

Apricot campaign kicks off in Hungary

The apricot campaign has started in Hungary and consumers will have access to this domestic fruit until mid-August. The Mediterranean countries have already been harvesting them for a long time thanks to their climatic conditions, but imported apricots are disappearing from the stores' shelves.

In an average year, Hungary produces 20-25 thousand tonnes of apricots, and about 20 percent, which is about 3-6 thousand tonnes, is exported. In general, Hungarian apricots perform well in foreign markets, but this year may be exceptionally important.

The yield and quality of the fruit depend heavily on weather, and this year's weather has favoured the European apricot production. Although the prices are somewhat lower than the average, this is compensated by the larger volume. The most significant export markets for Hungarian apricots are Austria and Germany, with about three quarters of domestic exports going there. In July, most of the Spanish, Greek and Italian apricots are already disappearing from European markets, as Spanish apricots are present in the European markets in May and June, and the Greek and Italian are more common in June, so there may be a slight increase in prices.

Imports into Hungary always come from those three countries; however, the volume of imports is not significant in Hungary, staying usually below 1-2 thousand tonnes. This is primarily due to the fact that domestic consumers prefer to buy Hungarian apricots, so imported apricots are only in demand until the domestic production hits the market. Domestic fresh consumption, however, is relatively low, according to statistics, with annual consumption below 1 kilogram.

As for prices, the average price of first class apricots this season is expected to amount to around 250-300 HUF per kilo (about 0.81-0.97 Euro), and for industrial apricots, which are mainly used for the production of brandy, they will oscillate between 70 and 120 HUF (between 0.23 and 0.39 Euro). These prices should be profitable, but will require producers to reach a yield of at least 10-15 tonnes per hectare per year on average.

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