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Israeli tomato exports decline

As the number of tomato growers falls, Israeli production is sliding steadily, with exports suffering as a result of strong domestic demand



Tomatoes are a central product in Israeli horticulture, with only grains and potatoes commanding a higher volume. In recent years, however, the number of growers has decreased due to the low prices recorded on the domestic market, as well as other external factors.

In 1999, at its peak, Israeli tomato production stood at around 600,000 tonnes. Since then, the volume

has declined steadily to just over 400,000 tonnes. During the 2013 campaign, 421,000 tonnes of tomatoes were produced on 4,700ha, with 53 per cent heading to the processing industry.

The impact of this decline has mainly been felt by exports, owing to an increase in domestic demand. Exports have dropped significantly in recent years from 40,000 tonnes in 2009 to 12,000 tonnes in 2013, and to

9,000 tonnes in 2014/15, representing approximately 5 per cent of total production.

Exports are split between cherry tomatoes and round tomatoes, with the main targets remaining the Netherlands, Russia and Slovenia.