

Turkey needs strategy to market its rapidly growing olive oil output

Turkey needs both a domestic and international strategy to market its rapidly growing olive oil output, according to Cahit Çetin, the head of Tariş, one of the two leading olive and olive oil unions.

"The olive oil yield this year is expected at 190,000 tons. It will exceed 300,000 tons in one or two years under good conditions," Çetin told Anadolu Agency, adding that the Agriculture Ministry forecasts output to reach 700,000 tons in the near future.

"A strategy is needed to market this increased yield, both domestically and internationally," he said.

Çetin was voicing a common concern in the sector that prices could dramatically drop in the event of higher output. He suggested that a possible solution may be to boost domestic consumption through campaigns informing people about the health benefits of olive oil.

"The Turkish olive oil industry also needs a strong international brand for positioning in global markets," he said, also asking for a cut in the value added tax on olive oil, which is currently at 8 percent

Consumption per capita has recently increased from 500 grams annually to nearly 2 kilograms, but there is still room for improvement, Çetin stressed.

The Agriculture Ministry's goal is for consumption to reach 5 kilograms per capita annually.

Çetin said the figure was as high as 15 to 20 kilograms for some olive producers, but was far below one liter in many parts of Anatolia.

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