

Germany: 'Decline in consumption of fruits and vegetables seems to have halted'

The demand for fruits and vegetables has picked up again this year. Customers so far have spent less and less money, while the quantities purchased have increased. Thus, expenditure on all products is likely to have remained relatively constant, according to estimates of the Federal Fruit and Vegetables Committee.

The apple harvest in particular was very much lower this year, with the yield being almost half of what it was last year. Particularly in the south and southwest, the losses were very serious, the harvest being up to 70 percent short. As the harvests abroad were often low as well, producer prices have doubled from around 30 eurocents per kg in the spring to around 60 eurocents per kg this fall. Accordingly, the crop failure has its resonance in the food retail trade, where the prices are currently much higher.

In the case of vegetables, the shelves are currently dominated by winter vegetables such as cabbages, carrots, onions and celery. Red and white cabbages, in particular, are expected to be more abundant than last year, with prices going down considerably. At present, the price of cabbage at the producer level has already fallen below 7 euros per 100 kilograms. As for onions and carrots, the price outlook is anything but rosy. Although demand has generally increased significantly, spending on fruit and vegetables is somewhat limited. The total share of the product range thus remains almost the same. As a result, the trend of declining consumption of fruits and vegetables finally seems to have been interrupted.

Popularity

In terms of consumer spending on fruit and vegetables, tomatoes are the most important crop at 1.39 billion euros, followed by apples at 1.12 billion, bananas at 0.92 billion and peppers at 0.74 billion. Strawberries rank 7th with 0.61 billion euros, ahead of asparagus at 0.57 billion spent by consumers every year. The proportion of strawberries and asparagus grown in Germany is particularly high. For strawberries it is about 60 percent, for asparagus even 80 percent.

For apples, things are a bit different, as the level of self-regulation is much lower here. It was probably around 60 percent for fresh consumption apples in 2016, but is now falling to 40 percent in 2017/18 due to the paltry harvest.

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