



# WORLD PROCESSING TOMATO COUNCIL

## WPTC crop update as of 1st May 2009

The WPTC production forecast currently stands at between 39.2 and 39.9 million tonnes of tomatoes to be processed in 2009 but it is still too early to predict how the spring conditions will affect the final size of the crop.

### AMITOM countries

The main feature of this early May is the delay incurred by planting operations due to heavy rains and other weather conditions that have disrupted preparations for the harvest in most of the Mediterranean regions. These could lead to a production glut mid season but it is difficult at this point in time to assess their impact on the size of the crop.

#### Portugal

No change to the forecast at 1.1 million tonnes. Conditions are fairly normal at the moment. Planting started early. Warm weather in March, with some frost in early April but good weather since.

#### Spain

The surface contracted is 34 500 ha in Spain and 1 500 ha in Portugal. This should lead to a production of approximately 2.3 million at an average yield of 63-64 t/ha. The weather has been on the cold side, with some rains which delayed planting slightly. Conditions remain however normal with no major problem to date.

#### France

The crop forecast stands at 220 000 tonnes. Planting is late because of the recent rains, especially in the south-east: only 25% of the surfaces have been planted against 50% normally at this date. This may lead to a bad bunching up of the crop when early and standard varieties mature at the same time. The new *Provence Tomatoes* factory will begin operating at the start of the season.

#### Italy

In the North, 1.8 million tonnes were contracted for 2009 by AIIPA members, more than previously forecast. This is 300 000 tonnes more than in 2008. About 20% of the surfaces have already been planted.

The cooperatives had contracted 10-15% more than last year but the production probably will be reduced because of the recent weather conditions.

In the south the quantities contracted were also increased compared to last year, but the recent weather conditions will also reduce production.

Everywhere, heavy rains in the last two weeks have halted transplanting and there is some concern that the surface already planted will have been damaged by the rains and cold weather. Some diseases are already developing. This could lead to a delay in the start of harvesting and concentration of production. Also, the rains will have washed away some of the pre-applied fertilizers which could lead to lower yields. Weather conditions should improve in the next few days and planting should resume early next week.

Because of these conditions, the forecast is maintained at 5 million tonnes, when it was expected only a few days ago that it would be higher.

#### **Greece**

The low temperatures have delayed planting. Some farmers have decided not to plant tomatoes this year and consequently the forecast is reduced from 840 000 tonnes to 800 000 tonnes.

#### **Turkey:**

Rains have also delayed planting and will delay harvesting. The forecast is reduced from 2.1 million tonnes to 1.6 million tonnes.

#### **Tunisia**

The weather conditions have not been good with cool temperatures and lots of rain. Yields are expected to be low. The current forecast is 800 000 tonnes.

#### **Algeria**

The cold and rainy weather conditions have lead to important delays in planting.

#### **Iran**

The forecast of 2.2 million tonnes is confirmed for 2009. There are currently some rains in the main tomato cultivating area and the season will start about 10 days late. Tomato prices are floating here, so we will find out about exact prices during season but the price should be around 100 USD per MT.

#### **Ukraine**

Planting will get under way seriously when the rain stops. The weather is now warmer. No change in the crop forecast.

### **Northern Hemisphere**

#### **California**

The official estimate from NASS/CASS will not be released until the end of May. Currently the CTGA is conducting its grower intentions survey. With approximately 1/3 of the responses in a 5.8% increase is being reflected from last year's crop. This would represent about a 12.5 million ton crop at this time (11.3 million metric tonnes). It is important to note that these are very preliminary with more responses continuing to come in.

Growers are approximately in the middle to the end of their planting cycle depending on delivery dates at this time. Some growers have experienced some frost damage earlier in the season. The majority of those have been re-planted and are being monitored further. While there has been some increase in water allocations throughout the state, some areas are heavily relying on well water and all are closely managing their water schedule to make sure they coincide with the needs of their crop. This type of water management will be a necessity for this season.

#### **Canada**

Preliminary indications are that contract volume will be down slightly at approximately 540,000 metric tonnes. Planting is expected to begin on schedule in early May.

#### **China**

The sowing and transplanting time in China started from March 25 to May 25, and the planting for early ripened tomatoes has come to the end. Upon our observation, the weather condition till now is normal, nothing special.

As cotton prices are on the downside, the surface of cotton is withered, leaving space for grain and tomato and more farmers are active to plant tomatoes, in addition to the expansion of self-owned land of some large processors; the surface for tomatoes will come to 1,783,000 mu, which equals to 118,885 ha. If the situation goes smoothly, the estimated output of 2009 crop will still be more or less the same with our early forecast: 7.68 million metric tons with a production of 960 000 tonnes of tomato paste.

### **Hungary**

Only 1300 ha was planted with tomatoes for processing last year and 83 000 tonnes processed. It was a good year for the whole sector (growers and processors too). The first survey this year showed an increase of the intention of production by growers, with a surface of 2000 ha expected which should lead to a production of 130 000 tonnes.

<b>Southern Hemisphere</b>
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### **South Africa**

The crop in South Africa in the South will be finished within the next month. Good weather conditions and sufficient irrigation water produced a good crop.

The Northern growing area will process the first part of the new crop in the week of 20 April. The crop was delayed as a result of above average rainfall in Jan & Feb with lower than usual maximum temperatures and less heat units. The hectares planted were increased. The total expected crop is increased to 170 000 tonnes fresh.

Prices paid are between 105 & 125 USD at an exchange rate of R9/USD. In the last year the range of the Rand/USD exchange rate were between R7.23 & R11.43.

### **Argentina**

The harvest season was very long this year and total production exceeded forecasts with 450 000 tonnes instead of the 410 000 tonnes expected.