

## **Qatar to increase fruit and veg imports by 12% this year**

The news site, Al Sharq, has learned that a number of major retail markets in Doha will receive huge quantities of vegetables and fruits imported from Asian countries this year to cover the growth of domestic consumer demand, which has been remarkable since the end of last year with the increase in the number of residents.

The sources pointed out that most of the import markets will be Asian countries, and that the decline in prices of agricultural products and food in general may drive foreign imports to increase by at least 12% by the end of this year. The most important countries that have been doing business with them are India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Several business deals have also been made between Qatari entrepreneurs and Azerbaijani food companies, which have recently introduced products into the Qatari market such as juices, honey, tea, mineral water and vegetables.

Last month, Doha was visited by an Azerbaijani Export Mission to open channels of communication and cooperation with Qatari entrepreneurs and Qatari companies. This is in line with Baku's desire to boost food export rates this year to some countries experiencing rapid consumer growth, such as Qatar, UAE, China, Germany, Pakistan and others.

The rapid growth in Qatar has encouraged foreign investment, especially in fields like food production, from several European and Asian countries, as well as Africa and the United States, and the negotiation for the signing of several business deals with Qatari investors.

Qatar is keen to increase local agricultural and food production in order to reduce foreign imports by about 70% in the coming years, developing its capabilities and technologies and supporting workers in this vital sector in order to guarantee food security.

### **Food consumption**

According to the GCC report, food and beverage consumption is expected to reach 51.9 million metric tonnes by 2019, with a CAGR of 3.5 percent between 2014 and 2019.

The report focused on the study of the food and beverage sector in the light of the growing population in the Gulf countries, the growth of the young population and the inflow of tourists from around the world to this region.

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