrated to growers many years ago when for a short period other early potatoes were grown. (For many years growers have been banned from exporting in season any potatoes other than Jersey Royal so as to ensure its unique name is maintained).

Clues to identification

Dark green vigorous foliage. Robust stems. Dark green, glossy leaflets with a thick appearance and wavy margins – terminal often fused. Few small white flowers.

4.3 Geographical Area:

The Island of Jersey

4.4 Proof of origin:

Both in field and at the packing station Government Inspectors ensure that the crop reaches the very high standards that have been set in legislation. The Inspectors have wide ranging powers and are able to stop the harvesting or packing procedure at any time if machinery is not properly operated, and to order the scorching of a field if disease (which could spread to tubers) is apparent in the foliage.

Marketing of the crop is undertaken by four Government approved grower controlled cooperatives. These cooperatives, in conjunction with the local Farmers' Union, play a major part in producing each year the Code of Practice which is formally endorsed by the Island's parliamentarians responsible for the Industry. It is interesting to note that such is the growers' desire to produce a perfect sample that the Code of Practice has been an adequate means of control rather than by extending legislation.

4.5 Method of production:

Each grower carefully controls his own stock of Jersey Royals, growing his own seed on his own farm. Selection is made within the seed fields to select plants yielding even size tubers and tubers of a suitable size (over large tubers cannot be shipped from the island). There is no source of Jersey Royals outside the Island to which growers can resort.

Growers stand their seed growing on the second shoot and by far the majority of the crop is planted by hand. While artificial fertilisers are used, locally collected seaweed is used extensively, not only does it provide an excellent source of organic fertiliser, the salt content of the seaweed is believed does much to enhance the flavour.

The crop is lifted taking great care to ensure it is undamaged. Growers make particular effort to ensure that the machinery involved is carefully regulated so that the tubers are not damaged. To this extent the Department of Agriculture and

Fisheries uses 'electronic potatoes' to monitor the machinery in use. While some of the crop is packaged directly from the harvester, by far the majority is packed at packing stations. Again care is taken with the selection and operation of grading and packing machinery.

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It is a unique situation where grower families have not only run their farm for many many generations but have also been responsible for growing and selecting their own seed. This ability to control and manage seed selection is a vital ingredient in preserving the unique characteristics of the Jersey Royal.

4.6 Link:

The Jersey Royal is an early kidney potato that has marketed exclusively from Jersey for over 100 years. It has a unique taste that enables it to obtain a market premium over other early potatoes and this is recognised in market reports:- it is quoted separately.

The Jersey Royal new potato is a selection (clone) of a distinct type of potato cultivar International Kidney.

Random Amplified Polymorphic DNA (RAPD) techniques have determined the genetic similarity between Jersey Royal, and two sources of International Kidney.

The Jersey Royal clone of International Kidney was selected around 1880 from a single tuber, and all the currently grown selections are believed to have originated from this single source.

The Jersey Royal could be botanically described as:

“*Solanum tuberosum* cv International Kidney cl Jersey Royal”

The RAPD testing has confirmed the known origins of the Jersey Royal and its similarity with other International Kidney clones, but has not confirmed the same genetic identity. It is therefore reasonable to treat Jersey Royal as a distinct clone of the potato cultivar International Kidney.

The name Jersey Royal was derived from the Royal Jersey Fluke and it is appropriate to quote from the Jersey Biographical Dictionary.

“De La Haye, Hugh (1835 – 1906). Originator of the Royal Jersey Fluke. Born 1835. For many years he farmed Bushy Farm on Mont Cochon.”

About 1880, at the dinner which he gave to his neighbours after the Grande Charrue ('Big Plough'), he passed round two huge potatoes which had been presented to him as curiosities. One of these had fifteen eyes and after dinner was cut into pieces and planted on a cotil above Bellozanne Valley. Next Spring they produced a large and early crop; but De La Haye was surprised to find that, though the parent potatoes had been round, all the produce of one of them was kidney-shaped. He nursed these new potatoes carefully and Charles Le Feuvre named them Royal Jersey Flukes. From this small beginning sprang all the later types of Royals and the early potato trade which brought such prosperity to Jersey.

In September 1882 his fellow farmers presented him with an illuminated address and a purse of gold “as a feeble recognition of our appreciation of the service you have rendered to your native isle by the introduction of the Jersey Fluke”. He never made any effort to exploit for his own advantage his lucky discovery and, when ill health compelled him to give up his farm, his income was very small. In old age he spent most of his time chatting to friends. He never married and died in the General Hospital on 2nd September 1906.

While this clearly demonstrates significant established usage of Jersey Royal within Jersey the name is also well established on the UK Wholesale Market and also by the consumer throughout the British Isles. Reference to any UK produce marketing periodical over the last 100 years will reveal that the Jersey Royal has been quoted as a separate commodity from Early Potatoes. Trade press quotes such as “the first of the Royals have arrived” or “the Jersey Royal season has started” are commonplace. Recipes will often quote the use of the Jersey Royal (often garnished with mint) rather than merely advising the use of Early Potatoes.

The Jersey Royal is grown on some 400 holdings and is graded and packed for marketing at some 30 packing centres.

For many years growers have been banned from exporting any potatoes other than the Jersey Royal so as to ensure that its unique name is maintained.

The early potato known as the Jersey Royal, produced exclusively on the island of Jersey has, for over 100 years, been recognised as being distinctly different from all other varieties of early potatoes, and this in large measure is due to the island's geographical environment.

Jersey lies in the shelter of the Bay of St Malo and is south facing slope thus having an equitable climate with rapidly warming soils. Over the years the cultivation of hedges and maintaining of stone walls has added shelter thus making Jersey without doubt the "earliest" area in the British Isles. The Jersey Royal has, uniquely, been adapted by growers to make maximum use of these natural benefits.

The name Jersey Royal is so well established and the appearance and flavour of the potato is so distinctive that producers have accepted that it is almost impossible to imitate. The Island's growers are not permitted to export any other variety of potato and therefore they are very well aware of the need to maintain pure stocks of Jersey Royal Potatoes.

4.7 Inspection body:

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The inspection body is an official public body conforming to the principles of the EN 45011 standard.

4.8. Labelling:

N/A