

Contents

	Page
Preface	1
Manual of Methods: Management of Nitrogen and Water in Potato Production	1
Contents	3
1 Introduction	11
1.1 The purpose of this Manual of Methods	11
The Concerted Action - EUROPP	12
What is optimization and why do it?	13
1.2 Basic concepts of the management of supply of nitrogen and water in potato production	15
Introduction	15
The roles of nitrogen and water in plant functioning	16
Plant processes affected by nitrogen	18
Plant processes affected by water supply	23
Transformations and losses of nitrogen and processes that affect the supply of nitrogen to the plant	24
The nitrogen budget of the crop	27
Sources of water for the plant	27
Principles of nitrogen management: dealing with the unknown	30
Principles of water management	31
Conclusions	32
2 Plant nitrogen status	35
2.1 The significance of trends in concentrations of total nitrogen and nitrogenous compounds	35
Introduction	35
Trends of concentration of nitrogenous compounds in plant organs during growth	37
Variations in trend of nitrogen concentration related to nitrogen supply	40

	Variations in trend of nitrogen concentration related to environment	42
	Variations in trend of nitrogen concentration related to crop management	44
	Purpose of measurement of nitrogen concentrations in plant organs	47
	Plant nitrogen status and fertilizer requirements (plant reaction time to nitrogen deficiency and to supplementary addition)	50
	Conclusions	53
	Recommendations	53
2.2	Determination of crop nitrogen status using invasive methods	55
	Introduction	55
	Description of methods	56
	Conclusions	70
2.3	Determination of crop nitrogen status using non-invasive methods	72
	Introduction	72
	Chlorophyll meters	73
	Chroma meter	74
	Chlorophyll fluorescence	77
	Light interception, crop reflection	77
	Overview of performance	80
	Conclusions	81
	Recommendations	82
2.4	Spatial and temporal aspects of sampling of potato crops for nitrogen analysis	83
	Introduction	83
	Sampling techniques (whole plant or plant parts)	84
	Pattern of sampling and sample size in commercial field for advisory or consultancy work	92
	Pattern of sampling and sample size in experimental field plots (research)	95
	Handling, storing and sub-sampling (for invasive methods)	99
	Information to be collected while sampling	100
	Conclusions	100
	Recommendations	102

2.5	Perspectives for use in practice - How can assessment of plant and crop nitrogen status be used in practice?	103
	Principles	103
	Features of the analytical methods	105
	Sampling	105
	Features of crop responses	107
	Conclusions	108
	Recommendations	110
3	Soil nitrogen status	111
3.1	Forms of soil nitrogen	111
	Introduction	111
	The soil nitrogen cycle	112
	The soil biomass	113
	Soil organic nitrogen	113
	Mineral nitrogen	116
	Conclusions	120
	Recommendations	120
3.2	Role and value of organic matter	121
	Introduction	121
	Determination and characterisation of organic matter	122
	Functions of soil organic matter	123
	Sources, composition and effects of organic materials	126
	Soil organic matter level	132
	Organic matter and potato production	133
	Conclusions	134
3.3	Losses of mineral nitrogen from the plant-soil system in potato production	136
	Introduction	136
	Loss processes, controlling factors and means of determination	138
	Losses during the growing period	141
	Losses after the growing period	145
	Factors that influence the relative importance of different loss mechanisms	147
	Growing cover crops to reduce nitrogen losses after harvest	149

Methods to reduce nitrogen losses during the growing period	150
Conclusions	153
3.4 Sampling and analysis of soils for soil nitrogen	155
Introduction	155
Sampling Methods	156
Spatial variation in soil nitrogen	159
Analysis Methods	161
Conclusions	163
Recommendations	164
3.5 Using soil nitrogen status in practice - the need for Decision Support Systems	165
Introduction	165
The concept of 'optimum nitrogen'	166
Using soil nitrogen measurements	170
The need for Decision Support Systems	172
Conclusions	172
Recommendations	172
4 Plant and soil water status	175
4.1 Plant and soil water status: what is their role and what can we do with their values?	175
Introduction	175
Water potential: a way to describe water status	178
Water in the soil	178
Water status in the plant	181
The root system	183
Water in the atmosphere	185
Water quality	185
Conclusions	186
Recommendations	186
4.2 Measurement techniques for soil and plant water status	187
Introduction	187
Methods	188
Assessing crop water status	188
Assessing soil water status	190
Water balance	198
Simulation models	202

Conclusions	204
Recommendations	204
4.3 Practical use of soil water measurement in potato production	205
Introduction: Influence of water on quality and yield	205
Principles of irrigation scheduling	206
Maintaining soil moisture	209
Manual examination	210
Soil moisture tension	211
Soil moisture content - fixed sampling points	212
Soil moisture content - different sampling points	214
Soil water balance calculations	214
Other techniques for soil water measurement	214
Forecasting ahead	214
Soil water balance calculation vs. soil water measurement	215
Water Quality	215
Conclusions	216
Recommendations	216
5 Nitrogen and water – decision support systems	217
5.1 Nitrogen decision support systems in potato production	217
Introduction	217
Nitrogen fertilisation advice systems	218
Type of fertilisers	225
Application of nitrogen fertilisers	227
Conclusions	229
Recommendations	229
5.2 Irrigation methods of the potato in Europe	231
Introduction	231
Effect of water on crop quality and disease susceptibility	232
Irrigation Methods	233
Climatic conditions for the potato crop in Europe	241
Country-specific problem(s)	242
Estimation of irrigation needs	244
Farmer Advice System for Potato Irrigation	245
Conclusions	246
Recommendations	246

5.3	Role of simulation and other modelling approaches in decision making	248
	Introduction	248
	Classification of mathematical models and other modelling approaches	249
	Conclusions	258
6	Future developments	261
6.1	Exploring trends in current practice, what are the lessons and risks?	261
	Introduction	261
	Water	261
	Nitrogen	265
	Effect of the EC Nitrate Directive	271
	Conclusions	271
	Recommendations	272
6.2	Precision farming for the management of variability	273
	Introduction	273
	Causes of variability	274
	Potential benefits	275
	Measurement of spatial variability	276
	Management of variability	280
	Conclusions	284
	Acknowledgements	285
6.3	Organic potato farming and nitrogen fertilisation, some food for thought	286
	Introduction	286
	Crop Nutrition	286
	How effective is 'organic cultivation' in providing nutrition for potatoes	289
	Economic and Environmental Implications	290
	Optimisation of productivity in organic farming	291
	Other logistic considerations	294
	Conclusions	296
7	Recommendations and trends in research and practice of application of nitrogen and water to potato crops	298
	Nitrogen and water	298

Recommendations	300
Future developments in decision support	302
References	307
Addresses of the authors	317
Summaries in ten languages	
Håndbog til styring af kvaelstof og vand i kartoffelproduktionen	323
Handboek van methoden: stikstof- en waterbeheer in de aardappelteelt	325
Menetelmäkäsikirja: Vesi- ja typpitalouden säätely perunanviljelyssä	327
Manuel de Méthodes: Gestion de l'azote et de l'eau en production de pomme de terre	329
Stickstoff- und Wassereinsatz im Kartoffelbau (ein Handbuch)	331
Summary in Greek	337
Manuale dei metodi: Gestione dell'Acqua e dell'Azoto nella produzione della patata	335
Podręcznik metodyczny: Gospodarowanie azotem i wodą w produkcji ziemniaka	337
Manual de Métodos: Gestão do azoto e da água na produção de batata	339
Manual de métodos: manejo del nitrógeno y del agua en la producción de patata	341
Subject index	347