

Title Fresh fruit and vegetable sector in Turkey
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Abstract

Total export value of Turkey has reached 132 billion FOB \$ in 2008 and advance of 475 % with respect to the export value in 2000, approximately 25 billion FOB \$. In 2008, Turkish fresh fruit and vegetable export value has reached 1.8 billion FOB \$. According to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 36.8 million metric tones of fresh fruit and vegetable was produced in Turkey in 2007. Our country, called as an “agriculture country”, has a great potential in fresh fruit and vegetable production. Turkey is at the 8th rank in fresh fruit production and has 2.5 % share in world production. As to fresh vegetable production, Turkey has 2.7 % share in world production and placed at the fourth rank. Moreover, apricots, cherries, figs, and quince production of Turkey are at the 1st rank in the world and 2nd rank in the production of sour cherries, and 3rd rank at apple production. Tomatoes have 27 %, table grapes have 11 % and watermelon has 9 % share in Turkish fresh fruit and vegetable production, respectively. In addition, fresh fruit and vegetable export consists of only 1.3 % of total Turkish export. As in production, tomatoes are also at the first rank in export with the value of 426 million FOB \$ export values. However, only 5 % of production could be exported and the rest is consumed by domestic market. Consequently, as exporters, one of our basic tasks is to increase the amount of export. Our destination markets are; Russian Federation, Germany, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria, respectively. However, our exporters are faced with some problems at times in export, and pesticide residue is the primary of these basic problems. Producing by an agricultural adviser accompaniment, taking care of pesticides usage and also elapsed time between application and harvest will make a contribution in this problem’s solution. The regulation, harmonizing the maximum residue levels (MRL) of pesticides in food came into force on 1st September 2008. However, as to Russian Federation, the other largest market, the MRL values of some active substances are very low. Under these conditions, it is hard and almost impossible to produce fresh fruit and vegetables for Russian market. Within the framework of the Memorandum signed with Russian Federation on 2nd July 2008, traceability should be absolutely satisfied in the export to this country. Although only 5 % of fresh fruit and vegetable production is exported, negative situations in international markets affect product prices in domestic market. Due to the changing market conditions, the costs of agricultural inputs have increased in the last period. In addition, conventional farming methods requiring high input costs negatively affect producers already carrying out small-scale production.

Incentive practices based on production, decrement of the Value added tax (VAT) rates of basic inputs, supporting producers to collaborate with agricultural advisers and exporters in order to supply market demands will help to overcome this problem. As exporters, we desire that the fluctuation experienced on the markets will be ended in the years ahead. While both exporters and producers in Turkey are believe in proudly presenting Turkish products in world superior markets.