

Russia became world's second largest banana importer last year

In 2017, fresh fruit and vegetable imports into Russia grew by 17% compared to the previous year and amounted to 7.1 million tonnes. Of this volume, 22% corresponded to bananas, 20% to citrus fruits, 10% to apples and 7% to tomatoes. Last year, Russia became the world's second-largest banana importer (1.5 million tonnes), losing first place to the US and overtaking Germany. Also, there was a significant increase in the supply of mandarins, watermelons, celery and avocados.

The agency's experts associate the growth of imports with the lifting of restrictions on the import of Turkish products, a record import of Ecuadorian bananas, and the establishment of relations with China, Egypt, Azerbaijan and Moldova. "It is also necessary to note the significant impact of the relatively stable exchange rate of the Russian rouble versus major world currencies last year. Given the lower risk of a sharp rise in the price of products during transportation, many fruits and vegetable exporters were able to expand their business again," says Irina Koziy, FruitNews CEO.

The largest supplier of fresh fruits and vegetables last year was Ecuador, which accounted for 21% of the total volume of Russian imports in this category. Almost all imports from this country consisted of bananas, which, according to the FCS, stood at 1.4 million tonnes; 11% more than a year earlier. The second largest supplier was Turkey, which accounts for 14% of all Russian fresh fruit and vegetable imports. In fact, Russia absorbs one third of Turkey's total fruit and vegetable exports. According to the Federal Customs Service, Turkey's most important export product in 2017 was citrus fruits, with almost 600 thousand tonnes shipped, mainly in the fourth quarter of 2017. The Russian market also purchased Turkish grapes, peaches, nectarines and apricots.

In third place was China, whose share is 10%. The most important Chinese products were tomatoes, with sales volumes increasing by 26%, to 109 thousand tonnes, as well as apples (with a 13% drop, down to 100 thousand tonnes). China also supplied onions, mandarins, cabbage, grapefruit, bell peppers, carrots and pears. As noted earlier by the press service of the FCS, the physical volume vegetable imports from China increased by an average of 1.4 times.

Imports from Belarus, which ranked fourth, dropped to 540 thousand tonnes, compared to 630 thousand tonnes in 2016 and 1.1 million tonnes in 2015. The main Belarusian products exported were peaches and nectarines (88,000 tonnes), tomatoes (70,000 tonnes), pears (77,000 tonnes), potatoes (51,000 tonnes) and apples (47,000 tonnes).