

## Egypt stops tomato exports due to TYLCV

This Sunday, the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture ordered a ban on the export of tomatoes after the infection of thousands of acres with yellow leaf curl virus (TYLCV) was confirmed. Samples - taken from the fields for analysis - tested positive for the virus, according to the investigation committee tasked to probe into the issue.

Earlier in October, the Egyptian authorities had already launched a series of investigations after farmers suffered losses in their 2018 tomato crops which resulted from planting seeds of class 023, infected with tomato yellow leaf curl virus (TYLCV).

Committees of the state-owned Agricultural Research Center (ARC) analyzed samples of the infected tomatoes from several planted areas. The infected crops were planted on around 10,000 acres across many rural areas. The cost of cultivating one acre of tomato was estimated at LE 50,000 (\$2,795).

In September, a number of farmers filed a complaint to Minister of Agriculture Ezz el-Din Abu Steit, calling to launch a probe pertaining to the infected seeds, bought from a private company. Egypt Today reports how the farmers stated in the complaint that the company unjustly claimed that the sowed seeds are resistant to the TYLCV virus. Egypt cultivates a total of 500,000 acres of tomatoes annually in different areas nationwide. Around 20 tons of tomatoes are produced on one acre, said Head of Vegetables Department at the state-owned Central Administration of Horticulture, Alaa al-Bahrawy. Egypt's tomato exports in the first quarter of 2018 amounted to \$13.5 million, compared to \$6.6 million in the same period of 2017, according to Egypt's Foreign Trade's annual bulletin. Furthermore, it has been reported that Egypt wants to export tomatoes to Canadian markets as part of its plan to increase vegetable export outlets.