



By Tom
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Perla doubles cherry capacity

As the Turkish cherry season approaches, exporter Perla Fruit expects good volumes due to major investments, according to executive chairman Kerim Taner



How is the new cherry harvest looking in Turkey? How has the weather been and when do you expect harvesting to commence?

Kerim Taner: The weather conditions have been favourable for cherries. Some regions have experienced their coldest winter in a decade, fulfilling the chilling hour requirements easily. The spring season has also been cooler than normal, pushing back the start of the harvest. We expect to start the Ziraat 0900 harvest around 25 May. We see some frost damage in early-producing cherry regions, but production looks promising in later regions.

What sort of volumes do you expect?

KT: The crop is looking promising on the trees. If we can harvest without any effect from the climate then we can expect a good export volume in 2021. Perla Fruit is planning to pack 10,000 tonnes of cherries this season. All our investments and preparations are progressing toward this goal.

KT: After a successful 2020 cherry season, Perla Fruit has continued to invest heavily, including in a new MAF Roda cherry line, doubling our packing capacity to 10,000 tonnes for 2021. In addition, the company has further invested in heat-sealing machines to offer alternative packaging options. Moreover, our laboratory investments exceed €2m in order to deliver 100-per-cent safe goods to our customers.

Which markets offer the most encouragement at the moment?

KT: We will mainly be focusing on Europe. Our main export volume will be for Germany. However, we expect strong demand from markets such as Italy, France, Austria, eastern Europe and the UK. We also have programmes in the Middle East and East Asia.

Have you encountered new challenges due to Covid-19?

KT: Perla Fruit managed the Covid-19 risk well in 2020. We will add more precautions

growing experience and the changing Covid environment.

Is sustainability increasingly a focus at the company?

KT: Sustainability is one of Perla Fruit's top priorities. Our commitment starts from the soil and extends all the way to the supermarket shelf. One of the reasons for our massive laboratory investment is sustainability. Perla Lab is not only testing for pesticides but also doing water, soil and leaf analysis, providing accurate data for each grower in order to produce the safest product in the most environmentally friendly way possible. We are also investing in research and development for new packaging and new processes to minimise our wastage.

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and proactive actions to our current protocols based upon our

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