

Lower demand for Polish frozen strawberries

Eurostat data shows that in 2018, imports of frozen strawberries to the EU increased by 31% to a record level of 159,000 tons. The main reason for this was the increase in the supply from Morocco and Egypt (by 35% and 72%, respectively, to 60.3 thousand tons and 62.0 thousand tons), according to information from Agro Navigator Bank PKO BP.

The high growth rate of imports of frozen strawberries from countries in North Africa (+63%) happened despite the recorded slowdown in the demand in the EU. This was due to a 38% drop in the supply of frozen food from China as a result of the impact of frosts.

The greater imports from Egypt and Morocco weakened the demand for frozen strawberries from Poland, despite the increase in the country's production (by 10%, according to the Central Statistical Office). From July to November 2018, total sales to the EU market decreased by 7.7%. Eurostat data also reveal a larger supply of frozen strawberries from Spain; however, taking into account the changes in the Spanish production in 2018 (according to Freshuelva, the yields decreased by 8%) and Eurostat trade data, they may be re-exporting strawberries from Morocco. In 2019, the factor that may limit the supply of Spanish strawberries is the high temperatures, which have a negative impact on the yield.

On the EU market, Ukraine is becoming more and more visible. It is true that in 2018, the import of frozen strawberries from this country amounted to just over 3.6 thousand tons (+22%) and accounted for 2.3% of total EU imports; however, this volume was 4.6 times greater than two years ago. If the country continues on this path, Ukraine may well become an important competitor in the frozen strawberry market.