

## Turkey: Problems in the lemon and tomato markets

Turkey's lemon harvest, which earns \$300 million annually from exports, has begun, yet producers are finding it hard to find markets. And as no buyers can be found for tomatoes, the product remains in the farmers' hands.

Chamber of Agricultural Engineers Adana Branch President, Semih Karademir said that despite being a major export item, producers are experiencing difficulties with lemon sales. Karademir reports that in Turkey out of the 750,000 tons of lemons produced, 400,000 tons are exported.

Yet because Turkey lacks a serious agriculture policy, the market is experiencing problems. Karademir made this statement:

"The market is experiencing problems concerning lemons. Although in these days our producers are beginning to harvest an important export item, they are finding it hard to sell the lemons. The most important reason for this is the lack of a serious agriculture policy. Hence, the producer is unorganised. Moreover, there are problems in the market. The majority of the market are experiencing problems because of the crisis in Russia. We believe that our country needs to be effective outside the range of Russian exports. However, if there was not a lack of organisation from production to point of export amongst our producers, the market problems would be eliminated. Since 2014, our exports to Russia have been in a desperate situation. Now the lemon harvest has begun, but the Ministry of Economy has still not made any studies into the lemon market. The Ministry needs to make these studies as soon as possible to support the exporters."

### Tomatoes fall to 12 cents

Erdemli's Chamber of Agriculture chairman Ahmet Oger made a statement to journalists, stating that in the district 2 million tons of tomatoes are grown on 200,000 decares, creating a significant contribution to the country's economy. Oger explains that the tomatoes harvested from July until the end of November, started at 24 cents a kilo from the fields, but this price fell to 12 cents. In the country in general, in the last period producers have been experiencing increasing problems with selling tomatoes, Oger continues:

"Hoping to make good money from tomato growing, producers took credit from the banks, because growers are not getting good money they are experiencing problems. In spite of the drop in prices it is still difficult to find buyers. We say we'll sell for 12 cents from the fields, there are no buyers. The problems being experienced with exports to Russia and neighbouring countries have negatively affected us. Now we have to collect the product because leaving it in the fields will damage the soil."

Tomato producer Bekir Unal added that the tomatoes which were grown with much labour have not made any money, thus producers cannot cover their costs and are left with product in their hands.