

Summary of the Workshop and Official Survey Launch

Sustainable & Climate-Resilient Potato Production for Food Security in Ireland

Food Innovation and Health Research Centre

TU Dublin

The ESAI/EPA Grassroots Workshop, titled “Sustainable & Climate-Resilient Potato Production for Food Security in Ireland,” was held on Monday 7th September 2026 at TU Dublin, Central Quad, Room CQ107, from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The event brought together researchers, agricultural stakeholders, community representatives, and other participants interested in the future of potato production in Ireland. The workshop focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with developing sustainable and climate-resilient potato systems, while also providing an important platform for dialogue between research, agricultural practice, and community engagement.

The event opened with registration and morning refreshments, followed by a welcome to TU Dublin from Dr. Catherine Barry Ryan. The opening session provided an introduction to the objectives of the event and highlighted the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange in addressing the future challenges facing potato production and food security in Ireland.

Dr. Ammara Batool then presented on climate-resilient potato systems and agronomic innovations. Her presentation explored the importance of adapting potato production systems to changing climatic conditions and highlighted the role of agronomic innovation in improving the sustainability, resilience, and productivity of potato production. The session provided an important foundation for subsequent discussions on how research and innovation can contribute to a more resilient potato sector.

This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Denis Griffin of Teagasc, focusing on potato research and development in Ireland, with particular emphasis on genetic improvement and the development of resistant potato varieties. The presentation highlighted the contribution of potato breeding and genetic technologies to addressing important production challenges, including disease resistance and changing environmental conditions. The development of varieties with improved resistance and other desirable characteristics is an important component of sustainable potato production. Teagasc’s potato breeding programme has a long history of developing new varieties, while more recent approaches have incorporated molecular and genome-based technologies to accelerate the identification and selection of beneficial traits.

The presentation also highlighted the importance of developing potato varieties that can respond to emerging challenges while meeting the requirements of growers, consumers, and the wider market. In particular, genetic resistance to diseases such as late blight represents an important pathway towards reducing reliance on chemical inputs and improving the resilience of potato production. Research in Ireland has demonstrated the potential of combining conventional breeding with molecular approaches to identify and incorporate resistance traits into new varieties.

Kaethe Burt O'Dea subsequently presented on SPUDS and its importance for community engagement and relevant projects. The presentation introduced the community dimension of sustainable potato production and demonstrated how potatoes can provide a practical entry point for engaging communities in questions relating to potato varieties. SPUDS has developed as a community-based action research initiative examining the sustainability of Ireland's food system through the potato, including interest in naturally blight-resistant varieties.

A central component of the event was the official launch of a survey on sustainable potato production. Participants were invited to take part in the survey and provide their perspectives on the current challenges, opportunities, and priorities for sustainable potato production in Ireland. The survey launch created an opportunity to capture stakeholder and community perspectives and to complement the scientific and technical presentations with direct input from participants. The activity also encouraged discussion around the practical challenges faced by potato production and the types of research, innovation, and support that may be required to build a more sustainable and climate-resilient potato sector.

The event provided a valuable platform for bringing together research, agricultural innovation, genetic improvement, community engagement, and stakeholder perspectives to explore pathways towards more sustainable and climate-resilient potato production in Ireland. The session was driven by a positive, enthusiastic, forward-thinking, and highly interactive atmosphere, with opportunities for developing sustainable solutions and identifying positive actions highlighted throughout the discussions. Attendees demonstrated a great interest in the discussions, actively engaging with the topics and sharing perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the sector. The official launch of the survey was an important outcome of the event, providing a mechanism for gathering wider stakeholder perspectives that can contribute to future research and engagement activities. Active discussions continued over lunch with participants exchanging possibilities of future collaborative engagement.

The workshop demonstrated the value of connecting research with growers, communities, and other stakeholders to develop practical approaches to the future challenges facing the Irish potato sector. The workshop was supported through the ESAI/EPA Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme, providing an opportunity to disseminate research, encourage stakeholder engagement, and strengthen dialogue around sustainable food production and environmental challenges.



Dr Catherine Barry Ryan- Welcome Note



Dr Ammara Batool – Sustainable Potato Production



Dr Denis Grifiin- Market & Future Challenges



Kaethe Burt'O Dea- SPUDS & Community



Guests



Lunch & Networking

Survey

The link to the survey on Irish Potato Production system is as follows:

[Irish Potato Production Systems Survey – Fill out form](#)