



By Fred Searle

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## Freskon returns with grape focus

Trade show in Thessaloniki will host first international congress on table grapes, aiming to increase supply of Greek fruit to Balkans



**R**eturning for its fourth year, the Freskon International Trade Show for Fruit & Vegetables is shining the spotlight on grapes this year, featuring an international congress on the high-value fruit.

The three-day show, which has increased its exhibitor tally to 191 to 210 this year, hosted the first international congress on table grapes on 26 April, with speakers from Greece and abroad.

The programme included sessions on food safety and disease control, digital farming and marketing challenges and trends. A number of new grape varieties were also unveiled by Spanish breeder Itum, UK firm Jupiter Marketing and US company International Fruit Genetics.

Serving as a meeting point for producers, international retail groups, and domestic and international exporters, Freskon is the largest fruit and vegetables show held in the Balkans and southeast Mediterranean region.

Panayiotis Orfanos, publisher and director of Froustonea magazine, which helped

this year's show, stressed that Freskon is gradually becoming an established institution and is being embraced by Greek distributors.

He noted that Greece is becoming a centre for the supply of fruit and vegetables to all the Balkan countries: "All of Europe is turning towards Greek fruit," he said.

This year exhibitors span 22 countries, with 150 buyers attending from 31 countries. According to the organisers, some of Europe's largest supermarket chains are in attendance and there will be 250 pre-arranged business meetings at exhibition, which will cover 11,000 sq m.

The FreshCon Market, organised in cooperation with Froustonea magazine, will bring large supermarket chains into direct contact with professionals of the agricultural sector in a bid to facilitate direct agreements.

Participants at the marketplace, taking place on 27 April, will include Greek supermarket chains Masoutis, Kritikos, Metro, Chalkiadakis and Discount Markt; Bulgarian retailers Fantastico and

T-Market; Ukraine's ATB Market, Brusnichka, Tavria V and Velyka Kyshenya; Romanian supermarket Mega Image; and Belarusian retailer Dionis.

The central fresh fruit and vegetable procurement unit of Metro, which serves 18 countries in Europe and Asia, will also participate.

"Freskon is a major multi-event, expanding beyond the country's borders thanks to its internationalisation," said Alexis Tsaxirlis, deputy general director of TIF-Helexpo, where the show is taking place. "It has no equivalent in the broader region of south-eastern Europe."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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organise the FreshCon Market at

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