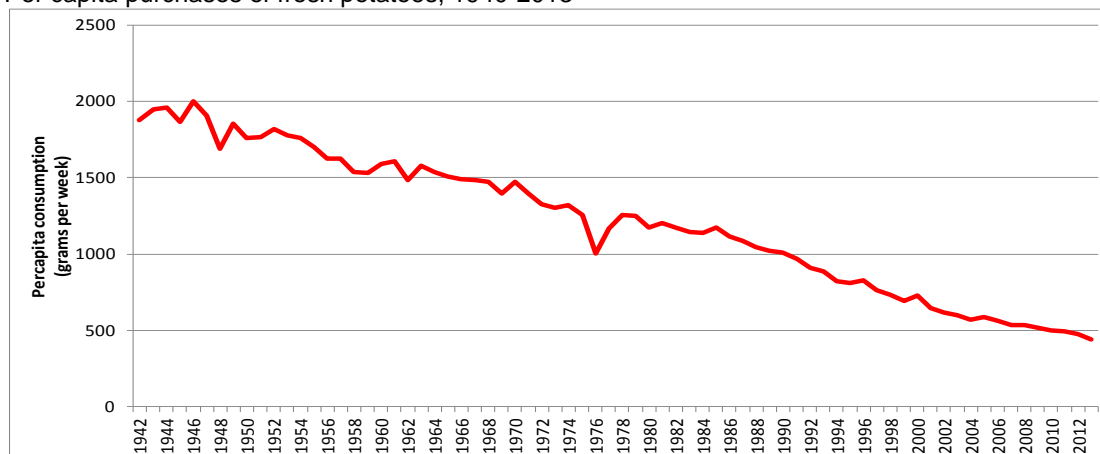


1. Changes in consumer demand for potatoes

As shown in the figure per capita consumption of fresh potatoes has declined, this has to do with increasing supply of processed potato products as much as changes in lifestyle (preferences for convenience).

Per capita purchases of fresh potatoes, 1940-2013

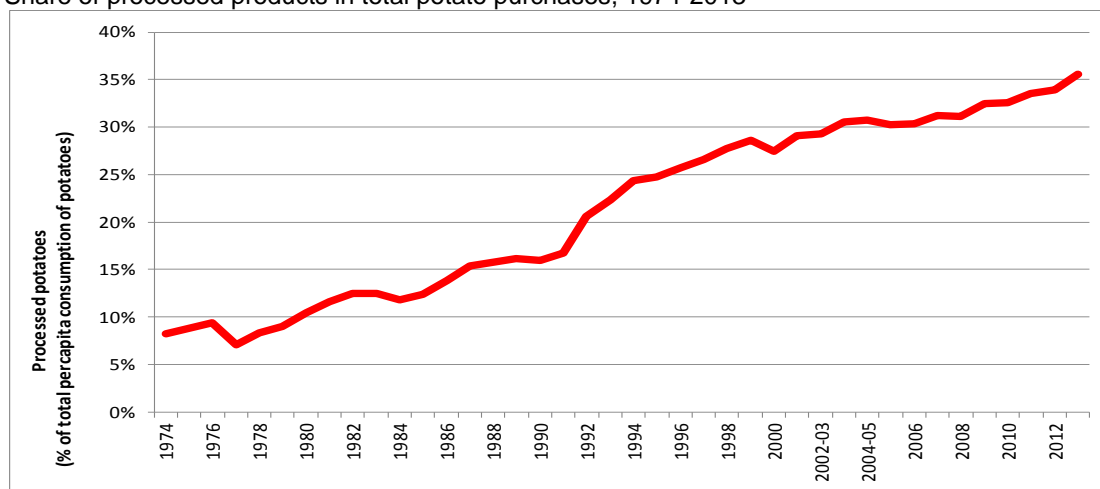


Source: Defra. Family Food.

The range of potato uses has expanded enormously in recent years. Apart from potatoes sold at retail in polythene bags (pre-packed potatoes) in supermarkets, the range includes punnets (sold as small blemish-free potatoes) and loose (where the consumer picks individual potatoes from a tray). Potatoes may be sold for specialised uses such as baking, chipping, boiling etc.

The proportion purchased of processed potato products, which include crisps, frozen chips and a range of foods/snacks containing potato flake, have been increasing steadily as shown in the figure.

Share of processed products in total potato purchases, 1974-2013



Source: Defra. Family Food.

The obvious conclusion of this trend is that the farm product becomes less of a final product and more of a raw material with increasing value created downstream the supply chain.

Changes in preferences also influence the preferred potato variety because in addition issues of disease resistance, potential yields, soil type, irrigation availability, storage or farm set-up, end-market requirements also play a fundamental role.