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The Dutch company Ostra International Projects BV active in the agro-food sector, realized large potato storage facilities in the Mexican regions of Baja California and Sinaloa.

Ostra International is mainly active, in Latin America and the Middle East. In these regions Ostra is responsible for the realization of agro projects and supervises the installation and start-up of storage facilities as well as grading and packing lines. (www.ostrainternational.com).

The concerned project in Mexico was contracted turn-key and included the renovation of old warehouses into ultra-modern potato cold stores. In the last 3 years, in total 17 cold stores were made with a total capacity of 22.000 ton.

Ostra works with the newest Dutch technology to store potatoes for approx. 9 months. Cold stores are equipped with modern features to control temperature, humidity, CO₂, ozone and sprout inhibitor completely by computer. Potatoes are stored in wooden bins of 1100 kg capacity each.

In the province of Baja California, potato cultivation takes place in the desert, using pivot irrigation systems. This area is particularly suitable for seed potato multiplication while less diseases exist.

The cultivation in Sinaloa is large scale with big farms (400-5000 ha. farms) using modern tractors with GPS systems but old fashion implements and hand harvest on large plots (20-80 ha.). Often there are 3 crops per year harvesting mais, sorghum, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, peas, onions, etc. Also here it's almost the whole year dry and irrigation water comes from large artificial dams in the nearby mountains.

It is a big challenge to work on sustainable food production in a region like this. Especially in harsh climates, specific requirements and looking after cultural norms.

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Potato cultivation Baja California; Mexico

Photo; Doeke Oosterbaan, Ostra International



Potato harvest Baja California; Mexico June 2012.

Photo; Doeke Oosterbaan, Ostra International