

Russia lifts Bosnia & Herzegovina ban

Growers in Bosnia & Herzegovina can finally breathe a sigh of relief after the Russian ban, announced just before the start of the harvest season on Aug 12, has now officially been lifted.

The ban, which had started as a temporary situation, ended up lasting just over 10 weeks, after "Roseljhonzadzor" had stated that the phytosanitary certificates and seals in Bosnia & Herzegovina were inadequate and could be easily obtained by anyone.

"Fruits and vegetables can once again be exported from BiH (Bosnia & Herzegovina) to Russia," said Mirko Šarović, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations for BiH, after announcing that the Russian Federal Phytosanitary Service "Roseljhonzadzor" had accepted the guarantees.

Sarovic emphasized that BiH will establish a registry of all exporters and producers to Russia.

"The Protocol on phytosanitary protection between BiH and Russia will significantly improve the overall plant health sector in BiH and entire phytosanitary system." he said.

Dragoja Dojčinović, President of the Association of Fruit Growers Republic of Srpska, said that fruit growers will learn whether or not they should still send trucks to Russia, because it is possible that their customers have found new suppliers in the meantime.

"The damage is estimated to be around €3 million. Fortunately, the apple harvest is not yet complete, but 2,000 tons of pears were forced to be sold on the domestic market." he said.

In the first six months of this year, fruit and vegetable growers from Bosnia and Herzegovina exported fruits and vegetables worth €8.5 million to the Russian Federation. Annual exports from Bosnia & Herzegovina to the Russian market usually amounts to around €50 million, however, the ban has lowered this amount to around €20-25 million in 2016.

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