

Turkey: Apricot harvest doubles

Last year, agricultural frost caused huge losses for apricot growers in Malatya. This year growers are experiencing an abundant season, and on the back of the harvest period, have started to dry their fruits. A large proportion of these dried apricots are exported abroad.

Malatya Commodity Exchange Chairman Gursel Ozbey explains that out of the 17 million apricot trees found in Turkey, 8 million are located in Malatya, which is why it is known as the world's apricot city.

Last year, 90 percent of the trees in Malatya were hit by frost, causing losses of 60 percent, says Ozbey, "this year frost also damaged the trees but only caused losses of around 30 percent. This year the region's Food, Agriculture and Livestock Ministry is expecting 386,000 tonnes of fresh apricot harvest, which will please growers, brokers, exporters and importers."

Ozbey said:

"From August 2015 to the end of May 2016, 69,107 tonnes of dried apricots were exported. In June 2016, around 4,500 tonnes were exported. This means 73-74,000 tonnes of dried apricots were consumed. This provides an important source of foreign exchange. This year I expect it will be around 100-110,000 tonnes. We will at least have a good season this year, I think."

Ozbey expects the dried apricot yield to increase this year, "Last year the yield was around 50-60,000 tonnes. This year will be 100-110,000 tonnes. This is a good yield. A yield we can sell. I don't think there is any product left in storage, as it's not entering the market now. So I think it will be a good season and we'll have a good product."

Dried apricots are just starting to enter the market and are priced between 8-10TL.

Warning for farmers

Due to losses over the past two years, buyers from fruit juice factories did not come to Malatya, explains Ozbey, "There just wasn't a product. It was expensive then. This year a significant volume will go to processing, to fruit juice factories. Here I would like to make the following warning to producers; we will sell our apricots for processing to fruit juice factories for 4-5TL this year, and they should take this into account."

(1 Turkish Lira=0.30 Euro)

Source: <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/161051/Turkey-Apricot-harvest-doubles> (21-07-2016)