



By Tom Joyce

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Positive outlook for Greek grapes

As Greek grape producers voice optimistic about the current season, exporter Proto is boosting volumes and planting new varieties to reach the next level



Greek grapes are expected to enjoy a better season compared with last year, according to George Kallitsis, export manager at Proto.

"Things are going more smoothly and the weather has been good so far, much drier than last year, so there have been no quality issues," he said. "Last year, we had some rains and a lot of humidity during the day, which caused some problems."

According to Kallitsis, prices are similar to last year's, but demand is better. "Spain has experienced some weather problems, so they are not pushing so hard on exports," he explained.

Proto is mainly working with the Crimson variety, of which 100 per cent of its volumes are sent to the UK.

"The colour has been very good this year," said Kallitsis. "We are limited in our capacity, so 7-10 lorries per week is our maximum. We are struggling to cover the demand we have in the UK, mainly to Tesco and Coop, as well as to some catering companies. But next year, we are planning to proceed with some investments on new grape lines, including sophisticated software, in order to improve packing performance."

Grape volumes are on the

rise at Proto, with new varieties being planted, including Arra 15, Arra 32, Sweet Celebration, Sweet Globe and Sugar Crisp.

"As our volumes increase, we are working more with markets like Germany, the Netherlands and Scandinavia," said Kallitsis. "When we have even more volumes, we will start to look at export markets in Asia."