

Italy: Half of cherry tomatoes sold domestically

Crop programming and market diversification are two winning strategies in horticulture. The perfect example of this is [Orto Serre](#), specialised in the soil-less cultivation of cherry tomatoes (Juanita) between March and November. Juanita tomatoes are harvested daily and available between June and November both as single fruits and in bunches.

In terms of production, 2014 was in line with previous years but "this year, we transplanted two weeks later than usual because we envisaged there would be sale price problems at the beginning of the campaign," explains owner Antonio Della Spina.

"We were right - we suffered a lot in June and in the first half of July as prices were 20-25% less than the previous year, probably because of the continuous rain which drove consumption down."

The main market for Orto Serre is the foreign one, "though this year we sold half of the produce at a domestic level. We found a commercial partner quite near us and we will also work together for the next campaign."

Perspectives for 2015 are quite positive, as contracts have already been signed defining price and volumes. "We basically already sold all of our production. We just need to wait for things to happen."

Talking about the Russian ban, Antonio feels prices have increased at a domestic level because there are less imports from those countries that used to be interested in the European market and are now interested in Russia.

In addition to the Juanita variety, the company is aiming at producing more cultivars, which should occupy 50% of the total cultivated area.

"We are also happy because we have been nominated among the 100 growers of most innovative tomatoes for the second time at the second edition of the Tomato Inspiration Event, which will take place in Berlin on February 5, 2015."

Orto Serre was established in 1999 and it covers 60,000 sq m, 30,000 of which are protected crops. In 2013 it became a partner of [APOC Salerno](#). "One of the advantages is that we can access subsidies from the EC. We have not been partners for long, but so far things are looking positive for the future," concludes Antonio.