

Russia top market for Turkey's fresh fruit, vegetable exports

In the first two months of this year, Turkey exported approximately \$365.66 million worth of fresh fruits and vegetables, with Russia importing the most Turkish produce at around \$104.53 million. According to Eastern Black Sea Exporters Association (DKİB) data, Turkey exported 697,577 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables to 100 countries in January and February. Russia ranked first in the amount of produce imported from Turkey, followed by Iraq with \$34.084 million and Romania with some \$33.11 million. On the other hand, the Eastern Black Sea Region exported 52,247 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables to 31 countries in the same period, making \$29.14 million in revenue.

Russia ranked first among the countries that imported fresh fruits and vegetables from the region with \$22.6 million, followed by Georgia with over \$2 million and Iraq with \$988,045.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Union Sector Board Vice Chairman and DKİB Vice Chairman Ahmet Hamdi Gürdoğan was cited by Anadolu Agency (AA) as saying that their priority market in the export of fresh fruits and vegetables has always been Russia.

"We believe that Russia will maintain its superiority in the export of fresh fruits and vegetables in 2019 as well," he said. Underlining that there are some problems with exports to Russia, Gürdoğan stated that the exports of fresh fruits and vegetables to that country are not at the desired level.

In January 2016, after Turkey downed a Russian fighter jet violating its airspace, Russia banned imports of Turkish fruits and vegetables including tomatoes, oranges, apples, apricots, cabbage, broccoli, mandarins, pears, peaches, cucumbers, plums, strawberries, onions, cloves, and poultry. However, Russia relaxed trade sanctions placed on Turkey during the summer of 2017.



Indicating that exports to the country should rise to higher levels, Gürdoğan said, "We want to complete the export of fresh fruit and vegetables with much better figures in 2019. Problems in this sense should be resolved in a short time."

Pointing out that the variety of countries and products in fresh fruit and vegetable exports has increased, Gürdoğan said, "Turkey exported to 100 countries, with Russia, Iraq and Romania taking the lead in the first two months of the year. Tomatoes ranked first in export revenues with a share of \$74.19 million. Tomato exports soared by 20 percent compared to the same period last year. In this period, mandarins and lemons were also the most exported products. Also, mandarins, tomatoes and lemons took the lead among the region's exports."

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