

Turkish fresh fruit and veg exporters invest in Russia's future

Aegean Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Union promoted products exported from the Aegean region during Russia's World Food Moscow food fair held between 14-17 September 2015 in Russia's capital city. 1,674 exhibitors from 72 countries, and more than 30,000 visitors turned out for the fair, during which the Aegean Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters were promoting products such as grapes, cherries, tangerines and lemons. According to Vice Chairman of the Board Association Ahmed Goksel, Russia is the largest market for Turkey's fresh fruit and vegetable sector; the impact of the economic crisis in the country was noticeable at the fair, as well as a reduction in the number of visitors compared to last year, nevertheless everyone is hopeful for the next season.

In particular the fresh grapes and cherries, grown in and exported from the Aegean region, attracted passing visitors to the Aegean Exporters' Association's stand, explains Goksel, who also worked to increase the popularity of a product unique to the Aegean, the satsuma variety of mandarin.

The fair is also important for gaining new markets and strengthening Turkey's current position; Turkish Exporters Assembly Member of the Board and the Aegean Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters' Association Chairman Riza Seyyer states that it is as important to find new markets as it is to protect the current ones, in this context, to reach the 2023 export target for the Russian market, Turkey should continually work to increase the quantity of goods being exported to the Russian Federation.

In 2012, Russia took second place to Germany as the Aegean Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Association's country, to which most exports of fresh fruits and vegetables were made, 49.5 million dollars of exports were made in that year to the country, in 2013, \$55.3 million, and as a result of the economic crisis in 2014, the value of exports fell to \$27.6 million. So far, for 2015 the amount of exports have been valued at \$18.3 million.

In terms of the value of individual products being exported from the Aegean Region to Russia, tomatoes take first place with exports to the value of \$ 7.3 million, seedless table grapes take second place with \$3.3 million and cherry exports are third with \$2.7 million.

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