

Greater vegetable harvest expected this summer in Bulgaria

Climate conditions and the situation on the Bulgarian domestic market are expected to help increase the country's production of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers this year.

The tomato production is likely to reach 164,000 tonnes; a 9% growth compared to the average of the previous three years, said analysts of the Center for Economic Research in Agriculture (CAPA) in its monthly bulletin.

Meanwhile, the pepper production is expected to come close to 48 thousand tons. This volume is 14% lower than the average for the past three years. The cucumber yield is likely to reach 70,000 tons, thus exceeding the average for the previous three years by 11%.

"The expected increase in the production of basic vegetables is based on assumptions of good natural conditions and a gradual stabilization of the production, as the domestic supply is lower than the demand and prices are increasing as a result," said the economists.

Vegetable purchases are characterized by large seasonal fluctuations, as well as significant annual changes.

The purchase price of Polish tomatoes so far is expected to stand at 0.63 BGN* / kg, or 8% above the average for the last three years. For the greenhouse production, the estimated purchase price is about 0.92 BGN / kg.

For Polish peppers, the purchase prices will probably reach 0.68 BGN / kg. This price is about 2% below the average for the period between 2016 and 2018.

For open ground cucumbers, the purchase price is likely to be 0.85 BGN / kg, 5% above the average for the last three years, while for the greenhouse production, the prices will amount to about 1.29 BGN / kg; 7% over the average of the past three years.

About 40% of consumers in the EU buy organic produce, and about 50% are looking for short supply chain products (from farmers'



markets or from specific producers). At the same time, the consumption of seasonal vegetables and fruits is growing.

As a result of the warm winter in Europe in recent weeks, there have been no great movements in the vegetable supply market. This has also resulted in a slight drop of prices in February, compared to January.

**1 BGN = 0.51 Euro / 0.58 US\$.*

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