

60% of tomatoes on Bulgarian market are imported

Bulgaria will continue to be a net importer of tomatoes due to the country's low production and the expected lack of significant developments in the medium term. This was revealed in an analysis carried out by the Center for Agri-Policy Analysis (CAPA) at the Institute of Agrarian Economics.

According to CAPA estimates, about 60% of the tomatoes available through different trade channels outside processing come from imports. Meanwhile, for peppers and cucumbers, the import quantities represent approximately 35% of the total volume.

The analysis indicates that the steady trend of growing imports of fresh tomatoes continued in 2017, with imports reaching 75.7 thousand tonnes; 7% above the 2016 level and 141% above 2011 levels.

The authors of the analysis, however, do not rule out that the slowdown in the growth rate of imports is due to the expected expansion of the country's greenhouse tomato production.

Analysts say the challenge is to stabilize the production and, in particular, to optimize production costs in greenhouses.

The price level is projected to increase over the next 5 years due to rising production costs, including energy and fuel prices and rising wages in agriculture. For tomatoes, average annual retail prices are expected to grow by about 16%.

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