

Early baker does the trick for Totally Tatties!



More than 1,000 pupils from across the north and north-east have embarked on a mission to grow their own potatoes. The Totally Tatties project is the brainchild of the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative (RNCI) – a rural education charity working with schools and teachers in Moray, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Established in 1997, the initiative aims to teach more children about where their food comes from.

In the last academic year, it organised 67 farm visits and 112 classroom speaker talks, reaching almost 4,000 pupils across the region.

This year's tatties project will involve more than 1,000 pupils from 49 primary schools planting and growing their own vegetables. Each school has been given an education pack, project workbook and kit for growing the potatoes – the Safiyah variety – provided by Higgins Agriculture Limited.

The charity's development officer Rachel Heydon said: "Teachers will have a dedicated link farmer who will talk to the class and advise on their tattie growing venture, and explain how produce is grown on a larger-scale, compared to the classroom sized version.

"Here, bridges and understanding can be built between farmers and producers and the pupils, who are the consumers of the future. All of our farmers are volunteers and they give their time, knowledge and expertise free of charge for which we are very grateful."

Each school taking part in the project will record its findings and have the chance to enter two competitions.

The first is for the best project submission and the second is for the heaviest crop of potatoes, which are due to be harvested in June.

The winners of the contest, which is sponsored by Raemoir Garden Centre, will be announced in August.

The Totally Tatties project is supported by Allathan Associates, CCPowell Ltd, Charles B Gray, Gardiner ICM, Grampian Growers, Higgins Agriculture Limited, Robertson Crop Services, Frontier Agriculture, TLC Potatoes, ACT Ltd Scotland and Harbro.