

## European kiwi forecast slightly down

The 36th edition of the IKO (International Kiwifruit Organization) meeting - a conference which CSO Italy attended together with a substantial Italian delegation made up of representatives of leading companies such as Jingold, Apoconerpo, Naturitalia, Agrintesa and Spreafico - was the perfect occasion to discuss kiwi cultivation in various countries. Delegations from important producer countries such as New Zealand, Chile, France, Spain, Portugal, the United States and Greece also took part.

In France, production areas cover approximately 3,800 hectares, confirming last year's figure. For the 2017/18 season, estimates talk about 58,000 tons of green and golden kiwis, fewer than last year due to the weather problems that led to a cold spring. As usual, one third of the volumes will be shipped abroad (approx. 20,000 tons), mainly to Belgium, Spain, Taiwan and Germany. An increase of domestic consumption over the past five years was also reported. In 2016, 33% of total imports came from Italy, i.e. a 10% increase on the previous year.

Last year, Portugal had low yields due to the lack of chill hours in winter. An increase is expected for 2017 despite the PSA bacteria (under control) also thanks the new production areas. 20% more volumes are forecast compared to 2016/17. Exports dropped between 2015 and 2016, reaching less than 13,000 tons in total (the main destination remains Spain).

Kiwi cultivation in Spain seems to be expanding and currently exceeds 1,100 hectares. Further investments on 150 hectares will be made over the next few years, also in regions on the Mediterranean Sea (Valencia and Catalonia). Estimates for 2017 talk about a saleable production of approximately 15,000 tons, i.e. 15% more than 2016. Almost all of the fruit grown is destined to the domestic market and only marginal quantities are exported. Spain continues to be the leading importer on a European level and, in 2016, incoming volumes increased further exceeding 160,000 tons.

Kiwi cultivation in Greece continues to gain popularity, albeit at a slower rhythm since 2016. Orchards are estimated to cover almost 9,000 hectares in total. Forecasts for 2017 presented by the Greek delegation talk about 185,000 tons, 15% more than the last season. A significant part of the Greek production is exported, especially since the domestic market continues to absorb no more than 15,000 tons a year.

In just a few years, Greece completely overhauled the destinations of its produce. They went from being mainly extra-EU countries (before the ban, approximately 40% of the produce was shipped to

Russia, now supplied by Turkey and Iran) to EU28 countries and mainly Germany and Spain. New markets of interest are China and India.

Most of the California produce is of the Hayward variety but golden kiwi orchards are increasing. Production is expected to drop slightly in 2017/18 with 27,700 tons in total, 3% less than the previous year. Over 80% of the fruit is sold on the domestic market and exports are shipped mainly to Mexico, followed at a distance by Canada, Japan and Taiwan.

In 2017/18, countries in the northern hemisphere are expected to produce little over 701,000 tons, -5% compared to the previous year. The bigger production in Portugal, Spain and Greece is counterbalanced by the drop in California, France and Italy.

### Kiwi production in the northern hemisphere (tons)

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Prev. 2017/18	var. % 2017/18 su 2016/17
Italia	453.292	474.578	575.096	451.742	390.379	-14
Francia	58.000	54.500	60.000	63.000	58.000	-8
Portogallo	21.306	21.300	28.331	21.000	25.000	+19
Spagna	11.203	12.500	14.987	13.000	15.000	+15
Grecia	133.656	152.517	167.769	160.000	185.000	+16
<b>Totale Europa</b>	<b>677.457</b>	<b>715.395</b>	<b>846.183</b>	<b>708.742</b>	<b>673.379</b>	<b>-5</b>
USA * California	23.753	21.358	23.445	28.500	27.700	-3
<b>Totale Europa + USA</b>	<b>701.210</b>	<b>736.753</b>	<b>869.628</b>	<b>737.242</b>	<b>701.079</b>	<b>-5</b>

The situation in the southern hemisphere is varied. In New Zealand, cultivated areas continue to increase and reached 12,800 hectares already in 2016. There seems to be a slight drop for Hayward, while there are now 4,500 hectares of golden kiwis (almost entirely of the SunGold variety). In 2017, production reached 420,000 tons against the 520,000 of the previous year (-20%) but, considering the potential production capacity, 540,000 tons could be reached in 2018.

In Chile cultivated areas continue to drop, as they went from 10,400 hectares of 2015 to the 9,500 of 2016. This is due to the lack of orchard renewal, PSA and, last but not least, the choice of producers to focus on other products (cherries and soft fruit). In 2017, exports might be slightly lower than 2016 (-3%, equal to around 173-175,000 tons) and, in 2018, production should reach approximately 170,000 tons.

## Expectations for Italy in 2017

In Italy, orchards dedicated to kiwi cultivation in 2017 are little over 24,700 hectares, 2% more than 2016. However, the situation is different depending on the area. In Piedmont, there is a 4% drop due to the vine decline reported last year. Nonetheless, the disease affected the Verona area the most, as it compromised hundreds of hectares. Luckily the planting of new orchards partly made up for the losses. In Emilia-Romagna, quantities remain constant despite the many young orchards. In Lazio, Hayward orchards have only slightly dropped while the area dedicated to golden kiwis is expanding rapidly. Cultivated areas have also expanded in Basilicata, Campania and Calabria.

As regards the production levels expected for this season, in the north, only Emilia-Romagna hasn't faced particular problems (except drought in summer), so levels should be in line or slightly higher than last year.

In Piedmont, trees were damaged by frost and by the return of PSA, which however affected Verona and the other Veneto province even more.

In all of northern Italy, Friuli included, the production drop should vary between -25 and -40%. These areas also have to deal with the brown marmorated stink bug.

But frost caused a few problems in various areas of the Lazio region as well. Production in 2017 is expected to drop sensibly compared to last year, probably by over 30%.

The situation is better in southern regions, where yields are more regular, meaning production will increase considerably (+25 to +40% expected).

In 2017, Italy should have available approximately 390,400 tons of kiwis, i.e. 14% less than last year. The production of golden kiwis should increase to over 36,000 tons, 25% more than 2016.

### **Exports**

In 2016/17, kiwi exports reached 323,000 tons, 18% less than the previous years and similar to the 2014/15 period. This was due to the lower volumes available. Nonetheless, the produce was shipped to 85 destinations worldwide.

The focus is shifting from the more traditional markets to ones that are farther away such as North America, South America, Middle East and Far East.

At the moment, the main destinations remain EU countries, which in 2016/17 absorbed 64% of the total produce exported. The leading outlets are Germany and Spain, despite a decrease compared to 2015/16 (-20 and -23% respectively).

North America dropped slightly compared to the past campaign with little over 32,000 tons, but still absorbed 10% of Italian exports (a volume equivalent to the California production).

Quantities absorbed by the Far East increased by 7% with little over 30,000 tons (9% of the total volume exported). The most important markets are China and Taiwan followed by India, Hong Kong and Singapore.

### **Imports**

Generally, Italy imports between 45,000 and 55,000 tons a year. In 2016, it imported 51,000 tons, the highest volume since 2011 and +13% compared to 2015.

Counterseasonal fruit from New Zealand and Chile prevails compared to the produce imported from European suppliers, although there seems to be a drop in volumes from Chile lately. The main supplier in 2016 was New Zealand (28%) with an 8% drop compared to the previous season. Fruit from Chile represented 25% of the total with little under 13,000 tons. In years when there is less domestic produce available, more fruit from Greece is imported. It recently exceeded 11,000 tons.

### **Retail**

Kiwis make up approximately 2.6% of the volumes of fresh produce purchased in Italy. Consumption increases in autumn and winter, when competition from other seasonal fruit is lower. According to GfK data processed by CSO Italy, 118,000 tons of kiwis were purchased over the last year, in line with the previous two years. Consumption seems to be stable in 2017 as well, with a 1% increase in the volumes purchased between January and July compared to the previous year.

In 2016, 79% of Italian families purchased kiwis at least once. Ten years ago, the percentage peaked at 89% so, should we want to look at the current lower percentage in a positive way, we could say that there are potential customers who used to purchase the produce in the past. Campaigns should focus on them as well as on new clients.

**Lien article :** <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/182312/European-kiwi-forecast-slightly-down>