

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Mike Knowles

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Italians note stronger demand for organic

CSO Italy reports rising sales of organic fruit and veg through Italy's supermarket and discount chains



An organic fruit box sold by Italian organic supermarket chain NaturaSi

Demand for organic fresh fruit and veg appears to be rising steadily but significantly in Italy, and Made in Nature, a project financed by the EU and some of Italy's leading producers, is seeking to capitalise on that growing demand both at home and across the European market.

The project's backers embarked on a full marketing programme focused on autumn products this week with a special media event at Anuga, the biannual food trade fair which takes place in Cologne on 5-9 October.

Coordinated by CSO Italy and bringing together leading names in organic fresh produce such as Brio, Canova, Conserve Italia, Lagnasco RK Growers and VeryBio, the briefing confirmed the growing importance of organic fruit and vegetables – be they fresh or pre-prepared – to European shoppers, with the Italian market alone now worth around €3bn per year.

Figures published by Ismea and reported at the event indicate that consumption of organic products in Italy has risen by 102 per cent since 2013 and have risen by a further 1.5 per cent this year.

A bigger share is reportedly being sold through modern supermarkets, where sales rose by 5.5 per cent so far this year compared with a 7 per cent decrease in traditional stores.

Discounters, meanwhile, have seen their sales of organic products soar by 20.7 per cent.

Just last month, one of Italy's leading organic food brands **Alce Nero opened its first pop-up store on the concourse at Milan's central railway station**, a move designed to raise awareness of organics to even greater levels.

Productivity surge

Italy's own production area for organic

Food and Forestry Policies, representing a total of 15.5 per cent of the country's total agricultural area.

According to CSO, sales of organic fruit and veg through major retailers and discounters have risen in the past 18 months, despite an overall contraction in the value of traditional produce.

It also observed that a period of late-summer sunshine had been a welcome boost for Italy's organic producers, notably those growing table grapes.

"We've seen excellent quality and good production of organic apples as well, which are particularly interesting because of the wide range of varieties that set Italy's offer apart," the group commented. "Interesting innovations like Candine and Story Inored are excellent quality, scab-resistant varieties."

Alluding to a recent infestation of brown marmorated stink bug, which has affected

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

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produce recently topped 2m hectares several parts of northern Italy,
according to the Ministry of Agricultural,

CSO said the organic pear harvest had
suffered problems

in terms of quantity this year, but insisted
that fruit quality remained excellent.

"Just as excellent," it added, "is the quality
of organic processed products such as
tomatoes used for processing."