

Potato starch quotas: 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 marketing years

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The Committee adopted a report by Encarnación REDONDO JIMÉNEZ (EPP, E) on potato starch used in industry. This product currently receives subsidies which enable starch producers to buy it at a competitive price by comparison with other raw materials such as maize. There is an overall Community quota (1.5 million tonnes) for these subsidies, which have to be shared among the producer countries. The rapporteur asks why aid should be granted for potatoes grown for industrial purposes - chiefly in Germany, the Netherlands and northern France - and not for potatoes intended for consumption - which are produced throughout the Union. There is no market organisation for the latter and no subsidies are provided, despite a Commission proposal dating from 1992. The Committee endorses the rapporteur's argument and calls upon the Commission to introduce support for producers of potatoes intended for consumption. In addition, it accepts the idea of reducing the premium for potato-based starch, as it believes the industry already receives a level of aid which is unjustifiably high by comparison with that granted for cereal-based starch.