

Malaysia identi-fried as the second top importer of Belgian fries in ASEAN

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Malaysia imported 24,724 tons of Belgian potato products last year – that is an equivalent weight of 24,724 Perodua Myvis. That’s a serious local love for potatoes!

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According to Flanders Agricultural Marketing Board (VLAM) and Belgian potato association Belgapom, Malaysia initially imported 12,779 tons of Belgian potato products to Malaysia in 2009. In 2018, this number rose to 24,724 tons, nearly doubling the number of potatoes shipped in a 10-year period.

This year, Malaysia is on track to breaking a new record, with Belgian potato suppliers exporting almost 14,000 tons of potatoes in the first six months of 2019.

The ASEAN region has become a large target market for Belgian potatoes over the last decade, with Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines proving to be growing markets for Belgian potato products.

The Philippines takes the number one spot as the top importer for Belgian potato products, with 30,468 tons shipped to the archipelago in 2018. This was followed by Malaysia’s 24,724 tons, then Indonesia’s 15,548 tons, Thailand’s 8,262 tons and Vietnam’s 2,815 tons.

Fries aren’t French, they’re Belgian!

Belgian fries date back to the 17th Century, where potatoes were fried by people living in the Meuse valley region of Belgium. They sliced the potatoes and fried them, creating the delicious dish we know today.

The term “French fries” came about during World War One when American soldiers fighting in Belgium were introduced to fries. At that time, the official language of the Belgian army was French, and the Americans nicknamed the delicious fried potatoes as “French fries”.

A potato world leader

Belgium is the world's number one export country of frozen potato products, with 4.5 million tons of potatoes processed into various products each year.

The five largest Belgium suppliers are Agristo, Bart's Potato Company, Clarebout Potatoes, Ecofrost and Mydibel. These family-owned businesses ship halal-certified potato products all over the world.

By using the newest technology, the Belgian potato processing sector is able to meet the strictest quality and food safety standards and offer a high-quality product with a rich taste, nice texture and a crispy coating.

Whether you enjoy them on their own, or as a side dish, fries are clearly a dish adored by many Malaysians.

Potato lovers can sample Belgian fries for themselves at the SIAL Interfood 2019 exhibition in Jakarta, Indonesia from 13 to 16 November 2019. Visitors will be able to taste Belgian fries from numerous supplies at booth number BE 009.