



# WORLD PROCESSING TOMATO COUNCIL

WPTC Crop update as of 22 May 2020

## AMITOM countries

In **Algeria**, the agricultural ministry expects a harvest of 1.7 million tonnes and processing of about one million tonnes in 26 canneries. To date 21,000 ha have been planted out of a target of 25,000 ha. The “wilayas” of Annaba, Guelma, Skikda and El Tarf, alone, cover 77% of national production.

In **Egypt**, harvesting of spring (early summer season) has started but a little bit slow because of Ramadan & Eid El-Fitr holidays and will return to normal starting from the middle of next week. Quality is very promising, and weather is suitable for tomatoes to ripen quickly. Brix as expected over 4.90”

In **France**, as for Spain and Portugal, barely any planting could be done last week and very little the week before in the South West. To date, only about 60% of the surface has been planted in the South East and 35% in the South West. Planting will therefore continue until 15 to 20 June and, as indicated by other countries, there will probably be a gap in the harvest between the two planting periods and large volumes arriving in factories in September. Despite some worries, no mildew or bacteriosis developed this week. The north wind is there with the sun and for the moment the fields already planted look healthy and rather in advance. The forecast of 150,000 tonnes is maintained at this time.

In **Greece**, despite a 4 to 5 days delay due to a heatwave, the planting is now 95% done and should be finished by the end of the week. There is no issue with water availability and the forecast remains 440,000 tonnes.

In **Hungary**, transplanting is ready at c. 95 % level. Weather is dry, with permanent, intensive wind which is continuously stressing the transplanted areas. Mood report from experts: "nothing good has happened yet this year". Total yield is expected rather less than previously planned 100,000 tonnes or more in Hungary this year.

In the **North of Italy**, to the current date about 70-75% of the surface has been planted. The operation will go on in the next two weeks and will finish around June 10<sup>th</sup>. Despite the forecasts, the rains have been modest, and the cultivation needs to be irrigated. Above average temperatures have led to a good vegetative development and the early crops are in good condition. The forecast remains between 2.55 and 2.6 million tonnes.

In the **South of Italy**, planting operations are going well, and weather conditions are currently perfect, so a good yield is currently expected. The water availability in Puglia is also improved and should not be an issue if there are further rains. Some heavy rain in the north of Basilicata this week has flooded some fields but it is too early to understand if and how this will affect the crop.

The current problem concerns the price negotiations: growers have requested 130 euros/tonne for round tomatoes and 140 euros/tonne for long tomatoes which is nearly a 50% increase on last year whereas processors offered a 2 to 3% increase only. Processors have left the negotiating table for 2 to 3 weeks and informed the government and the press to try to get a reasonable price. Despite this,

planting continues, and the total surface planted by the first week in June could be higher than initially expected.

The total forecast for **Italy** remains 5 million tonnes.

In **Portugal**, the situation is similar to the Vegas Bajas in Spain with planting interrupted all of last week due to rains. To date, only about half of the surface has been planted and operations will continue until the first week of June. There is some uncertainty as to whether the total surface contracted will be planted but growers have rented the fields and plants are available so the reduction will probably be limited. The season will probably be long and difficult, with two big gaps in planting and harvesting until the first week of October. It is too early to give a revised forecast, but production will be lower than the 1.4 million tonnes initial estimate (probably between 1.2 and 1.3 million tonnes).

In **Spain**, Planting is finished in Andalusia. There is some development of mildew and bacteriosis in fields due to recent rains, but it is not a serious issue.

In Extremadura while 75% of the surfaces have already been planted in Vegas Altas, in Vegas Bajas nothing could be planted last week as it rained between 40 and 80 mm. Only about 55% of the surfaces have been planted to date in the area and it is now likely that not all fields will be planted or that some will be planted in June which would mean a very late harvest. The season is therefore likely to be very difficult with a lot of grouped maturity and large volumes in September. The forecast of 3.1 million will probably be reduced in a couple of weeks when there is more clarity on the situation.

In **Russia**, the weather in April and May has not been the most favourable as it was colder and more rainy than usual. The planting operations are therefore 7 to 10 days late and are now ongoing but with some interruptions due to intermittent rain. The forecast remains 550,000 tonnes, the level of 2019 production as the new factory in Astrakhan will not open this year.

In **Turkey**, there is no change from the last report. There has been a dry and hot (August temperatures) weather which has helped with the plantings to go smoothly. The forecast is for rain this weekend but nothing risky, and then returning to normal temperatures for the season.

In **Ukraine**, transplanting is on schedule and should finish in two to three weeks as the weather in the spring has been normal and the rains in May have not affected operations. The plants already in the fields for the early and mid-season look good. The forecast remains 850,000 tonnes.