



Turkmen tomatoes vie for Russia

Turkmenistan looks poised to become Russia's top source for greenhouse tomatoes in the near future, reports EastFruit.

According to analysis from EastFruit, Turkmenistan is rapidly catching up with Uzbekistan as the leading supplier of greenhouse tomatoes to Russia.

In the first eight months of 2021, Turkmenistan exported 32,000 tonnes of greenhouse tomatoes to the Russian market, an increase of 92 per cent over the year-earlier period.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan recorded an increase of 55 per cent to 37,400 tonnes. Turkey saw its exports to Russia decline by 2 per cent during the same period.

According to Andriy Yarmak, an economist at the UN FAO, Uzbekistan's position as the leading supplier to Russia may be under serious threat, especially given the energy demands for heating greenhouses over the winter.

"Considering the growth rate of supply volumes, as well as the situation with gas prices and gas supply to greenhouse plants in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, we do not exclude that Turkmenistan will overtake Uzbekistan in terms of supply of greenhouse tomatoes to Russia by the end of 2021," he said.

"Suppliers from Turkmenistan will have a competitive advantage in the cost of energy, although given record high prices for greenhouse vegetables, the cost of their production is becoming less important," Yarmak added. This means that if Turkmenistan has sufficient volumes, it will be able to diversify the export of



greenhouse tomatoes, supplying them not only to Russia, but also to other countries of the region.”

Turkmenistan has boosted its tomato exports to Russia fourfold in just two years, according to EastFruit, bypassing China, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Iran and Egypt on its way to a 10 per cent market share.

Turkmen tomato exports also rose to Kazakhstan, by 73 per cent to 13,000 tonnes between January and July.

2021 equally saw Turkmen greenhouse tomatoes exported for the first time to Ukraine and Belarus, as well as to Austria.

Turkmenistan's recent success in Russia comes in spite of the latter's overall reduction in greenhouse tomato imports, which declined by 12 per cent to 337,000 tonnes over the first eight months of 2021.

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